

THE TRANSFORMATIVE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PAULINE THOUGHT

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Introduction

In this paper we will attempt to survey the data regarding the Pauline understanding of the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. Since there are many subtopics that could be included in such a synthesis the primary thesis will be that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God indwelling believers *in order to recreate human persons into a new humanity that will rule the resurrected creation with Christ after his Second Coming*. In order to make sense of this we will proceed by focusing upon several parts that comprise the whole, namely (1) the deposit of the Spirit; (2) the resurrecting action of the Spirit; and (3) the Spirit against the flesh; and (4) the “already, but not yet” work of the Spirit.¹ We will then summarize our conclusions.

The Deposit of the Spirit

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is described by the Apostle Paul as the deposit of our inheritance. In 2 Cor. 1.21-22 the Spirit is our “deposit” or “down-payment”² that we will receive our heavenly inheritance. Again, in 5.5 the Spirit is described as deposit on the guarantee that we will one day shed this mortality in favor of something greater. In Eph. 1.13-14 the Spirit is again described as the deposit of our inheritance. In fact, it is the Holy Spirit that provides us access into the promises of God *in this age* (cf. 1.3).

In two of the passages already mentioned—2 Cor. 1.21-22 and Eph. 1.13-14—the Holy Spirit is referred to as our seal. Another passage where this language appears is Eph. 4.30 where it says that it is the Holy Spirit that seals us “for the day of redemption”. G. Fee says that this

1 The intrinsic failure of such a task if I will often be left begging the question although I will try to defend my presuppositions as best as I can considering the form of this paper.

2 Gk. ἀρραβών

terminology is in reference to “a stamped impression in wax, denoting ownership and authenticity, and carrying with it the protection of the owner”³ much like an imperial letter.

Similarly, the Spirit is called the “first-fruits” in Rom. 8.23 which is a reference to the beginning of a harvest. Fee notes that this is also terminology used of Christ’s resurrection as a prelude to our own.⁴ As with the two previous illustrations it is evident that the Apostle wants to indicate that the Holy Spirit is given to us for an important eschatological purpose. The Spirit indwelling believers is not an end in and of itself. It is a means to an end.

In the aforementioned 2 Cor. 5.5 the Spirit is being referred as a deposit on the promise that we will shed this “mortal” existence. As we will see below Paul does not understand this to be a reference to some sort of Platonic, ethereal, anti-material existence. Instead, the Holy Spirit is the promise that our current, dying existence is temporary. The Spirit is the promise of an ontological shift that has both continuation and discontinuation with our current existence, but it is not a promise of something altogether foreign.

In fact, the Spirit as “first-fruits” in Rom. 8.23 is the beginning of a salvific harvest which includes our bodies. The Apostle writes, “we...who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies”. This statement is in apposition: the adoption as sons is equated with the redemption of our bodies.⁵

What is important to notice here is that Paul understands the Spirit as being the guarantee that the full content of our inheritance *will be* given to us. In other words, God would not fill us with the Spirit only to go back on his people who are awaiting the full redemption of

3 Fee, 807.

4 Ibid.

5 *υιοθεσίαν* and *ἀπολύτρωσιν* are both in the accusative singular.

the body. If the Spirit is in us there is reason to believe that Spirit will raise us from the dead as he did Christ (cf. Rom. 8.11).

We must ask to what degree did Paul see the Spirit as being involved in the redemption (= resurrection) of believers. According to Fee, “no text in Paul, in fact, attributes the resurrection of Christ to the work of the Spirit” and therefore the Spirit does not do anything more in our resurrection. For Fee, it is “God alone” who is credited with the resurrection of Christ and believers. This means that at best, “The Spirit is the guarantor of our future, including our bodily resurrection”.⁶ Is this the full extent to which Paul sees the Spirit being involved in the process of resurrection? While surely it is true that the Spirit is the “guarantor” of the future the assertion that the Spirit is not the agent in the resurrection of Christ seems to ignore the fullness of Paul’s expression regarding the relationship between resurrection and the Spirit.

The Resurrecting Action of the Spirit

While we do not have the space to give much attention to this it is important to take notice of the fact that in the Hebrew Scriptures the Spirit is understood to be a source of life. In Gen. 2.7 it is the breathing⁷ of God into the human that makes him evolve from dust to *imago Dei*. When the life of humans is shortened it is because God determines that the Spirit will no longer dwell in their midst (Gen. 6.3).

