

**THE ADAMIC BACKDROP OF ROMANS 7**

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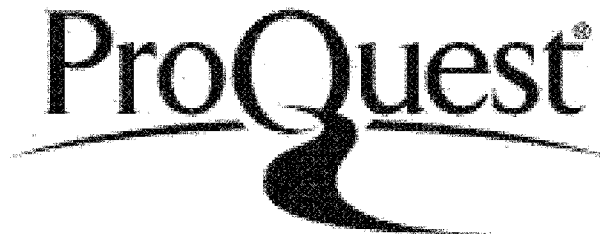


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## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Adamic Backdrop of Romans 7**

This dissertation is a study of the Adamic backdrop of Rom 7. While much has been written throughout church history regarding the identity of the “I” in 7:7-25, this dissertation contends that Paul is using the Greek rhetorical device of impersonation to speak of himself as Adam. That this is the case is evidenced by the vocabulary and imagery of Rom 7. This conjecture is further supported by the significant role the Adam story plays in both Judaism and early Christianity and especially in Paul. Moreover, the dissertation demonstrates that Adam imagery is distinctly evident in several passages in Romans and that the structure of the book clearly links 7:7-25 back to 5:12-21 where Adam is plainly contrasted with Christ. This contrast is maintained throughout Rom 5-8 and thus the two epochs of Adam and Christ are what drive the content of these chapters, further supporting the view that Rom 7 is Paul’s impersonation of Adam.

The approach is intended to be comprehensive and selectively unites together various components of this argument: history of interpretation; Jewish and NT background; employment of the Adam narrative in the Pauline epistles, especially the Corinthian letters and Romans; the structure of Romans; and the exegesis of Rom 7. The goal is to provide an understanding of the “I” which recognizes that Adam alone harmonizes with many of Paul’s statements in Rom 7 and, thus, in order to be consistent, one must follow this association throughout the entire passage. At the same time, this interpretation still allows Paul to address an important message to the Roman church, that is, that only the Spirit, not the Law, provides victory over indwelling sin.

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## DEDICATION

*Tell me the old, old story,  
Write on my heart every word.*

I have sung those words nearly my entire life, and from my earliest memories, many have told me the story of Jesus. Beginning with my grandmother and continuing on through Sunday school teachers, pastors and friends, I have been privileged to hear that narrative many times. It is to these faithful witnesses that I first dedicate this work for without them I would not know the wonderful story of redemption.

This dissertation, however, is not primarily about the 2000 year old story of Jesus' death on the cross but rather is concerned with an even older narrative that goes back to the dawn of creation. It concerns the story of the first man, Adam, whose sin necessitated the coming of the second Adam, Jesus, in order to deliver us from the sin and death which the first Adam ushered into the world.

That most ancient of stories has been told to me many times as well. Indeed, my committee members are not only responsible for helping to finalize this work but have also sown the seeds which initiated the thought process that led up to it. It was in one of my first classes in the doctoral program with Dr. Ben Witherington that I first began to examine the idea that Paul was impersonating Adam in this text. Indeed, those structural arguments I presented in a paper for that class comprise much of the substance of one of the chapters in this dissertation. Moreover, in Greek class Dr. Joe Dongell noted that where most English translations have "a lie" in Rom 1:25, the original actually employs the definite article and in the creation context of Rom 1, this almost certainly points to the original lie of Satan in the Garden. This led to further exploration of other texts in

Romans for an Adamic backdrop. Finally, in Corinthians class with Dr. Ruth Anne Reese, I was able to explore how profusely Paul employed the Adam story in those epistles. Thus, thanks must go out to all three members of my committee for not only helping to finalize this project but also for contributing to its inception as well. Many thanks also go to my editor, Sue Liubinskas, for greatly improving the flow of my writing. Although she also did much to raise the level of my writing, the pastoral, familiar style which remains is my own.

Furthermore, I would like to dedicate this work to my family whose sacrifice has helped to make it all possible. From my children's acceptance of the fact that they could not bother Daddy because he was studying to my wife's long hours in working numerous jobs in order to earn her PhT ("put hubby through"), I thank you with all my heart.

Finally, to God be the glory! He has made the cruse of oil never run dry and the barrel of flour never be exhausted (1 Kgs 17:14). And, without his Spirit, all my thoughts are but worthless chaff.



## INTRODUCTION

In the opening chapters of Romans Paul argues that all of humanity has sinned against God and stands under condemnation. He goes on to say that God has provided a solution to this condemnation in the form of his son, Jesus Christ, so that believers now have peace with God through his gracious forgiveness (5:1). However, Paul then asks an important question. What now? Do we go on sinning and merely allow this grace to atone for this new sin in our lives? Such a suggestion is abhorrent to Paul and he responds with a resounding, “May it never be!” (6:2).<sup>1</sup> Instead, Paul argues in Rom 6-8 that God has also provided a means to overcome sin and be freed from enslavement to its bondage through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

This brings us to our crux, however, and one of the most commented upon passages in the NT, Rom 7:7-25, for in this text Paul seems to interpose a picture of an individual who is still totally enslaved to sin and is completely powerless to resist its demands and follow God’s leading. Further complicating this apparent interruption of victory with defeat is the fact that Paul writes in the first person and even employs the emphatic pronoun. Thus, although 7:7-13 is written in the past tense, suggesting that Paul is speaking about a previous problem with sin, 7:14-25 switches to the present tense and begins to speak of present enslavement and the inability to do right and forsake wrong. Paul’s use of the first person, coupled with the shift from the past to the present tense has led many exegetes from the time of Augustine to conclude that in Rom 7:7-25 Paul is speaking about himself and his enslavement to sin *as a Christian*.

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<sup>1</sup> All OT and NT scripture quotations are from the NASB unless otherwise noted.

It should be observed, however, that even before Augustine and throughout church history, other views on the passage have been advanced. Indeed, before Augustine and even in Augustine's own early writings, most scholars did not view the statements in this chapter as autobiographical. Rather it has been held by many interpreters over the centuries that Paul's first person account is the apostle's attempt at impersonation in which he is playing a character on the stage. Gerald Bray writes: "Most of the Fathers believed that here Paul was adopting the persona of an unregenerate man, not describing his own struggles as a Christian. As far as they were concerned, becoming a Christian would deliver a person from the kind of dilemma the apostle is describing here."<sup>2</sup>

My contention in this dissertation is that Paul is using the Greek rhetorical device of impersonation to speak of himself as Adam. That this is the case is evidenced by the vocabulary and imagery of Rom 7. This conjecture is further supported by the significant role the Adam story plays in both Judaism and early Christianity and especially in Paul. Moreover, I will demonstrate that Adam imagery is distinctly evident in several passages in Romans and that the structure of the book clearly links 7:7-25 back to 5:12-21 where Adam is plainly contrasted with Christ. I will contend that this contrast is maintained throughout Rom 5-8 and that thus the two epochs of Adam and Christ are what drive the content of these chapters, further supporting the view that Rom 7 is Paul's impersonation of Adam.

In pursuing this line of argument, the reader should be aware of the following considerations. First, I intend to approach this subject comprehensively. Many scholars have dealt with various components of this task. For example, some writers have performed the great service of amassing the prodigious history of interpretation. Others

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<sup>2</sup> Gerald Bray, ed. *Romans* (ACCS NT 6; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 183.

have dealt heavily with the Jewish background and still others have focused on exegetical reasons for arguing that Paul is impersonating Adam. Indeed, these various studies have been so thoroughly explored that there is little reason for any scholar to attack these individual projects again. Consequently, my own goal is to selectively unite this work together in a multifaceted argument for the impersonation of Adam in Rom 7.

Thus, in chapter 1 I will briefly review the history of interpretation, the purpose being to reveal that, while the autobiographical view propounded by Augustine has predominated throughout most of church history, the early church, on the other hand, rejected this autobiographical interpretation for the impersonation view, believing that Paul was instead playing the role of Adam. Moreover, this view that Paul is impersonating Adam is not only the earliest recorded view but continues to be defended by a number of scholars today.

In chapter 2, I will argue that Paul had the skill to employ this rhetorical device and that the Adam impersonation harmonizes well with the context of Rom 5-8 where we find a repeated *synkrisis* contrasting the effects of the work of Adam with that of Christ. Impersonation also suits the diatribe employed in Rom 7:7-25 since an historical figure was often employed as a dialog partner.

In chapter 3, I will explore the Jewish traditions which evolved from the original Genesis narrative. While this study will fail to demonstrate that a clear association existed between Adam's fall and human sinfulness at the time of Paul, it does suggest that the idea of corporate suffering as a result of an ancestor's sin had been explored and that, therefore, the groundwork for such an association had been laid. Furthermore, these Jewish traditions offer possible solutions to the problems raised for our argument by the

apostle's repeated references to the Mosaic Law, and specifically to the tenth commandment, in an Adamic narrative which takes place thousands of years before Moses. Finally, this study demonstrates a growing interest in the Adam story in Judaism so that we see entire books devoted to this narrative at or shortly after the writing of Romans, thereby suggesting that this narrative was likely important to the Jewish Paul.

This growing interest in the Adam story is not only demonstrated within Judaism but is also displayed in the writings of the NT. In chapter 4 I will establish the fact that all the major sections of the NT contain some allusion to the Adam story. This is especially true in the Pauline letters and is demonstrated most clearly in the Corinthian correspondence. That the Adam narrative plays such an important rôle in the Corinthian epistles suggests that this narrative may have been at the forefront of Paul's mind when he wrote Romans as well since it was written at approximately the same time.

Romans itself, I will argue, presents the story of humanity's fall and promised restoration beginning in its opening chapter and continuing until its very conclusion as it follows humanity's plunge into sin beginning at the time of creation (1:20-23) as a result of Adam's acceptance of the primordial lie (1:25) and his subsequent loss of glory (1:23; 3:23), the restoration of that glory (8:18, 21) and the ultimate triumph depicted as the fulfillment of the protoevangelium (Gen 3:15) when God will crush Satan under the Christians' feet (16:20).

Furthermore, I will contend that the structure of Romans presented in chapter 6 suggests that the contrast between the effects of Adam's disobedience and the counter effects of Christ's obedience serves to summarize the earlier doctrinal portion of the epistle and furthermore serves as a basis for Paul's arguments for unity in the Roman

church in the remaining chapters. Adam has ushered sin and death into the world so that all have sinned and are subject to God's wrath. Christ's crucifixion, on the other hand, has provided the means for reconciliation with God and the promise of victory over sin and death, so that the Christian might no longer be subject to their reign but serve God instead through the power of the Holy Spirit. All of humanity, whether Jewish or Gentile, is united together in this plight and corresponding solution and thus finds itself under one of these two dominions. Thus, Rom 5:12-21, which contrasts Christ and Adam, serves as a crucial text which summarizes both what has proceeded in Romans and what is yet to come. This contrast continues to be highlighted in Rom 6-8. Indeed, Rom 7:6 is a general statement of these contrasting dominions which is then detailed in Rom 7:7-25 and Rom 8, supplying a critical clue that the former deals with Adam.

All of this evidence, however, does not prove that Paul is impersonating Adam in Rom 7:7-25 but only increases its likelihood. That the apostle is indeed employing impersonation ultimately hinges upon an exegesis of the text itself. Consequently, chapter 7 explores the contextual evidence necessary to support this conclusion as well as provides reasons for rejecting other alternatives.

In writing this dissertation I also hope to provide an honest evaluation of the evidence. In doing so, many readers may conclude that I spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with passages which I ultimately conclude are "dead ends." Again, I would point to my comprehensive approach and note that many excellent scholars have drawn upon these texts to support the Adam position. These arguments thus deserve a hearing. That I end up rejecting many of their assertions will, I hope, demonstrate that I am not merely multiplying evidence in my favor but rather seeking a correct assessment.

Finally, I am aiming for consistency. While nearly every commentator on Rom 7 finds Adam somewhere in Paul's pronouncements, most then depart from the Adam impersonation due to a focus on the Mosaic Law, the statement regarding sin indwelling the "I" in 7:17, or as a result of some other concern. A correct interpretation, however, must be one which interprets the "I" consistently. If Adam is the background for some of Paul's statements, this strongly suggests that Adam be in some way connected to the "I" throughout the passage. This does not necessitate that the "I" speak only of Adam but some connection should be maintained. At the same time, Paul is not merely writing a history lesson. He has a message for the Roman church and the "I" must in some way relate to their concerns. I believe the interpretation proposed in the following pages both consistently relates Rom 7:7-25 to Adam as well as provides such a message for the church.

## CHAPTER 1 - HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

*This chapter reviews the history of interpretation beginning with early Church Fathers who held that Paul was employing impersonation in Rom 7. It then examines possible reasons why Augustine departed from this stance. Although Augustine's autobiographical view was dominant up through the Reformers, it is nevertheless important to note that some rejected this position. Finally, we will see Augustine's interpretation was largely overthrown in the modern period, especially as a result of the work of Werner Georg Kümmel. The chapter concludes with an examination of some of the major positions still held today including those writers who favor the position espoused in this paper.*

### Early Church Fathers

Origen, one of the first writers to comment on Rom 7, interpreted the passage from an impersonation perspective. He reasons as follows:

If, perhaps, the explanation we were maintaining concerning the different kinds of law appeared to anyone as forced and presumptuous, let him now attend to this section, where not only a diversity of laws is introduced, but a diversity of *personae*. For Paul, who has said elsewhere, 'For we do not live according to the flesh nor do we wage war according to the flesh,' claims in the present passage to be of the flesh. And here he claims to be sold into slavery under sin, whereas elsewhere he had said, 'You were bought with a price,' and again, 'Christ redeemed us.' What is more, in other places he said, 'It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me,' and says again, 'on account of his Spirit dwelling in us.' But now he says, 'Good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh.' Well, if good does not dwell in his flesh, how can he say that our bodies are a temple of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit? Furthermore, how are all the other things, in which he declares that he is led captive to the law of sin by the law that is in his members and that fights against the law of his mind, congruent with apostolic dignity and especially with Paul, in whom Christ both lives and speaks? (6.9.2)<sup>3</sup>

Origen views impersonation as common in Jewish literature and cites further examples in Ps 38:2-6 and Dan 9:3, 5-7. In the latter passage, Origen speaks of Daniel and the fact that, while scripture does not record any sin of his, he still confesses all types of

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<sup>3</sup> Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 6-10* (FC 104; trans. Thomas P. Scheck; Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 36.

wickedness and repents in sackcloth and ashes. Origen writes: “Who can deny that in these words Daniel has taken on the *persona* of sinners, on whose account he seems to say these things as though on his own behalf?” (6.9.12).<sup>4</sup> Daniel himself has not sinned in this grievous way but rather is taking on the role of the Israelite people.

Origen observes several Edenic images in Rom 7, including the personification of sin as the serpent in the Garden. For example, Origen writes: “It is possible that here he has called the author of sin, ‘sin,’ concerning whom it is written, ‘The serpent seduced me’” (6.8.10).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, he suggests that Paul is speaking of the Law of Moses through which Adam knew his sin and hid himself in the Garden (6.8.3).<sup>6</sup> Origen thus recognizes that the original temptation forms at least part of the backdrop for Rom 7 and that the “I” in some of its statements refers to Adam.

For Origen, however, Paul is not playing only one role, but many. Several quotes reveal the varying parts he envisions Paul undertaking:

Yet when he says, ‘But I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin,’ as if a teacher of the Church, he has now taken upon himself the *persona* of the weak. On this account he has also said elsewhere, ‘I became weak to the weak to win the weak.’ Here as well, then to whoever, is weak, i.e., to those who are in the flesh and sold into slavery under sin. (6.9.4)<sup>7</sup>

Having assumed the *persona* of the weaker person, Paul had taught that struggles occur within a human being. He had shown that a soul may be carried off to sin’s jurisdiction, even against the will, through the desires of the flesh by the very practice of sinning. Since this is so, at this point he utters an exclamation, still under the *persona* of the one whom he has described, and says, ‘Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?’ (6.9.11)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 42-43.

<sup>5</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 37.

<sup>8</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 41.



This exclamation comes, then, from the *persona* of the one whom the Apostle describes as having received the initial phases of a conversion in that the will for the good is present in him, but he could not yet come to the accomplishment of the good. For he does not manage to perfect the good, because the practice and training in the virtues had not yet grown in him. The answer to what he had said, ‘Who will set me free from the body of this death?’ is given no longer under the *persona* of that person but with apostolic authority: ‘The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ (6.9.11)<sup>9</sup>

One fairly obvious critique regarding Origen’s quotations is that it would be especially difficult for a reader to follow Paul as he jumps from one impersonation to another. In other words, would a reader be able to follow as Paul impersonates Adam, the weak, the newly converted and finally takes on his own apostolic persona, all with the use of the first person singular? Werner Georg Kümmel denies this likelihood and argues that the persona of 7:7-13 must be connected with that of 7:14-25: “Wenn also dieser Beweis einen Sinn haben soll, so muß das Subjekt in 7, 14ff. das gleiche sein wie in 7, 7-13, ohne daß man voraussetzen müßte, es sei auch beidemale derselbe Zustand des Subjekts geschildert.”<sup>10</sup> There may be development, but one cannot haphazardly leap about as Origen has suggested. Thus, the past tense of 7:7-13 may reflect one status of the person being impersonated and the present another but there cannot be development within the same section nor a complete change of person from the lost individual to the apostle.

Another interpreter of the early Church who associated this “I” in Romans with someone other than Paul is John Chrysostom. In some of his remarks, Chrysostom, too, identifies the “I” with Adam. For example, on Rom 7:6 he writes:

Now what does he mean here? for it is necessary to disclose it here, that when we come upon the passage, we may not be perplexed with it. When then Adam sinned (he means), and his body became liable to death and

<sup>9</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Werner Georg Kümmel, *Römer 7 und Das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: zwei Studien* (1929; repr., München: C. Kaiser, 1974), 90.

sufferings, it received also many physical losses, and the horse became less active and less obedient. But Christ, when He came, made it more nimble for us through baptism, rousing it with the wing of the Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Commenting on 7:8 he cites the example of Judas Iscariot giving in to covetousness, and then says: “And Eve, by bringing Adam to eat from the tree, threw him out of Paradise. But neither in that case was the tree the cause, even if it was through it that the occasion took place.”<sup>12</sup> Later, he adds: “For after praising the Law, he hastens immediately to the earlier period, that he may show the state of our race, both then and at the time it received the Law, and make it plain how necessary the presence of grace was, a thing he labored on every occasion to prove. For when he says, ‘sold under sin,’ he means it not of those who were under the Law only, but of those who had lived before the Law also, and of men from the very first.”<sup>13</sup> These statements all indicate that Chrysostom sees Paul as impersonating the character of Adam.

However, other remarks by this early preacher show that Chrysostom does not retain this viewpoint throughout the passage. On 7:12, he writes:

For this will make our own statements clearer. For there are some that say, that he is not here saying what he does of the Law of Moses, but some take it of the law of nature; some, of the commandment given in Paradise. Yet surely Paul’s object everywhere is to annul this Law, but he has not any question with those. And with much reason; for it was through a fear and a horror of this that the Jews obstinately opposed grace. But it does not appear that he has ever called the commandment in Paradise ‘Law’ at all; no, nor yet any other writer.<sup>14</sup>

He continues: “Now neither Adam, nor any body else, can be shown ever to have lived without the law of nature. For as soon as God formed him, He put into him that law of

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<sup>11</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans* (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:420).

<sup>12</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies* 12 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:421).

<sup>13</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies* 13 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:428).

<sup>14</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies* 12 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:422).

nature, making it to dwell by him as a security to the whole kind . . . . And besides this, it does not appear that he has anywhere called the law of nature a commandment.”<sup>15</sup>

However, Chrysostom is not consistent with his own objection that the passage only deals with the Mosaic Law for in 7:23 he concedes that this verse is speaking of the law of nature.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Chrysostom concludes that the “I” represents the people of Israel and that they were “alive without the Law” before receiving the Law at Mount Sinai. The death of the “I” then refers to the Jews who were subsequently condemned by it. Although Chrysostom’s interpretation had no apparent support in the early church, according to Kümmel, it did eventually win the support of Hugo Grotius and is espoused by the modern expositor, Douglas Moo.<sup>17</sup> Again, as we noted with Origen, the problem with this view is that it expects the reader to follow Paul as he first impersonates Adam and then shifts to an impersonation of Israel.

Let us now examine some other writers who have seen the “I” as referring to Adam. These, like Origen and Chrysostom, are Eastern Church Fathers who would have been most familiar with the Greek language, its rhetorical style and the argumentative methods used by rhetoricians of Paul’s day. The fourth and fifth century writings of Didymus of Alexandria, Akazius of Caesarea, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severian of Gabala, and Gennadius of Constantinople are representative of this group.<sup>18</sup> Here we find constituents of both the Alexandrian and the Antiochian schools of interpretation, the former leaning toward an allegorical interpretation of

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<sup>15</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies* 12 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:423). As we will see later, this objection based on a singular focus on the Mosaic Law is something that other writers will use to deny the possibility that the passage refers to Adam.

<sup>16</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies* 13 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:430).

<sup>17</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 85.

<sup>18</sup> Quotations from these Fathers are taken from Karl Staab’s monograph, *Pauluskommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), an indispensable resource on commentary by the Greek Fathers on Paul’s writings.

scripture and the latter favoring the literal. The fact that both schools of interpretation, the allegorical and the literal, see Paul referring to Adam lends credence to the position that this is not something which has merely been read into the text.

Didymus, as do many early writers, repeatedly uses the Greek term προσωποποιία in remarking on this passage. In fact, he claims that Paul employs this device throughout 7:7-24:

εἶθ' οὕτως ἤρξατο πάλιν τῆς καθ' ὑπόθεσιν προσωποποιίας, ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἀμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἕως τοῦ ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος, τίς με ρύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου;<sup>19</sup>

Quintilian, an expert in the first century on the use of ancient rhetoric, defines the Greek term Didymus uses in this way:

A bolder form of *figure*, which in Cicero's opinion demands greater effort, is *impersonation*, or προσωποποιία. This is a device which lends wonderful variety and animation to oratory. By this means we display the inner thoughts of our adversaries as though they were talking with themselves (but we shall only carry conviction if we represent them as uttering what they may reasonably be supposed to have had in their minds); or without sacrifice of credibility we may introduce conversations between ourselves and others, or of others among themselves, and put words of advice, reproach, complaint, praise or pity into the mouths of appropriate persons. (9.2.29-30)<sup>20</sup>

Here, Quintilian is speaking of employing this device against one's adversaries.

However, a perusal of Quintilian's work shows that it was used by writers for other purposes as well. Thus, by employing this device, Paul, according to Didymus, places into the mouth of another character the speech which he writes in the first person. This other character is specifically named by Didymus when he comments further: Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν διὰ τῆς δοθείσης τῷ Ἀδὰμ ἐντολῆς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἠπάτησεν, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς

<sup>19</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian with an English Translation* (trans. H. E. Butler; 4 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).

τὸν Ἄδαμ, ἀφορμὰς πορισάμενος διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.<sup>21</sup> Later he adds: Οἶδα δὲ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν. νῦν εἰς τὸ τοῦ Ἄδαμ πρόσωπον ἐξηγεῖται.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Didymus suggests that Paul is impersonating Adam with the rhetorical “I” and that the passage is to be interpreted in this light. Moreover, according to Didymus, this impersonation continues from 7:7 thru 7:24.

This is particularly interesting in light of two other statements found in Quintilian. First, he writes: “Sometimes the advocate himself may even assume the role of close intimacy with his client, as Cicero does in the *pro Milone*, where he cries: ‘Alas, unhappy that I am! Alas, my unfortunate friend!’” (6.1.24). This assumption of close intimacy may suggest why many continue to find an association with Paul in this passage in spite of the fact that the statements really do not fit the apostle’s portrayal of his own life. Paul is striving to identify with his adopted character, Adam, and the subsequent feeling of despair Adam experiences as a result of his fall.

Moreover, it is especially noteworthy that the example Quintilian cites from Cicero is almost identical to Paul’s expression in 7:24. The phrase, “Alas, unhappy that I am!” sounds strikingly similar to “Wretched man that I am!” As we will see in chapter 2, ancient Greek rhetoric was often taught through the imitation of specific examples. It is plausible then that Cicero is citing an example used by teachers of rhetoric in training their students in the device of impersonation and that Paul is using this same example in the text of Rom 7. It is equally plausible that Paul knew of this specific example from Cicero. Although we will note in chapter 2 that we can largely only speculate regarding Paul’s training and educational background, the words of Cicero do parallel rather closely

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<sup>21</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 4.

those of the apostle. This may suggest that Paul did have some rhetorical training and that impersonation is the rhetorical technique being employed here.

Furthermore, it is important to note Didymus' claim that Paul is engaged in impersonation from 7:7 thru 7:24 is supported by the following statement from Quintilian:

We must not, therefore, allow the effect which we have produced to fall flat, and must consequently abandon our appeal just when that emotion is at its height, nor must we expect anyone to weep for long over another's ills. For this reason our eloquence ought to be pitched higher in this portion of our speech than in any other, since, wherever it fails to add something to what has preceded, it seems even to diminish its previous effect, while a *diminuendo* is merely a step towards the rapid disappearance of the emotion. (6.1.29)<sup>23</sup>

The impersonation should end, according to Quintilian, at the height of the emotional pitch, and this is exactly what Didymus indicates by evaluating that the impersonation ends with the cry of despair.

Similarly, Akazius of Caesarea clearly interprets Rom 7:9 as referring to Adam when he states: ἄλλ' ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ἀποδυρόμενος ταῦτά φησιν· ἐγὼ δὲ ἔξων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ. σαφέστερον δὲ ὡς ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ἀποδυρόμενος ταῦτά φησιν, λευκαίνων τὸ νόημα, οὐκέτι νόμον ἀλλ' ἐντολὴν φάσκων, τὴν δοθεῖσαν τῷ Ἀδὰμ δηλονότι.<sup>24</sup> Note that, like Didymus, Akazius refers to the rhetorical device of προσωποποιία and interprets the time of living without the Law as the time before Adam's fall in the Garden and that the Law which is spoken of is the command given to Adam not to eat of the forbidden fruit.

Diodore of Tarsus also construes 7:9 as referring to Adam. He writes: ὅτε εἰληφότα τὸν Ἀδὰμ ἐντολὴν καὶ εἰδότα τὴν παράβασιν ὀλεθριον ἠπάτησε καὶ

<sup>23</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*.

<sup>24</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 54.

κατηγωνίσαστο ὁ διάβολος.<sup>25</sup> He claims, however, that Cain then underwent a similar event and ultimately suggests that what Adam experienced is subsequently experienced by all of humanity.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Diodore would interpret the “I” both specifically of Adam and Cain but also make the statements of Rom 7 more broadly applicable to the entire world. We will see that many other interpreters also begin with Adam but extend the application of the “I,” either to the entire race, or to some subset (perhaps Gentiles who are especially thought to be Paul’s audience in Romans, or Jews who would especially fit well into the category of “those who know the law” (Rom 7:1).

Theodore of Mopsuestia follows a similar line of reasoning claiming that Paul uses the first person to speak of Adam and, by extension, that which is common to all people. Commenting on Rom 7:8, he says: καὶ γὰρ τὸ ἐν μοὶ ὅτε λέγει, τὸ κοινὸν λέγει τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τοῖς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ εἰς ἀπόδειξιν κέχρηται τῶν κοινῶν.<sup>27</sup> Theodore goes on to interpret the state of living without the Law in Rom 7:9 as the time in Paradise before Adam was given the command by God: ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, περὶ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ λέγων, ὡς ἂν ὅτε εὐθύς ἐγενετο ἔξω νόμου τυγχάνοντος, πρὶν ἢ δέξασθαι παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἀποχῆς τοῦ φυτοῦ τὸ ἐπίταγμα.<sup>28</sup> In support of the connection between the Mosaic Law and the command given to Adam, Theodore continues his remarks on this verse by stating that ὅθεν καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ μέμνηται ἐντολῆς, ἐπειδὴ ἀρχὴ νόμου τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκεῖνος ἐγενετο.<sup>29</sup> A similar comment is made regarding the Law by Theodore in his observations on 7:12. The connection between the Mosaic Law and the Garden command is discussed more

<sup>25</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 88.

<sup>26</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 88-89.

<sup>27</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 127.

<sup>28</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 128.

<sup>29</sup> Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 128.

extensively below but suffice it to say here that at least some of the early church fathers believed that Paul closely associated the two. Theodore continues his remarks on Adam into 7:13, but they become increasingly directed towards what is true of all humanity before finding salvation in Christ.

Severian of Gabala also associates Adam's command with the Mosaic Law. Commenting on Rom 7:12 he writes: Νόμον μὲν τὸν Μωϋσαϊκὸν λέγει, ἐντολὴν δὲ τὴν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τῷ Ἀδὰμ δεδομένην, ἀγίαν μὲν ὡς τὸ δέον διδάξασαν, δικαίαν δὲ ὡς ὀρθῶς τοῖς παραβάταις τὴν ψῆφον ἐπενέγκουσιν, ἀγαθὴν δὲ ὡς ζωὴν τοῖς φυλάσσουσιν εὐτρεπίζουσιν.<sup>30</sup> Here the three attributes ascribed to the Law in 7:12 are linked to the specific event in the Garden.

In his remarks on Rom 7:9 Gennadius of Constantinople also links the time without the Law to Adam: Ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ· τὸ ἐγὼ νῦν ἀντὶ τοῦ ὁ ἀνθρώπος λέγει, λέγει δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ἀδαμ.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps the most extensive application of the text to Adam is found in the work of Methodius of Olympus. In his *Discourse on the Resurrection* he consistently applies the statements of Paul in Rom 7 to the account in Gen 3. For example, he says: "For this saying of his, 'I was alive without the law once,' refers to the life which was lived in paradise before the law, not without a body, but with a body, by our first parents, as we have shown above; for we lived without concupiscence, being altogether ignorant of his assaults."<sup>32</sup> A further comment shows that Methodius equates the command to Adam and Eve with the prohibition against coveting in the Decalogue:

<sup>30</sup> Staab, *Pauluskomentare*, 219-20.

<sup>31</sup> Staab, *Pauluskomentare*, 370.

<sup>32</sup> Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 3.2.1 (ANF 6:370).