In Ps. 104.29-30 it reads, “When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the ground”.⁸ It is evident here that the Psalmist seems to have interpreted Gen. 2.7 and 6.3 as references to human life being dependent upon the Spirit of God.

6 Ibid. 809

7 נְשַׁמָּת although not רִיחַ seems to imply something very similar.

In Is. 32.14-20 devastation remains until “the Spirit is poured upon us from on high”. In Ez. 37.1-14⁹ it does not seem like a coincidence that the imagery of national “resurrection” corresponds to these images of the Spirit bringing life from death.¹⁰ We could develop this further but this will suffice to show that Paul had plenty of imagery upon which to draw.¹¹

It may seem ignorant to apply language regarding the resurrecting action of the Spirit to Christian life in this age. Nevertheless, this is exactly what Paul does. He sees the Spirit as redeeming us from the “inside-out”, per se. We have *already* been recreated in the “inner person”. The “outer person” has yet to be *fully* reconciled with this form of existence.

In 2 Cor. 4.16 in outer person is seen as perishing while the inner person “is being renewed day-by-day”. This assurance comes from the fact that the “Spirit of faith” which is shared by Christians, who raised Jesus from the dead, “will raise us also with Jesus” (2 Cor. 4.14).¹² In spite of our current state within decomposing flesh we can take comfort that we are

8 Athanasius of Alexandria understood this text to apply to how the Holy Spirit redeems humanity as well as the whole created order. In the context of his first *Letter to Serapion* he used this as a primary proof-text for the divinity of the Spirit linking it with Titus 3.4-7 which speaks of the washing and renewing work of the Holy Spirit and Heb. 6.4 which speaks of “tasting the heavenly gift”. (C.R.B. Shapland, trans. *The Letters of Saint Athanasius concerning the Holy Spirit*, 122-123. Cf. 82, 127, 165, 174, and 182. Likewise, Basil the Great wrote, “Resurrection from the dead is accomplished by operation of the Spirit: ‘Thou sendest forth thy Spirit and they are created; and though renewest the face of the earth’. If ‘creation’ means bringing the dead back to life how great the work of the Spirit is!” For Basil this text referred not only to the work of the Spirit but possibly the resurrecting work of the Spirit and at least the renewal of believer. (David Anderson, trans. *On the Holy Spirit*, 77). It is here we see two of the most prominent early theologians in regards to the discussion of the divinity of the Spirit citing Ps. 104.29-30 as evidence of their position.

9 While this passage refers to the “resurrection” of national Israel it provides imagery consistent with other OT passages that connect the Spirit to life. E.g. see Dunn, 261, and Levison, 29.

10 For an excellent discussion on these OT references to the Spirit and life see Levison, 14-86.

11 We may introduce the Johannine depiction of Jesus “breathing” upon the disciples saying “receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20.22) as further evidence that this is not merely a possible interpretation of the texts but a likely one amongst first century Jewish Christians such as Paul.

12 The ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, and NIV all translate this as “spirit of faith”, but I agree with Fee who writes, “Paul intends to refer to the Holy Spirit” (Fee, 323).

“being transformed into his image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3.18; cf. Rom. 1.17 “from faith to faith”). God “will grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Eph. 3.16).

At this juncture we should note the interconnectedness between Paul’s statement regarding the Spirit as inheritance/seal/first-fruits and this discussion regarding the Spirit’s redemption of the inner man. In Eph. 1.3 Paul says that we are *already* experiencing “Spiritual blessings in the heavenly place” which characteristically could not occur without the Spirit. Yet we know that we await our full redemption (cf. Rom. 8.23). In both paradigms it is being conveyed that we have the very thing that we need for eternal life—yet it is not in full. The Spirit of God is the necessary factor in eternal life. It is by the Spirit that we will be resurrected. It is the Spirit that will animate us.

For Paul the model of what we will become is who Christ is now (cf. Col. 1.18). In 1 Cor. 15 Paul delivers an exposition on what is central to his gospel (vv. 1-8) with the primary element being defended is that Christ has risen and therefore we will rise (v. 16). It is a guarantee that like Christ’s natural body all our bodies that will “perish” is “sown in dishonor” and “sown in weakness” (v. 43). In other words, we will die. Nevertheless, Christ, who has already died this way and who has become one with the “Life-Giving Spirit” (v. 45), has become the “first-fruits” (cf. 1 Cor. 15.23) or the “first-born” from the dead (Col. 1.18).