And for this reason it is said, 'I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' For when (our first parents) heard, 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' then they conceived lust, and gathered it. Therefore was it said, 'I had not know lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;' nor would they have desired to eat, except it had been said, 'Thou shalt not eat of it.'<sup>33</sup>

Another interesting link seen earlier in Origen and found again in Methodius is the equating of sin in Rom 7 with the serpent of Gen 3. He writes: "For 'behold I set before thee life and death;' meaning that death would result from disobedience of the spiritual law, that is of the commandment; and from obedience to the carnal law, that is the counsel of the serpent; for by such a choice 'I am sold' to the devil, fallen under sin."<sup>34</sup> Finally, we may note that Methodius, too, extends this application to all of humanity. One example will suffice:

'for that which I do, I allow not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me – that is, in my flesh – dwelleth no good thing.' And this is rightly said. For remember how it has been already shown that, from the time when man went astray and disobeyed the law, thence sin, receiving its birth from his disobedience, dwelt in him. For thus a commotion was stirred up, and we were filled with agitations and foreign imaginations, being emptied of the divine inspiration and filled with carnal desire, which the cunning serpent infused into us.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the specific act of the serpent in the Garden is seen by Methodius as having its effect on the entire human race and the Pauline statement is seen to apply not only to the specific situation in Genesis but to all subsequent situations as well.

We may conclude then, as Bray previously stated, that the statements of the early Church Fathers demonstrate that their view of the "I" in Rom 7 refers not to Paul speaking autobiographically but to the fact that he was impersonating someone else. All

<sup>33</sup> Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 3.2.1 (ANF 6:370).

<sup>34</sup> Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 3.2.1 (ANF 6:371).

<sup>35</sup> Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 3.2.2 (ANF 6:372).

the interpreters surveyed above see this impersonation as having some connection with Adam, though some see a further association with either all who are apart from Christ or more narrowly to the nation of Israel. We have suggested earlier that Paul's audience may have had difficulty in following the kind of changes in impersonation that Origen has expressed, but the idea of the corporate personality may allow some leeway in this area in moving from Adam to those in Adam. That is a matter we will explore later in more detail.

### **From Augustine to the Reformers**

The dominance of Augustine in the Western Church is manifested in the work of Hermann Lichtenberger who after discussing the interpretations of Origen and Augustine, skips over fifteen centuries to Friedrich Tholuck, touching only on Martin Luther, before again picking up the history of interpretation.<sup>36</sup> As in many matters, Augustine's assessment of Rom 7 prevails over most, if not all, alternative interpretations. This is quite interesting, however, given that Augustine's own interpretation was not as settled as this dominance would suggest. Early in his commentary on Rom 7-8, Augustine distinguishes the groaning of those already converted in chapter 8 from the cry for deliverance of the unconverted in chapter 7. He states: "In other words, not only does that creaturely part of those not yet faithful, and hence not among the sons of God, groan and sorrow, but also we who believe and have the first fruits of the spirit, since we now cling by our spirit to God through faith and hence are called not 'creation' but 'sons of God',

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<sup>36</sup> Hermann Lichtenberger, *Das Ich Adams und das Ich der Menschheit: Studien zum Menschenbild in Römer 7* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 2004).

even we ‘groan inwardly as we await adoption, the redemption of our bodies’ (8:23).”<sup>37</sup>

Here we see that Augustine does not equate the groaning of the lost for initial salvation (Rom 7) with the groaning of the Christian for final deliverance from the struggles of the body (Rom 8). However, as Augustine abandons his view that Rom 7 is about the unconverted, he will equate deliverance in this chapter with death and the receiving of the resurrected body. Later, he writes:

In so far, then, as there is now this waiting for the redemption of our body, there is also in some degree still existing something in us which is a captive to the law of sin. Accordingly he exclaims, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ What are we to understand by such language, but that our body, which is undergoing corruption, weighs heavily on our soul? When, therefore, this very body of ours shall be restored to us in an incorrupt state, there shall be a full liberation from the body of this death; but there will be no such deliverance for them who shall rise again to condemnation.<sup>38</sup>

In other words, Rom 7 has now become for Augustine a depiction of the Christian’s struggle with sin from which he or she will be delivered at death and the future resurrection rather than a cry of despair by the unconverted.

Along with this comes a change in Augustine’s perspective concerning the identity of the “I.” In his earlier interpretation of the passage, he believes, like those Fathers we surveyed above, that Paul is employing the Greek rhetorical device of impersonation. He says: “In this passage the apostle seems to me to represent himself as a man set under the law, and to speak in that character.”<sup>39</sup> He continues: “Thereby he shows that he is not speaking in his own person but generally in the person of ‘the old

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<sup>37</sup> Augustine, *Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans* 13-18 in *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Paula Fredriksen Landes; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982) 53:18-19.

<sup>38</sup> Augustine, *Marriage and Concupiscence* 1.31.35 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 5:277).

<sup>39</sup> Augustine, *To Simplician – on Various Questions* 1.1 in *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (trans. John H. S. Burleigh; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953).

man.”<sup>40</sup> From the intervening context, we can conclude that Augustine is thinking specifically of Adam. This is clearly shown by the fact that just prior to the statement regarding the “old man” he states: “Indeed when he says that sin revived when the commandment came, he makes it perfectly clear that sin had lived before and had been known, I suppose, in the sin of the first man, since he had received and violated a commandment.”<sup>41</sup>

However, in his later writings where Augustine is concerned with refuting the position of the Pelagians, it is the Pelagians who hold the impersonation view, and Augustine argues that Paul is speaking now of himself.

For in this respect he says that he was sold under sin, that as yet his body has not been redeemed from corruption; or that he was sold once in the first transgression of the commandment so as to have a corruptible body which drags down the soul; what hinders the apostle here from being understood to say about himself that which he says in such wise that it may be understood also of himself, even if in his person he wishes not himself alone, but all, to be received who had known themselves as struggling, without consent, in spiritual delight with the affection of the flesh?<sup>42</sup>

In the same writing, he later reiterates that he now views the passage as not only now referring to Paul but to other Christians as well: “On the careful consideration of these things, and things of the same kind in the context of that apostolical Scripture, the apostle is rightly understood to have signified not, indeed, himself alone in his own person, but others also established under grace, and with him not yet established in that perfect peace in which death shall be swallowed up in victory.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Augustine, *To Simplician* 1.4.

<sup>41</sup> Augustine, *To Simplician* 1.4.

<sup>42</sup> Augustine, *Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.10.17 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 5:383).

<sup>43</sup> Augustine, *Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.11.24 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 5:385).

T. J. Deidun remarks that Augustine had to sacrifice a number of straightforward statements to make this change.

Rom. 7.14-25, which before the controversy Augustine had understood to be referring to humanity without Christ, he now applied to the Christian to deprive Pelagius of the opportunity of applying the positive elements in the passage (esp v. 22) to unredeemed humanity. To do this, Augustine was obliged to water down Paul's negative statements: the apostle is describing not the bondage of sin but the bother of concupiscence; and he laments not that he cannot do good (*facere*) but that he cannot do it perfectly (*perficere*).<sup>44</sup>

We will see that these kinds of sacrifices to the straightforward reading of the text multiply in Augustine and also in the Reformers who follow him.

The identification of the "I" in Rom 7 is certainly critical to its interpretation and Augustine's shift from viewing the "I" as Paul's use of impersonation to Paul's description of himself is a major transition, one which might not have occurred if not for the Pelagian insistence that Christians are able to follow God in their own strength. This was certainly not the only contributing factor to Augustine's change in interpretation but it was a significant one, and one I would argue need not have occurred if Augustine had merely realized the difficulties inherent in this use of Rom 7 and employed Rom 8 instead to combat the Pelagians. Romans 8 explicitly addresses Christians' inability to battle sin on their own and the necessity of reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Another important departure from Augustine's earlier view can be seen in his assessment of Paul's statement in 7:14 where the apostle speaks of being sold into bondage to sin. In his later years, Augustine takes this statement as referring to Paul the Christian.<sup>45</sup> This, however, is problematic given what Paul has previously stated in Rom

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<sup>44</sup> T. J. Deidun, "Romans," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, (ed. R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden; London: SCM Press, 1990), 601-4.

<sup>45</sup> Augustine, *Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.10.17 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 5:383).

6:16-23 and will later reaffirm in 8:12-15, that the Christian has been freed from the dominance of sin. Yet for Augustine who came to view the body as so very corrupted due to inherited depravity, this was a likely conclusion. However, it does reflect a transition from his earlier position in which he saw Christians as freed by their Liberator from the slavery the Devil had imposed on them.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, in his later position on Rom 7 Augustine declares: “And because I do not see how a man under the law should say, ‘I delight in the law of God after the inward man;’ since this very delight in good, by which, moreover, he does not consent to evil, not from fear of penalty, but from love of righteousness (for this is meant by ‘delighting’), can only be attributed to grace.”<sup>47</sup> In his article on Augustine’s views on Rom 7 and 8, Eugene TeSelle states that 7:22 was for Augustine the “clinging argument.”<sup>48</sup> It is fascinating, however, in view of TeSelle’s claim, that in his response to Simplician Augustine looks at this delight in the Law and attributes it to one “before he is under grace.”<sup>49</sup> Also, in the account of his own conversion in the *Confessions*, Augustine speaks of his own delight in the law *before* his experience in the garden.<sup>50</sup> Thus, in two writings which are often viewed as defining for his change of view, he is still using this expression of delight, which TeSelle describes as “clinging” for his new perspective, not to refer to a Christian but rather to an unconverted individual.

It is quite surprising, therefore, given this great vicissitude in Augustine, that his later position became dominant for almost 1500 years. Only a handful of exegetes would

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<sup>46</sup> Augustine, *Propositions*, 52.

<sup>47</sup> Augustine, *Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.10.22 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 5:384).

<sup>48</sup> Eugene TeSelle, “Exploring the Inner Conflict: Augustine’s Sermons on Romans 7 and 8,” in *Engaging Augustine on Romans: Self, Context, and Theology in Interpretation* (ed. Daniel Patte and Eugene TeSelle; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), 111.

<sup>49</sup> Augustine, *To Simplician* 1.13.

<sup>50</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* 8.5.12 in *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (trans. J. C. Pilkington; Cleveland: Fine Editions Press, n.d.).

oppose his view that Rom 7 was a picture of the apostle Paul and an example of the normative Christian life. Otto Kuss notes that Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas were aware of Augustine's earlier view of the text but still favored the latter.<sup>51</sup> Kuss notes that there were a few interpreters who opposed Augustine's view like Nicholas of Lyra, and many of the Pietists who had such an influence on Wesley, but in the main most held that Paul was writing of himself as a Christian.<sup>52</sup>

The key leaders of the Reformation continued to follow Augustine. On 7:9-10, Luther says: "Here the Apostle speaks for his own person and in the name of all saints (*believers*) of the deep darkness of our minds, on account of which even the most holy and wise men do not have a perfect knowledge of the Law."<sup>53</sup> It is especially on 7:25 that Luther hinges his belief that the Christian is *simul iustus et peccator*, and for him this recognition was to be a strong check against any arrogance on the part of the Christian.<sup>54</sup> Why, one must ask, however, is a claim to be able to live a life free from enslavement to sin through the power of the Holy Spirit a sign of arrogance rather than a reason to praise God for His grace? Yet, such is the view of Luther and many who follow him in the train of Augustine.

John Calvin comments on Augustine's change of interpretation and presents similar views:

The inexperienced, who consider not the subject which the Apostle handles, nor the plan which he pursues, imagine, that the character of man by nature is here described; and indeed there is a similar description of human nature given to us by the Philosophers: but Scripture philosophizes much deeper; for it finds that nothing has remained in the heart of man but

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<sup>51</sup> Otto Kuss, *Der Römerbrief*, (3 vols.; Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1959), 2:473.

<sup>52</sup> Kuss, *Der Römerbrief*, 2:464.

<sup>53</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (trans. J. Theodore Mueller; repr.; Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976), 111.

<sup>54</sup> Luther, *Romans*, 114, 116.

corruption, since the time in which Adam lost the image of God. So when the Sophists wish to define free-will, or to form an estimate of what the power of nature can do, they fix on this passage. But Paul, as I have said already, does not here set before us simply the natural man, but in his own person describes what is the weakness of the faithful, and how great it is. *Augustine* was for a time involved in the common error; but after having more clearly examined the passage, he not only retracted what he had falsely taught, but in his first book to Boniface, he proves, by many strong reasons, that what is said cannot be applied to any but to the regenerate.<sup>55</sup>

Calvin understands the time Paul was without the law as being “while he had his eyes veiled, being destitute of the Spirit of Christ.” He notes that Paul was instructed in the law from childhood.<sup>56</sup> “When the commandment came” is then asserted to be the time “when it began to be really understood.”<sup>57</sup> Remarking on Paul’s statement that he is “sold under sin,” Calvin argues: “Hence this comparison does not import, as they say, a forced service, but a voluntary obedience, which an inbred bondage inclines us to render.”<sup>58</sup> Calvin says that the conflict expressed in 7:15 “does not exist in man before he is renewed by the Spirit of God: for man, left to his own nature, is wholly borne along by his lusts without any resistance.”<sup>59</sup> Commenting again on this verse, he says: “You must not understand that it was always the case with him, that he could not do good; but what he complains of is only this – that he could not perform what he wished, so that he pursued not what was good with that alacrity which was meet, because he was held in a manner bound, and that he also failed in what he wished to do, because he halted through the weakness of the flesh.”<sup>60</sup> Thus Calvin, as did his predecessor Augustine, seeks to

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<sup>55</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (trans. and ed. John Owen; American ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 263-64.

<sup>56</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 255.

<sup>57</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 255.

<sup>58</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 261.

<sup>59</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 262.

<sup>60</sup> Calvin, *Romans*, 264-65.



diminish many of Paul's statements to make them more compatible with his view of the apostle.

One major exception among Reformation leaders to these views on Rom 7 is found in the Dutch reformer, James Arminius. Arminius penned a dissertation of nearly 200 pages expounding his interpretation and defended it as being in accord with earlier teachings.<sup>61</sup> He says: "I will show, that in this passage the Apostle does not speak about himself, nor about a man living under grace, but that he has transferred to himself the person of a man placed under the law."<sup>62</sup> Arminius emphasized that what is stated in Rom 7:14 about enslavement to sin contradicts what is stated about the Christian's freedom from sin in Rom 6:7, 16-20. He also notes that Augustine's view subverts statements found elsewhere in the NT (John 8:36; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:18).<sup>63</sup> In addition, he objects to Augustine's position that the unregenerate can commit sin without reluctance and he argues that those under the Law consent to its goodness.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Arminius reserves Rom 7 to not just any unregenerate person but rather to those who are specifically under the Law. He says: "I deny that there is any absurdity in laying down a threefold state of man, regard being had to the different times; that is, a state *before* or *without the law*, one *under the law*, and another *under grace*."<sup>65</sup>

In his analysis Arminius also anticipates an argument made by Bruce Longenecker who argues that the end of Rom 7 follows a type of Greek rhetorical

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<sup>61</sup> James Arminius, "A Dissertation on the True and Genuine Sense of the Seventh Chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *The Works of James Arminius* (trans. James Nichols and William Nichols; vol. 2 trans. James Nichols; London ed.; repr., Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1986), 488-683

<sup>62</sup> Arminius, "Seventh Chapter," 490.

<sup>63</sup> Arminius, "Seventh Chapter," 516-17.

<sup>64</sup> Arminius, "Seventh Chapter," 520-21.

<sup>65</sup> Arminius, "Seventh Chapter," 591.

transition.<sup>66</sup> Arminius remarks on Rom 7:25: “In the latter part of the same verse is something resembling a brief recapitulation of all that had been previously spoken; in which the state of the man about whom the apostle is here treating, is briefly defined and described in the following words: ‘So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.’”<sup>67</sup> Thus, for Arminius, 7:25b is not a statement of the present state of the individual who has just given thanks for his deliverance but rather a summary of the problem he faced before that deliverance.

Arminius further notes that Paul “diligently, and as if purposely, . . . exercises caution over himself, not to employ the word, ‘Spirit,’ in any passage in his description of this state: Yet this word, the use of which he here so carefully avoids, is that which he employs in almost every verse of the next chapter.”<sup>68</sup> The Holy Spirit is thus not a controlling factor in the life of the person under Law in Rom 7, but completely infuses the life of the Christian in Rom 8.

Arminius further disputes several other views that Augustine held on Rom 7. For example, Arminius cites both Rom 6:6 and Col 2:11 and also early quotes from Augustine himself on Rom 7:24 and argues that Paul is here not talking about putting off our mortal body but of putting off the body controlled by sin.<sup>69</sup> Also, in response to Augustine who interpreted the *κατεργάζεσθαι* in 7:18 as *perfect* performance, Arminius says:

I affirm that this is a mere evasion. For the Greek verb, *κατεργάζομαι*, does not signify *to do any thing perfectly*, but simply *to do, to perform, to despatch*, as is very evident from the verb, *ποιῶ*, ‘to do,’ which follows;

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<sup>66</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of the New Testament Chain-Link Transitions* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Arminius, “Seventh Chapter,” 579.

<sup>68</sup> Arminius, “Seventh Chapter,” 587.

<sup>69</sup> Arminius, “Seventh Chapter,” 575-77.

and from this word itself as it is used in the 15<sup>th</sup> verse, where, according to their opinion, this verb cannot signify *completion* or *perfect performance*, - for the regenerate, to whom, as they understand it, this clause in the 15<sup>th</sup> verse applies, do not *perfectly perform* that which is evil.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, Arminius argues that Augustine cannot retain his view that this passage is about Paul while simultaneously holding a high view of the apostle's character. Verse 18 does not say that the person does not *perfectly* do the good but rather that he is not able to do good at all.

In this period we have seen that Augustine's autobiographical view of Rom 7 became dominant. However, we also have observed that this required that a straightforward interpretation of a number of statements be watered down in order to make them harmonize with the church's views regarding Paul and the Christian life. Arminius is the major voice of those who cry foul concerning these mitigations, and we will see that in the modern period such cries will lead to a severe undermining of the Augustinian position.

### **The Modern Period**

Augustine's perspective was not finally overthrown until the twentieth century and continues to be defended by some. One writer who helped to accomplish this overthrow was Krister Stendahl. In his book, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*, Stendahl argues: "We should venture to suggest that the West for centuries has wrongly surmised that the biblical writers were grappling with problems which no doubt are our own, but which never entered their consciousness."<sup>71</sup> Stendahl contends that the kind of war some regard as occurring in Paul's conscience is the product of the Western

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<sup>70</sup> Arminius, "Seventh Chapter," 540.

<sup>71</sup> Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 94-95.

mind and not a part of Paul's own thinking, given first century culture. Indeed, he sees this introspective view arising with Augustine who battled with his own inner struggles as he describes them in his *Confessions*.<sup>72</sup>

While I would like to wholeheartedly accept Stendahl's rejection of the autobiographical view based on this idea that such introspection would be out of character for Paul, I have reservations in doing so. First, let me affirm that I do believe Stendahl is correct that introspection is more characteristic of the Western conscience than it was for early Mediterranean people. Westerners are far more individualistic and self-absorbed than the people of scripture who were more community oriented. However, with that said, it also must be admitted that Rom 7 was not written by Augustine but by Paul. Thus, it *was* possible for the apostle to write about an ongoing inner battle even though such an introspective analysis is rare. The more important question then becomes whether these thoughts are written by Paul about himself or if instead he is writing about someone else's inner battle.

On the possibility that Paul is writing autobiographically, an earlier writer of the twentieth century answers with a definitive "no." In his study, *Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus*, Kümmel examines the statements in 7:7-13 and addresses the proposal that this describes Paul's childhood. Such a view can be traced to the time of the early church where Origen raises the possibility that 7:9, where Paul states that he was at one time "living without the Law," refers to the time of youth before a child comes to reason.<sup>73</sup> However, Origen himself notes that it would be difficult for any Jew to envision a time, no matter how young, when he or she was not under the Mosaic Law. Origen thus

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<sup>72</sup> Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, 85.

<sup>73</sup> Origen, *Romans*, 32.

interprets the law here as natural law. Kümmel, however, rejects Origen's solution on a number of bases. First, he argues that the context of Rom 7 points to the term Law as referring to the Mosaic Law throughout this passage, and moreover that the passage refers not just to a lack of awareness but to an absence of law.<sup>74</sup> Further, he points out that Paul would not support the idea of sinlessness in children.<sup>75</sup> Most importantly, Kümmel notes that the words ἔζων and ἀπέθανον in 7:9-10 must refer to more than just physical life and death. For Kümmel, then, it would be impossible for Paul to speak of a person as truly living in this way before his or her conversion.<sup>76</sup>

Another solution is the view that takes 7:7-13 as referring to the time before Paul's *bar mitzvah* when a child takes responsibility for keeping the Law. This creates similar issues for Kümmel. He notes that some responsibility for keeping the Law exists long before the actual ceremony. In addition, Kümmel finds no evidence that such a ceremony even existed for Jewish children prior to the time of the Middle Ages. He finds only one text where the term is used prior to this and says that that text refers to an adult rather than a child.<sup>77</sup> W. D. Davies does cite the second century text, *Pirḳê Aboth* 5.24, but notes that the text is seen by many as a later addition.<sup>78</sup> We are thus left with a *possible* early reference to a Jewish custom with which Paul may or may not have been familiar. In addition, *Pirḳê Aboth* itself speaks of multiple levels of knowledge of the Law for the child with the scriptures introduced at age 5, the Mishnah at 10, the commandments at 13 and the Talmud at 15. This indicates that Kümmel is correct to

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<sup>74</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 83-4.

<sup>75</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 81.

<sup>76</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 78-9.

<sup>77</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 82-83.

<sup>78</sup> W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948), 24-25.

argue that the Jews saw the child as under Law from the time of their birth, with only an increasing emphasis upon this obligation as the child grew into adulthood.

The prior solutions are meant to find a time in Paul's life which suits the statements in 7:7-13. Two possibilities are also espoused for 7:14-25. The first takes the present tense as used for vividness and applies the statements to Paul's time as a Pharisee. Kümmel objects to this on the grounds that the text reflects a quite negative attitude toward the Law. According to him, no Pharisee would take such a despairing attitude toward the Law or see it as the tool of sin to bring about death. Kümmel says that the Law for Paul the Pharisee "war ihm höchste Autorität" and "daß moralische Verzweiflung und Anerkennung der Kraftlosigkeit des Gesetzes bei einem Pharisäer undenkbar sind."<sup>79</sup> Indeed, Paul's statements about his blameless moral life as a Pharisee (e.g. Phil 3:5) stand in sharp contrast to these statements regarding habitual sin in Rom 7.

This moral failure is even more problematic for those who would regard the present tense verbs as referring to Paul's current life as a Christian. Kümmel finds it inconceivable that Paul could speak of such grave moral failure here and at the same time hold himself up as an example for other Christians to follow.<sup>80</sup> He notes the various ways Augustine and others have endeavored to tone down the statements in order to make them applicable to the Christian Paul. For example, he observes that Augustine must limit Paul's issues to concupiscence or otherwise he would have this admired saint of the church found guilty of adultery.<sup>81</sup> In addition, to state that the Christian Paul is "sold under sin" in 7:14 is incompatible with what Paul says in both 6:17-18 and 8:2. Kümmel

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<sup>79</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 117.

<sup>80</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 103.

<sup>81</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 92.

notes that Augustine tries to ameliorate this by arguing that the apostle is sold in the flesh but not in the mind.<sup>82</sup>

Thus, Kümmel shows that there is no period in Paul's life that corresponds to the statements of Rom 7. Consequently, this passage cannot be an autobiographical account of Paul's life and he concludes:

Wir haben oben gesehen, was der Sinn des Satzes ἐγὼ ἔξων χωρὶς ποτέ ist: ich hatte wahres Leben, als ich ohne Gesetz war. Die Leser, die des Paulus jüdische Herkunft kannten und wußten, daß er überzeugter Jude gewesen war (vgl. 3, 9a. 4, 1), mußten hier die Frage erheben, ob Paulus selbst Subjekt sei, und sie verneinen. Dann blieb aber für sie nur die Lösung übrig, daß das Ich eine Stilform sei, d. h. daß Paulus einen allgemeinen Gedanken durch die 1. Person lebendig ausdrück.<sup>83</sup>

This general thought expressed by the rhetorical form is that of a non-Christian who yearns to obey the Law but is hopeless about doing so. This hopelessness leads to the eventual cry for a deliverer in 7:24. However, although Kümmel sees the thoughts expressed here as referring to a non-Christian, he notes that the viewpoint is expostulated from a Christian perspective.

While the autobiographical view has been largely overthrown by the work of Kümmel, it is still maintained by a few scholars including Anders Nygren. Others like Mark Seifrid retain it but do so with many modifications. Nygren is certainly more traditional here in his outlook and will not allow the type of concessions which Seifrid wishes to propose. Nygren states that Rom 7 deals with the Christian life and will not allow the view that the passage is speaking of the Christian operating only in his or her own power without the Spirit. He notes that the presence of the Spirit is for Paul what

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<sup>82</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 92; citing contra duas ep. Pel. I, X.20.

<sup>83</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 124.

defines the Christian.<sup>84</sup> Seifrid on the other hand wants to permit 7:12-25 to speak of both Paul's past before he became a Christian as well as Paul's present life as a Christian.<sup>85</sup>

"The usual question put to the text, whether it reflects the preconversion or postconversion Paul, misses the decisive element of Paul's use of the ἐγώ. He here portrays himself, according to a pattern found in early Jewish penitential prayer and confession, from the limited perspective of his intrinsic soteriological resources."<sup>86</sup> He cites Stanley Porter's work and says the change from the past tense in Rom 7:7-13 to the present tense in 7:14-25 does not necessitate that we look at the text as a change from Paul's past life to his present.

In an important study on the relation of Greek tense and aspect, Stanley Porter has shown that the tense forms are not based primarily on time, but on aspect. Present forms grammaticalize imperfective aspect, aorist, perfective. The distinction between the two has been variously described, with the contrast often made between narrative (perfective) and descriptive (imperfective) categories. Therefore the interpretation offered by a number of scholars that the change in tense usage denotes a shift from narration of an event to description of a condition now can be seen to have a sound grammatical base.<sup>87</sup>

This allows Seifrid to apply key phrases in the passage like 7:14 to Paul's life before Christ since Paul would never ascribe slavery to sin as part of the Christian life, but still leaves the door open for Seifrid to agree with Luther that the Christian life is one of being both simultaneously justified and still a sinner. Although Seifrid may be correct in making a distinction between the narrative of 7:7-13 and the descriptive of 7:14-25, it is not necessary to see the descriptive portion of the passage as dealing with the overlap between the pre-Christian and Christian life.

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<sup>84</sup> Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (American ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1949), 294-95.

<sup>85</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, "The Subject of Rom 7:14-25" *NovT* 34 (1992): 313-33.

<sup>86</sup> Seifrid, 320.

<sup>87</sup> Seifrid, 321; citing Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood* (Studies in Biblical Greek 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989).



Similarly, James Dunn wants to depict 7:14-25 as the life of the Christian who has obtained salvation but who is still struggling with the old epoch of Adam. "Having shown that the law in its real nature as good and spiritual cannot therefore be consigned without remainder to the old epoch of Adam, so now he confesses that he himself cannot yet be consigned wholly to the new age of Christ."<sup>88</sup> However, both Seifrid and Dunn, as well as others, need to recognize that Paul already speaks of the period of overlap when the Christian has not been delivered completely from sin and temptation in the opening portion of Rom 8 and that Nygren is correct that Paul never speaks of the Christian as operating solely in his or her own power (Rom 8:9). Nygren himself, however, needs to recognize that Paul draws a strong distinction between Rom 7 and Rom 8 and that the Holy Spirit is only seen as empowering the individual in the latter.

Thus, while new efforts are still made to find a way to fit Paul into the depiction of Rom 7, these efforts continue to fail. We have seen, however, that other views on the passage have been advanced. Before Augustine and even in Augustine's own early writings, most scholars in the church did not view the statements in this chapter as being written by Paul about himself. Rather his first person account is the apostle's attempt at impersonation. For Kümmel, the character impersonated by Paul expresses the general plight of the non-Christian and the inability of the Law to provide deliverance which eventually emanates in the pathetic cry of despair for a redeemer.

Douglas Moo takes a different approach than Kümmel, although he, too, believes that Paul is playing a role. He follows the early view of Chrysostom that the "I" refers to Israel. He bases his conclusion on several factors. First, he recognizes with Kümmel that the statements in this passage cannot correlate with any period in Paul's life and thus

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<sup>88</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38; Dallas: Word, 1988), 406.

cannot be strictly autobiographical.<sup>89</sup> However, while agreeing with Kümmel that the passage cannot be about Paul alone and that the “I” must be seen as a rhetorical device, Moo goes on to argue: “When Paul’s use of *egō* is considered – due allowance being made for the influence of Jewish and Greek rhetorical patterns – it is impossible to remove autobiographical elements from *egō* in Rom. 7:7-25.”<sup>90</sup> Moo then precedes to argue along with Chrysostom that the Law in this passage must refer to the Mosaic Law and that the coming of the Law brings an increased awareness of sin and condemnation (though not initial) for the people of Israel.<sup>91</sup> He then uses the idea of corporate identity to say that Paul is including himself along with other Jews in the statements he makes in Rom 7.

In his article, “The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus,” Terence Fretheim argues that there are strong ties between the creation accounts in Genesis and the redemption from exile in Egypt.<sup>92</sup> For example, the remark in Exod 1:7 that Israel was fruitful and had multiplied in Egypt is seen as a direct fulfillment of the command given to Adam and Eve in Gen 1:28. Fretheim notes that the exile is God’s way of upholding this Genesis command which Pharaoh had sought to overthrow.

When God delivers Israel from bondage to Pharaoh, the people of Israel are reclaimed for the human situation intended in God’s creation. In redemption, God achieves those fundamental purposes for life and well-being inherent in the creation of the world. When the anti-creational forces embodied in Pharaoh have been destroyed, life begins to grow and develop once again in tune with God’s creational designs. It is important to note that this is not a ‘back to Eden’ scenario, as if the effect of God’s redemptive work were a repristination of the original creation. The image to be considered here is spiral, not cyclical. This consideration has to do

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<sup>89</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 429-30.

<sup>90</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 427.

<sup>91</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 428-30.

<sup>92</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus,” *Int* 45 (1991): 354-65.

with two major factors: the nature of the original creation and the effects of redemption.<sup>93</sup>

This connection between creation and exodus is seen by Fretheim not only in relation to Israel's fruitfulness but also in relation to the Law. Fretheim observes: "Sinai is a drawing together of previously known law, and some natural extensions thereof; it intensifies their import for this newly shaped community. In most respects, Sinai is simply *a regiving of the law implicitly or explicitly commanded in creation*. Sinai reiterates for those redeemed the demands of creation."<sup>94</sup> This close association between the events of creation and the events of the exodus will be important as we consider the connections between Adam and Eve and Paul's quotation of the tenth command of the Decalogue in Rom 7:7.

Sylvia Keesmaat, like Moo, seeks to show the importance of the events of the exodus for the book of Romans. She explicitly focuses her attention on Rom 8:14-30 and the importance of the exodus tradition as background for this text. She notes that the passage refers to bondage and compares the redemption of the Christian to the redemption of Israel from Egypt.<sup>95</sup> She also notes the connection between the glory that Paul says the Christian will receive in Rom 8:17 and the glory which Israel experienced at Sinai and later lost.<sup>96</sup> However, while Keesmaat repeatedly notes the connections between this passage in Romans and the exodus tradition, she, at the same time, repeatedly notes this passage's associations with the older story of Genesis. In connection with the glory motif, she comments that in Rom 1:23 "Paul has extended the tradition,

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<sup>93</sup> Fretheim, "Reclamation of Creation," 358.

<sup>94</sup> Fretheim, "Reclamation of Creation," 363.

<sup>95</sup> Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (JSNTSup 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 66-68.

<sup>96</sup> Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*, 84.

however, to refer to all of humankind rather than just Israel.”<sup>97</sup> She continues with the following observation:

Moreover, in *1 En.* 90.37-38 humanity is transformed to reflect the glory of the first man. It seems quite probable that these texts contributed to a matrix of ideas with which Paul was quite familiar, for his discussion of the glory that is to be revealed to the created order has long been understood to have Adamic themes underlying it. Moreover, the loss of the glory of Adam and the subsequent effect of that loss on creation is unmistakable in Paul’s further discussion.<sup>98</sup>

Her summarization is indeed telling and suggests that her book might have been aptly subtitled *(Re)Interpreting the Genesis Tradition*. She writes:

Not only the land of Israel, but all of creation, the whole earth, is groaning under oppression. Not only the people of Israel, but all those who are in Christ Jesus are groaning under oppression; not just under the oppression of another foreign power, but under the oppression of a worldwide curse, the curse of Adam. The tradition has been transformed so that it is no longer only the tradition of Israel, land, and people, but the tradition of the whole cosmos and those in Jesus Christ.<sup>99</sup>

Thus, while Paul does see associations between the redemption of the Christian and the redemption of Israel from Egypt, the story is really extended to include all of humanity according to Keesmaat. The ultimate focus goes back to Adam as the progenitor of the entire human race and not merely to the Jews.

As we move to modern scholars who support the idea that the text points to Adam as the subject of Paul’s impersonation, no commentator makes quite so definitive a statement as Ernst Käsemann: “There is nothing in the passage which does not fit Adam, and everything fits Adam alone.”<sup>100</sup> Käsemann too, however, goes on to employ the Jewish belief in corporate personality and says that the text relates not only to Adam but

<sup>97</sup> Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*, 85.

<sup>98</sup> Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*, 87.

<sup>99</sup> Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story*, 115.

<sup>100</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 196.

to all his descendants. “Every person after Adam is entangled in the fate of the protoplast. The fate of every person is anticipated in that of Adam.”<sup>101</sup> Other modern writers who see the text as pointing to Adam include Timo Laato, Franz Leenhardt, Richard Longenecker, James Dunn, Ben Witherington, and Stanislas Lyonnet.

Laato writes: “According to the widest spread and best founded exegesis 7:7-13 analyses and interprets the Old Testament story of the fall into sin (Gen. 3) with regard to the divine threat: ‘But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’ (Gen. 2:17).”<sup>102</sup> Laato bases this conclusion on the strong connection between this passage and Rom 5. “Paul explains consequently both in chapters five and seven of the Epistle to the Romans the story of the fall into sin. The content of 5:12ab includes the kernel of what is found in 7:7-11: Adam’s transgression brought death into the world.”<sup>103</sup> What the exact connection is between these two chapters is often debated, although most scholars see some relation. And certainly, since the former is explicitly concerned with the story of Adam, it is not a huge jump in logic, especially with the verbal clues we will examine later from Rom 7, that, even though the name Adam is not explicitly used, he should be seen as the subject of the latter as well.

Leenhardt argues that the idea of corporate personality is found in the OT Psalms. “Jewish piety was used to hearing the psalmist speak in the first person to express, nevertheless, a state of mind which was common to all believing Israel; the ‘I’ or ‘me’ served to make more concrete and living an experience which was quite general and collective. One individual spoke out what all thought; in speaking of himself he spoke of

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<sup>101</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 197.

<sup>102</sup> Timo Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* (trans. T. McElwain; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 102.

<sup>103</sup> Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 104-5.

man in general; when he said ‘I’ he implied ‘we’.”<sup>104</sup> He then continues: “To enable man to speak with dramatic cogency it was natural to create an imaginary Adam as the speaker. The kinship of vv. 7-12 with Gen. 3 shows that the apostle thought out the scene which he here constructs on the basis of the picture of Adam as at once individual and collective.”<sup>105</sup> This same parallel exists in Leenhardt’s thinking when it comes to the law. “The thought of Paul goes back to the position described in Gen. 3: the man Adam hears the word of God. Thanks to the law, the situation is once more the same, and this is the underlying reason why the apostle describes the function of the law in terms clearly reminiscent of the Genesis story.”<sup>106</sup>

Richard Longenecker builds on the evidence for the impersonation view provided by Kümmel but reaches a different conclusion regarding Adam because of his willingness to allow for a broader interpretation of Law. While he sees this broader interpretation as problematic, he realizes at the same time that restricting the interpretation to merely the Mosaic Law is problematic as well. He notes that Paul’s statement in Gal 3:17 that the Law was given 430 years after the promise to Abraham does not necessarily make it impossible for Paul to speak of the Law as existing at the time of Adam. “R. Jose accepted the eternity of the Torah while still dating it at the time of Moses (b. Kid. 40b).” Longenecker, like Kümmel, avers that Paul’s use of impersonation is intended to make the message in Rom 7 applicable to all humanity including Paul himself.<sup>107</sup> However, Longenecker, unlike Kümmel, does not restrict the statements of Rom 7 to non-Christian humanity. Longenecker chooses to understand ἐγὼ αὐτὸς in 7:25 as “I of

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<sup>104</sup> Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 184.

<sup>105</sup> Leenhardt, *Romans*, 105.

<sup>106</sup> Leenhardt, *Romans*, 106.

<sup>107</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964), 86-95.

my own resources” and thus concludes that Paul is writing of a person who is trying to overcome sin through his own means rather than through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>108</sup> In this, Longenecker follows the work of C. L. Mitton who wrote in 1953: “On this interpretation Ro 7<sup>14-25</sup> becomes a description of the distressing experience of any morally earnest man, whether Christian or not, who attempts to live up to the commands of God ‘on his own’ (αὐτὸς ἔγω), without that constant reliance upon the uninterrupted supply of the resources of God, which is characteristic of the mature Christian.”<sup>109</sup> Longenecker sees the passage as especially applicable to the Christian who is sensitive to this inability, but he recognizes that the same inability is lamented in the Qumran writings.<sup>110</sup>

In his commentary Dunn lays out many of the arguments for the impersonation view of Adam which will be presented in this dissertation. He argues for a Jewish view that saw the Law as pre-existing before the creation of the world.<sup>111</sup> He contends that lust is viewed as the root of all other sins and is the command broken by Adam and Eve in the Garden.<sup>112</sup> He notes that personified sin in Rom 7 fulfills the role of the serpent in the original temptation. He claims that the “stages marked by ἔζων ποτέ and ἀπέθανον (v 10) clearly reflect the stages of Adam’s fall.”<sup>113</sup> He argues against Moo that “prior to Sinai sin was far from powerless according to 5:13-14, not to mention Gen 6:1-6.”<sup>114</sup> He will also argue that the general statements of 7:5-6 are particularized in 7:7-25 and

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<sup>108</sup> Longenecker, *Paul*, 112.

<sup>109</sup> Charles Leslie Mitton, “Romans VII. Reconsidered,” *ExpTim* 65 (1953), 133.

<sup>110</sup> Longenecker, *Paul*, 114-16.

<sup>111</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 379.

<sup>112</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 380.

<sup>113</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 381.

<sup>114</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 383.

chapter 8 and that these verses stipulate the antithesis between law and Spirit.<sup>115</sup>

However, while Dunn wishes to argue for the impersonation view of Adam, he is still unwilling to separate Paul completely from the “I.”

Even if the ‘I’ of vv 7-13 has no specific self-reference to Paul, the expressions which follow are too sharply poignant and intensely personal to be regarded as simply a figure of style, an artist’s model decked out in artificially contrived emotions. Paul probably intended the universal ‘I’ of Adam to be kept in mind, but the following verses’ character as personal testimony is too firmly impressed upon the language to be ignored. . . . Paul’s testimony strikes a somewhat chilling and sobering note when compared with vv 4-6. For it says in effect that the Adam of the old epoch is still alive. He dies with the old epoch; that had been said clearly in 6:2-11 and 7:1-6. The trouble is, the old epoch itself has not yet run its full course. So long as the resurrection is not yet, the ‘I’ of the old epoch is still alive, still a factor in the believer’s experience in this body.<sup>116</sup>

Thus, as we stated earlier, Dunn includes chapter 7 in the area of overlap of the eras for the Christian. I have suggested that I see this overlap for the Christian described in Rom 8 rather than in Rom 7 and I will endeavor to show that Paul draws a strong contrast between the person in Adam and the person in Christ throughout Rom 5-8.

Witherington also argues that Adam is in view throughout these chapters. He observes: “It is unfortunately seldom noted that the story of Adam is either the text or the subtext for not only argument five, but all the way through Romans 7. This story, which tells what is true of all humanity (for all have died in Adam), underlies and undergirds everything that is said from 5.12 to 7.25.”<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, Witherington argues that the audience of Romans is predominantly Gentile and thus, contra Moo, “it would be singularly inept for Paul here to retell the story of Israel in a negative way, and then turn

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<sup>115</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 374.

<sup>116</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 405.

<sup>117</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 60.



around in chs. 9-11 and try and get Gentiles to appreciate their Jewish heritage in Christ and to be understanding of Jews and their fellow Jewish Christians.”<sup>118</sup>

The difficulty of this position lies in the fact that Paul speaks of the Law of Moses and this is especially tied to the Jewish people. Witherington responds to this objection in three ways. First, he notes that Paul believed that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch and this would include the creation and fall accounts of Genesis. Second, the Law Moses wrote would thus include the command given to Adam and Eve in the Garden. Finally, he cites *Apocalypse of Moses* 19.3 as evidence that Paul saw “coveting the fruit of the prohibited tree as a form of violation of the tenth commandment.”<sup>119</sup> Witherington, therefore, concludes that Paul is employing the rhetorical technique of impersonation as described by Quintilian and says “Paul then is providing a narrative in Romans 7:7-25 of the story of Adam from the past in vv. 7-13, and the story of all those in Adam in the present in vv. 14-25.”<sup>120</sup>

Lyonnet objects to those who find the period of relative innocence depicted by Paul in Rom 7 as the period for Israel before the giving of the Law under Moses. Rather he notes that the Bible described it as a period of great sin and of God’s severe judgment on that sin. He notes several examples from this period but especially cites the events surrounding Noah as well as Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>121</sup> Robert Gundry seeks to find the solution in Paul’s frustration with sexual lust before his conversion.<sup>122</sup> Lyonnet, however,

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<sup>118</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, Oreg.: Cascade Books, 2009), 134.

<sup>119</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 185.

<sup>120</sup> Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric*, 145.

<sup>121</sup> Stanislas Lyonnet, “L’histoire du salut selon le chapitre VII de l’épître aux Romains,” *Bib* 43 (1962), 127-30.

<sup>122</sup> Robert H. Gundry, “The Moral Frustration of Paul before his Conversion,” in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (ed. Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980), 228-45.

notes that the commandment against coveting in 7:7 is used much more broadly both in Paul and scripture as a whole than merely to refer to sexual lust. He notes that the coveting of evil things is cited in 1 Cor 10 as the reason for Israel's downfall. The passage points among other things to the desire for quail in Num 11 where the LXX uses the same word as in Rom 7:7 (ἐπιθυμέω; Num 11:34).

Like Fretheim and Keesmaat, Lyonnet sees a connection between the Genesis account and the exodus. However, he further extends this connection to the NT. “La « convoitise » d’Israël consista précisément, comme pour Adam et Ève, dans le refus de la nourriture choisie par Dieu, plus profondément dans le refus de se plier à ce qui dans la pensée de Dieu constituait l’expérience spirituelle du désert (Deut 8,3, que le Christ opposera à Satan lors de la tentation, Mt 4,4).”<sup>123</sup> Lyonnet thus ties Adam and Eve’s lust for the forbidden fruit to Israel’s lust for quail and the food of Egypt to Jesus’ testing in the wilderness and his hunger for bread. This fits well with the suggestion that Christ is pictured as the second Adam who overcame the temptation of the first Adam in order to restore humanity to the glory which it originally lost. As further support for the view that Paul’s reference to the tenth command of the Decalogue refers to the temptation in the Garden, Lyonnet cites *Targum Neofiti* on Gen 2:15 which says that Adam was placed in the Garden not to cultivate it but rather to observe the law. Indeed, Lyonnet notes that this Targum for Gen 3:23 compares the Law to the tree of life.<sup>124</sup> While this document is later than Paul, it may nevertheless reflect a tradition with which the apostle was familiar.

It may be noted here that Rudolf Schackenburg, who writes a chapter in a *festschrift* in honor of Kümmel, finds Lyonnet’s arguments sufficient to overcome

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<sup>123</sup> Lyonnet, “L’histoire,” 145.

<sup>124</sup> Lyonnet, “L’histoire,” 137-38.

Kümmel's earlier rejection of the Adam interpretation based on the belief that the passage strictly refers to the Mosaic Code.

Aber es fragt sich, ob Paulus damit nur einen allgemeinen Gedanken einkleiden will, also einer jederzeit möglichen (psychologischen) Erfahrung einen eigentümlichen Ausdruck verleiht, oder nicht doch konkret an die Unheils-Heils-Geschichte der Menschheit denkt, wie sie in der Adam-Christus-Typologie umrissen wurde. *W. G. Kümmel* lehnt allerdings auch die seit häufig vertretene Bezugnahme auf Adam, jegliche Anspielung auf die Sündenfallerzählung von Gen 3, mit beachtlichen Gründen ab. Seine Hauptbedenken scheinen mir jedoch durch neuere Forschungen, namentlich durch die Arbeiten von *S. Lyonnet*, ausgeräumt zu sein.<sup>125</sup>

Schnackenburg, like Lyonnet, believes that haggadic interpretation of Gen 3 equates the prohibition of Genesis with the tenth commandment and becomes the basis for Paul's statements in Rom 7.

Finally, before leaving Lyonnet, I would note one distinction he observes between the Genesis account and Rom 7. He says: "Avec cette différence, bien entendu, que dans le récit de la Genèse le diable-serpent demeure toujours extérieur à l'homme, tandis que pour saint Paul le péché, d'abord complètement étranger à Adam qui « vivait » - « je vivais naguère » -, devient en lui un principe interne d'activité qui, l'opposant à Dieu, le sépare de Dieu, source de toute vie, et partant lui donne la mort."<sup>126</sup> This is certainly a reasonable point which might suggest that Paul is not telling Adam's story. However, as we have seen, many of the Church Fathers see the personification of sin in the passage. Furthermore, we may ask how Adam himself dealt with sin after the Fall. Did it remain an external power or did he, too, now experience it as an inner conflict like that described in Rom 7? Thus, Rom 7 may remain Adam's story if Paul is describing not only what

<sup>125</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Römer 7 im Zusammenhang des Römerbriefes," in *Jesus und Paulus: Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Gräber; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 293.

<sup>126</sup> Lyonnet, "L'histoire," 134.

caused the Fall but also his perception of what resulted in the life of Adam after his initial sin. As discussed above, Seifrid claimed that the change in tense might indicate that Paul is making a distinction between narrative and description. Perhaps this distinction, however, is intended to tell us not only what happened to Adam in the Garden (7:7-13) but also is meant to indicate what became of Adam's nature as a result of the Fall (7:14-25).

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have endeavored to briefly discuss the prodigious history of interpretation for Rom 7. I have sketched the major positions and turning points and indicated where the argument stands today. I could continue to list expositors that fit into one of these positions and explore further the strengths and weaknesses of their views. However, that is not the purpose of this dissertation. For those readers interested in pursuing interpretations other than the one which sees the "I" of Rom 7 as the impersonation of Adam, I would point to the works of the previously mentioned writers and also to the excellent histories of interpretation found in Kümmel, Lichtenberger and Kuss. My own focus in this dissertation is to examine in detail the position which sees Paul impersonating Adam, a position which we have seen dates back to the very beginnings of the church and which is still prominent today.

## CHAPTER 2 – THE HERMENEUTIC AND RHETORIC OF PAUL

*This chapter examines the way Paul uses the OT as well as questions regarding his training in Greek rhetoric. These are examined especially in relation to Rom 7. We will therefore focus on the Greek rhetorical devices of diatribe, contrast and impersonation. The chapter concludes with a brief examination of text critical issues.*

If Paul is telling Adam's story in Rom 7:7-25, from where does he derive his thoughts? Do they come strictly from Genesis, or does Paul supplement the Genesis story with material from non-canonical Jewish and/or Greek literature? Does he use the story just as he himself has received it, or does he adapt it to his own purposes? I have suggested that Paul is looking at the Genesis story in a very unique way by writing in the first person and impersonating Adam in this passage. But can it be shown that Paul was familiar with this Greek rhetorical device or, indeed, that he was trained in rhetoric at all?

I will argue later that repeated comparison, or what the Greeks referred to as σύγκρισις, is a significant reason for seeing this passage as connected to the argument in Rom 5. This would certainly add further support to the idea that the "I" of chapter 7 is Adam. However, this too depends upon the idea that Paul knew Greek rhetoric because σύγκρισις is another rhetorical tool. Moreover, in Romans Paul employs a unique writing style that is not altogether lacking in his other letters but is certainly ubiquitous in this epistle. Paul frequently appears to be carrying on an argument with someone else, repeatedly raising queries and providing answers as if he is recording a dialogue. Where does Paul derive this style and what is his purpose for writing in this way?

It is the goal of this chapter to look first at the hermeneutics of Paul, that is, how he employs the OT in his epistles. We will consider evidence that suggests that Paul not only used the OT but also that he adapted its narratives to his own specific concerns.

Secondly, we will look at Paul the rhetorician. I will argue that Paul was employing the Greek style of diatribe in Romans and I will offer some suggestions as to what this may imply for the interpretation of Rom 7. I will also contend that Paul used other Greek rhetorical devices in Rom 5 through 8 and that all of these devices point to the same conclusion, that is, that Paul knew Greek rhetoric and was employing the creation account of Adam in a unique way in his argument in Romans.

Finally, in this chapter dealing with methodological considerations, I find it appropriate to deal with issues involving the text itself and what Paul originally penned. At least three text critical issues have bearing upon the contention that Paul is impersonating Adam.

### **Hermeneutics**

N. T. Wright contends that the NT church and Paul in particular reuse the stories of the OT in order to understand their own narrative thought world. He writes as follows:

The story begins with the creation of the world by the one god, a good and wise god. So far, so Jewish, though Paul does not say, as 4 Ezra would later, that the world was made *for the sake of Israel*. It continues, equally Jewishly, with the creation and fall of Adam and Eve, as the eponymous parents of all humankind. Skipping over Noah, Paul's story highlights Abraham, whom he sees, in company with Jewish tradition, as the beginning of the divine answer to the problem of Adam. Unlike Jewish tradition, however, Paul insists that the covenant promises to Abraham held out to him not just the land of Israel but the entire *kosmos*, the world.<sup>127</sup>

This quote is significant for several reasons. First, Wright notes that Paul's narrative thought world derives much of its basis from creation and the story of Adam found in the OT. Second, although Paul's use of the OT is sometimes supplemented by and in line

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<sup>127</sup> N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 405.

with Jewish tradition, he sometimes interprets the OT in a way that conflicts with many Jewish writers of his day. Most importantly, Paul's use of the OT is designed to depict a narrative thought world whose focus is far larger than merely the nation of Israel.

Richard Longenecker argues that NT exegesis of the OT focused on four major presuppositions.<sup>128</sup> The first presupposition is that of corporate solidarity or personality which holds that what one person does affects not only him or herself but also his or her descendants. This focus on corporality in the Biblical world is often difficult for us to comprehend in the individualistically oriented West, but it is an important thing to grasp if we are to properly understand a number of passages. This solidarity is especially evident in Heb 7:4-10 where we have the story of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek. This is a story right out of the pages of Genesis. However, its application, drawn from a belief in corporate personality, goes far beyond the original story in Gen 14. The author of Hebrews argues that Abraham's descendants, the Levitical priests, who are now living over a millennium later than their ancient forefather at the time of the epistle's writing, also paid tithes to Melchizedek because they were then present in Abraham's loins. Paul uses similar exegesis in Romans. For example, Paul, like the author of Hebrews, uses the Abraham story to talk about justification. However, contrary to the author of Hebrews who emphasizes physical descent for inclusion in Abraham's story, Paul argues that possessing the same faith as Abraham rather than physical descent is the key factor in justification and incorporation into Abraham's family. In other words, corporate personality remains the basis of the argument but it is a solidarity based on faith, not on genealogy.

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<sup>128</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Paternoster, 1975), 93ff.

Corporate personality also plays a vital role in the argument in Rom 5. Here Paul argues that death has come upon all humanity as a result of Adam's sin. Since the Adamic backdrop to Rom 7 is the subject of our dissertation, this exegetical presupposition of corporate personality will play a vital role in our understanding. We will also see, beginning in chapter 3, that there is great disagreement about how far Judaism and Paul in particular extends this idea of corporate headship.

The second presupposition that Longenecker notes is that of correspondence in history. This is the idea that God tends to work in the present in much the same way as he worked in the past. The writers of the Gospels are especially adept at relating Jesus' earthly ministry to the stories of the OT, especially the story of the exodus. For example, the book of John introduces Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (1:29) and then in 19:36 comments that not a single one of Jesus' bones was broken on the cross. This is intended to conjoin with the fact that the Passover lamb was to be roasted whole without breaking any of its bones (Exod 12:46). In John 6 Jesus miraculously feeds the people bread in the wilderness and walks across a body of water, but nevertheless hears the people murmuring due to their lack of faith in him. All three events are meant to parallel the experience of Moses in leading Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Jesus is thus compared both to the Passover Lamb as well as to Israel's lawgiver. The Gospel writer Luke even uses the very word ἔξοδον (9:31) in referring to what Jesus was going to accomplish at Jerusalem.

For Paul as well, what is happening to the people at Rome now parallels what occurred to the people in the OT. As we saw in chapter one, Moo posits the exodus as the key for understanding Paul's message in Rom 7, while for others like Keesmaat, we saw



that the Genesis story is the ultimate underlying factor. Thus one of the purposes of this dissertation must be to determine which OT story best corresponds with Rom 7.

A third exegetical presupposition which goes along with the second is that the eschatological fulfillment promised in the OT is occurring *now*. Longenecker declares that this kind of exegesis is similar to that found at Qumran and refers to it as *peshet*. However, he distinguishes Paul's use of *peshet* from that performed at Qumran by arguing that the people at Qumran interpreted the book of Habakkuk as describing that which was still to happen, while "Christians were convinced that the coming of the Messianic Age was an accomplished fact."<sup>129</sup> I myself do not think that the two can be so clearly distinguished. After all, while Paul viewed the Messianic Age as already begun, there was yet much to be fulfilled (e.g., 1 Thess 4:13-18).

Craig Evans states that "peshet exegesis understands specific biblical passages as fulfilled in specific historical events and experiences."<sup>130</sup> This exegesis adapts the scriptural passage to fit the needs of the current situation. Thus, for example, Matt 11:15 quotes Hos 11:1 and says "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." Some interpreters, like Walter Kaiser, would insist that the OT author of Hosea was aided by God so that he knew that what he was writing concerned the return of Jesus from Egypt; thus Hosea's interpretation of this passage was exactly the same as Matthew's.<sup>131</sup> I would object that such a conjecture is both unnecessary and indeed rather unlikely. It is much more probable that Hosea was writing about God's deliverance of Israel from bondage in

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<sup>129</sup> Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 95.

<sup>130</sup> Craig A. Evans, "From Prophecy to Testament: An Introduction," in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. Craig A. Evans; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 9.

<sup>131</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Darrell L. Bock and Peter Enns, *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

Egypt and that Matthew (perhaps again through the influence of the concept of corporate personality) concluded that he could apply this text to Jesus through *peshet* exegesis.

A clear example of *peshet* exegesis in Romans is 10:6-8 where Paul quotes from Deut 30:11-14. In this OT passage Moses refers to the fact that Israel does not need to ascend into heaven or cross the sea in order to obtain the Law for it is in their hearts. However, Paul is not speaking of the nearness of the Law but rather of the nearness of Christ. Paul thus takes the Deuteronomy text and applies what was originally written about the Law to Jesus.

A more lengthy discussion of Rom 10:6-8 is appropriate here, since it will not only help to enhance our understanding of how Paul employs later Jewish writings in interpreting an earlier text, but also because this text deals with the Law, an important concept in Rom 7. First of all, we note that within the canon itself the writer of Proverbs has personified Wisdom (Prov 8-9). Here, Wisdom performs human functions such as preparing food and building houses. In the NT, connections between Wisdom and the person of Jesus are often made. For example, in Matt 11:19, 28-30 both Jesus and wisdom are said to be justified by their actions, and Jesus' yoke (a term often used in reference to taking on the responsibility of keeping the law) is said to be light.

If we include non-canonical Jewish writings, we see how Paul may have made the jump from Law to Wisdom to Jesus. Davies writes: "Judaism had ascribed to the figure of Wisdom a pre-cosmic origin and a part in the creation of the world. It becomes probable therefore that Paul has here pictured Christ on the image of Wisdom."<sup>132</sup> Davies goes on to note a very interesting comment by Philo: "Philo, however, interpreted the passage in Deut. 8:15 : 'who brought forth water out of the Rock', as a reference to the

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<sup>132</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 151.

Wisdom of God. He writes: ‘The rock of flint is the Wisdom of God from which he feeds the souls that love Him.’”<sup>133</sup> This comment by Philo is especially noteworthy not only because it makes an association with Wisdom and the rock from which Moses brought forth water in the wilderness but also because of the text to which Philo is alluding. Paul, in 1 Cor 10:4 says that this rock of the exile wanderings is Christ. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that Paul quotes Deut 8:17 in Rom 10:6 where he uses the words  $\mu\eta\ \epsilon\iota\ \pi\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\upsilon\ \tau\eta\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon$ . Davies notes that this same association with Wisdom and the rock of the wilderness is made in Wis 2:4. This connection is probably more notable than the one Philo makes since most scholars today think that Paul is almost certainly drawing on the book of Wisdom in chapter 1 of his epistle.<sup>134</sup>

Davies explores other connections between the Law and Wisdom in Sirach. “There the figure of Wisdom becomes identified with the Torah, Wisdom takes up her abode in Israel and is established in Zion.”<sup>135</sup> He observes that in 24:23 “the identification of Wisdom with the Torah is made explicit.”<sup>136</sup> He concludes that the association between Torah and Wisdom can be seen in three areas. First, both came to be regarded as older than the world. Second, both are brought into connection with the creation of the world. Finally, the world is said “to be created for the sake of the Torah.”<sup>137</sup> Davies further notes that Paul makes the explicit identification of Christ and Wisdom in such texts as 1 Cor 1:24, 27.<sup>138</sup> Thus for Davies Christ becomes the New Torah through the equation Torah equals Wisdom equals Christ.

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<sup>133</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 153; citing Philo, *Leg.* 2.21.

<sup>134</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 59.

<sup>135</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 168.

<sup>136</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 169.

<sup>137</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 170-71.

<sup>138</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 154.

Not all scholars, however, are comfortable with Davies' equation. While Marvin Pate acknowledges the equations of Law and Wisdom in Judaism and Christ and Wisdom in Paul, Pate argues that Judaism's Wisdom is far different than the Wisdom of Paul. His argument is lengthy and we cannot discuss it in detail here, but one quote will serve to show that he sees a disjunction not found in Davies: "For *Baruch*, preexistent wisdom is embodied in the Torah, but for Paul preexistent wisdom is the incarnate Christ, who is proclaimed in the *kerygma*."<sup>139</sup> A moderating position between Davies and Pate is found in the writings of Eckhard Schnabel. While Schnabel would agree with Davies that Christ is the New Torah as this relates to Christian ethics,<sup>140</sup> he contends on the other hand that "the Torah, after the Christ event, has no soteriological functions left."<sup>141</sup> An important consideration in this regard is to note that Paul omits the last part of Deut 30:14, καὶ ἐν ταῖς χερσίν σου αὐτὸ ποιεῖν. Indeed, Paul has eliminated all four of the references to ποιέω in 30:12-14. Thus, while Moses stresses the Law's nearness in order that it may be performed, Paul stresses Christ's nearness in order that he may bring righteousness through faith.

In Rom 7 Paul takes exception to Moses' confidence that people are able to obey God through the keeping of the Law and argues in Rom 8 that it is only through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that one can obey God and fulfill the law of Christ. Thus, for Paul, Christ is in some ways the NT embodiment of this OT code, but he also brings it to fulfillment and to an end as well (Rom 3:31; 10:4).

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<sup>139</sup> C. Marvin Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse: Paul, Wisdom, and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 2000), 244.

<sup>140</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1985), 342.

<sup>141</sup> Schnabel, *Law*, 292.

This brings us to Longenecker's final exegetical presupposition: for NT writers the OT is filtered through the interpretational lens of the Christ event. Similarly Wright posits:

In the light of this, we can see how Paul's brief, often clipped, references to Jesus function within the letters as mini-stories, small indices of the rudder by which the great Jewish narrative world had been turned in a new direction. . . . Even taken individually, these passages all show that *the story of Jesus*, interpreted precisely within the wider Jewish narrative world, was the hinge upon which Paul's rereading of that larger story turned.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, the OT stories are important for the ways they are able to elucidate for Paul's audience the meaning of what Christ has accomplished for them. The old creation is related to the new creation, the first Adam is compared and contrasted with the second Adam, and humanity's relationship to God under the old covenant embodied by Law is placed in antithesis to life in the Spirit.

Before leaving our summary of Longenecker, it is important to note that NT authors do not always overtly signal their use of OT stories. Thus, while in John 6 the writer does specifically note through the words of Jesus that his feeding of the 5000 is similar to Moses' feeding of the Israelites with manna (6:31-32), he does not explicitly compare Moses' crossing of the Red Sea with Jesus' walking on water. Neither does he overtly state that the people who are murmuring in unbelief are like the Israelites who grumbled in the wilderness. Often the references are subtle and the author depends on the reader's familiarity with the story in order to pick up on these allusions.