It is a difficult exegetical task to explain how Christ and the Holy Spirit are distinguished yet together in this text (v. 45-47).¹³ Nevertheless, we must take Paul’s language at

13 Gaffin does well in “Life-Giving Spirit: Probing the Center of Paul’s Pneumatology”. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 4 D (1998). 573-589. Fee provides another vantage point, 264-269.

face value that Christ has become the “Life-giving Spirit”. This is not to say that Trinitarian language fails to explain the relationship between the Son and Spirit. What it does say is that Christ previews what a resurrected human will be like at the eschaton. It is a human who exist fully animated by the Spirit. Now that Christ is animated this way he can provide the Spirit to us.

For Paul the body that we will receive once we are resurrected is fully material, yet animated by something other than “flesh and blood” (1 Cor. 15.50). Again, Paul is not degrading material existence. Rather, he is speaking against mere bodily sustained existence. For Paul there is a way in which the body exists that is not dependent upon the “perishing” of our muscles, bones, organs, et cetera. It is a body animated by the Holy Spirit.

All of humanity is divided between those who are still animated by mere “flesh and blood” and those who, like Christ, are being animated by the Holy Spirit. For Paul being “in Christ” was not *merely* a legal status as so many Protestants understand it. Rather, it is an actual ontological existence. Some theologians refer to it as “regeneration”.

For Paul we are not merely freed from sin legally; for Paul we are freed from the outcome of sin (= death, Rom. 6.23; cf. 1 Cor. 15.54-57).¹⁴ There is an element of humanity that remains in Adam which is destined for death; there is another element that is in Christ (cf. Rom. 5.14-19), and as we have seen from 1 Cor. 15.45 the second Adam comes to us giving us life through the Spirit of life.¹⁵

14 It may be that Pauline Pneumatology can serve to bypass the impasse between Reformed/Lutheran and New Perspectives on Paul. The problem is that both parties often speak past each other because one wants to emphasize the “right-standing” works-free aspect of salvation. The other (rightly) points out that mere imputati

15 It is important to read Rom. 5.14-19 with an eye toward 1 Cor. 15.42-50. Those who do not do this will mistakenly assume that for Paul being in Christ rather than Adam is something theoretical; that the distinction refers only to our status as justified. If we read these two passages together we obtain a full bodied understanding of Paul’s Adam-Christ contrast which is more than justification by faith (though no less then this). It includes Spirit empowerment. It is more than just legal standing so that sins are forgiven; it is the promise that the wages of sin will not have full effect and that death will not reign.

Christ is the preview of who we will become at our resurrection. It was at the resurrection that Christ was crowned the “Son of God in power” (Rom. 1.3). Paul is not denying that Christ was the Son before the resurrection. Rather, like the context of 1 Cor. 15 the subject here is how the humanity of Jesus has been exalted. He is now the Son of God “in power”. The reason that this is the case is because his resurrection was “according to the Spirit of holiness”¹⁶.

It is this form of being a son that we participate in because of the Holy Spirit. According to Paul the Spirit is the “Spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8.15). He writes, “all who are led by the Spirit of God as sons of God” (v. 14). The Spirit testifies to our Spirit that this is so (v. 16). Yet this adoption is not complete until these “first-fruits” result in the full inheritance, which is our redemption, which is bodily (again 8.23).

Resurrection is about life. The Spirit is equated with life by Paul (Rom. 8.2). It is the Spirit who will raise us again to life (v. 11). This is where an important contrast appears for Paul that is often misunderstood or minimized in modern theology: the Spirit against the flesh.

The Spirit against the Flesh

Since the Protestant Reformation it has been popular to read the Spirit-flesh contrast of passages such as Gal. 3-5 as being *merely* about human behavior in contrast with God-empowered behavior. This is true, but not complete. For Paul the contrast between Spirit and flesh is an eschatological one as well.¹⁷

16 “The Spirit of holiness” seems to be a Semitism. There are many reasons given for why Paul said this rather than “the Holy Spirit”. It could be that Paul has adopted a pre-Pauline creed. This option is especially attractive since one of the purposes of this epistle seems to be Paul trying to present a shared gospel with the church in Rome. Another option includes the Spirit “of holiness” being a reference how Christ is raised. Christ is in the realm of the Spirit which is defined by being holy (= separate). There are more reasons given by various scholars but what is important for us here is that it is the Spirit by which Christ was resurrected.

17 It could (should?) be said, “more importantly so”.

In Rom. 8 Paul puts forth two ways of living: one by flesh; one by Spirit. These two ways are antithetical. Those who live by flesh have their minds set on death; those who live by the Spirit have their minds set on life (vv. 6-7). For Paul there is no such thing as a genuine Christian who lives by flesh for he writes to the Roman church, “You...are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit”. If someone does not have the Spirit there is no way that person can be of Christ (v. 9).

Paul says that “the body is dead because of sin” (v. 10). This echoes his language elsewhere regarding being redeemed in the inner person while the outer person, who is mere mortality, waste away. Yes, the body is dying but Christians *are not dying*. Rather, Christians are alive by the Spirit with the promise that when the body dies the body *cannot stay dead* because, like Christ, the believer is united with the Holy Spirit of life. To be united with the Spirit is to make the permanency of death *impossible*.

Life outside of life in the Spirit is not life at all. As it has been noted, the flesh is “death” (Rom. 8.6). As we return our attention to Galatians we can see that this is more than a discussion regarding mere morality or even “works” against “faith”. The promise of Abraham is the promise of the Spirit that recreates humanity (Gal. 5.14; Jew and Gentile into the “race” of “the second Adam”). Law brings death (cf. Rom 8.2). This is because Law only empowers flesh. It shows flesh why flesh cannot live but it does nothing to empower the human person to change in order to “fulfill the law” as Paul says on occasion.

On the other hand the Spirit, which comes by faith (Gal. 3.2), comes because we are sons of God (Gal. 4.6). As sons we are no longer slaves (v. 7). We have that which makes us one with Christ. We are to live as sons. Those who are sons are not defined by flesh.

Again, we may mention Gen. 6.3 at this juncture. It is here that we read that the Spirit of God would no longer dwell with humans because “he also is flesh”. It appears that for Paul this

does mean “bodily” to some extent. It does not mean “bodily” as material in contrast to “Spirit” as in ethereal existence. It means bodily as in corrupted, sinful existence.

God could not dwell amongst corrupted, sinful “fleshly” humans. In this eschatological scenario the Spirit reunites with the human spirit. This is not a compromise of the Gen. 6.3 statement. Rather, it is a solution to the problem noted there.

The Spirit begins, as we have discussed above, by restoring the human from the inside-out. The Spirit of God restores the spirit of humanity. The spirit of a human that is united to the Spirit of God has the guarantee that redemption will occur. In fact, in some sense, redemption has already occurred.

Redemption will occur because the renewed human being animated by the Spirit in spirit will eventually lead to the transformation of bodily existence. Again, as we noted in 1 Cor. 15 the distinction is between “flesh and blood” animated bodies and “Spirit” animated bodies. Those who have received the promise of Abraham, which is the Spirit, by faith, are being reanimated by the Holy Spirit of God which will lead to a *new bodily existence* that subverts the problem of mere corrupted bodily existence in Gen. 6.3.

As with Eph. 4.30 where we await the “day of redemption”, and Rom. 8.23 where we await the “redemption of our body”, so in Gal. 5.5 we await the “hope of righteousness”. There is a lot of discussion these days regarding the nature of justification by faith. While we cannot delve into that subject here we can say that there is something to the assertion that *current* justification by faith is derived and dependent upon future justification. In Galatians righteousness and justification are often intertwined. It is those who are “justified” that will be proven “righteous” and who are “righteous”. Likewise, it is the Spirit who can be found in Paul’s eschatological discussions in Ephesians, Romans, and Galatians. On the day that we are fully

redeemed (a work of the Spirit) which is equated with the redemption of our bodies (a work of the Spirit) we will obtain the “hope of righteousness”. We can conclude that this is also, in part, a work of the Spirit.¹⁸

The Spirit will make us into people who are not just legally right before God but who are *actually* right before God.¹⁹ The Spirit is making us into *new humanity*. The Spirit has already placed us *in Christ* over against dying Adamic flesh. The Spirit will resurrect us. It is then that we will be fully justified. We will stand before God being part of the “race” of Messiah with a humanity that has been redeemed just like Jesus’ humanity and alive by the Spirit of God just like Jesus.

All this being said what is the “reason” for this current age where we are redeemed inside but waiting redemption in the body? It has been called the “already, but not yet” age. It is the era of inaugurated eschatology. It is here that we will look at how God actually transforms believers in this life into who they will be in the age to come.²⁰

18 Thomas Schreiner writes, “...the forensic work of Christ on the cross is the basis for the transformative work of the Spirit. The liberating work of the Spirit is granted only to those who are already justified, to those who are already forgiven by God”. 264. We can affirm what he says here. It is the forensic declaration that one is righteous before God by grace through faith that allows God to pour the Holy Spirit into the life of the believer. The believer is internally redeemed in the inner man as well because it is at this point that the believer received the Spirit. Nevertheless, there is a progress revealing of this status, especially as the flesh gives way to the Spirit, which is fully consummated at the eschaton.