In his book *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Richard Hays deals with allusions to OT stories in Paul's letters which are often not clearly indicated by the

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<sup>142</sup> Wright, *New Testament and the People of God*, 407.

author.<sup>143</sup> Some of these “echoes” which Hays cites are very faint, and some scholars have questioned whether Paul’s audience would have heard them. For example, Christopher Stanley, in his article, “Paul’s ‘Use’ of Scripture: Why the Audience Matters,” cites the level of education of the audience, the obscurity of some of the echoes Hays finds and also the modifications Paul makes to the OT texts as reasons why the audience might not pick up on these echoes.<sup>144</sup> Stanley’s reluctance to accept many of Hays’ echoes on the basis of these criteria is understandable. As Witherington notes: “There was probably not a large Christian reading and writing public in the first century A.D. All major literacy studies of the Greco-Roman world of the Empire basically come to estimates of *at most* between 10 and 20 percent of the entire population; the latter is an absolute upper limit.”<sup>145</sup> These observations coupled with the fact that books at that time were copied by hand and thus relatively unavailable to the general populace lends further credence to Stanley’s objections.

At least two factors, however, help to mitigate these concerns. First, Paul mentions the presence of a number of Jews in the Roman church including Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3). This couple instructed Apollos in order that he might understand “the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26) even though he himself was said to be “mighty in the Scriptures” (Acts 18:24). Certainly they would have been able to instruct their fellow believers in Rome on any OT allusions in Paul’s letter. In addition to this, while the letter would eventually have been read privately by some individuals in the

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<sup>143</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989).

<sup>144</sup> Christopher D. Stanley, “Paul’s ‘Use’ of Scripture: Why the Audience Matters,” in *As It is Written: Studying Paul’s Use of Scripture* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 125-55.

<sup>145</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998), 92; citing William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 130-45.

Roman church, it would have been initially read to the entire congregation. Jewett argues that this would have been done by Phoebe and Tertius whom Jewett regards as her scribe.<sup>146</sup> Tertius, we are told in Rom 16:22 was the writer of the letter. Jewett's suggestion is certainly possible but we can be fairly certain that whoever delivered the letter to the Roman congregation would have received it directly from Paul and would have some knowledge of its contents and be able to explain it to the audience.

Still, we may conjecture if, apart from the benefits of indirect instruction by the author himself, the average listener could have heard these echoes which Hays claims, and did the author intend these echoes? Having read some of the echoes Hays proposes and having not recognized them myself until Hays pointed them out, I can again understand Stanley's reluctance. For example, Hays propounds that Rom 1-3 has the story of David and Bathsheba in the background including Nathan's rebuke of David.<sup>147</sup> Thus, Rom 2:1 which reads, "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" recalls, according to Hays, David's condemnation of the man who stole his neighbor's lone lamb. Nathan in turn, takes David's condemnation and points it back toward the king for robbing Uriah of Bathsheba, proclaiming: "'You are the man!'" (2 Sam 12:7). Although I am very familiar with this OT story and have read Rom 1-3 many times, I have to admit that I have never previously associated the two. However, I must agree that the story forms a wonderful background for Paul's argument and the apostle possibly did intend such an association. Nevertheless, I really have only a limited assurance regarding that conclusion.

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<sup>146</sup> Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 90.

<sup>147</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 48-49.

Anticipating such criticism, Hays provides seven criteria by which exegetes may measure the validity of potential echoes.<sup>148</sup> First, we should ask if the source of the echo was available to the author and/or the audience. As we consider whether or not the story of Adam is in the background of Rom 7, we must ask not only if Paul knew the OT story but also whether he could have known various Jewish interpretations of the story.

Second, in considering allusions, Hays states that we should reflect on how closely the new text parallels that which it is said to echo. Is the quote verbatim or only slightly congruent? How long is the reference? Direct dependence is given greater assurance by the length of the citation. Not only is the length of the citation an important consideration but also the presence of unusual words or ideas. One is much more likely to inadvertently repeat common words or ideas than uncommon ones.

Third, interpreters should examine whether or not Paul refers to the same story elsewhere in his writings. If it is a story which he often uses, this makes it more likely that he is doing so again. For example, that Paul is referring to Nathan's accusation of David in Rom 2:1 is made more likely by the fact that he has already referred to David in Rom 1:3.

Another criterion Hays mentions is thematic coherence. Does the echo fit well with the argument? In the case of the David echo we may note that both the story and Paul's argument speak of someone who is judging another when they themselves are guilty of the same crime.

A fifth criterion is that of historical plausibility. Does the echo make Paul say something that is unlikely for him to have said based on what we know about him from other evidence? We have seen that this is indeed Kümmel's argument against an

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<sup>148</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29-32.



autobiographical view of Rom 7. The statements do not fit the life of Paul when we take other statements he has made into consideration.

Sixth, Hays suggests that we consider whether others have seen the proposed echo or if we are the first? I have already demonstrated in the review of the history of interpretation that many interpreters, past and present, have seen a reference to the Adam story. It should thus be conceded that this criterion has already been met.

Finally, Hays says we should ask if the echo is satisfying. That is, does it make sense and contribute to the overall sense of the passage? I would argue that, while I might object to hearing an echo of Nathan's words in Rom 2:1 on the basis of some of the criteria mentioned above (For example, the David story does not figure prominently in the letters of Paul.), I do find it highly illustrative for Paul's argument. David is the perfect example of someone who has condemned others while doing the very same thing.

As we consider the Adamic backdrop of Rom 7, it will be important for us to consider not only the fact that others have seen this allusion but also whether it can be supported by these other criteria. Furthermore, we will not only have to show that Paul alludes to the story, but we will need to examine what adaptations, if any, Paul has made, and whether these are derived from contemporary Judaism or stem from his own creation.

### **Rhetoric**

Earlier I raised the question regarding Paul's familiarity with ancient Greek rhetoric and his ability to employ specific rhetorical devices. Training in ancient rhetoric often involved the imitation of pagan writings as Theon makes clear in his instructional manual dealing with rhetorical composition. "First of all, the teacher must instruct the young students to learn by heart effective examples for each exercise collected from

ancient writings.”<sup>149</sup> Many of these writings would have contained stories about the Greek gods. Would a strict Jewish monotheist like Paul have been familiar with these writings? Jewish history is filled with accounts of people who resisted, often to the point of death, these Hellenistic inroads into their culture.<sup>150</sup>

Nevertheless, such inroads did occur and this is especially true in regard to the Greek language. Martin Hengel notes that “all in all around 33% of the roughly 250 inscriptions found in and around Jerusalem from the time of the Second Temple are in Greek and about 7% are bilingual.”<sup>151</sup> Emil Schurer comments on the presence of Greek writings even among the ultra-conservative group at Qumran. He notes: “These new papyri and the increased number of Greek – mainly funerary – inscriptions discovered in Palestine have persuaded some scholars that bilingualism was widespread in Jewish Palestine in the first century A.D., and that it is quite proper to ask whether Jesus and his immediate disciples could speak Greek.”<sup>152</sup> Hengel notes that Greek education was available in Galilean cities like Sepphoris which was only three miles from Jesus’ home town of Nazareth and says it “was impossible to found a new ‘Hellenistic’ city without a Greek school” even in Palestine.<sup>153</sup> These Greek schools undoubtedly included instruction in Greek rhetoric since, as George Kennedy points out, “rhetoric was the core subject of formal education” in the Greek speaking world.<sup>154</sup> “Rhetoric was a systematic academic discipline universally taught throughout the Roman empire. It represented

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<sup>149</sup> James R. Butts, “The Progymnasmata of Theon: A New Text with Translation and Commentary” (PhD diss., The Claremont Graduate School, 1986), 139; II, 5-7.

<sup>150</sup> Emil Schurer and G. Vermes, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (3 vols., Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973).

<sup>151</sup> Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 55.

<sup>152</sup> Schurer and Vermes, *History of the Jewish People*, 2:79.

<sup>153</sup> Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, 55.

<sup>154</sup> George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 5.

approximately the level of high-school education today and was, indeed, the exclusive subject of secondary education.”<sup>155</sup>

Moreover, according to Kennedy, “Palestine and Syria were not rhetorical backwaters: one of the most famous rhetoricians of the first century before Christ, Theodorus, was a native of Gadara who moved to Rome, where he became the teacher of the emperor Tiberius, and then settled in Rhodes.”<sup>156</sup> Schurer cites evidence that the tutor of Cicero himself lived at Ashkelon.<sup>157</sup> Kennedy adds: “The most famous rhetorician of the reign of Augustus was a Sicilian Jew named Caecilius of Calacte. The greatest rhetorician of the second century of the Christian era was Hermogenes, who was born in Tarsus, the home of Saint Paul, and who taught in the cities of the Ionian coast, where Christian churches had an early development.”<sup>158</sup> Although Hermogenes postdates Paul, this nevertheless provides evidence for early rhetorical training in Paul’s place of birth. Hengel notes that we also find evidence for rhetorical education in Jerusalem where Paul studied under Gamaliel. “That there was Greek rhetorical instruction in Jerusalem is attested in connection with Herod, who was instructed in the science by Nicolaus of Damascus, along with many other sciences.”<sup>159</sup>

While rhetorical training was available in both Paul’s birthplace and his place of instruction, this in no way guarantees that Paul availed himself of such opportunities. Nevertheless, there are quite a few things which suggest he may have done so. First, there is clear indication in Acts that the conservative Jewish group of which Paul was a part was not adverse to using rhetoric to promote its own ends. Ronald Hock makes the

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<sup>155</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 9.

<sup>156</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 9.

<sup>157</sup> Schurer and Vermes, *History of the Jewish People*, 2:49.

<sup>158</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 9.

<sup>159</sup> Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, 59.

following remark regarding Acts 24:21. “Paul is prosecuted before the governor Felix by a professional orator (ῥήτορ, *rhetōr*) named Tertullus (vv. 1-8); Paul then defends himself (vv. 10-21), which suggests that the author of Acts regarded Paul as equally skilled in speaking in such a judicial setting.”<sup>160</sup>

One might object to the second half of Hock’s assertion concerning Paul’s own speaking ability on the basis of many statements from Paul’s own writings. For example, in the Corinthian epistles Paul repeatedly downplays the importance of wisdom in deference both to the anointing of the Holy Spirit and to the authority that he derives from God’s calling (e.g., 1 Cor 1:18-2:16; 2 Cor 11:6). It is clear that Paul does place greater importance on God’s role in his ministry than on his own training. However, to entirely omit the latter based on these statements is to overlook much evidence to the contrary. Hock acknowledges the reticence of some to ascribe “rhetorical sophistication” to Paul, but notes: “And yet, given the pervasive, varied, and accurate use of rhetorical forms and style in Paul’s letters that Betz and others have pointed out, it is hard not to draw the conclusion that Paul had formal rhetorical training.”<sup>161</sup> Even someone as reticent as Dean Anderson to ascribe formal rhetorical training to Paul still finds numerous instances of rhetorical devices employed in Paul’s writings.<sup>162</sup>

In addition to Paul’s desire to magnify God’s empowering of his ministry, the apostle may also be combating a type of rhetoric popular in Corinth. Bruce Winter notes that there was a flowery type of rhetoric which emphasized the delivery of the message over its substance. He states that some rhetors even removed their body hair in order to

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<sup>160</sup> Ronald F. Hock, “Paul and Greco-Roman Education,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 216.

<sup>161</sup> Hock, “Paul and Greco-Roman Education,” 215.

<sup>162</sup> R. Dean Anderson, Jr. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (rev. ed.; Leuven: Peeters, 1998).

make themselves godlike.<sup>163</sup> This emphasis on self-promotion was totally abhorrent to Paul (Acts 14:11-15). However, while Paul was incensed by the idea that people wished to treat him as one of the gods, there is clear indication that he was familiar with some pagan literature (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Tit 1:12).<sup>164</sup> Kennedy further argues: “In addressing a Greek audience, even when he pointedly rejected the ‘wisdom of this world,’ Paul could not expect to be persuasive unless there was some overlap between the content and form of what he said and the expectations of his audience.”<sup>165</sup> Paul knew that rhetorical ability was necessary for effective evangelism. Thus, it is more than likely that he would have availed himself of the opportunity for training in these skills.

The distinction Winter draws between Paul’s rhetoric and that of his opponents leads to a second issue which we must address in considering whether or not to view Paul as a rhetorician. As noted above, Winter raises the distinction between Sophistic rhetoric (concerned with flowery style) and a type of rhetoric focused on substance. Anderson further notes that there is a type of rhetoric associated with the philosopher Aristotle and another type of the later schools. Anderson argues that Aristotle’s treatise on rhetoric is not a helpful source in examining the rhetoric of Paul.<sup>166</sup> In addition, Hengel comments that the infusion of Jewish instruction into Paul’s rhetoric resulted in what he calls “basically un-literary rhetorical training, focussed [sic] on speaking publicly in the synagogue.”<sup>167</sup>

All of this points to the fact that when we speak about rhetoric, there are many forms and Paul’s rhetorical style has been modified by his Jewish background. This will

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<sup>163</sup> Bruce W. Winter, “Is Paul among the Sophists,” *RTR* 53 (1994): 28-38.

<sup>164</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 10.

<sup>165</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 10.

<sup>166</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 32.

<sup>167</sup> Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul*, 58.

become especially important when we examine Paul's use of the rhetorical device of προσωποποιία. As we will see, Hock endeavors to analyze Rom 7:7-25 on the basis of a specific use of the device in a specific writer (Hermogenes) and will reject Paul's employment of the device based on a rigid comparison. However, ancient Greek rhetoric and the use of language in general should not be pigeon-holed to such a degree. Constant adaptation and stretching of previous parameters is the norm, not the exception.

Anderson raises another objection with respect to Paul's use of rhetoric, repeatedly noting that letters were viewed as quite distinct from rhetorical speeches in ancient culture.<sup>168</sup> He thus objects to Kennedy's claim that the structure of a letter resembles a speech and asserts that most do not.<sup>169</sup> Although Anderson is correct in his critique of Kennedy, it is important to point out that Paul's letters are quite unique in a number of ways. First, compared to most letters of the time, Paul's letters are extremely lengthy. More importantly, Paul's letters were written not to a specific individual but to churches. Even the short personal letter to Philemon is intended for a wider audience (v. 2). Since most people in Paul's day were unable to read, this necessitated that letters be read aloud to the congregation. Christopher Forbes states: "Arguments that his letters ought to be expected to conform more to epistolary than to rhetorical conventions have this weakness: Paul was not writing letters to individuals, to be read at their leisure. He was writing letters to Christian assemblies, where his letter would be read aloud, often in quite polemical situations."<sup>170</sup> Even Anderson, who objects that Paul's letters are not speeches, concedes: "Despite the fact that ancient letters cannot automatically be

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<sup>168</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 118-19.

<sup>169</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 141.

<sup>170</sup> Christopher Forbes, "Paul and Rhetorical Comparison," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 151.

classified into one of the three rhetorical-speech genres, there *were* letters in antiquity that were essentially rhetorical writings given an epistolary frame.”<sup>171</sup> He notes especially in this regard the first 4 letters of Demosthenes who wanted to speak to the Athenians but could not because of his exile.<sup>172</sup> Similarly, Paul often comments that he would have preferred to speak to the recipients of his letters in person but has been hindered for one reason or another from coming to them. Thus, his letters, like those of Demosthenes, are a substitute for a speech that he would have preferred to have personally delivered.

Anderson seeks to minimize the extent of Paul’s training in this discipline by downplaying terminology which other scholars have evidenced. For example, whereas Winter sees various terms in Paul’s letters as pointing to his knowledge of rhetoric,<sup>173</sup> Anderson argues that most of these terms need not be seen as formal rhetorical vocabulary, stating that: “The words βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί are hardly used as rhetorical technical terms here.”<sup>174</sup> However, Anderson does admit that the verb ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι “is pretty well confined to rhetorical treatises, and Paul’s use in *Ep. Rom.* 13.9 conforms to its regular meaning there, namely, ‘to sum up.’” Nevertheless, he contends that this example should not be used to overrule all the evidence to the contrary regarding Paul’s rhetorical training and that he may have simply picked it up from Apollos or somewhere else.<sup>175</sup>

Anderson argues in much the same way when it comes to Paul’s use of προσωποποιία. “It should be observed that in all the instances tentatively labelled προσωποποιία, Paul not once shows awareness that he is deliberately using such a

<sup>171</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 121.

<sup>172</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 123.

<sup>173</sup> Winter, “Is Paul among the Sophists,” 32-33.

<sup>174</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 278.

<sup>175</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 289.

figure.”<sup>176</sup> Still, while Anderson is unwilling to admit that Paul received formal training in rhetoric, he cites example after example of ways that Paul’s usage reflects ancient rhetorical technique and thus undermines his own case. These examples include all of the rhetorical devices which I believe are essential to the argument that Paul alludes to Adam in Rom 7. Accordingly, I will now examine some of these devices and discuss their usage.

### ***Diatribē***

I began this chapter with a series of questions which I subsequently intended to answer myself. These questions were ones one might imagine some reader of this dissertation asking. When an ancient author wrote questions and answers like this in the form of a dialogue, this style was often referred to as diatribe. It has frequently been noted that the book of Romans contains more diatribe than any other Pauline epistle. However, the very fact that I began this chapter using a question and answer style without having had any real training in ancient rhetoric should be a caution to those who would try to claim too much based on the presence of this form. Question and answer is a form that is ubiquitous both in speech and writing.

Thus, in spite of Stanley Stowers’ high praise for the continuing value of Rudolf Bultmann’s dissertation *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*,<sup>177</sup> we must be careful in drawing analogies between Paul’s use of diatribe in Romans and the preaching of Cynics-Stoics as Bultmann does. In fact, Bultmann himself

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<sup>176</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 283 n.21.

<sup>177</sup> Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 45.



notes the large number of discrepancies between the use of diatribe by the Cynics-Stoics and by Paul. For example, he says:

Es ist hier sehr schwer, eine parallele zu ziehen. Denn auf den ersten Blick sieht man nur den ungeheuren Unterschied zwischen der Diatribe und Paulus. Dort eine reiche Fülle und bunte Farbenpracht, hier Dürftigkeit und Nüchternheit. Dort ein lebensvolles Bild nach dem andern, hier eine merkwürdige Unfähigkeit, anschaulich zu schildern. Dort geschickte, wirkungsvolle Verwendung, hier große Ungeschicklichkeit. Aber andererseits fällt es sehr schwer ins Gewicht, daß Paulus in diesem Punkt der jüdischen Rhetorik noch ferner steht. Von dieser - von Jesus wie vom AT und den Rabbinen - unterscheidet ihn ein wichtiges Moment: er hat überhaupt keine eigentliche Parabel, keine novellistische Erzählung eines Einzelfalls. Und wenn wir näher zusehen, lassen sich doch gewisse Analogien zur Diatribe erkennen.<sup>178</sup>

Bultmann is unable to classify Paul with Jesus or the rabbis in terms of style, so he seeks to find a parallel with the Cynics-Stoics based on their use of diatribe. However, he repeatedly notes various distinctions and finally concludes that the differences are greater than the similarities.<sup>179</sup> Stowers argues that Bultmann's motive was to link Paul to the Cynics-Stoics in order that he "could recognize his highly-developed use of a type of rhetoric and still maintain the accepted opinion that Paul's letters belonged to the lowest levels of literary and rhetorical culture. The diatribe was seen as a form designed for use by ignorant and vulgar Cynics in their preaching to the uneducated masses."<sup>180</sup>

Whether or not this was in fact Bultmann's motive, it does raise an important conclusion needs to be dispelled. Bultmann and his student Bornkamm see Romans as flowing out of Paul's experience of preaching to the masses including the churches at Galatia, Corinth and Philippi rather than as coming from personal knowledge of the

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<sup>178</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 88.

<sup>179</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, e.g., 92, 106-7.

<sup>180</sup> Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 17.

church at Rome.<sup>181</sup> Thus, the questions that Paul raises in the letter of Romans come out of Paul's own experience and thoughts and are not real questions with which the church at Rome is dealing. Bultmann calls Paul's dialog partner a "fingierter Gegner."<sup>182</sup>

In his analysis Bultmann does provide many examples where the interlocutor is the product of the author or speaker's own mind. However, as Stowers notes, there are passages in 1 Corinthians that are in the form of a diatribe (4:7; 7:21; 8:10; 14:17; 15:36).<sup>183</sup> Moreover, we know that Paul wrote this letter in response to a letter from them (1 Cor 7:25). It is highly probable that the *περὶ δὲ* phrase used here and which is repeated in 8:1, 12:1 and 16:1 points to a number of questions to which Paul gives answer. Since a number of Paul's uses of diatribe are found in these contexts, it is highly likely that at least some of the questions come from a real and not an imaginary person or persons. Thus, based on Paul's own usage, diatribe does not necessarily entail a totally fabricated dialog and does not necessarily lead to the conclusion reached by Bultmann, Bornkamm and others who claim that Romans does not address the church's specific situation. Indeed, Karl Donfried observes that "every other authentic Pauline writing, *without exception*, is addressed to the specific situations of the churches or persons involved"<sup>184</sup> and it would thus be out of character for Romans not to do so as well.

This dispute over the intended audience of Romans is very much tied in with questions regarding the integrity of Rom 16 and its lengthy list of addressees which we will examine below. Here we may note, however, that, if Rom 16 is an original part of

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<sup>181</sup> Günther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp. ed.; ed. by Karl P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 16-28.

<sup>182</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, 10.

<sup>183</sup> Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 84.

<sup>184</sup> Karl Paul Donfried, "False Presuppositions in the Study of Romans," in *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp. ed.; ed. by Karl P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 103.

the letter of Romans, then Bornkamm's conclusion that the diatribes in the letter reflect a polemic against an imaginary Jewish opponent and his understanding of salvation is certainly called into question.<sup>185</sup> If Paul is writing to a group of Christians with whom he has intimate contact rather than to an unknown group of people, it is far more likely that he is responding to questions they have raised rather than drawing from his own experience or imagination. Also, if he is writing to a group of people towards whom he displays the type of affection evidenced in the closing chapter, it is unlikely that he would use the kind of polemic employed by the Cynic-Stoic. Bultmann himself recognizes that the tone of Romans is much less severe than that of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe and that this milder tone is due to the fact that Paul is addressing the church.<sup>186</sup>

Thomas Tobin, at the same time, argues that the diatribe style would be especially helpful for Paul in addressing a church in which there were a number of people he had never met. Tobin writes: "Given his standing or lack of it with the Roman Christians, it would have been difficult for him directly to confront their misgivings about him and his views. But the diatribe allowed Paul to place them rhetorically on his side from the beginning. All the rhetorical devices of the diatribe would have enabled him to respond to their issues and misunderstandings of him without ever having to confront them directly."<sup>187</sup> Thus, again in contrast to the highly confrontational style of the Cynics-Stoics, Paul is employing diatribe in order to appear more responsive and less confrontational.

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<sup>185</sup> Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," 26.

<sup>186</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, 106.

<sup>187</sup> Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 103.

Stowers indeed argues, contra Bultmann, that diatribe style originated in the philosophical schools as a means of instructing students. “The goal of this part of the instruction was not simply to impart knowledge, but to transform the students, to point out error and to cure it. Our review of the sources suggests that the dialogical element of the diatribe was an important part of this pedagogical approach.”<sup>188</sup> Thus, in contrast to the picture which we get from a comparison between the Cynics-Stoics and Paul preaching to the masses in order to combat false doctrine, we have a picture of Paul as a teacher instructing fellow believers in how to live righteous lives. Stowers notes that this concern with ethics is the real connection between the diatribe of Paul and that of the Cynics-Stoics. “Those authors who have almost unanimously been recognized as most representative of the diatribe are all either Cynics or Stoics or have unquestionably adopted Cynic or Stoic traditions in the area of ethics.”<sup>189</sup>

Although we have been rather critical of Bultmann and many of the conclusions he has drawn with his comparison of the diatribe of Paul with that of the Cynics-Stoics, his analysis, along with that of Stowers, has produced some fruitful results for our study to which we now turn. First, Bultmann argues that when writers use diatribe they not only invent an imaginary dialog partner, but may also sometimes personify inanimate objects with which to interact and also bring historical characters to life in order to express their views. Speaking of the former, he writes:

Besonders charakteristisch ist ferner, daß nicht nur Personen, sondern auch Personifikationen zum Mitreden veranlaßt werden, und zwar reden diese dann meist nicht als Gegner des Redners, sondern als seine Bundesgenossen. Da heißt es denn: εἰ φωνῆν λάβοι τὰ πράγματα, oder: ἔρεῖ σοι φωνῆν ποθεν λαβόν (τὸ ἔξαιρετόν). So können Gesetz, Natur, Vaterland, die Tugenden und dergl. als Personen auftreten, und sie

<sup>188</sup> Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 76.

<sup>189</sup> Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 30-31.

reden nicht nur mit dem Redner, sondern auch mit dem Hörer, oder auch mehrere von ihnen miteinander.<sup>190</sup>

Bultmann cites examples of Greek heroes that are made to speak: “Sie treten auf als Vertreter der philosophischen Ansicht, wie z. B. Odysseus und Herakles, oder - und das ist häufiger - als ἰδιῶται. Da werden populäre Helden wie Agamemnon oder Achill zitiert εἰς τὸ μέσον vom Redner gerufen - und müssen Rede und Antwort stehen, um vor dem Publikum die Kläglichkeit ihrer vermeintlich heldenhaften Anschauungen zu dokumentieren.”<sup>191</sup> Stowers adds that these historic characters are not always just invoked for their words. “One of the notable variations is that sometimes instead of an anonymous ‘Man’ or ‘fool’ *the one addressed is a figure from history or mythology* who is used to typify a wrong attitude or type of behavior.”<sup>192</sup> I would argue that all of these elements are to be found in Rom 7: dialog with an historical figure, personification of an inanimate object, and use of an historical figure to display the results of wrong behavior.

Another element that is important for our study is *pathos*. Several writers, notably Moo and Dunn, argue that Rom 7 is too emotional for the passage not to reflect Paul’s own involvement in what is said. Thus, the passage must be, at least to some extent, autobiographical. Certainly Paul himself would agree that he is included in his conclusion that “all have sinned” (3:23) and that he like the rest of humanity has been affected by Adam’s fall (Rom 5:12-21). However, while Paul may see a connection with Adam in this way and, while he himself certainly is involved in the passage by his very penning of its words, to argue that the pathos of the passage necessarily leads to personal testimony is to overlook what Quintilian says about the importance of this element of emotion in

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<sup>190</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, 12.

<sup>191</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, 12.

<sup>192</sup> Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 90.

personification. Bultmann observes that this emotional aspect is also characteristic of diatribe. He notes: “Die im vorigen angeführten Beispiele haben zugleich gezeigt, daß die Eigentümlichkeiten, die sich aus dem dialogischen Charakter der Diatribe erklären oder mit ihm zusammenhängen, verwandt werden können, um eine starke rhetorische Wirkung hervorzubringen. Man denke nur an die letztgenannten Aufzählungen, in denen sich ein gewaltiges Pathos entfalten kann.”<sup>193</sup> Quintilian argues that *προσωποποιία* is most powerfully employed via the use of strong pathos and Bultmann maintains that strong pathos is also characteristic of diatribe. If Rom 7 employs both *προσωποποιία* and diatribe, then it is unreasonable to suggest that the strong emotion of the passage necessitates that the passage be read as Paul’s own personal testimony. Rather he is simply following the rhetorical style required by the tools he employs.

Another element of diatribe which perhaps defines its essential purpose is dealing with conflicting views or positions on a subject. Thus, antithesis is almost always found in diatribe. Accordingly, Bultmann writes:

Sehr häufig ist die Anwendung der sogenannten Klangfiguren. Unter ihnen nehmen der Parallelismus der Glieder und die Antithese die erste Stelle ein. Der Parallelismus kann grob angedeutet, er kann aber auch feiner ausgestaltet sein. Häufig ist er mit der Antithese verbunden; sei es, daß parallele Glieder in Antithese stehen, sei es, daß eine Reihe von Antithesen in Parallele stehen.<sup>194</sup>

It is clear to all who study Rom 5:12-21 that Paul is contrasting the effects of Adam’s and Christ’s deeds on humanity. A series of diatribal questions clearly follows in Rom 6-7 (Note especially 6:1, 15; 7:1, 7, 13.). One may infer that the contrasts between the effects of Adam and Christ which are clearly evident in Rom 5:12-21 are carried forward in the diatribes which follow, and this is exactly what we see occurring. The fact that Christians

<sup>193</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, 20.

<sup>194</sup> Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt*, 20.

have been delivered from the effects of death through the grace of Christ raises the diatribal question as to whether they should now go on sinning in order that grace might increase. The realization that the Law has been an accomplice in the death brought about by Adam and humanity's subsequent sin raises the diatribal question as to whether the Law is sin as well.

Thus, while we may question some of Bultmann's conclusions regarding Paul's use of diatribe such as the extent of his knowledge of the Roman church, Bultmann's work does suggest several things which comport with our own conclusions. Specifically, his observations support our views on Rom 7 concerning personification and impersonation, on the idea that pathos may be attributed to rhetorical style rather than autobiography, and finally on the fact that Rom 6-8 is meant to draw a continual contrast between the effects on humanity of the actions of Adam and Christ.

### *Synkrisis*

This last note on the importance of antithesis for the diatribe leads us into a discussion of the rhetorical tool of *synkrisis*. Forbes observes that schoolboys in Paul's day were often "asked to prepare a σύγκρισις (*synkrisis*), a speech of comparison."<sup>195</sup> This was considered one of several preliminary exercises before the student was asked to move on to more difficult subjects. Thus, if Paul had any rhetorical training at all, he would be familiar with *synkrisis*. Forbes further notes: "Comparison (σύγκρισις, *synkrisis*) in the προγυμνάσματα (*progymnasmata*) was primarily a set of techniques for the 'amplification' (αὐξήσις, *auxēsis*) of good and bad qualities in speeches

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<sup>195</sup> Forbes, "Paul and Rhetorical Comparison," 134.

involving praise and blame.”<sup>196</sup> This emphasis on the contrasting qualities of good and bad certainly fits well with Paul’s argument in 5:12-21 which compares the death brought upon humanity as a result of Adam’s fall with the abundant life brought about through the grace obtained by Christ’s obedience.