19 I am well aware that this may scare some Protestants in that it sounds too “Catholic”. In response just because there are parallels doesn’t mean it is the same conclusion. The Spirit is the only one who can bring forth the needed change being described.

20 There are two things we will not address in this paper but that should be considered: (1) What about Old Testament saints? They did not have the Holy Spirit yet it seems by Paul using Abraham and David as examples that they too are redeemed and will experience bodily resurrection. (2) What about those who come to faith at the end of life who do not have the opportunity to be “sanctified”. All we can say to this matter here is that there is nothing that prevents the Spirit from bringing forth this change suddenly soon before or even after death. The Christian is being sanctified *because* the Spirit that will raise them from the dead *already* dwells in them and therefore the change *must* be inaugurated because it is not possible for the Spirit of God to fully dwell in a human and there be no change. If there is no change the real question is whether or not that person is actually being indwelt by the Spirit. Nevertheless, the actual resurrecting act occurs after death for us like it will Old Testament saints or those who come to faith right before death.

The “Already, but Not Yet” Work of the Spirit

It is often the case that people approach the study of Spirit’s work in the life of the Christian by focusing upon *either* (1) the moral change enacted by the Holy Spirit or (2) the empowerment associated with the Holy Spirit. The first group focuses much attention on passages such as Gal 5.22-23 which describe the “fruit” of the Spirit. As “fruit” it is rightly noted that this is a reference to the visible evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work. Often this group minimizes any discussions regarding empowerment in order to emphasize the moral change caused by the Spirit.

The second group (rightly) notes that the Spirit is a means of empowering. The Spirit does more than moralize the Christian; the Spirit empowers the Christian to do the work of God. This groups can often be selectively fond of the content found in 1 Cor. 12-14 where Paul discusses various examples of “grace gifts” that are provided by the Spirit in order for the church to proclaim the gospel in power and edify one another.

At times it seems that both emphases overlook the primary function of each approach, namely to develop us into a community of people that foreshadow what we will be after the return of Christ. While the gifts are temporal (1 Cor. 13.10) the purpose of the gifts are not. The gifts are designed to function as expressions of love within the Christian community (1 Cor. 13.1-13). There will be no need for prophecy, healing, or glossolalia at the eschaton, but love will endure and there *is need* for such expressions of the Spirit as conduits of love until that time.

Likewise, the “fruits” of the Spirit are not for the sake of mere morality. In the context of Gal. 5-6 living by the Law/flesh results in a community where the members “bite and devour one another (5.15) rather than fulfilling the Law by loving one another (5.14). This is why the sins of the flesh as well as the fruits of the Spirit are primarily communal. The Spirit does not make

people moral for the sake of abstract “goodness”; the Spirit makes people moral because this results in love for one another to the point that if another fails one does not destroy that one but rather acts to restore (6.1-2).

Therefore, we see that the transformative work of the Spirit ought to lead toward eschatologically minded behavior toward one another. One example of how the Apostle expects this to function is depicted in 1 Cor. 6.1-11 where Paul rebukes the Corinthians for lawsuits against one another in a pagan court. It is his contention that Christians have been “washed... sanctified...justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (v. 11). Since this is so it makes no sense that the redeemed who will “judge the world” (v. 2) and “judge angels” (v. 3) would be judged by pagans!

The very fact that Paul must correct the Corinthians indicates that in spite of the internal change discussed above there is a sense of “already, but not yet”. One may argue that both First and Second Corinthians are an interesting exercise in Pauline Pneumatology since for Paul these people remained “saints” (1 Cor. 1.1-2; 2 Cor. 1.1) in spite of many gross indecencies. It would appear that for Paul there is a sense in which believers must be given time to become who they already have become. In other words, even though a Christian may be redeemed as Paul has spoken elsewhere this does not mean that the process has been finished. This aspect of our salvation is often discussed as “sanctification”. It is the process by which we are holistically made into who we are internally.

Thomas Schreiner has discussed this reality by noting for Paul there are indicatives directed toward Christians (who we are) as well as imperatives (who we ought to be). In those sections of his epistles where Paul exhorts Christians to right behavior this is *not* for the sake of mere morality as we have said before. Rather, it is because “the indicative guarantees the

actualization of the imperative”.²¹ If we have actually been changed inside we will show “fruit” of this. It is hard to imagine that the indicative could apply to a particular individual in any real sense if the imperatives are not obeyed.²²

As we have noted above this process of redemption makes us holy so that we can be reunited to the holy God who is made known to us by the *Holy Spirit*. Yet this is not the whole. The other aspect of this discussion is the restoration of the *imago Dei*. In Gen. 1.26-27 God makes humans in order to rule the created order. In Rom. 1.3 Paul speaks of Christ as being the human who has been resurrected by the Spirit in order to sit on the Davidic throne. As we noted in Eph. 1-3 Paul sees Christians are currently sitting with Jesus, in our spirit by the Spirit, ruling in the heavenlies here and now (cf. 1.20-21 w. 2.6-7). It is no surprise then that Paul equates our redemption with the redemption of the created order in Rom. 8:19-23.

In this passage the whole creation is “groaning” waiting for the full bodily redemption of the sons of God. It appears that this statement is influence by imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures, especially Ps. 104.29-30 which we noted above. It is the Spirit that is redeeming the sons of God in this passage. It is the Spirit who is alluded to as redeeming creation as well and who is directly credited with this act in Ps. 104. This is because it is the Spirit who has been recreating the people of God in the inner person, who are reigning with Christ in the heavenlies

21 Schreiner, 253-261.

22 This is one of those subjects where one’s leaning toward Calvinist or Arminian soteriological perspectives is influential. At face value these statements seem to indicate the Arminian understanding that one can have and then lose salvation. While there may be some truth to this there is also truth to the Calvinist perspective that the actually redeemed (as with discussions regarding the elect) will be proven at the eschaton. If someone falls away before the end we must ask if there is any real sense in which we can speak of them being “saved”. This being said we should not minimize or explain away the *very real salvific* experiences of those who apostate. There is a tension that we must let remain if we are going to be faithful to the biblical witness.

by the Spirit, who are being resurrected bodily, who will be given the “new creation” which itself is also going to be “resurrected” by the Spirit.

It is in this sense that we see Paul alluding to the *imago Dei* of Gen. 1 as being fully restored in the sons of God. Christ reigns; we reign with Christ. Christ brings heaven and earth together as king of all. We are part of that kingdom.

So when Paul corrects the Corinthians for behaving like pagans or the Galatians for behaving like mere “flesh” beings he is not reverting to his Pharisee origins. Rather, he is calling Christians to *be* the new humanity that God has recreated them to be by the power of the Spirit. It is believers who will judge the world and angels and who will reign with Christ; it is believers who need to show that they have faith in the plan of God by *already living* in the Spirit.

Summary

This paper *attempted* to explore the coherence of Paul’s thought on the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. If it is successful it is only successful in that it alludes to various strands of Paul’s theology that are often thought of as separate but that need to be seen as intertwined. What have we been trying to say about the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian? We will summarize here.

First, the Christian is part of the new age inaugurated by the resurrection and the pouring out of the eschatological Spirit. In the Jewish worldview both resurrection and the Spirit are eschatological events that are intertwined. This is exactly how the Apostle understands it except for Paul it has happened *already*.

The Christian has received the eschatological Spirit that raises the dead as a guarantee that just as Christ has risen from the dead one day we will rise from the dead. The Spirit has

already begun this process by redeeming our inner person in anticipation of full redemption which is equated with bodily redemption.

Second, the Christian now lives distinct from those who do not believe in that he is part of the race of the “Second Adam”. Believers are redeemed inside, given life, and therefore are “saved”. Those in the First Adam are still bound for death because they are animated by fleshly, mere bodily existence. The believer is animated by Spiritual, united-with-God existence. Therefore, death *cannot* be permanent for us *just like* it could not be permanent for Christ.

Third, this reality is a work in process. There is an “already, but not yet” tension. We are already changed by the Spirit; we are not changed. It is during this time that we become fully who we already are internally.

Finally, the purpose is so that we can reign over the new creation with Christ just like we reign in the heavenlies with Christ by the Spirit. The difference will be simply that Christ currently reigns over all but he is only present in the Spirit and we are with him in that reality, but at the eschaton he will bring heaven and earth together finalizing the rule that was inaugurated, according to Paul, when the God resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is our hope as well.

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