As Forbes notes, comparison was a rhetorical tool with which every young school boy was familiar. Thus, we should not be surprised that such a tool was ubiquitous in both the writings and speeches of the Roman Empire. Forbes further comments on the writer Plutarch and his popularity and points out that he “constructed several of his works, and the whole architecture of his *Lives*, on a comparative model.”<sup>197</sup> That a writer living at roughly the same time as Paul structured these well-known works by means of *synkrisis* is strong evidence that it had become a popular and common form of communication in the apostle’s day. I will argue that Paul uses this tool a great deal in Romans and in a later chapter will examine the important articles of Jean-Noël Aletti and A. Feuillet which specifically refer to Rom 7.<sup>198</sup>

It might be interesting here, however, to cite one specific example found in Forbes. In this second century example he refers to a use of *synkrisis* which compares remarkably well with Paul’s statement in Rom 2:1. Hermogenes, a popular Greek rhetorician writes that “you will bring into the denunciation comparisons with the lesser, since they are destructive. “Is it not shocking to punish the thief, but not the temple-

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<sup>196</sup> Forbes, “Paul and Rhetorical Comparison,” 134.

<sup>197</sup> Forbes, “Paul and Rhetorical Comparison,” 138.

<sup>198</sup> Jean-Noël Aletti, “The Rhetoric of Romans 5-8,” in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*; JSOTSup 146 (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 294-308; A. Feuillet, “Les Attaches Bibliques des Antithèses Pauliniennes dans L’Épître aux Romains (1-8),” in *Mélanges Bibliques en hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 323-349.



robber?""<sup>199</sup> Here in Hermogenes we find an almost verbatim comparison of one employed by Paul. This not only demonstrates an example of *synkrisis* in Romans but shows again that the apostle may have been familiar with stock comparisons used by Greek rhetoricians. As we noted earlier in looking at the instructional book of Theon, the most common method of learning rhetoric was through the study of examples from other writers. Is it then too great a leap to argue that Paul and Hermogenes were both instructed in their use of comparison by studying this same example involving theft and temple robbery?

We have thus seen several things which would lead us to conclude that comparison was a common tool familiar to everyone in the Greek world. We have demonstrated that Paul himself employs this tool in his writings and have even suggested that his use of one specific comparison in Rom 2:1 may provide evidence that he was familiar with stock comparisons used by rhetoricians in the training of their students.

Later, I will seek to demonstrate that Paul uses repeated comparisons throughout Rom 5-8 to contrast the effects of the acts of Adam and Christ upon humanity. Speaking of chapter 5, Anderson writes: "At v.12 Paul embarks on a *σύγκρισις* (a developed comparison) between Adam's transgression and God's act of justification in Christ."<sup>200</sup> I will argue that this journey does not end at 5:21 but rather continues on into chapter 8. This continued *σύγκρισις*, I will further contend, lends additional support to the idea that Adam is to be seen as the background to Rom 7:7-25.

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<sup>199</sup> Forbes, "Paul and Rhetorical Comparison," 146.

<sup>200</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 225.

### *Impersonation*

One may initially note that in contrast to the subheadings “diatribe” and “*synkrisis*” employed above I have not used the Greek term here. This is due to the fact that the Greek term to be chosen is a matter of dispute. The English term “impersonation” is not much better for it may not accurately convey the correct nuance for some readers. Stowers prefers the term “speech-in-character” which may be more descriptive but also more awkward. Therefore, I will often use the term impersonation but wish here to define what I mean. In chapter one I noted the frequent employment of the term προσωποποιία among the Church Fathers in their remarks on Rom 7. This term is also found in many of the rhetorical handbooks of later writers such as Hermogenes, Athonius, and Nicolaus under their umbrella term, ἠθοποιία.<sup>201</sup> For example Athonius writes:

Ethopoeia (*êthopoiia*) is imitation of the character of a proposed speaker. There are three different forms of it: apparition-making (*eidôlopoiia*), personification (*prosôpooiia*), and characterization (*êthopoiia*). Ethopoeia has a known person as speaker and only invents the characterization, which is why it is called ‘character-making’; for example, what words would Heracles say when Eurystheus gave his commands. Here Heracles is known, but we invent the character in which he speaks. In the case of eidolopoeia, the speaker is a known person, but dead and no longer able to speak, like the character Eupolis invented in his *Demoi* and Aristeides in *On the Four*; which is why it is called ‘apparition-making.’ In the case of prosopopoeia, everything is invented, both character and speaker, as Menander invented Elenchos (Disproof); for *elenchos* is a thing, not a person at all; which is why this is called ‘person-making’; for the person is invented with the character.<sup>202</sup>

Strictly speaking, according to Athonius, the best term for what I will be arguing for in Rom 7 is εἰδωλοποιία since Adam is a known person but also dead. However, it appears

<sup>201</sup> See *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (trans. with introductions and notes by George A. Kennedy; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 84-85, 115-16, 165.

<sup>202</sup> *Progymnasmata*, 115-16.

from the usage of the Church Fathers and from Quintilian who was closer to the time of Paul that προσωποποιία was the correct term for that period. I will, therefore, use this Greek term and the English word impersonation but with the understanding that I am referring in Rom 7 to putting speech into the mouth of a dead historical figure, namely Adam.

There are a number of objections which have been raised regarding Paul's employment of this rhetorical device. Lauri Thurén argues that προσωποποιία is a solution which was devised by later writers in order to preserve Paul's character when no other solution was apparent.<sup>203</sup> He says: "We should not be preoccupied with the idea that Paul was a 'prince of thinkers', producing a polished theology – maybe he often contradicts himself."<sup>204</sup> He claims that employing this rhetorical device would have required great skill but "Paul was hardly a well-trained actor or orator."<sup>205</sup> In addition, he contends that the use of impersonation would have been especially difficult in a letter where one could not indicate a change of character with a change of voice as one might in a speech. Moreover, Thurén objects that the educational level of Paul's audience would have made them unlikely to have picked up on such a device should Paul have had the skill to use it. That is, this device was so uncommon that few would have been cognizant of it.<sup>206</sup>

How shall we respond to Thurén's claims? First, it is possible for a writer to completely contradict him or herself in stating something different than he or she has said elsewhere. However, this is usually magnified both by distance and time. The problem

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<sup>203</sup> Lauri Thurén, "Romans 7 Derhetorized," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps; JSNTSup 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 420-40.

<sup>204</sup> Thurén, "Romans 7 Derhetorized," 421.

<sup>205</sup> Thurén, "Romans 7 Derhetorized," 429.

<sup>206</sup> Thurén, "Romans 7 Derhetorized," 429-30.

with the autobiographical interpretation of Rom 7 is that it contradicts not only what Paul says elsewhere in other letters but also repeatedly contradicts what he says both in the immediately preceding context as well as in that which follows. Thus, although it is possible that Paul immediately, within such a close context, repeatedly contradicts himself, even the greatest critics of his skills have to admit that it is unlikely that he was this obtuse. To endeavor to understand any historical figure we must try to fit the pieces together as best we can and Kümmel has shown that an autobiographical reading of Rom 7 does not fit into the overall picture of Paul presented in the NT. Neither, as we will endeavor to show, can the statements made in Rom 7 be reconciled with the picture of the Christian life presented in chapters 6 and 8. Thurén may be correct that Paul indeed has made such blatant contradictions. However, such an admission would make biblical interpretation a slippery exercise, and this is a path, I for one, am unwilling to follow.

As far as the rhetorical knowledge of the audience is concerned, it is readily admitted that there were some who would not have recognized that Paul was employing προσωποποιία. This admission would be true of almost any audience with regard to any literary tool. I would argue, however, that this does not necessarily prevent a writer from using any tool at his or her disposal. Still, one can assume that Paul would have wanted to communicate effectively. Thus, the crucial question is whether it is likely that most of the audience would have known what he was doing. Thurén claims that the device was uncommon. However, the fact that προσωποποιία is mentioned in all four lists of the *progymnasmata* of Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Nicolaus along with the fact that it is discussed in the writings of Paul's contemporary Quintilian indicates that rhetoricians in Paul's day were being instructed in its use. It may very well be true

that it was not used to the degree that say *synkrisis* was, but it is difficult to argue that a device with such widespread instruction would not have been employed commonly enough to have been familiar to a number of people in just about any audience. As Quintilian indicates, it was not as uncommon as Thurén suggests:

Consequently I regard *impersonation* as the most difficult of tasks, imposed at it is in addition to the other work involved by a deliberative theme. For the same speaker has on one occasion to impersonate Caesar, on another Cicero or Cato. But it is a most useful exercise because it demands a double effort and is also of the greatest use to future poets and historians, while for orators of course it is absolutely necessary. For there are many speeches composed by Greek and Latin orators for others to deliver, the words of which had to be adapted to suit the position and character of those for whom they were written. (3.8.49-50)

Here Quintilian speaks of one speaker using the same device numerous times in the same work. He also speaks of its use in multiple formats including poetry and history. In addition, he uses the expression “many speeches.” This suggests that Thurén’s objection regarding the audience does not hold much weight.

Thurén is correct that *προσωποποιία* is a more difficult device to use than some of the others listed in the *progymnasmata* and this is especially true in the case of a letter where a change of voice can not be used to indicate a change of character as in a speech. However, this fails to take into account a number of things. First, the letter of Romans was sent to a church and not an individual and would have been read aloud to its audience. Second, as we noted earlier, the letter would likely have been read by someone entrusted directly with the letter by Paul and instructed by the apostle as to how it was to be orally delivered and the nature of what he was endeavoring to convey. Moreover, we may note that Nicolaus specifically mentions that this device could be conveyed through

letter writing.<sup>207</sup> We shall thus want to examine our passage to see if there are any specific clues as to whether or not this is what Paul is doing, but to exclude it because it is used in a letter and not a speech rings much more true for a modern letter read by an individual than it does for Paul's epistle orally presented to the Roman church.

It is also true, as Anderson points out, that authors in general specifically identified who they were impersonating.<sup>208</sup> Anderson does allow for exceptions to this rule but in these cases other means are employed to make it clear that this is what is being done. Consequently, we will need to examine Rom 7 to see if Paul has left us sufficient clues to arrive at such a conclusion. However, it may initially be noted here that Paul does frequently use the Adam story without specifically identifying him by name (e.g., 1 Cor 11:2-16).

An objection raised by Hock concerning the use of προσωποποιία concerns the temporal sequence governing its use which we find laid out in the *progymnasmata*. Hermogenes writes: "The elaboration proceeds by the three times. Begin with the present, because it is difficult; then run back to earlier times, because they have a large share of happiness; then change to the future, because what is going to happen is much more dreadful."<sup>209</sup> Hock comments on Rom 7 on the basis of Hermogenes' quote: "To be sure, all three tenses appear in these verses, but their order does not follow Hermogenes because the sequence is past (7:7-11), then present (14-24a, 25), with virtually no future, save for a brief glance at the future toward the end of the section dealing with the present (24b)."<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> *Progymnasmata*, 166.

<sup>208</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 203.

<sup>209</sup> *Progymnasmata*, 85.

<sup>210</sup> Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," 211.

There are several things to be said in response to this objection. First, in actual practice literary devices are rarely confined as narrowly as they are in rhetorical handbooks. Authors are always pushing the boundaries. Moreover, Hermogenes specifically relates why a speaker should follow the order he has specified. For example, the future should be reserved for last because what is going to happen is much more dreadful than either of the other time frames. One would have to agree that this is clearly not Paul's outlook toward the future in regard to what he is describing in Rom 7. The immediate future is rather a time of thanksgiving as a result of the deliverance from the present cry of distress, and the ultimate future is glorious fellowship with God. In addition, the time outline is much more complicated in Rom 7:7-25 than a mere linear development of past, present and future. Paul speaks of a past when the "I" came to know sin (7:7-8); of a time before this past when the "I" was innocent of this sin and its knowledge (7:9); again of a past similar to the events of 7:7-8; then of a present where there is ongoing struggle with sin (7:14-23); of a cry for deliverance (7:24); then of a thanksgiving which may be future and point to the same event as 8:18-25 when a Christian is delivered from his corrupt body, or perhaps future and yet past, as if Paul is looking back on the deliverance made available to the desperate sinner through faith and baptism (see Rom 6:6). Thus, the time sequence is far more complicated than that described in Hermogenes. Moreover, the emotions associated with these time periods are very different in Paul. It would not be surprising then to see the apostle vary the normal pattern, even if such a pattern existed in his day. Rhetoricians who mention a specific pattern are all later than Paul and these time specifications are not found in Quintilian.

Therefore, I conclude that the use of impersonation is not out of the question in Paul's letters. While Anderson may wish to argue that Paul's use of it was picked up through contact with other rhetoricians rather than through formal training, he nevertheless cites an example of impersonation in Paul (Rom 10:6-8).<sup>211</sup> Whether Paul actually was using προσωποποιία in Rom 7:7-25 should therefore be decided on the basis of contextual evidence rather than simply rejected out of hand. We have already cited one example of such evidence from Quintilian when he speaks about the use of pathos and building to a climax, a technique often found with προσωποποιία. We will look at a number of other supporting criteria as we pursue this study.

One final component of προσωποποιία, which a number of ancient writers on *progymnasmata* mention, remains to be addressed. Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Nicolaus all speak of προσωποποιία as involving ethos, pathos or both.<sup>212</sup> Ethos speaks of a universal truth or of what would happen in a certain circumstance. Pathos points more to the emotions of the situation. Based on what Quintilian says about climax, I have already argued that pathos is present in Rom 7:7-25. In addition, Kümmel's interpretation of Rom 7:7-25 points to the idea that the fictive "I" is referring to the universal fall of humanity. Thus, if one were to typify the kind of impersonation found in Rom 7 based on these findings, one would need to conclude that it is of a mixed type employing both ethos and pathos. There is certainly not much doubt as to the presence of pathos. Whether Kümmel's interpretation of universal truth is to be adopted is yet to be explored, but it is certainly an element often found in impersonation.

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<sup>211</sup> Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, 236.

<sup>212</sup> *Progymnasmata*, 85, 116, 164-65.



### *Text Critical Issues*

There are three textual issues that have some bearing on our discussion. The first deals with whether οἶδαμεν should be read as οἶδαμεν (“we know”) or as οἶδα μὲν (“on the one hand I know”). A few manuscripts and the church Fathers divide the letters into two words. This is probably based on the emphasis throughout the passage on the first person singular, and we may note that Paul does use οἶδα in 7:18. However, if one examines all the other places in Paul’s writings where this same construction occurs (Rom 2:2, 3:19, 8:22, 8:26, 28; 1 Cor 8:1, 4; 2 Cor 5:1, 16; 1 Tim 1:8), the verb is either clearly gnomic signaling knowledge held by all (e.g. Rom 2:2) or there are other clues such as another first person plural verb in the context (e.g. Rom 8:26) or a first person plural pronoun (2 Cor 5:16) which demonstrates that all other uses refer to the first person plural. Thus, if Rom 7:14 is to be read as οἶδα μὲν, it would be the only case in all of Paul’s writings where we should do so. It is therefore probably best to read it as gnomic here as well. There is no disagreement that the Law is a spiritual entity, having been given by God. Thus, the “A” rating given by the UBS committee for the first person plural is deserved.<sup>213</sup>

Immediately following our textual focus in 7:7-25 we find in Rom 8:2 a question as to the pronoun to be used as the object of ἠλευθέρωσέν. There are several variants listed in the textual apparatus but the ones deserving attention due to manuscript support are the first person singular με (A D 1739<sup>c</sup> et al.) and the second person singular σε (⊗ B F G 1506 et al.). The first person singular again fits well with the previous passage where the first person has been emphasized throughout. However, the second person is clearly

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<sup>213</sup> Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, (second edition; Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1994), 454.

the more difficult reading as it is hard to account for the singular in this context. One might expect Paul to address the church with the plural and the first person plural is one of the minor variants ( $\Psi$  bo), but the second person singular is unexplainable. One possible solution offered by the committee is that it “may have originated in the accidental repetition of the final syllable of ἠλευθέρωσέν when the terminal  $-\nu$ , represented by a horizontal line over the  $\epsilon$ , was overlooked.”<sup>214</sup> The committee favors this more difficult reading though with less certainty than the variant discussed above.

A more important textual question for this dissertation, though seemingly far removed from the context of Rom 7, is the much debated crux regarding the ending of the book and the presence or absence of chapter 16. This is important for at least two reasons. If chapter 16 is original, then this would indicate that Paul is likely addressing specific people and issues within the Roman church and not combating some non-Roman opponent such as the Judaizers. Secondly, while this paper does not stand or fall on the originality of Rom 16:20a, I will argue that this verse provides an additional reference to the Adam story and that this would thus mean that the Adam story runs throughout the book of Romans from chapters 1 through 16.

The status of Rom 16 has been the subject of entire dissertations so I will have to leave it to my readers to explore the subject in more depth on their own. However, it is important to note that the tide has recently turned in favor of its inclusion, as is evidenced by the revised edition of Donfried’s book, *The Roman’s Debate*. In one of the original essays from the 1977 edition of the book, Donfried writes that there is “a growing consensus, especially among continental NT scholars that Romans 16 was not an original

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<sup>214</sup> Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 456.

part of Paul's letter to Rome."<sup>215</sup> However, in the preface to the 1991 edition, he now notes that Rom 16 "is now viewed by the majority as being an integral part of Paul's original letter."<sup>216</sup> One of the important factors contributing to this change of viewpoint certainly has to be the dissertation written by Harry Gamble, Jr. A revised edition of Gamble's 1970 Yale dissertation was published the very year that Donfried's original edition first came out in 1977.<sup>217</sup>

Accordingly, I will summarize some of the major arguments for and against the inclusion of Rom 16. First, Paul tells us that he has never been to the church at Rome and yet the conclusion of Romans has the lengthiest list of greetings of all of Paul's letters. How can this be if Paul has never visited the city? Secondly, Prisca and Aquila are specifically addressed in Rom 16:3 and have an assembly in their house yet we know that they were in Ephesus when Paul wrote First Corinthians (Rom 16:9; perhaps A.D. 55) which is usually dated near the same time as the writing of Romans (A.D. 56-57). However, 2 Tim 4:19 places them back in Ephesus.<sup>218</sup> Coupling these factors with the fact that the doxology of Romans is found both at the end of chapter 14 (A P et al.) and at the end of chapter 15 (p<sup>46</sup>) has led to the suggestion that Rom 16 was appended to the original letter and then sent as a letter to Ephesus where Paul knew many more people and where we find Prisca and Aquila both before and after the writing of Romans.

In support of the inclusion of chapter 16, Gamble notes these factors. First, every manuscript including those which place the doxology in other places includes chapter

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<sup>215</sup> Donfried, *Romans Debate*, 44.

<sup>216</sup> Donfried, *Romans Debate*, lxx.

<sup>217</sup> Harry Gamble, Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

<sup>218</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 38.

16.<sup>219</sup> Second, we have the testimony of Origen that Marcion shortened the original letter due to theological considerations.<sup>220</sup> Third, the fourteen chapter version of the letter is almost impossible to defend given the strong connection of 15:1-13 with chapter 14 and 15:14-32 with 1:8-13. Fourth, the fifteen chapter version of the letter is supported only by a single manuscript and Gamble shows that appending chapter 16 is a much more complicated process than Manson's theory suggests. Fifth, Gamble notes that the culture of this time was highly mobile and suggests that the lifting of Claudius' edict ordering the expulsion of the Jews led many exiles including Prisca and Aquila to return to their homes in Rome.<sup>221</sup> Furthermore, this mobility may account for not only the move of this Jewish couple from Ephesus to Rome and back again but may also explain how Paul knew so many Christians in Rome. On this point Gamble notes as well that in letters to churches where Paul is well acquainted with his audience the greetings are not numerous but rather few.<sup>222</sup> Gamble notes that the numerous greetings in Romans may be intended both to bolster respect for one another in a divided community and also to gain support for Paul's further mission to Spain.<sup>223</sup> Finally, Gamble does an analysis of all the canonical letters of Paul and concludes that every one of them ends with a grace benediction. If 15:33 is the ending of Romans then we have the letter ending with a peace benediction and not the grace benediction which is only found in chapter 16.<sup>224</sup> Gamble does recognize the problem of the duplication of the peace wish (15:33 and 16:20a) as well as the repetition of the grace benediction (16:20b, 16:24, 16:28).<sup>225</sup> However, it is

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<sup>219</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 35.

<sup>220</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 14.

<sup>221</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 47-49.

<sup>222</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 75.

<sup>223</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 92.

<sup>224</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 56-95.

<sup>225</sup> Gamble, *Textual History*, 88.

difficult to support the idea that Paul would choose to omit a grace benediction when this is found in all of his other letters. I will, therefore, concur with the growing consensus that the last chapter is original and that 16:20a is part of the Roman letter.

With respect to chapter 16 Francis Watson offers some helpful insights which may advance our discussion. First, he argues that chapter 16 relates closely to Paul's message to the separate congregations of Jews and Gentiles in Rom 14:1-15:13. "The purpose of Romans is to encourage Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, divided over the question of the law, to set aside their differences and to worship together." He continues: "One of the means by which Paul attempts to do this is to include greetings for members of both congregations in the final part of the letter." Watson notes that Paul does not greet individuals directly in Rom 16 but rather "commands his readers to greet them."<sup>226</sup> This is intended to force the leaders of the separate congregations to come together and work out their differences.

### **Conclusion**

Some of the main findings of this chapter may be summarized as follows. First, we looked at Paul's hermeneutic and especially how the writers of the NT used the stories of the OT. Richard Longenecker has suggested four principles under which writers of the NT operated. He says that these writers believed in the idea of corporate solidarity, that the actions of a forefather affected his descendants. Paul uses this concept in Romans to speak of Christians having the same faith as Abraham and of humanity suffering death as a result of Adam's sin. Christians furthermore believed that God

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<sup>226</sup> Francis Watson, "The Two Roman Congregations: Romans 14:1-15:13," in *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp. ed.; ed. by Karl P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 203-15.

tended to work in ways parallel to those ways he had worked in the past. Thus, they saw in OT stories ways in which God was currently working. Writers could thus adapt OT accounts to their current circumstances. Critical to this way of interpretation was the fact that Christ was the lens through which the OT stories were interpreted. Accordingly, we observed in Rom 10:6-8 that Christ now replaced the Law in being accessible to the follower of God.

We saw furthermore that, although the debate continues regarding Paul's level of rhetorical training, even the most skeptical admit his use of rhetorical devices. When it comes to diatribe, we saw that the Corinthian epistles clearly evidence that diatribe does not always suggest an imaginary opponent and that thus the book of Romans could address the historical circumstances of the church. We also observed that, while these debates between author and opponent could address real situations, writers could also on occasion employ a character from history, living or dead, to show the results of certain courses of action. Most often diatribe was used to show opposing viewpoints. The opposing viewpoints in Rom 6-8 flowed out of the *synkrisis* of Rom 5:12-21 where the effects of Adam's actions are contrasted with those of Christ. *Synkrisis*, or comparison, was one of the first things taught to young school children. Moreover, Plutarch made it a common literary device when he used it to compare historical figures. Thus, I suggest that the comparison of Adam and Christ would be recognized by Paul's audience as a familiar rhetorical tool.

A less common device but still shown to be more familiar than Thurén suggests is the device of impersonation which I have defined for this paper as the author's adoption of the persona of a dead historical figure. I suggested that two characteristics of this

rhetorical technique are important for our discussion of Rom 7. First, impersonation often involves building to a climax and, moreover, this impersonation often incorporates a great deal of *pathos*, or emotion. I argued that writers like Moo and Dunn who suggest that Rom 7 is too emotional to not require some autobiographical element may thus only be noticing that Paul has endeavored to embrace the pathos of this literary device. Second, I noted that impersonation sometimes involves allowing one character to speak a truth which concerns an entire group.

Finally, we looked at textual criticism and especially the importance of whether chapter 16 should be seen as an original part of Romans. We saw that the tide had now turned in its favor largely as a result of the dissertation of Gamble who analyzed Paul's letters and showed that all of them concluded with a grace wish which would be true in Romans only if chapter 16 is included in the book. This in turn suggests that the story of Adam runs all the way from Rom 1 through Rom 16 where Paul mentions that God will soon trample Satan under foot (Rom 16:20; Gen 3:15).

### CHAPTER 3 – THE ADAM STORY IN JUDAISM

*This chapter examines the growing interest in the story of Adam within Judaism. Like the doctrine of the resurrection, there is little interest in the story of the Fall in the OT but by the time of Paul, or slightly later, there are entire books written about Adam and Eve and their sin. Jews sought both an explanation for their current plight as well as a picture of what restoration might entail. Both questions eventually found an answer in the story of Adam. However, explanations were certainly not uniform in Judaism. Various opinions were propounded regarding the relationship between Adam's fall and universal death, and also concerning the corruption of humanity and nature. One loss which was especially connected with Adam's sin was that of glory. Finally, this chapter looks at the issue of whether or not Adam himself possessed all or some portion of the Mosaic Law, and at various figures with which Adam was compared.*

It has become increasingly apparent in recent scholarship that Paul was thoroughly Jewish in his outlook. That he was influenced by the Greek culture in which he lived is certainly true, but Paul's primary roots were in Judaism. Therefore, when we seek for Paul's understanding of the Adam story, we must first look to the writings of the Jews in both the OT and the extra-biblical sources. Moreover, there is little doubt that the story of creation was a prominent theme in Judaism, a story that certainly included the creation of the first couple. Fretheim comments: "Explicit creational interests occur in every corner of the Old Testament, including in every major tradition, from early to late, including the priestly, Exodus, Sinai, Royal-Zion, and prophetic traditions, and in numerous echoes and allusions. They also occur in most types of literature: poetry and prose, laments and hymns of praise, narratives and Wisdom poems, prophetic oracles and apocalyptic visions."<sup>227</sup>

However, while Fretheim strongly asserts that creational concerns are ubiquitous in the OT, he nevertheless admits that specific interest in the Fall of Adam is more limited. "Genesis 3 has had a high level of value in the history of biblical interpretation,

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<sup>227</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 3.



though apparently not within the Old Testament itself (Ezek 28:11-19 has some uncertain connections).”<sup>228</sup> In this chapter I will explore Ezek 28 and its “uncertain connections” to Adam as well as look at a few other OT texts cited by other writers. However, one might ask here, if there is such a paucity of material in the OT outside of Genesis itself on the Fall, does this lack call into question its importance for Paul? Are there any other Jewish texts which Paul may have relied upon where this “high level of value in the history of biblical interpretation” began, or have most of the views we have come from Paul’s own pen? Indeed, are our views regarding Adam more the result of later biblical theologizing by the church rather than Paul’s own perspective?

Stowers argues that this last suggestion is almost certainly the case. Indeed, it is for just this reason that, while he supports the use of impersonation in Rom 7, he rejects the idea that Paul could be employing Adam as his subject. He contends that in order to see Adam in this passage we must impose later theological views regarding Adam that did not exist in Paul’s time onto the text of Romans. He says that “Jewish literature before 70 C.E. shows little interest in the effects of Adam’s transgression. The Adamic fall does not serve as *the* explanation for *the* human predicament.”<sup>229</sup> Stowers continues:

Adam, as the first human, commits the first sin, and God punishes sin. But extant pre-70 Jewish literature does not make the leap to connect human sinfulness with primeval sin. Fourth Ezra and 2 Baruch, both post-70 writings, display a greater emphasis on the effects of Adam’s transgression.. But this interest stems from a profound pessimism generated by the catastrophe to Judaism caused by the destruction of Jerusalem. Paul lived on the other side of this divide. The Judaism of 4 Ezra and Baruch would have been unimaginable to the apostle.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Fretheim, *God and World*, 70.

<sup>229</sup> Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 87.

<sup>230</sup> Stowers, *Rereading*, 87-88.

Is Stowers correct in his contention? Does the view that I am contending for, that Rom 7 involves the impersonation of Adam, depend on later theological views of which Paul was unaware? It is the purpose of this chapter to explore Jewish literature on the subject of Adam in an endeavor to respond to Stowers' rejection of the Adamic backdrop.

From the start it is important to acknowledge that Stowers is correct in pointing out that interest in the Adam story increased over time. As in the case of bodily resurrection, there are far fewer references to Adam in the OT than in the New. However, the paucity of OT references to resurrection has not prevented it from being incorporated as a major component of the NT including the writings of Paul. Certainly Jesus' own resurrection from the dead played a leading role in this change. However, that cannot be regarded as the only factor. In *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, N.T. Wright demonstrates that even prior to Jesus the Pharisees of whom Paul was a member held a strong belief in bodily resurrection. I would suggest, contra Stowers, that a similar increase in interest in the Adam story was occurring prior to the fall of Jerusalem and before Paul wrote his epistles. Thus, Stowers may be correct that the fall of Jerusalem piqued increased interest in the Adam story. However, as discussed below, there were cataclysmic events in the Jewish nation prior to A.D. 70 which fostered interest in both the resurrection of the dead and the sin of the first man.

It should also be admitted that our task is not one of absolute precision since the dating of many of the documents which contain references to Adam is highly speculative. For example, *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* do, as Stowers suggests, almost certainly post-date Paul. Other books, however, like the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Jubilees*, undoubtedly precede his time. Many other writings are questionable. For example, Levison argues that

much of the material from the *Apocalypse of Moses* predates Paul while many others regard it as coming later.<sup>231</sup> In addition, many of these writings are composite containing material spanning a wide range of time. For example, Nickelsburg notes that *1 Enoch* contains five books and two appendices which “were composed between the fourth century B.C.E. and the turn of the Common Era.”<sup>232</sup> And, even though Nickelsburg dates all of these prior to Paul’s epistles, the problem is not completely solved since many of the intertestamental writings also contain interpolations from later writers. We thus cannot always be certain that the comments about Adam are part of the older text. Finally, even if one can demonstrate that some of the texts existed in the first century, this does not prove that Paul himself knew them or agreed with their perspectives.

These factors can have a rather paralyzing effect on biblical interpretation.

However, Robin Scroggs addresses these issues in detail and gives the following helpful response:

If one admits only those materials which it is likely Paul actually read, then a chapter on the post-biblical writings would be of little value. Even of less value would be a chapter on rabbinic materials. Much of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha is, as far as we know, contemporary or later than Paul, and as everyone knows, no written rabbinic materials existed until probably at least a century after Paul’s death. Recent scholarship has increasingly been recognizing, however, that to seek out the literary background of a figure like Paul is not as important as recovering the general cultic and communal environment out of which he lived. On the one hand, the result is a few passages of uncertain worth, since one can rarely know with assurance what Paul actually read, once it is decided what he could have read. On the other hand, a rich religious culture is uncovered whose main concerns and ways of thinking Paul would undoubtedly have known. Particularly is the latter approach possible for the Jewish community, whose oral tradition one cannot doubt was both persistent and widespread throughout the centuries surrounding

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<sup>231</sup> John R. Levison, “Adam and Eve in Romans 1.18-25 and the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*,” *NTS* 50 (2004), 519-34.

<sup>232</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 1-8.

Paul. Philo's discussion of Adam proves, for example, that he knew rabbinic teaching of which we know nothing from rabbinic teaching itself until later.<sup>233</sup>

This chapter will, therefore, examine some of the writings of ancient Judaism to show how they employed the story of Adam. Many of these writings will, without a doubt, have been familiar to Paul. Others he will certainly not have known. However, even in instances where familiarity is unlikely, it is probable that he still would have been familiar with at least some of the ideas present in these texts. Although I will endeavor to constrain my examination largely to the earlier material, I will also on occasion insert a few relevant points from later writings. As we will see, some of the references to Adam in this literature fit quite nicely with Paul's own arguments, while others do not. In fact, some of the writings take an opposing view. However, as I demonstrated above, Paul not only uses the OT but also adapts it to his own purposes, sometimes agreeing and sometimes disagreeing with Jewish tradition. Consequently, I will delay discussion of Paul's own perspective, returning to many of these topics when I examine the apostle's own writings.

### Old Testament

We begin our discussion with texts with which Paul was certainly familiar, the books of the OT. Unfortunately, as noted above, there is little comment on the Adam story outside of Genesis. One possible reason for this paucity is suggested by Davies who contends that "Judaism generally discouraged speculation of a cosmological kind. The discussion of Gen. I. 2 and Ezekiel I. 4ff. was forbidden: they were considered subjects

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<sup>233</sup> Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 16-17.

suitable only for the few. Because certain mystical and esoteric groups within Judaism had made these chapters the object of study, and many had been corrupted thereby, cosmological speculation was regarded as a menace to religious faith.”<sup>234</sup> Davies cites a specific warning in Sir 3.21-24 regarding the dangers of prying into these secret things.

Nevertheless, interest in the future eventually prevailed over these warnings and writers increasingly began to speculate about eschatology. One of the leading factors driving this interest was the perception that the condition of the present world was deteriorating. Stowers links this interest in the Adam story to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and this certainly was a monumental point in the history of Israel which drove its people to rethink their beliefs. However, many would argue that it was not the first such incident. Bruce Malina notes that the entire period from 200 B.C. to A.D. 150 were years of significant crisis.<sup>235</sup> Davies points back even earlier to events that triggered growing interest in the doctrine of the Fall. “It is clear that the Exile had burnt the sense of sin into the very being of the Jewish nation.”<sup>236</sup> Thus, the people of Israel were looking for a reason for their punishment as early as 586 B.C. when Jerusalem first fell, and hope for a brighter future. F.R. Tennant observes that it “is noteworthy that the allusions to the garden of Eden (Ezek. xxviii. 13, xxxi. 8, 9, Isai. li. 3) belong to the prophets of the captivity: Joel ii. 3 is perhaps an exception, though it may be post-exilic.”<sup>237</sup> Thus, Stowers’ suggestion that A.D. 70 is the hinge which opens the door to an interest in Adam’s sin does not comport with the historical facts concerning Israel and the growth of apocalyptic literature which started centuries before. Philo, for example, writes prior to

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<sup>234</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 37.

<sup>235</sup> Bruce J. Malina, “Some Observations on the Origin of Sin in Judaism and St. Paul,” *CBQ* 31 (1969), 18.

<sup>236</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 38.

<sup>237</sup> F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* (1903; repr., New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 91 n.1.

the fall of Jerusalem and his writings are filled with examinations of the Genesis accounts. He, along with many other Jewish writers before him, was interested in the origins of evil, and the story of the Fall provided one source for their speculation.

Why this interest in the beginning of the biblical story in the midst of what appeared to many to be an approach to its denouement? Davies responds by saying that there “are passages in the Old Testament where the Messianic Age is pictured in cosmological terms, as a return to the perfection of the beginning.”<sup>238</sup> He especially notes various texts from Isaiah, like 65:25, where harmony in nature is restored. He believes that this text specifically displays its connection with Gen 3:14 when the prophet proclaims that “dust will be the serpent’s food.”<sup>239</sup> Larry Kreitzer concurs with Davies regarding restoration: “The Messianic Age is thus the re-establishment of the original creation. That this correspondence between *Endzeit* and *Urzeit* existed within Judaism can be easily demonstrated. The Messianic Age is spoken of in terms of the first creation in 4 Ezra 7:29.”<sup>240</sup> This text with its surrounding context reads:

At the end of that time, my son the Messiah shall die, and so shall all mankind who draw breath. Then the world shall return to its original silence for seven days as at the beginning of creation, and no one shall be left alive. After seven days the age which is not yet awake shall be roused and the age which is corruptible shall die. (7:29-31)<sup>241</sup>

In addition, Malina notes that this idea of a return to perfection led also to great enhancements to the original story. As people sought a brighter future and compared it to the beginning, that beginning in turn became brighter as well. On the other hand people sought an explanation for their present suffering and one solution was found in the

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<sup>238</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 37.

<sup>239</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 37 n.6.

<sup>240</sup> Larry Kreitzer, “Christ and Second Adam in Paul,” *CV* 32 (1989), 60.

<sup>241</sup> All passages from the Apocrypha are from *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) unless otherwise noted.

original sin of Adam. These writers thus point to Israel's belief in a time before the Fall which was a time when everything was right. The new age would be a restoration of this paradise. In order to enhance the beauty of the future the past was aggrandized beyond the original accounts. Furthermore, the Fall was viewed as a reason for the present suffering, and this present world of woe was contrasted with the restored paradise to come.

I suggested earlier that one reason for finding relatively few references to Adam in the OT was the prohibition against cosmological speculation. Another reason for this paucity is that the personal name "Adam" in Hebrew is also the generic term for "man." This means that we cannot always be certain whether a writer is referring to the Adam of Gen 3 or to humanity in general. Thus, it may well be the case that some references to generic humanity are also intended by the writer to have an underlying reference to the specific character, Adam. This connection is often lost in English translations. Tennant discusses this difficulty citing two OT passages as examples:

Possible allusions to Adam's transgression occur in Job xxxi. 33, 'If like Adam I covered my transgressions,' and Hos. vi. 7, 'But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant.' But though these renderings have found place in the text of the R.V., and that of the former verse at least is still sometimes maintained to be the more natural sense (see, *e.g.*, Gibson's *Commentary on Job, in loc.*), the alternatives given in the margin of the R.V., in which for the proper name Adam is substituted 'man' or 'men,' are now generally adopted.<sup>242</sup>

As we will see, a similar debate exists with regard to several Qumran texts. At this point, however, it is important to keep in mind that, for Jewish audiences, אָדָם was inseparably linked to the creation story. In some instances the association with the specific Genesis

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<sup>242</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 91 n.1.

character is more overt but, by virtue of his very name, “Adam” becomes a corporate representative for all humanity.

Aside from the use of the name “Adam,” Tennant also notes that various images are employed to call attention to the creation story. “The phrase ‘tree of life’ (Prov. iii. 18, xi. 30, xiii. 12) is possibly derived from the legendary conception embodied in Gen. ii-iii., and surviving in traditional lore, as well as its equivalent ‘fountain of life’ (Prov. x. 11, xiii. 14, xiv. 27).”<sup>243</sup> These images course through the pages of the Bible right up to its very close in the last chapter of the book of Revelation where the new Jerusalem is pictured as flowing with “a river of the water of life” and we find growing beside it “the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of fruit*” (Rev 22:1-2). We will see that Paul not only uses the name of Adam and alludes to his story but also plays on these other images as well.

One of the clearest examples of the use of the Adam story in the OT is found in Ezek 28. Most writers see some connection between the king of Tyre and the first created being, Adam, although as G. A. Cooke contends, this “is nowhere stated.”<sup>244</sup> Here again, we must rely on verbal clues rather than specific mention of the name “Adam” to conclude that he is the subject of the discussion. Daniel Block, commenting on the cherub mentioned in 28:14, states that

the numerous allusions to Gen. 1-3 link this cherub with the first man, Adam of Gen. 2-3. This is most obvious in the setting of the second oracle in Eden, the garden of God. . . . Like the king of Tyre, the first man (1) was created by God, (2) was divinely authorized to rule over the garden as king, (3) not being satisfied with the status of *'ādām*, sought or claimed divinity, (4) was punished for this hubris by humiliation and death.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 91 n.1.

<sup>244</sup> G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (1936; repr., Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1967), 315.

<sup>245</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 117-18.



In addition, Dexter Callender argues that the phrase “turned you to ashes” in 28:18 refers not only to the burning of the city of Tyre but also to the return of the primal human to the dust of the earth.<sup>246</sup> He argues that even though the word for “ashes” is אֵפֶר rather than “dust,” עֹפָר (Gen 2:7), these words are interchangeable and used together to describe the return to death (e.g. Job 30:19, Gen 18:27).<sup>247</sup> Thus, Callender sees a reference to the creation of Adam from the dust of the ground which supports the view that Adam is the background for these images. This “dust” metaphor further combined with the twofold use of אֵפֶר (vv. 13, 15) clearly links the passage to the creation of Adam from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7).

However, while there are clear links to the Adam story, Ezekiel at the same time has taken obvious liberties with the story in order to adapt it to his own purpose. John Wevers comments on some of the similarities but then notes distinct differences as well:

In this lament the king of Tyre is compared in a sustained figure to Primeval Man of a Paradise myth. The myth has some parallels to the J story of Adam and Eve of Gen. 2 and 3. In both a primeval state of perfection obtained; in both a garden of God is a setting; in both Primeval Man sinned and was ejected to die; in both a cherub was involved. But the Ezekiel myth has numerous elements which are at variance with the J story. Only one individual is involved. Though Eden is mentioned, the dominant setting is the mountain of God. The description of primeval bliss is one of adornment, whereas in J the first pair were naked; fiery stones were present on the mountain of God; only one cherub is present who takes part in the ejection, and the final punishment was not only ejection but consumption by fire.<sup>248</sup>

Thus, one specific difference that Wevers notes is that in the Garden Adam and Eve are initially naked. However, in the Ezekiel story, we are told in v. 13 that “every precious

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<sup>246</sup> Dexter E. Callender, Jr., *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 127.

<sup>247</sup> Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 129.

<sup>248</sup> John W. Wevers, *Ezekiel* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969), 215.

stone was your covering” and we are given a list of nine stones. Block disputes the idea that we need to go outside Genesis for this background, pointing to the precious stones of Gen 2:12, and debates those who see an association with the high priest’s garment. He says that “it is doubtful that either Ezekiel or his audience would have tolerated the image of a pagan king dressed in the most sacred of all Israelite garb.” This is especially true since Ezekiel himself was a priest.<sup>249</sup> Block is correct that Gen 2:12-13 mentions gold which is found in the Ezekiel passage and two other stones. However, of these two other stones, “bdellium” and “onyx,” only the latter is one of the precious stones found in Ezekiel. Callender does note a later tradition in Pseudo-Philo 26 which connects the source of the high priest’s stones with the Havilah of Gen 2:11-12. This text mentions that the stones are placed in the Ark of the Covenant which is watched over by the two cherubim.<sup>250</sup> However, this goes far beyond the Genesis account and nowhere do we see any of the characters in the Garden actually depicted as wearing these stones. As Wevers has already noted, the first pair were naked.

Thus, the argument of Donald Gowan is far more convincing:

there are only about seventeen precious stones mentioned in the Old Testament . . . [and] the probability of selecting at random nine stones out of a group of seventeen and getting none but stones which are among the twelve in Exod. 28 is only about 1/120. Also four of the nine stones are mentioned only in these two places in the Old Testament. Most commentators, then, have concluded that the list of stones on the high priest’s breastplate was copied into the Ezekiel text some time after it was written, and they believe that the fact the Septuagint contains a list of twelve stones just as in Exod. 28 confirms this.<sup>251</sup>

Although there is some jumbling between the two lists, we find consistency as well. For example, the first and second stones in both lists are the same. Stones four through six in Ezekiel are ten through twelve in Exodus. The three missing stones from Ezekiel are all

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<sup>249</sup> Block, *Ezekiel*, 111-12.

<sup>250</sup> Callender, *Adam*, 104.

<sup>251</sup> Donald E. Gowan, *When Man Becomes God: Humanism and Hybris in the Old Testament* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1975), 83.

from the same row in Exodus. In addition, Callender further notes that the root כָּסָה used to describe this “covering” of stones in Ezekiel is often used for the idea of a “covering” or “screen” and notes that this appears frequently in reference to cloth screens in the court of the tabernacle. This lends further support to a cultic article of clothing.<sup>252</sup>

Coupling these arguments with the fact that there appears to be quite a bit of other cultic imagery in the Ezekiel passage, gives one confidence that the precious stones are indeed drawn from Exodus. Here then we see evidence, as Fretheim and Keesmaat have earlier claimed in regard to other texts, of an association between the Genesis story and that of the exodus. Both of these narratives are combined by Ezekiel for his own distinctive use as a proclamation of judgment against the King of Tyre.

We may further note that Ezekiel elsewhere makes the river of Genesis, besides which grow trees for healing, flow out of the temple (47:1-12) and that the account of God breathing into the dry bones in Ezek 37 recalls the life breathed into the first man. In Ezek 31:9 the prophet compares Assyria to a tree which made the other trees of Eden jealous. Thus, this book is filled with images from the Garden but used in quite distinctive ways and often in association with cultic images.

While we may then agree with Stowers that Ezek 28 does not draw a direct line of causation between Adam and the sin of humanity, the prophecy does demonstrate that the King of Tyre’s fall is meant to parallel that of Adam. Although both were exalted to high ruling positions, they failed to obey God and their desire for even greater exaltation led to their humiliation. In this way the King of Tyre is pictured as, in some sense, imitating the sin of Adam.

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<sup>252</sup> Callender, *Adam*, 100-1.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis emphasize that humanity plunged rapidly into excessive sin. Some scholars note that the intertestamental literature places early emphasis on the beginning of evil in Gen 6. However, chronologically the murder of Abel by Cain and the murder committed by Lamech have already occurred (Gen 4) before the sin of the angels. Thus, from the perspective of the biblical writer, the downward plunge begins before Gen 6. Davies acknowledges the early importance of Gen 6 but notes that “attention was more and more fixed on Gen. 3, which by the first century A.D. played the predominant part in all mythological speculation on the origin of sin.”<sup>253</sup> It is difficult to argue that the torrent of wickedness pictured in Gen 4-11 is not meant to be seen in some way as precipitated by the Garden Fall in the preceding chapter. In other words, Adam’s sin begins the flood that follows.

However, while this may be true, the question of just how Adam’s sin affected his progeny became a matter of great debate in the first century. Did Adam’s fall result in the death of the entire human race or just his own? Did it result in the corruption of only his own heart or of both his and his descendants? In other words, is Adam corporately responsible for all of humanity, or is each individual responsible for his or her own outcome? Let us briefly look at some of the intertestamental literature as it relates to these questions.

### **Intertestamental Literature**

Malina comments that the earliest intertestamental Jewish writings did indeed focus on Gen 6 rather than Gen 3 for the origins of evil. This is evident in *1 Enoch*. “In the exegetical traditions derived from this text, sin in its many forms is traced back to the

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<sup>253</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 38.

rebellion and fall of angels. More specifically, it derives from their demon progeny, whose evil brood fill the air and hover continually over the earth, the home of their mothers (cf. 1 Enoch 6,1-6; 7,1-6; 15,2-12-16,1).”<sup>254</sup> Malina, however, also cites *1 Enoch* 98:4 which says that “sin has not been sent upon earth, but man of himself has created it, and under a great curse shall they fall who commit it.”<sup>255</sup> The following verse speaks of barrenness falling upon a woman as a punishment for “the deeds of her own hands.” We observe then that angels are seen as the primary source of evil but individual human responsibility is equally emphasized. Sin in *1 Enoch* is viewed as the result of individual deeds and not the result of Adam’s sin. “Woman” clearly cannot be a reference to Eve in this text since Eve herself was not barren.

Malina further points to the importance of Gen 6 in the book of *Jubilees*. However, here the Fall story is added. “The book of Jubilees further attempts to clarify Gn 6,1-4 in terms of Gn 3 (Jub 3,17-26 = Gn 3,1-7.16 [LXX].17-19.21.24). Here evil derives from Eve’s obedience to the serpent, and Adam’s obedience to Eve *and* disobedience to God. The result is a death sentence, true; yet this account seems to be a harmonization of Gn 6 exegesis with the fresh data of Gn 3.”<sup>256</sup> Malina believes this division of fault confusing. Wedderburn, however, commenting on the later book of Wisdom, argues that “the fact that Wisdom could speak both of death originating at the devil’s instigation and of the unrighteous inviting death by their own actions should warn us that the Jews found it possible to lay the cause of death now at the door of some primeval agent and now at that of all men and found these two aspects complementary to

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<sup>254</sup> Malina, “Some Observations,” 22

<sup>255</sup> Malina, “Some Observations,” 23.

<sup>256</sup> Malina, “Some Observations,” 23.

one another; we shall recall this pattern when we come to investigate R. v 12.”<sup>257</sup> It should be noted that Gen 3 itself divides responsibility and punishment among the serpent (vv. 14-15), Eve (v. 16) and Adam (v. 17). It is not impossible then in Judaism to find the same writer blaming Adam for the presence of sin in the world and its catastrophic results while at the same time ascribing fault to each individual human being. Furthermore, responsibility may also be laid at the feet of a supra-human being as in the case of the temptation.

Tennant notes that Wis 1:14 and 2:23 speak of God as having originally created humanity to be immortal but the actions of godless men and the devil’s envy has resulted in death. However, Tennant argues that this immortality only refers to the soul of the righteous and that the physical death of the body was deemed a natural occurrence instituted by God himself. Thus, the death that the devil ushers in is that of ethical death. This is evidenced in Wis 7:1 where the writer compares himself to the first man in that they are both dust and mortal but does not state that this mortality is a result of Adam’s sin.<sup>258</sup> Tennant further argues that the story of Genesis can be interpreted in many ways. For example, Adam’s original creation from dust may point to his natural mortality and access to the tree of life was the supernatural means of avoiding that natural consequence.<sup>259</sup>

As far as inherited depravity is concerned, Tennant cites two texts which present contrasting views on the subject. The first, Wis 8:20, speaks of Solomon having entered into “an unblemished body.” “The force of the word ἀμίαντον is not diminished by the

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<sup>257</sup> Alexander John Maclagan Wedderburn, “Adam and Christ: An Investigation into the Background of 1 Corinthians xv and Romans v 12-21” (PhD. diss. King’s College; University of Cambridge, 1970), 61.

<sup>258</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 125-27.

<sup>259</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 117-18.

fact that the writer professed the spiritualism characteristic of the Alexandrian school; for he nowhere teaches that the body, or that matter in general, is essentially or actively evil. If any conclusion be drawn, therefore, from the verse in question, it must be that Pseudo-Solomon knew of no doctrine of an inherent and necessary sinfulness propagated by descent from Adam."<sup>260</sup> On the other hand, Tennant does find evidence for just this kind of inherited depravity in a second text. "Its proof is rather to be derived from xii. 10, 11, where inborn and transmitted corruption, caused by the cursing of their ancestor Noah, is unmistakably attributed to the Canaanites."<sup>261</sup>

But thou didst carry out their sentence gradually to give them space for repentance, knowing well their way of thinking would not change to the end of time, for there was a curse on their race from the beginning. (Wis 12:10-11)

Wisdom 12:10-11 could certainly be seen as providing the foundational groundwork for a later doctrine of inherited depravity. However, Tennant notes that this text falls short in one fundamental way:

The possibility, and indeed the actuality, of transmission of a depraved nature by physical descent is plainly asserted; but the one essential feature of the doctrine of Original Sin, derivation of a universal taint from Adam's transgression, is altogether wanting. The Book of Wisdom shows us, in fact, all the collected materials for the elaboration of the doctrine; the introduction from without of evil and (spiritual) death, the transgression of 'the protoplast,' the local actuality of transmitted viciousness, the universal frailty of the race; the data all are here: but they are not yet elaborated into a single generalisation.<sup>262</sup>

Thus, although corruption is passed on from an ancestor to his or her descendants, according to Wisdom, there is no universal taint transmitted to all humanity. However, as Tennant suggests, all the materials are there for a later writer to assemble in a coherent

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<sup>260</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 129-30.

<sup>261</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 130.

<sup>262</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 130-31.

doctrinal scheme. Furthermore, evidence from this particular book ought to be taken seriously due to the close affinities often noted between it and Paul's letter to the Romans. For example, Wis 13 parallels many of Paul's statements in Rom 1 regarding the revelation of God through creation and humanity's rejection of that revelation.

As we move on to Sirach, Wedderburn claims that "Sir. xxv 24 is the first evidence of the idea of a sentence of death passed on all Adam's posterity."<sup>263</sup> "Woman is the origin of sin, and it is through her that we all die" (Sir 25:24). Wedderburn further remarks concerning this text: "The language of the second line is important here: we all die δι' αὐτήν (הַבְּגִלָּה); בְּגִלָּהּ is frequently used in the Old Testament of punishment coming to a person because of the guilt or fault of another (or of reward or blessing because of another's virtue or merit."<sup>264</sup> Wedderburn cites several examples (Gen 2:3, 30:27, 39:5, Deut 1:37; 1 Kgs 14:16; Jer 15:4 (also Sir 10:8, 41:7)). Since the last reference is from the same book, we will cite it here:

A godless father is blamed by his children for the disgrace they endure on his account. (Sir 41:7)

Tennant notes that this causation could be interpreted as true of both halves of Sir 25:24 but he says that only the latter half should be interpreted that way. "In the literally rendered words of xxv. 24, the Fall was the *cause* of death, but only the *beginning* of sin."<sup>265</sup> He argues that Sirach does not believe that Eve is the cause of humanity's corruption but rather believes in an evil inclination which was originally planted by God himself.<sup>266</sup> Levison supports this idea as well although he speaks of a neutral capacity rather than an evil one, citing 15:14. Moreover, he disagrees with both Wedderburn and

<sup>263</sup> Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 24.

<sup>264</sup> Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 59.

<sup>265</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 121.

<sup>266</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 111-17.



Tennant in that he does not believe that Sir 25:24 refers to Eve at all and does not support the view that Sirach believes that Eve brought death upon all humanity. In Levison's view death, according to Sirach, is rather a natural occurrence instituted at creation. Accordingly, the "woman" of 25:24 is not Eve but rather the evil wife who leads her husband into sin. "We all" refers to all men who are married to such an evil wife.<sup>267</sup>

This interpretation is certainly possible, as Malina notes, but in light of later texts it is unlikely. "'Woman' stands without an article, and may refer to womankind. Perhaps this was the author's interpretation of Eve. Be that as it may, the Life of Adam and Eve 3 and *passim*, and the parallel Apocalypse of Moses 24,1 and *passim* (ca. 70 A.D.) throughout lay almost exclusive emphasis on Eve's guilt and causality. The NT preserves this tradition in 1 Tm 2,14 (cf. 2 Cor 11,3)."<sup>268</sup> Contra Malina, the text above in *1 Enoch* where "woman" cannot refer to Eve suggests the idea that it should not refer to her here as well. However, the notion of a single woman causing the death of "all" strongly favors Malina. Moreover, Levison's effort to restrict the "all" to only men married to evil women seems rather forced.

While Tennant claims that Sirach traces the idea of an evil inclination back to creation rather than Eve, he also points out that the idea can be drawn from Genesis itself, citing 6:5 and 8:21 which both speak of the universal corruption of humanity's heart.<sup>269</sup> In addition, he notes Gen 4:7 which portrays sin as a personified power, "couching at the door."<sup>270</sup> Later Rabbinic writers became quite creative in their use of Genesis in formulating this doctrine. For example, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Gen 2:7 states:

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<sup>267</sup> John R. Levison, "Is Eve to Blame? A Contextual Analysis of Sirach 25:24," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 617-23.

<sup>268</sup> Malina, "Some Observations," 24.

<sup>269</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 97-98.

<sup>270</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 97.

“The Lord God *created Adam with two inclinations.*” These good and evil inclinations are derived from the fact that the verb in this verse (וַיִּצְרָא) contains two yods.<sup>271</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* employs a similar line of argument in claiming that Adam’s sin resulted not only in his own death but also in the death of all humanity. In its commentary on Gen 2:17, we read:

[Since the verb, ‘you shall surely die,’ uses the root ‘die’ more than once, what is indicated is] the death penalty for Adam, for Eve, and for coming generations.(XVI.VI.4.B)<sup>272</sup>

In the book of *2 Enoch* 30, that writer sees God as recognizing the corrupt nature of man even before the making of Eve which, of course, would also make it prior to the Fall.

Whereas I have come to know his nature, he does not know his own nature. That is why ignorance is more lamentable than the sin such as it is in him to sin. And I said, ‘After sin there is nothing for it but death. And I assigned a shade for him; and I imposed sleep upon him, and he fell asleep. And while he was sleeping, I took from him a rib. And I created for him a wife, so that death might come <to him> by his wife. (*2 Enoch* 30:16-17)<sup>273</sup>

Tennant cites *2 Enoch* and says that “if the whole of the longer recension (*A*) of the book be as old as the shorter (*B*), and the date generally assigned to the book as a whole, *i.e.* the first half of the first century A.D., be correct, we have here the earliest occurrence of the idea of inborn infirmity inherited from Adam, and a Jewish doctrine of Original Sin more explicit, and earlier, than the teaching of S. Paul upon the subject.”<sup>274</sup> Levison,

<sup>271</sup> Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Translated with Introduction and Notes* (Collegeville: Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 381.

<sup>272</sup> Jacob Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis: A New American Translation: Volume I Parashiyot One through Thirty-Three on Genesis 1:1 to 8:14* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 177.

<sup>273</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, (New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 1:152.

<sup>274</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 210.

however, notes that the dating is highly problematic with suggestions ranging all the way from pre-Christian times down to the Middle Ages.<sup>275</sup>

However, even if one questions the dating of *2 Enoch*, Davies notes that the concept of the “evil impulse” appears as early as Sir 15.11-14.<sup>276</sup> Tennant states that the doctrines of the evil *yezer* and Original Sin are “theoretically different” since the former was not associated with the Fall of Adam. However, he goes on to say that it is “in practical tendency equivalent to it.”<sup>277</sup> Nevertheless, it should be noted that Sirach still affirms humanity’s ability to choose to keep the commandments in spite of the presence of this evil *yezer*.

The idea that God would have created humanity with an evil nature is very troublesome to Philo. To solve that problem, “Philo explains that God created the part which produces virtue and the helps the part which produces vice. Therefore, God is not the cause of evil.”<sup>278</sup> Since Philo regarded this part of humanity as placed there at creation, it is fair to agree with Tennant that Philo “did not hold any such view of the fall of Adam as would attribute to it the cause of the sinful tendency of his descendants.”<sup>279</sup>

*Second Baruch* 54:15, 19 seems to answer affirmatively to the question of whether Adam’s sin brought death to his descendants but negatively to the question regarding inward corruption.

For, although Adam sinned first and has brought death upon all who were not in his own time, yet each of them who has been born from him has prepared for himself the coming torment. And further, each of them has chosen for himself the coming glory. Adam is, therefore, not the cause,

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<sup>275</sup> John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 31.

<sup>276</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 20.

<sup>277</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 228.

<sup>278</sup> Levison, *Portraits*, 67; citing *Creation*. 72-75

<sup>279</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 135.

except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam. (2 *Baruch* 54:15, 19)<sup>280</sup>

Thus, according to 2 *Baruch*, Adam is responsible for humanity's death, but we are responsible for our own corruption or glory. It is still within our free will to choose. Tennant writes: "This is as stark a repudiation of what is commonly meant by original sin, *i.e.* the heredity of moral incapacity caused by Adam, as could be expressed. The passage is an explicit assertion of man's ability to fulfil the commandments of God, a capacity in no way prejudiced by the Fall; man's sin consists exclusively 'in the following of Adam.'"<sup>281</sup> In other words, humans merely follow in Adam's footsteps according to 2 *Baruch* rather than receiving original sin from him. Tennant, however, citing 48:42-43, suggests that Baruch may allow the contrasting viewpoint as well.

And I answered and said: O Adam, what did you do to all who were born after you? And what will be said of the first Eve who obeyed the serpent, so that this whole multitude is going to corruption? And countless are those whom the fire devours. (2 *Baruch* 48:42-43)<sup>282</sup>

In these verses Baruch appears to draw a direct causative link between the actions of Adam and Eve and the resulting corruption of humanity, though it may still be noted that the writer says that all "are going to corruption" and not that they have already been made corrupt by the Fall. Levison argues that what Baruch actually writes is a question, not a statement of fact, which he then goes on to rebut.<sup>283</sup> Since the surrounding context emphasizes the responsibility of individual action (48:40) and contrasts the outcomes of the wicked in this paragraph with the outcome of the righteous in the next, it is probably

<sup>280</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:640.

<sup>281</sup> Tennant, *Sources*, 217.

<sup>282</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:637.

<sup>283</sup> Levison, *Portraits*, 135.

best to infer, especially in light of 54:15, 19, that Baruch does not support the idea of an inherited corruption passed down from Adam.

*Fourth Ezra* 4:30 is more in line with the thought that Adam passed on not only death but also corruption to his descendants:

For a grain of evil seed was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning, and how much ungodliness it has produced until now, and will produce until the time of threshing comes! (*4 Ezra* 4:30)<sup>284</sup>

In the preceding chapter we saw that God took away the evil heart from Israel when he gave them the Law (3:20). Subsequently, however, we observed that later generations again clothed themselves with the evil heart as Adam had done (3:26). This evil heart is thus viewed by *4 Ezra* as being passed on through descent, as being able to be removed by God, and then as being able to be reestablished in the heart through one's own individual actions. *Fourth Ezra* 7:118 says that Adam's fall was not his alone but also that of his descendants. However, the next verse indicates that death is a result of each individual's own actions.

What can we conclude based on the above evidence concerning Jewish views of the Fall? Without a doubt there was no single prevailing view in Judaism regarding the Fall and its consequences. Some believed that Adam's sin brought death to the human race while others saw it as the natural state of humanity. Still others linked death with the guilt of each individual person. With regard to the notion that the corruption of human nature was a result of Adam's fall, there is very little evidence that such a view was common. We did see in *Wis* 12:10-11 an example of how a father's sin corrupted his own progeny but this idea cannot be equated with the notion of a universal taint passed on from Adam. There is a belief in the evil inclination among writers of this period but most

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<sup>284</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:530-31.

regard this as an original part of human nature rather than a result of Adam's fall. *Fourth Ezra* is without a doubt the most pessimistic of all the writings in this regard but the writer nevertheless allows that some will choose the right path. Unlike the Augustinian concept of the bondage of the will, there is almost universal agreement in the Judaism of Paul's time that humanity is free to choose its own course of action even though there is also a strong belief that humanity invariably chooses the course of sin. As Tennant correctly suggests, the various elements are all present within Judaism which will lead the Church to develop its doctrine of original sin but that this idea already existed in Paul's day is uncertain.

Aside from a few comments from the rabbinic writings regarding the evil inclination, I have tried thus far to restrict the writings I have examined to those before or at least within a few decades of Paul's own life. Speculation about Adam after this time does exponentially increase. Entire books like *The Life of Adam and Eve* will subsequently be written which are devoted to the subject of Adam's creation and subsequent fall. That there was broad interest in this story and that this interest was widely spread over the Roman Empire is, at least in part, demonstrated by the fact that manuscripts of *The Life of Adam and Eve* have been found in Latin, Armenian, Slavonic, Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic as well as the primary Greek manuscript.<sup>285</sup>

We cannot look at all of these writings concerning Adam but Levison argues that there is good reason for us to include *The Life of Adam and Eve* in our analysis. He argues that the original author of much of the material to be found in this book moved in

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<sup>285</sup> *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (ed. Robert Henry Charles; Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004), 2:124-27.

the same circles as Paul and that there are numerous parallels between this book and Paul's writings.

These miscellaneous parallels typically include: the location of paradise in the third heaven in 2 Cor 11.3 and *GLAE* 37.5, where Adam's corpse is taken to paradise in the third heaven; the transformation of Satan into an angel of light in 2 Cor 11.4 and *GLAE* 17; the depiction of God as the 'father of lights' in *GLAE* 36.3 and Jas 1.17; the reference to ἐπιθυμία as the origin of sin in Rom 7.7 and *GLAE* 13.6; and the laying of blame at Eve's feet.<sup>286</sup>

He then writes that there are "correspondences in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* that are substantially more significant, even potentially indispensable, for the interpretation of Rom 1."<sup>287</sup>

Most scholars argue that the *Life of Adam and Eve* is too late to have influenced Romans. Whether this is true or not, let me say that this comment by Levison is especially interesting in light of Stowers' rejection of the Adam impersonation of Rom 7. Stowers argues that this interpretation is impossible because it is based on later Christian systems of sin and salvation which stem from a misreading of Rom 1-3. "Some contemporary scholars believe 1:18-32 to be constructed through allusions to the fall story in Genesis. These attempts are profoundly unconvincing. They fail because they assume the existence and utter obviousness of cultural codes that came centuries later."<sup>288</sup> Specifically, Stowers states that "extant pre-70 Jewish literature does not make the leap to connect human sinfulness with primeval sin."<sup>289</sup> He then says that many of his conclusions are based on Levison's book, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*. Stowers writes: "John Levison has demonstrated the absence of the later Christian focus on

<sup>286</sup> Levison, "Adam and Eve," 520.

<sup>287</sup> Levison, "Adam and Eve," 521.

<sup>288</sup> Stowers, *Rereading*, 86.

<sup>289</sup> Stowers, *Rereading*, 87-88.

Genesis 1-3.”<sup>290</sup> However, Levison himself contends that *The Life of Adam and Eve* is “potentially indispensable” to a correct interpretation of Rom 1. Moreover, Levison, commenting on the author of this book along with those of *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* states that for these writers “there exists a relationship between the primeval sin and human sinfulness.”<sup>291</sup> Thus, Levison, contra Stowers, contends that Paul was aware of at least one writing that included an association between Adam’s sin and human sinfulness. Whether Levison is correct in this assessment is again debatable. However, this statement does indicate that Levison does not reach the same conclusion regarding the use of the Adam story in Romans as does Stowers, despite the latter’s own claim. Levison’s position runs more to the thought that there was no consensus of opinion on the connection between Adam and human sinfulness. Moreover, as Tennant earlier argued, the elements are all there for someone to put it all together, and if the first to do so was not the author of *The Life of Adam and Eve*, then perhaps Paul did so himself.

Thus far we have restricted our examination of the Adam story to Judaism’s views regarding his sin and its effects upon humanity’s moral nature. According to the OT, however, humanity was not the only part of creation affected by the Fall. Genesis speaks of the animosity God placed between the woman’s children and the serpent (Gen 3:15), of the suffering which would result (Gen 3:16, 19), and of the cursing of the ground (Gen 3:17-18). As noted above Isa 65:25 speaks of the new age as a reversal of the animosity existing between God’s creatures. A far lengthier text depicting this reversal can be found earlier in Isaiah 11:6-9. Verse 8 of this passage is especially

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<sup>290</sup> Stowers, *Rereading*, 86.

<sup>291</sup> Levison, *Portraits*, 189.



noteworthy in that it speaks of the cessation of animosity between the child and the serpent.

Although Davies says that Judaism was not completely united in viewing the negative aspects of the world situation as a result of the Fall, the majority did see a causal relation.

Opinions differed as to whether the physical world had lost its pristine perfection through its own sin, e.g. because the earth had allowed unfruitful trees to grow rather than fruitful ones, or had become involved in corruption willy-nilly because of man's sin (Paul in Rom. 8.20 seems to accept the latter view). Similarly some held that the beasts had themselves, like man, disobeyed their Creator, all except the Phoenix, and so entered into corruption. In any case various cosmic disorders followed Adam's sin, the circulation of the planets was affected, fruit took longer to ripen on the trees, vermin appeared on the earth, wild beasts acquired their ferocity and obstinacy and lost their speech. Six things in particular followed the Fall: the earth lost its fruitfulness, as did the trees, and the atmosphere ceased to be clear; while as for man he lost the glory of his appearance, the eternity of his life, and the magnitude of his form.<sup>292</sup>

Unfortunately, much of Davies' evidence is gathered from rabbinic sources.

However, one earlier example may be cited from *Jub. 3* showing that this perspective already existed prior to the fall of Jerusalem:

On that day the mouth of all the beasts and cattle and birds and whatever walked or moved was stopped from speaking because all of them used to speak with one another with one speech and one language. And he sent from the garden of Eden all of the flesh which was in the garden of Eden and all of the flesh was scattered, each one according to its kind and each one according to its family, into the place which was created for them. But from all the beasts and all the cattle he granted to Adam alone that he might cover his shame. (*Jub 3:28-30*)<sup>293</sup>

This text suggests that animals lost their ability to speak in the day of Adam's expulsion and that they were not able to cover their shame as Adam did. They, too, like Adam were then expelled from paradise and scattered upon the earth.

<sup>292</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 39.

<sup>293</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 2:60.

Although the world was looked upon as being marred by the Fall, these writings nevertheless view God as revealing himself to humanity through creation. Wisdom 13:1, for example, condemns those who fail to recognize God through his works.

What born fools all men were who lived in ignorance of God, who from the good things before their eyes could not learn to know him who really is, and failed to recognize the artificer though they observed his works!  
(Wis 13:1)

This chapter goes on to add further condemnation upon humanity because they not only rejected the Creator but, in place of the Creator, they worshiped creation by making images of living creatures (13:10). A text from *2 Baruch* which we examined previously also describes humanity's rejection of the knowledge of God which his works were intended to teach (54:17-18). The importance of this text is further enhanced by the fact that the very next verse speaks of Adam and humanity's responsibility for its own sin.

Adam is, therefore, not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam. (*2 Baruch* 54:19)<sup>294</sup>

The conjunction of these statements indicates that humanity's current rejection of the knowledge of God made available through his works is comparable to the action of Adam in the Garden.

Thus far, we have examined writings related to the moral corruption of humanity, the corruption of creation, and the rejection of the knowledge of God and subsequent idolatry in connection with the Fall. One other concept which becomes a major focus in later Jewish writings is the loss of humanity's glory. Indeed, this later focus on the loss of Adam's glory tends toward the absurd as writers take the extreme in emphasizing it. For example, in *Gen. R.* 8:10 we are told that man was created in the image of God such that the angels could not distinguish him from God and that God had to put him to sleep in

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<sup>294</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:640.

order for the angels to see that Adam was only a man. Similarly, in the *Life of Adam and Eve* 13-16 we are told that the devil lost his own glory for refusing to worship Adam at the command of Michael, the archangel. As Davies asserts in the *Clementine Homilies*, “the glorification of Adam is carried to great lengths. He was conceived as possessing the Spirit of God and, therefore, incapable of sin; he was ignorant of nothing.”<sup>295</sup>

As we observed above, such extreme statements appear to have been driven by a desire to augment the hope of a return to such a glorious time in the future. Nevertheless, we need not reject the idea itself merely because of these extremes. That is, when Adam sinned, his glory was lost as well. *Third Baruch* 4 makes a connection between the loss of glory by Adam and the subsequent plunge of humanity into various acts of evil:

Then know, Baruch, that just as Adam through this tree was condemned and was stripped of the glory of God, thus men now who insatiably drink the wine deriving from it transgress worse than Adam, and become distant from the glory of God, and will secure for themselves eternal fire. For (no) good derives from it. For those who drink excessively do these things: Brother does not have mercy on brother, nor father on son, nor children on parents, but by means of the Fall through wine come forth all (these): murder, adultery, fornication, perjury, theft, and similar things. And nothing good is accomplished through it. (*3 Baruch* 4:16-17)<sup>296</sup>

The above citations concerning glory are all from writers thought to be later than the time of Paul. Although earlier material is not as extravagant in its claims, we do find these writings also speaking of the loss of glory. We noted earlier that Levison claims that Paul is dependent in Rom 1 on early material from *The Life of Adam and Eve*. Part of this material contains the *Apocalypse of Moses*. In this document we find the following lament of Adam:

‘And at that very moment my eyes were opened and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness with which I had been clothed. And I wept

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<sup>295</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 51.

<sup>296</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:669.

saying, "Why have you done this to me, that I have been estranged from my glory with which I was clothed?" "And I cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Adam, Adam, where are you? Rise, come to me and I will show you a great mystery." And when your father came, I spoke to him unlawful words of transgression such as brought us down from great glory. For when he came, I opened my mouth and the devil was speaking, and I began to admonish him, saying, "Come, my lord Adam, listen to me and eat of the fruit of the tree of which God told us not to eat from it, and you shall be as God." Your father answered and said, "I fear lest God be angry with me." And I said to him, "Do not fear; for as soon as you eat, you shall know good and evil." Then I quickly persuaded him. He ate, and his eyes were opened, and he also realized his nakedness. And he said to me, "O evil woman! Why have you wrought destruction among us? You have estranged me from the glory of God." (Apoc Mos 20:1-2; 21:1-6)<sup>297</sup>

Moreover, even earlier texts, indisputably prior to the time of Paul, also speak of the glory of Adam and its loss. In Sir 49:14-16 the glory of Adam is said to have surpassed that of all other human beings.

Not only are there a number of texts which speak of the loss of Adam's glory, but there are also many texts which speak of the restoration of that glory. For example, the faithful at Qumran believe they will enjoy the blessings of Adam:

For these are those selected by God for an everlasting covenant and to them shall belong all the glory of Adam. (1QS 4:22-23)<sup>298</sup>

Those who remained steadfast in it will acquire eternal life, and all the glory of Adam is for them. (CD 3:20)<sup>299</sup>

As noted above, the value of these Qumran texts have been questioned on the grounds that it is not clear whether the Hebrew noun refers to the specific character of Adam or to humanity in general. For example, Levison excludes these texts from his discussion because they fail to meet his required criteria,<sup>300</sup> by which I assume that there is not

<sup>297</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 2:281.

<sup>298</sup> Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 7.

<sup>299</sup> Martínez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 35.

<sup>300</sup> Levison, *Portraits*, 29-30.

sufficient context to decide whether they are actually speaking of Adam or of humanity as a whole. Wedderburn notes this debate but then comments: “Admittedly the references to him in the surviving literature are few, but one passage which has been largely overlooked and which is surely relevant at this point is 1 QH viii: there in 11. 4-14a the community are described in terms of a grove of trees, using language strongly reminiscent of Gn. ii-iii and associated O.T. passages which also refer to the paradisaical conditions.”<sup>301</sup> Scroggs on the other hand admits that he is inclined to interpret the above texts as referring to humanity in general but then remarks: “The issue is not, however, of great importance, for the anthropological thrust of the context remains the same regardless of which translation is accepted: the saints will inherit the glory which was intended for man from the beginning but which was yet to be consummated.”<sup>302</sup> Yet, one must ask Scroggs, if God intended humanity to have this glory from the beginning, why would not Adam himself have possessed it? Is it necessarily true that God assumed the Fall and held back the glory from him on the basis of this assumption?

*Fourth Ezra* 7:95 also speaks of “the glory which awaits them in the last days.”<sup>303</sup>

It indicates that this glory is for those who have obtained “victory in the long fight against their inborn impulses to evil, which have failed to lead them astray from life to death” (7:92) and who have “throughout their life kept the law with which they were entrusted.” We have already noted that at least some strands of Judaism held that people had the freedom to resist the evil impulse. Here in *4 Ezra* we see that this resistance is closely connected with keeping the law. Although much of the evidence Davies cites comes from later rabbinic sources, he states that the Jews believed that “the chief means of protection

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<sup>301</sup> Wedderburn, “Adam and Christ,” 71.

<sup>302</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 26.

<sup>303</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:540.

against the evil impulse was the study of Torah.”<sup>304</sup> This would certainly agree with the statements here in *4 Ezra*. That is, the attainment of future glory comes through keeping the Law which gives one the ability to overcome the evil impulse.

Since the Jewish view regarding the ability to keep the Law and resist the inner impulse is important to our study of Rom 7, I will briefly examine several Jewish views regarding the Law. When we think of the Law and Israel we are almost always reminded of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai by God. However, this is not the only tradition regarding the Law found in the OT and the intertestamental writings. For example, much speculation about the nature of the Law arose as a result of texts like Gen 26:5: “because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.” Since Abraham lived many centuries before Moses, what were all these commandments and laws which he kept? Was it a different law or the same one given to Moses?

The book of *Jubilees* points to a law even further back than Abraham, going all the way back to the time of the creation of the world. Although *Jubilees* begins with God giving the Law to Moses, further on in the account the writer indicates that the Mosaic Law is only a republication of the Law that had been observed from the beginning. For example, the text states that Adam and Eve performed various purification rites after the birth of their children and that the feast of weeks “was celebrated in heaven from the day of creation till the days of Noah” (6:18). In addition, Enoch was given the job of recording events and was even transported into the Garden of Eden in order to note the evil that began there (4:23). Consequently, Enoch passed down the laws concerning proper offerings and sacrifice to his children and their descendants (7:36-38). Similarly,

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<sup>304</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 22.

the writings of other patriarchs are said to be passed down through generations (45:16). Thus, according to *Jubilees*, the patriarchs beginning with Adam possessed the same law later given to Moses on Sinai. *Targum Neofiti* indeed draws an interesting conclusion based on this earlier material. According to this text, Adam and Eve were not placed in Eden in order to work the garden. Rather *Targum Neofiti* on Gen 2:15 reads: “And the Lord God took Adam and had him dwell in the garden of Eden to toil *in the Law* and to observe its *commandments*.”<sup>305</sup>

In other texts like those in *Jubilees* we see this law passed down from generation to generation. However, questions arise as to why Abraham is then issued a directive regarding circumcision as if it were a new regulation. *Aggadat Bereshit* provides two comments concerning this difficulty. “This is what Scripture says: ‘The secret of the Lord is for those who fear him’ (Ps 25:14). What is the secret of the Holy One? This is circumcision, because the Holy One did not reveal the secret of the circumcision from Adam until the twentieth generation; until Abraham stood up and it was given to him” (16.B).<sup>306</sup> Chapter 13 begins: “Before the world was created, the Holy One stored up the Torah until Abraham would arise and accept it.”<sup>307</sup> Chapter 43 even speaks of Adam wearing the garments of the High Priest.<sup>308</sup> Thus, unlike *Jubilees* which saw the Law as passed from generation to generation, in this later tradition the Law is portrayed as eternal yet hidden for a period of time. However, in both the earlier *Jubilees* tradition as

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<sup>305</sup> Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 58.

<sup>306</sup> Lieve M. Teugels, *Aggadat Bereshit: Translated from the Hebrew with an Introduction and Notes* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2001), 51.

<sup>307</sup> Teugels, *Aggadat Bereshit*, 41.

<sup>308</sup> Teugels, *Aggadat Bereshit*, 130.

well as in the later rabbinic tradition, Adam is depicted as fully aware of the Law which indicates that it did not begin with Moses.

Some discussion is also found concerning the specific command which Adam and Eve were given and which they transgressed. We note, first of all, a statement in *4 Ezra* 3:6 that says that Adam had only a single commandment.

And you led him into the garden which your right hand had planted before the earth appeared. And you laid upon him one commandment of yours; but he transgressed it, and immediately you appointed death for him and for his descendants. (*4 Ezra* 3:6-7a)<sup>309</sup>

In addition, two other texts indicate that coveting is the source of all other sins and is the original sin involved in the Fall.

‘When he had received the oath from me, he went, climbed the tree, and sprinkled his evil poison on the fruit which he gave me to eat which is his covetousness. For covetousness is the origin of every sin. And I bent the branch toward the earth, took of the fruit, and ate.’ (*Apoc Mos* 19:3)<sup>310</sup>

So great and so excessive an evil is covetous desire; or rather, if I am to speak the plain truth concerning it, it is the source of all evils. For from what other source do all the thefts, and acts of rapine, and repudiation of debt, and all false accusations, and acts of insolence, and, moreover, all ravishments, and adulteries, and murders, and, in short, all mischiefs, whether private or public, or sacred or profane, take their rise? For most truly may covetous desire be said to be the original passion which is at the bottom of all these mischiefs. (*Spec.* 4:84-85)<sup>311</sup>

This last text is from Philo and thus dates from a period as early as the writings of Paul.

As we will see in the next chapter, *Jam* 1:12-18 echoes this idea that all sin begins with lust, providing further evidence that Paul was likely aware of this Jewish view. We may thus conclude that there is every possibility that Paul was cognizant of traditions which

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<sup>309</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:528.

<sup>310</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 2:279.

<sup>311</sup> Charles Duke Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus: The Contemporary of Josephus, Translated from the Greek* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1854-1890). Cited 27 October 2009. Online: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book30.html>.



either placed the entire Law in the hands of Adam, or that saw him as being given a single command, and that saw this prohibition as dealing with the idea of coveting the fruit of the forbidden tree. Furthermore, this command in some manner summarized the later Mosaic code.

A tradition which we can not at all be certain that Paul knew but which fits in well with the previous discussion of the evil impulse and the perspective that the Law was given to Adam in the Garden is also found in *Targum Neofiti* on Gen 3:15:

*And it will come about that when her sons observe the Law and do the commandments they will aim at you and smite you on your head and kill you. But when they forsake the commandments of the Law you will aim and bite him on his heel and make him ill. For her sons, however, there will be a remedy, but for you, O serpent, there will not be a remedy, since they are to make appeasement in the end, in the day of King Messiah.*<sup>312</sup>

Thus, for Eve's descendants, victory over the serpent will be achieved through the keeping of the Law.

Finally, in regard to our discussion of the Greek rhetorical device of *synkrisis* in chapter 2, it is important to note that the first man was the subject of frequent comparison in Jewish writings. Wedderburn finds at least six different individuals with whom Adam is compared.<sup>313</sup> First, like Adam, Enoch is ushered into the Garden of Eden in *Jub.* 4:23. He thus in a way takes the place of Adam who was removed from the Garden due to his sin.

Similarly, in *QG* 2:56 Philo asks why God gives the same blessing to Noah that he had first given to Adam. He responds: "And did he not by these words evidently intimate that Noah, at the beginning of what we may call the second creation of mankind, was found equal in honour to that creature who in the first instance was made as to his

<sup>312</sup> McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1*, 61.

<sup>313</sup> Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 73-87.

form in the likeness of himself? Therefore he equally assigned both to the one and to the other the principality and power over all the creatures that live upon the earth.”<sup>314</sup> Philo thus associates Noah with a new creation and gives him the same kind of sovereignty that was originally meted out to Adam. Noah thus becomes the paradigm for the OT return to a new paradise that we saw earlier in Isaiah.

Wedderburn also cites Philo for the comparison of Adam with Abraham, or the triad of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Wedderburn says that Philo envisions Abraham and his progeny as forming a “new race of men.” He comments on the comparison of Adam with Noah and with Abraham: “Here a twofold new creation seems to be envisaged, a new physical one inaugurated by Noah and a new spiritual one beginning under, or represented by, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that is, Israel, he who sees God.” In *Genesis Rabbah*, we hear Rabbi Levi making the same kind of comparison: ““But the Holy One, blessed be he, thought, “Perhaps something may go wrong, and there will be no one to repair matters. Lo, to begin with I shall create the first Adam, so that if something should go wrong with him, Abraham will be able to come and remedy matters in his stead””” (XIV:VI 2 C).<sup>315</sup> Thus Abraham is portrayed as the one who will return the world back to its originally intention.

We have repeatedly seen in this dissertation a relationship between Exodus and the creation story. It is thus not surprising that the next relationship is one between Adam and Moses. We find a lengthy contrast of these two individuals in *2 Baruch* 17-18:

And the Lord answered and said unto me: With the Most High no account is taken of much time and of few years. For what did it profit Adam that he lived nine hundred and thirty years and transgressed that which he was commanded? Therefore, the multitude of time that he lived did not profit

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<sup>314</sup> Yonge, *Philo*.

<sup>315</sup> Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah*, 154.

him, but it brought death and cut off the years of those who were born from him. Or what did it harm Moses that he lived only one hundred and twenty years and, because he subjected himself to him who created him, he brought the Law to the descendants of Jacob and he lighted a lamp to the generation of Israel?

And I answered and said: He who lighted took from the light, and there are few who imitated him. But many whom he illuminated took from the darkness of Adam and did not rejoice in the light of the lamp. (*2 Baruch* 17:1-4; 18:1-2)<sup>316</sup>

Here the antithesis is specifically between the darkness of Adam and the light introduced by Moses. We are told that Adam also introduced death for himself and his descendants though there is no contrasting aspect of life for Moses. What is evident in this passage is the picture of two distinct camps, one composed of the few that have followed Moses and the light, and the second of the majority who have rejected the light and are walking in the darkness of Adam.

Wedderburn argues that this comparison with Moses is particularly significant for views regarding Jesus as the second Adam in the NT.

We may note too how the exodus was often thought of in terms of a new creation; this is particularly clear in Wis. xix: there the whole creation was fashioned anew for the benefit of Israel. This interpretation of the exodus is the more important in that on the one hand the eschatological salvation came to be seen as a new exodus and on the other the prominence of Moses as the leader of the first exodus would prepare the ground for the concept of the Messiah as a new Moses.<sup>317</sup>

I remarked earlier on the repeated comparison between Christ and Moses in John 6. Jesus is the new Moses who miraculously provides bread in the wilderness, walks not through but on the sea, and yet hears the same murmuring from the Israelites that Moses had earlier heard. The book of Acts (3:22; 7:37) notes that the relationship between Moses and Christ was prophesied in Deut 18:15.

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<sup>316</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:627.

<sup>317</sup> Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 70.

A further comparison with Adam that suggests NT links is the comparison of Adam with Elijah. Wedderburn observes: "Again in later material we find Elijah contrasted with Adam; unlike Adam he has not sinned and hence lives for ever; his experience is that originally meant for Adam."<sup>318</sup> This material is rabbinic and therefore we should not base too much on it, but it is interesting that here again we find a contrast between death and life. Adam brought death into the world through his sin but Elijah who did not sin lives forever.

Another comparison which can only be addressed briefly here is the heavenly man/earthly man speculation of Philo. Philo bases his ideas on the two accounts of Adam's creation in Gen 1 and 2 and on the Platonic notion that things on earth are copies of heavenly reality. One quote from his writings will have to suffice:

The races of men are twofold; for one is the heavenly man, and the other the earthly man. Now the heavenly man, as being born in the image of God, has no participation in any corruptible or earthlike essence. But the earthly man is made of loose material, which he calls a lump of clay. On which account he says, not that the heavenly man was made, but that he was fashioned according to the image of God; but the earthly man he calls a thing made, and not begotten by the maker. (*Leg.* 1.31)

There is much debate as to what Philo is doing with these two men given that his various observations lack consistency. Although many scholars see a connection with Plato's idea of heavenly and earthly realities, this particular passage actually speaks of the two men as being types of two races of men, both earthly. The subsequent context then uses the two Adams for two types of mind, the heavenly one representing the pure mind which seeks after virtue (*Leg.* 1.88-89). Thus, Stephen Hultgren argues that Philo's point here is

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<sup>318</sup> Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 80; citing Lv. r. 27.4, Qoh. r. 3.15 in n.4.

ethical, not ontological, which further implies that Paul's views regarding a first and second Adam can not be based on Philo.<sup>319</sup>

Although there is much more that could be said regarding the origins of first Adam/second Adam typology, such an exploration would lead us too far afield.<sup>320</sup> Instead we will limit ourselves here to the conclusion that Judaism was very interested in the Adam story at the time of Paul's writing of Romans and that these writers employed Adam as an example of what humanity had been like before the Fall and what it could be again. Although speculation was widespread concerning just how Adam's sin had affected the human race, it was nevertheless generally believed that he had ushered death into this world. Such speculation often imposed new ideas on the original story, seeking both a reason for the present evil world and also a brighter outlook for the one to come. In addition, Adam is also frequently contrasted in these writings with another earthly figure, one that will restore the world to what God intended. That is, although Adam lost God's blessing and glory, he is not the one who will restore them. Rather, some other individual like Noah, Abraham or Moses is depicted as fulfilling this role. Finally, although it would be convenient to leap forward to a writing like the *Testament of Levi* in which chapter 18 speaks of a figure very much like the Messiah who would deliver Adam and restore the tree of life to him, this writing, as Scroggs notes, is later than the NT and bears the marks of Christian interpolation.<sup>321</sup> Wedderburn suggests that a similar comparison between Adam and the Messiah can be found in *2 Baruch* 73-74 and argues

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<sup>319</sup> Stephen Hultgren, "The Origin of Paul's Doctrine of the Two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15.45-49," *JSNT* 25 (2003): 343-70.

<sup>320</sup> I would encourage the interested reader to explore the possible backgrounds of the second Adam idea in Paul by reading Davies and Wedderburn. Wedderburn, for example, wishes us to consider a possible link with the 'son of man' language of Dan 7 and the use of this language by Jesus in the Gospels. See Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 86-115.

<sup>321</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 29-30.

that this text cannot be due to Christian influence.<sup>322</sup> However, this text is also later than the NT. Thus, we must leave it to conjecture where Paul derived his idea of the second Adam.

### **Conclusion**

As Stowers claims, there is little, if any, evidence in Judaism prior to Paul for a view of inherited depravity passed down from Adam or for the kind of bondage of the will later espoused by Augustine. Still, as Tennant has shown, there are a few texts that suggest that the sin of a patriarch negatively affects his entire progeny, and also a view that sin is universal. Moreover, the evil impulse is certainly something which can be traced back to writers before Paul, although the predominant view in his day was that it was implanted by God and not a result of Adam's sin. While Stowers is thus correct that there is no clear text prior to Paul which coincides with later interpretations of Romans regarding inherited depravity, Tennant is also right in his assertion that the elements were all there for someone, perhaps Paul himself, to put it all together. Whether or not Paul has actually done that in Romans is a matter yet to be explored.

This chapter has demonstrated that Wright is correct that the creation story is one of those stories which became important for Jews in explaining their own present situation. While it appears rarely in the pages of the OT, the crises of the exile, of Antiochus Epiphanes, of the Roman occupation and the eventual fall of Jerusalem led it to become increasingly significant in intertestamental Judaism. This significance leads to the likelihood that Paul may also have employed this story not only explicitly where he employs the name Adam but also implicitly where verbal clues point to aspects of the

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<sup>322</sup> Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ," 80-81.

creation account examined in this chapter. It must, however, yet await our analysis of Paul's letters themselves to see if this is so and to see if his interpretation of the story corresponds to Jewish views of his day, or whether he takes it in a somewhat different direction. This will be especially pertinent for our study of Romans as it relates to Paul's views on law, the loss of glory, and comparisons he will draw with Adam.

## CHAPTER 4 – THE ADAM STORY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

*This chapter seeks to demonstrate that the Adam story plays a prominent role in the NT. While some of the allusions mentioned here remain a matter of debate, there nevertheless remain accepted references to the Adam story in all the major divisions: the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine writings, the historical book of Acts, the General Epistles and the Pauline writings. Moreover, we will see in the Corinthian letters, those writings nearest to the time of the writing of Romans, that the allusions become both more numerous and prolonged.*

In the previous chapter we considered some of the ways the Adam story was employed in Judaism, both in the OT as well as the intertestamental literature. In this chapter I will examine how this narrative is used by NT writers, reserving discussion of Romans to a separate section. Aside from Paul's own letters of course, we must again note that we are endeavoring to examine the cultural context and not necessarily writings with which Paul himself was familiar. Although much of the NT is later than the apostle's time, it can once again be argued that much of its content predates his epistles.

As we examine some of the suggestions made by scholars regarding these NT allusions, we may conclude that some proposals are rather questionable. However, I believe we will also observe that for many passages this background is rather certain, and, as we move closer to the writings of Paul himself and especially to those epistles written closest to the time of Romans, the Corinthian letters, we will find passages which demonstrate conclusively the importance of this story for Paul.

### Synoptic Gospels

Since we observed earlier that Lyonnet drew a parallel between the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as well as the temptation of the Israelites in the wilderness, let us begin our examination



with the temptation account found in the Synoptics (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). Lyonnet remarks that all three temptations involve a desire for food: Jesus had fasted for 40 days when the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread; Adam and Eve were tempted with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and the Israelites hungered for the leeks and cucumbers of Egypt having come to despise the manna from heaven.

While Lyonnet is correct that all of these temptations involved a desire for food, one should also note that this desire resulted from differing motives. After fasting for 40 days, only Jesus could be said to have been truly hungry. Adam and Eve were free to eat from all the other trees of the Garden and were thus not in dire need of sustenance. The Israelites were supplied manna daily and so were not hungry but only lacked variety. Moreover, the second and third temptations in Matthew and Luke take the focus off food altogether.

Petr Pokorný takes a different tack in trying to connect the temptation of Jesus to Adam and Eve's Fall by endeavoring to associate a number of texts. First, he notes that Satan quotes from Psalm 91:11-12 in Matt 4:6 and that, if one examines the context of this quotation, one finds mention in the very next verse the fact that God gives the psalmist the ability to tread upon wild beasts. Furthermore, among the wild beasts are mentioned the cobra and the serpent (or perhaps dragon). Any one of these images would fit well with the protoevangelium of Gen 3:15 where the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head. Pokorný further notes the mention of "wild beasts" in Mark's account of the temptation (1:13) as well as statements from Jewish literature that speak of the animosity of the animals resulting from the Fall.

The most striking parallels are offered to us in the apocalyptic Books of Adam. In the Apocalypse of Moses we read of a dialogue between Eve and Seth and a wild beast that had assailed them, because men had lost their authority over the animals through Eve's failure to resist temptation. In paradise, Adam and Eve ate the food of angels. After they had been driven out of paradise, Adam decided to do penance and spent forty days fasting.<sup>323</sup>

Pokorný further argues that the "original Hebrew text of the Book of Adam originates most probably from before A.D. 70 and the passages just mentioned belong to the bulk of the old Jewish apocalyptic Adam tradition." It is possible then, according to Pokorný, that Mark was aware of these traditions and placed Jesus' temptation in this context.

However, Pokorný's thesis requires a number of assumptions. First, most scholars date the *Books of Adam and Eve* after the Gospels, and even if some material is earlier, we cannot be certain that the Synoptic writers knew this material.<sup>324</sup> Second, most scholars assume Markan priority, so there is no evidence that Mark was aware of Satan's question from Psalm 91:11-12 or that he made any connection between Jesus' temptation and Psalm 91:13. Third, we have no basis to suggest that either Matthew or Luke was interested in Psalm 91:13. Neither of them mentions the idea of Jesus being with wild animals or of him treading upon serpents. Moreover, none of the Synoptic writers go on to build upon any connection between Jesus' temptation and that of Adam. The only other time in Matthew that we can really be certain that the writer has the story of Adam in mind is in Matt 19 where Jesus compares God's joining Adam and Eve into one flesh with the sacrament of marriage and, by this, condemns divorce. We will see that this illustration is also used by Paul in similar ways (1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31). However, a

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<sup>323</sup> Petr Pokorný, "The Temptation Stories and their Intention," *NTS* 20 (1974), 121.

<sup>324</sup> For example, Johannes Tromp says "the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* was written somewhere in the period between 100-300 CE"; Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 28.

reference regarding marriage 15 chapters later provides very little assurance that Matthew was thinking of the Adam story while he was penning the temptation account.

Thus, outside of the connection with food and temptation, there is little, if anything, to connect the temptation of Jesus with the Fall of Adam. Most scholars do acknowledge that Lyonnet is correct in seeing a connection between Jesus' temptation and the testing of Israel. Donald Hagner, for example, in his comments on the Matthew passage, notes quite a number of parallels. First, Jesus, like the Israelites, is said to have come out of Egypt (Matt 2) and both temptations occur in the wilderness. It may be true as well that the baptism of Jesus is somehow meant to parallel the crossing of the Red Sea since Paul draws just such a parallel between baptism and this crossing in 1 Cor 10:1-2. Moreover, all the responses to Satan by Jesus are drawn from the book of Deuteronomy and the context of these wilderness wanderings (Matt 4:4, 7, 10; Deut 8:3; 6:16, 13). In the preceding passage, God has just proclaimed that Jesus is his Son (Matt 3:17), and in Deut 8:5 we are told that God was disciplining Israel as a father would his son. In both stories we are told that God himself is behind the testing of the parties involved (Matt 4:1; Deut 8:2). Finally, we are told that both Jesus and Moses fasted 40 days and nights. (Matt 4:2; Deut 9:9).<sup>325</sup> However, while Lyonnet's assertion that the temptation of Jesus is almost certainly associated with Israel's temptation may be true, that it is also associated with Adam's remains questionable.

We gain a little more evidence when we turn to Luke's account. Immediately before his recounting of the temptation, the evangelist records the genealogy of Jesus. Unlike Matthew, who only traces this genealogy back to Abraham, Luke traces Jesus' lineage all the way back to Adam (3:38). Jesus is said to be "the son of Adam, the son of

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<sup>325</sup> Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, WBC 33A. (Dallas: Word, 1993), 62-64.

God.” On this basis, Geldenhuys draws both a comparison and a contrast with Jesus’ forerunner. He emphasizes that, like all humanity from the time of Adam, Jesus was tempted, citing Heb 2:17-18.<sup>326</sup> However, he notes that Jesus’ temptation was far more difficult. He was in a wilderness while Adam was in a garden, and he had fasted for 40 days while Adam could enjoy the fruit of any other tree. Geldenhuys argues further that the fact that Jesus overcame in the midst of such negative circumstances is proof that the Fall was not inherently necessitated by any fault in Adam’s original nature, and therefore not the fault of God’s creation but that of his own choice.<sup>327</sup> He then concludes that Adam and Jesus form two representative heads, “the head of the old fallen humanity” and “the Head of the new humanity.”<sup>328</sup> While Geldenhuys’ conclusions are certainly interesting in light of my own thesis and fits well with Rom 5, it must be admitted that this scholar does more to show how Luke differs from Gen 3 than he does to show a connection between the two. Moreover, if such a contrast between Adam and Jesus is part of Luke’s agenda, why does Luke not proceed to do anything with it? It is thus more likely that Luke goes back to Adam rather than Abraham for his genealogy for far different reasons than to propose him as a second Adam.

It is, therefore, more common to see scholars point to Mark’s account when they draw parallels between Jesus’ temptation and that of Adam. Mark, unlike Matthew and Luke, omits most of the ties with the exodus story. For example, Mark omits the dialog between Jesus and Satan and the three responses from Deuteronomy. This may suggest

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<sup>326</sup> Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke: The English Text with Introduction Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 158.

<sup>327</sup> Geldenhuys, *Luke*, 159.

<sup>328</sup> Geldenhuys, *Luke*, 158.

that Mark does not have the exodus story in his purview and may be calling on another background.

Many of the comments regarding Mark's account center on the statement in 1:13 that Jesus was "with the wild beasts." What is the purpose of this statement and what do the wild beasts signify? John Heil, like Pokorný, argues that the wild beasts should be seen as opponents of Jesus on the side of Satan, as evidenced by the following chiasmic structure:

- A And (καί) immediately the *Spirit* drove him out into the wilderness (v. 12)
- B and he was (καὶ ἦν) in the wilderness forty days tested by Satan (v. 13a)
- B' and he was (καὶ ἦν) with the wild animals (v. 13b)
- A' but (καί) the *angels* were ministering to him (v. 13c)<sup>329</sup>

The outer figures in the chiasm, Spirit and angels, are thus allies of Jesus while the inner figures, Satan and the wild animals, are his foes. However Heil, unlike Pokorný, does not go on to link the passage to Adam. Instead, he argues that the wild animals are part of the wilderness experience which is meant to compare Jesus' testing with that of the Israelites. Moreover, he argues against any association with the Adam story on a number of bases. First, he notes that God drove Adam out of the garden *after* his temptation. Jesus is driven into the wilderness *before* it. Moreover, nothing in the Adam story corresponds to the 40 days. Further, Eve is "deceived" while Jesus is "tested" or "tempted." In addition, Adam is brought to all the animals while Jesus is only with *wild* animals. Heil suggests, moreover, that if the evangelist had restoration in mind, then the animals would be said to be with Jesus rather than that Jesus was with them. Indeed, as the chiasm shows, they are

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<sup>329</sup> John Paul Heil, "Jesus with the Wild Animals in Mark 1:13," *CBQ* 68 (2006), 65.

contrasted with the angels who support Jesus, not in companionship with him. Finally, he notes that there is no other portrayal of Jesus as an eschatological Adam in Mark.<sup>330</sup>

Richard Bauckham concedes that the wild animals in the Markan account should be regarded as a danger to humanity. However, he says this does not make them demonic or allies of Satan.<sup>331</sup> Moreover, he argues that the phrase εἶναι μετὰ τινος

frequently has a strong positive sense of close association in friendship or agreement or assistance (Matt 12:30; 26:69, 71; 28:20; Luke 22:59; John 3:2; 8:29; 15:27; 16:32; 17:24; Acts 7:9; 10:38; 18:10; Rom 15:33; Ign. *Phld.* 3:2; cf. the positive but less strong sense in John 3:26; 13:33; 14:9; 16:4; 17:12). In Mark's usage elsewhere the idea of close, friendly association predominates (3:14; 5:18; 14:67; cf. 4:36). Thus in Mark 1:13 the phrase ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων, in the absence of any other indication of the kind of relationship envisaged, may convey a more or less strongly positive sense of association, but it certainly does not express hostile confrontation.<sup>332</sup>

Bauckham thus seeks to argue that "Mark portrays Jesus in peaceable companionship with animals which were habitually perceived as inimical and threatening to humans." He cites the promised restoration of harmony which is to be reestablished at the eschaton (Hos 2:18; Isaiah 11:6-9). However, he notes that "Jesus does not restore the paradisaical state as such, but he sets the messianic precedent for it."<sup>333</sup> If Bauckham's assertion were true, then it would provide a connection with the Adam story, but again, if that is Mark's point, then he certainly fails to do much with it in his subsequent narrative.

Thus, when it comes to the Synoptics, we are left with a definite reference to the Adam story in Matt 19:5 (Mark 10:6-8), an explicit mention of Adam in Luke 3:38, and some uncertain allusions in the temptation of Jesus.

<sup>330</sup> Heil, "Wild Animals," 64-65.

<sup>331</sup> Richard J. Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals (Mark 1:13): A Christological Image for an Ecological Age," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology* (ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 6-10.

<sup>332</sup> Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals," 5.

<sup>333</sup> Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals," 19.

### Johannine Literature

When we come to the Gospel of John we can speak with much greater certainty that the writer has the creation story in mind. The book begins by quoting from Genesis (“In the beginning”) and continues by speaking about light and darkness and the fact that all things were created through the Word. “That John intends an allusion to Genesis 1 may be regarded as certain,” says Craig Keener.<sup>334</sup> He notes that John employs the word ἄρχῆ “to depict the advent of a new creation,” citing 2:11, 8:25, 15:27, and 16:4. Similarly, Raymond Brown writes: “Since the first words of the Prologue opened Genesis, they are peculiarly fitting to open the account of what God has said and done in the new dispensation.”<sup>335</sup>

However, while many interpreters would agree with the above statements, Brown’s further claim that the Adam story is integral to the opening of the book is not nearly as accepted. He writes: “The narrative of the first days of creation and of the first man and woman is the backbone of John i 1-ii 10.”<sup>336</sup> We do have in John 1 several references to creation, but, as Keener notes, there is also a strong dependence on Wisdom motifs. “The prologue’s plot of descending and returning Wisdom informs the entire Gospel.”<sup>337</sup> Moreover, the focus soon shifts from creation to the tabernacle and its glory (1:14) and to the contrast between Moses and Christ (1:17). Brown tries to hold on to the creation theme by citing the address of Jesus to Mary as “woman” in 2:4 which he believes is a reference back to Gen 3:15. He derives this by a heavy reliance on Rev 12

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<sup>334</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 1:366.

<sup>335</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (AB 29, 29A; New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 1:23.

<sup>336</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:lx.

<sup>337</sup> Keener, *John*, 1:334.

which we will discuss below.<sup>338</sup> Keener, however, while conceding that such an address was unusual for one's own mother, notes that Jesus uses the same address for a number of other women (Samaritan, 4:21; woman taken in adultery, 8:10; Mary Magdalene, 20:13; Syrophenician, Matt 15:28; and the woman healed in Luke 13:12). Thus, "apart from excess weight on this term (often interpreted in light of Rev 12:1-2, though it appears twenty other times in the Gospel) and similar allegorization of 19:26, we lack adequate clues to confirm this allegorizing."<sup>339</sup> We conclude then that there is certainly an allusion to creation in John 1 but little, if any, specific dependence on the Adam story.

For Brown, the importance of the Adam account in John certainly does not end with the opening two chapters. "In John vi Jesus will speak of the bread of life which a man may eat and live forever – a bread, therefore, which has the same qualities as the fruit of the tree of life in Paradise. John viii 44 mentions man's loss of the opportunity for eternal life in Paradise when it describes the devil as a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (the serpent lied to Eve)."<sup>340</sup> Again, Brown's first reference has little to tie it to Adam outside of the term "life," and, as we noted earlier when we looked at John 6, the exodus motif is really the lens through which John lays out the life and death of Jesus, and the bread references in this sixth chapter are specifically tied to the manna of the wilderness. On the other hand, one should agree with Brown's assertion that the reference in 8:44 goes back to Satan's lie to Eve in the Garden. Accordingly, Keener remarks: "Most interpreters associate the devil's start as a 'murderer' with the fall of humanity, an association supported by its link with the devil's role as deceiver."<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:107-8.

<sup>339</sup> Keener, *John*, 1:505.

<sup>340</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:27.

<sup>341</sup> Keener, *John*, 1:760.



Michaels in fact connects this text in John where the Jews are rejecting the truth of Jesus in exchange for the devil's lie to Paul's comment in Rom 1:25.<sup>342</sup> Here the apostle makes a strikingly similar analysis saying that humanity has exchanged the truth of God for "the lie" (τῶν ψεύδει).

One especially significant allusion to the Adam story is found in John 20:22 where Jesus breathes on his disciples after his resurrection. Andreas Köstenberger notes: "The theological antecedent plainly is Gen. 2:7, where the exact same verb form is used. There, God breathes his Spirit into Adam at creation, which constitutes him as a 'living being.' Here, at the occasion of the commissioning of his disciples, Jesus constitutes them as the new messianic community in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to the ascension."<sup>343</sup> Keener observes that the creation account is fairly well accepted as the backdrop for Jesus' action, citing the rarity of the word for breathe which is used both here as well as in Gen 2:7.<sup>344</sup> This, too, I would argue, has significant importance for our study of Rom 7 since it demonstrates that John views Jesus as constituting a new creation similar to the original creation in Genesis, but distinct in that it is marked by the receiving of the Holy Spirit, not mere physical breath. As we will see in Romans, although the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once in Rom 7, his presence is pervasive in Rom 8, indicating that a change of epochs takes place between the two chapters.

We continue our examination of the importance of the Adam story in the NT by examining another book in the Johannine literature, the book of Revelation. Mounce notes that the first five verses of the last chapter "portray the eternal state as Eden

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<sup>342</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 519 n.88.

<sup>343</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

<sup>344</sup> Keener, *John*, 2:1204.

restored, thus ‘book-ending’ the Christian Bible.”<sup>345</sup> “In the restored Eden all has been reversed: eating of one tree brought the curse – eating of this tree eternal life.”<sup>346</sup> Aune further notes that verse 14 of this same chapter lifts the ban on the tree of life which had been imposed on the first couple as a result of their sin.<sup>347</sup> While too great an emphasis should not be placed on this canonical inclusio, it is striking that the Bible begins and ends with a focus on the old and new creation, giving at least some credence to the importance of the creational restoration theme.

The last chapter, however, is not the only place where we find reference to the Genesis story. While there is some debate regarding its primary focus, Rev 12 must also be seen to allude to it (at least in part). Brown argues that both the book of John and the book of Revelation use the address, “Woman,” to draw a link between the protoevangelium of Gen 3:15 and Jesus mother, Mary. At the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John 2:4) and again at the cross (John 19:26), Jesus addresses his mother in this way. Here in the twelfth chapter of Revelation we see that a woman has born a child whom the devil is endeavoring to destroy. Brown writes:

There can be no doubt that Revelation is giving the Christian enactment of the drama foreshadowed in Gen iii 15 where enmity is placed between the serpent and *the woman*, between the serpent’s seed and her seed, and the seed of the woman enters into conflict with the serpent. In Revelation the woman in birth pangs brings forth a male child who is the Messiah (xii 5 || Ps ii 9) and is taken up to heaven. The great dragon, specifically identified as the ancient serpent of Genesis by Rev xii 9, frustrated by the child’s ascension, turns against the woman and her other offspring (xii 17).<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 398.

<sup>346</sup> Mounce, *Revelation*, 399.

<sup>347</sup> David E. Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols.; WBC; Dallas: Word, 1997; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 3:1221.

<sup>348</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:107-8.

Brown does concede that the woman is generally regarded as referring to the people of God and not just Mary. However, he argues that from earliest times Mary was regarded as a symbol of the church.<sup>349</sup>

Although Beale admits a secondary application to Mary is possible, he argues that the primary focus must still be on the community of faith. First, he contends that the motif of the birth of an exceptional child who would overthrow a tyrant and whom the tyrant initially tried to kill is prevalent in ancient literature. He says the closest parallel to Rev 12 is the story of the birth of Apollo whose mother was attacked by the dragon, Python.<sup>350</sup> Secondly, there is an emphasis in the passage on the persecution of the woman and he argues this does not fit the Gospel picture of Mary.<sup>351</sup> Thirdly, he writes: "In John 16:19-22 Christ compares the grief of his disciples over his impending death to 'a woman about to give birth [who] has sorrow' and is about to bear 'a child . . . a man.' In line with this understanding of Rev. 12:2, in John 16 the disciples represent the mother, the messianic community, in whose midst the Christ was born and whom they are to present to the world."<sup>352</sup> Finally, he notes that John associates the dragon with both Egypt and Rome and argues that these are depicted as instruments of the persecution of the people of God.

While I would agree with Beale that the emphasis in Rev 12 is on the persecution of the community for this motif is one of the main thrusts of the book of Revelation, I would also concur with Brown that the secondary focus on the birth of Jesus should not be overlooked. In response to Beale, the efforts of Herod to assassinate Jesus following

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<sup>349</sup> Brown, *John*, 1:108.

<sup>350</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 624.

<sup>351</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 629.

<sup>352</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 630.

his birth certainly parallel the story of Apollo. Moreover, Jesus' flight into Egypt in Matthew is meant to be seen as a parallel to the exodus and the persecution of the Jewish nation. In addition, the Gospel story does speak of a sword piercing Mary's soul (Luke 2:35) and it would be difficult to deny that watching one's son be crucified is not severe persecution.

However, even if we dispute the link Brown draws between the woman of Gen 3:15 and the use of "Woman" in John and Revelation, one cannot altogether reject the link between Rev 12 and the Genesis story. This is clearly indicated in Rev 12:9 where the dragon, Satan, is called "the serpent of old." Aune says that this text "provides the only explicit biblical identification of Satan with the serpent who tempted Eve in Gen 3:1-7." However, he notes that "such an identification *may* be presupposed in several other NT passages, such as in Rom 16:20, if the phrase 'crush Satan under your feet' alludes to the 'protevangelium' in Gen 3:15, and perhaps also in Luke 10:19, which links the fall of Satan (seen by Jesus in the vision reported in 10:18) with the ability to tread on serpents (and scorpions)."<sup>353</sup> I will argue, too, that the way in which the serpent deceived the first couple and then becomes the deceiver of the whole world in Rev 12:9 will be paralleled in Rom 1 and 3. Moreover, others suggest as does Aune that the serpent is rearing his head in Rom 7.

Thus, while Brown almost certainly goes too far in stating that the Adam story is integral to John 1:1-2:11, we do see in both John's Gospel as well as the book of Revelation a number of clear allusions to the Adam story.

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<sup>353</sup> Aune, *Revelation*, 2:696-97.

## Acts

We will now examine two passages which not only evidence the creation story as their background but also are closely tied to the book of Romans. The first is Acts 17:22-31. In addition to the presence of words in the passage which link to Genesis (esp., v. 24 “made the world” and v. 26 “He made from one *man* every nation of mankind”), this text is especially important in that the speech is purported to be that of Paul himself to the Athenians. I use the word “purported” because of the intense debate concerning the historicity of Acts, especially in relation to Paul, and whether we can rely on Luke’s ability to give us an accurate picture of the apostle. One aspect of this debate deals with whether or not the passage can be seen to agree with Paul’s statements in Rom 1. However, a key difference between the two writings is often overlooked and this may help explain some of the discrepancies scholars have noted. The difference being that Paul’s speech in Acts is directed toward unbelievers while the letter of Romans is addressed to Christians.<sup>354</sup>

Keeping in mind this suggested difference in audiences, I would point to a number of parallels with Rom 1 which Witherington notes in his comments on Acts:

In short, Paul is suggesting here that the Athenians have an inkling that such a God exists, as is shown by their actions, but they do not either really know or properly acknowledge this God. This way of putting it is not much different from what we find in Rom. 1:20-23. Rom. 1:23 shows that instead of proper worship pagans have chosen to honor images or idols resembling humans or animals, just as Paul saw in his tour of Athens. Rom. 1:22 says their thinking was futile because they rejected what they could know of the true God from creation and so their minds were darkened. As we shall see, this comports with what is said in Acts 17:27 about pagans groping around in the dark for the true God. In both

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<sup>354</sup> I do not have space here to further debate the historicity of Acts but will simply refer the reader to the following article: Colin J. Hemer, “The Speeches of Acts: II. The Areopagus Address,” *TynBul* 40 (1989): 239-59.

texts there is an affirmation of natural revelation but not of anything that amounts to an adequate natural theology as a response to that revelation.<sup>355</sup>

Thus, Witherington (along with Hemer) provides us with many reasons for seeing these ideas as coming from the same person, Paul. If we accept this conclusion, then Acts provides support for the idea that the thoughts of Rom 1 are based in a creation background which included thoughts regarding the use of Adam as a universal progenitor. Indeed, it may be argued that the strong focus on the Adam story in the Corinthian epistles and Romans received its very impetus from this event since Acts records that Paul went directly from Athens to Corinth (18:1).

In addition, Darrell Bock suggests an important motive for the use of the Adam story here, whether it be based in Luke or Paul. “The reference to Adam is intended to show that all people have their roots in the Creator God . . . . This affirmation would be hard for the Athenians, who prided themselves in being a superior people, calling others barbarians.”<sup>356</sup> In other words, Adam is introduced in order to show the Athenians that there is no place for pride, since are all are descended from the same individual, Adam. In Romans which is addressed to both Jews and Gentiles and where there is clearly some tension in the church as a result of ethnic issues, this reminder that we are all descended from Adam almost certainly has a similar purpose.

### James

The other passage which has ties to Romans is from the book of James. James, of course, has often been compared to Paul’s epistles in regard to the doctrine of faith and works. However, another paragraph from James, 1:12-18, has also frequently been linked

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<sup>355</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 523.

<sup>356</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 566.

with Paul's statements in Rom 7. For example, Scot McKnight argues that both texts deal with an inner struggle and have Gen 3 as their background.<sup>357</sup> In addition, both Peter Davids and Martin Dibelius note a progression from lust to death in both writers.<sup>358</sup> The latter writes: "Therefore, the actual concern of our passage is to establish the series 'desire' – 'sin' – 'death' (Rom 7:5: 'to bear fruit for death' [εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ])."

In our earlier examination of the possible Jewish background for Rom 7, one suggestion mentioned for the cause of sin in humanity was the presence of the evil *yetzer*. We observed that there was a debate as to how early this belief arose. It may be noted here that McKnight, Davids, as well as Bo Reicke, among others, all believe that this idea is the background for James' statements in this paragraph.<sup>359</sup> For example, Reicke writes of James: "In this he, like Paul in Rom vii 7 f., 19-23, has probably adopted the rabbinic teaching concerning the evil instinct by which man has been mastered since the fall in the garden of Eden."<sup>360</sup>

This conjecture draws support from the parallels noted between this passage and Sir 15.<sup>361</sup> For example, Dan McCartney compares Jam 1:13 with Sir 15:11-12 which reads:

Do not say, 'The Lord is to blame for my failure'; it is for you to avoid what he hates. Do not say, 'It was he who led me astray'; he has no use for sinful men. (Sir 15:11-12)

<sup>357</sup> Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 118, 122.

<sup>358</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 85; Martin Dibelius, *James* (ed. Helmut Koester; trans. Michael A. Williams; rev. Heinrich Greeven; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 93-94.

<sup>359</sup> McKnight, *James*, 118-19; Davids, *James*, 79.

<sup>360</sup> Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (AB 37; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 17.

<sup>361</sup> Dan G. McCartney, *James* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 104.

Both texts reject the idea that God should be seen as responsible for humanity's sin. The Sirach text goes on to say that God created humanity and placed the decision to keep the commandments or not ἐν χειρὶ διαβουλίου αὐτοῦ (15:14-15). It is first of all noteworthy that Sirach again sets the time for keeping the commandments as from the very beginning of creation and not the receiving of the Mosaic Code at Sinai. However, also important here is the idea that God left people in the hands of their διαβουλίου. In our earlier discussion of the Jewish background, we saw that Davies cited this text as early support for the belief in the evil impulse, or *yetzer hara*. Joel Marcus notes that the Greek text is likely based on a Hebrew original where the text read בִּיד יִצְרוֹ.<sup>362</sup> Humanity's ability to obey the commandments is thus seen as dependent on one's response to this *yetzer*.

However, while these writers all see the *yetzer* as the background for James and compare it with Paul, McKnight finds a possible distinction between the two in regard to the solution of the sin problem. "If the rabbis find the resolution to the *yetzer hara* ' in the study of the Torah and Paul finds it in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, James seems to find it in three interlocking ideas: the necessity of Torah observance and obedience (the *yetzer*), rebirth through the Word (1:18), and (only possibly) the indwelling Spirit and work of God (4:5-10)."<sup>363</sup> The idea of Torah observance is certainly in line with Sirach according to Marcus. "Another passage, Sir 21:11, enunciates what was to become an important rabbinic doctrine: 'The person who observes the Law gets

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<sup>362</sup> Joel Marcus, "The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James," *CBQ* 44 (1982), 607; citing Frank Chamberlain Porter, "The Yeçer Hara: A Study in the Jewish Doctrine of Sin," in *Biblical and Semitic Studies: Critical and Historical Essays by the members of the Semitic and Biblical Faculty of Yale University* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901): 91-156; S. Schechter and C. Taylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection presented to the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899)..

<sup>363</sup> McKnight, *James*, 119.



mastery of his thought' (*tou ennoēmatos*; the Syriac version suggests that the Hebrew original of *tou ennoēmatos* was *ysrw*).<sup>364</sup> This focus on Torah we will see in Rom 7-8 is quite distinct from Paul who argues that the Law cannot give anyone the ability to overcome sin which can only be overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, while we may admit some distinctions between the two writers, it is significant that James employs a background similar to that seen in Paul, the creation story of Adam.

In addition to what has already been mentioned, evidence that the creation story is indeed the backdrop for the James passage may be found in the following observations. First, Davids speaks of the significance of the phrase "Father of lights" (1:17).

The phrase 'father of lights,' found elsewhere only in some versions of the Ass. Mos. 36, 38, is probably built from the creation narrative and the fact that God was thought of as light (1 Jn. 1:5; Philo *Som.* 1.75) by analogy to many similar statements about God (Jb. 38:18; Test. Abr. 7:6; Philo *Spec. Leg.* 1.96; *Ebr.* 81; CD 5:17-18). The idea is certainly Jewish both because of the creation reference and because Hellenistic thought apparently did not use  $\phi\omega\varsigma$  to designate heavenly bodies.<sup>365</sup>

McCartney comments: "'Lights' in the plural is rare, but it occurs in Ps. 135:7 LXX (136:7 ET), which refers to God as the one who made the lights. The phrase 'father of lights' has no close antecedent in either Jewish or Hellenistic literature, but in a Jewish environment the phrase most likely would be understood to refer first of all to God as the creator of sun, moon, and stars, as in Gen. 1:14-18."<sup>366</sup>

McKnight further comments on the phrase "word of truth" in the next verse in James and says: "The first thought that comes to mind for a first-century Jewish reader would be Genesis 1, where God stanchied the flow of the *tohu wa-bohu* and turned it all

<sup>364</sup> Marcus, "Evil Inclination," 610.

<sup>365</sup> Davids, *James*, 87.

<sup>366</sup> McCartney, *James*, 108.

into a pleasing order through his word.” McCartney remarks on this phrase and notes that “the seed that produces God’s offspring is ‘the word of truth,’” while “the fertilizing agent for sin is falsehood.”<sup>367</sup> As we will see in Paul’s writings and especially in Romans, the apostle places emphasis on deception and falsehood in the production of sin and death.

Dibelius examines the above cosmological references and debates whether scholars should understand this passage as cosmologically or soteriologically focused. He says: “If cosmologically, then ‘he brought forth’ (ἀπεκύησεν) would refer to the creation, ‘word of truth’ (λόγος ἀληθείας) would refer to the creating word, and ‘first-fruits’ (ἀπαρχή) would mean the paradisaical condition of humans.”<sup>368</sup> Dibelius, however, then argues that humanity was the last of God’s creation and not its first-fruit as James indicates, and thus concludes that the passage should be read soteriologically, not cosmologically.<sup>369</sup>

While other commentators would agree that soteriology should be seen as James’ primary emphasis, they would however not exclude the cosmological element. Davids for example agrees with Dibelius’ conclusion but asks the question: “Yet is it not the case that redemption in the NT is often seen as a new creation, the creation terminology being used for effect?”<sup>370</sup> McKnight notes that “first-fruits” in Rom 8:23 is used soteriologically as Dibelius suggests for James to comment on the redemption of Christians who possess “the first fruits of the Spirit.” However, he notes further that this

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<sup>367</sup> McCartney, *James*, 107.

<sup>368</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 104.

<sup>369</sup> Dibelius, *James*, 106.

<sup>370</sup> Davids, *James*, 89.

soteriological employment is done in the context of the Fall and new creation.<sup>371</sup> As we will see shortly, this is typical of Paul who often links salvation and creation together, especially in the Corinthian letters.

### Pauline Letters

As we move to Paul's own writings, let us begin with a text that has proved nearly as controversial as Rom 7, that being Phil 2:6-11. Ralph Martin in his book *Carmen Christi*, debates whether or not to detect Adam in the text and finds in favor of this background. Martin writes:

The Adam of Genesis ii-iii aspired to an equality with God – a promise held out to him by the serpent – but found only disaster and misery in his self-assertion. The last Adam 'did not think equality with God was a prize to be seized' by the exercise of His own choice; and chose rather to be given that equality at the close of His incarnate and self-surrendered life. The equality was future to Him in His heavenly existence, and could be His either by snatching it (which He refused to do) or by His receiving it from God (which is, in fact, what He chose).<sup>372</sup>

Many scholars have held to this view, or one somewhat similar, and have argued that Adam is being compared to Christ. Oscar Cullmann in fact writes that "the thought of Phil. 2.5 ff. relates primarily to the Genesis story and can be understood only by reference to it."<sup>373</sup> Cullmann, following Héring, bases this belief in part on the idea that μορφή in Phil 2:6 should be seen as corresponding to εἰκὼν in Gen 1:26 "since the Semitic root  $\text{מָדַן}$  or its synonym  $\text{מָלַךְ}$  can correspond to either of the two Greek words."<sup>374</sup> He specifically cites Dan 3:19 in support of this association. Furthermore,

<sup>371</sup> McKnight, *James*, 131.

<sup>372</sup> R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 151.

<sup>373</sup> Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall; rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 175.

<sup>374</sup> Cullmann, *Christology*, 176.

Cullmann finds a number of passages in Paul's writings where these words are used in conjunction.

This idea of our transformation (μεταμορφουῖσθαι) into the image of Christ (who is himself the image of God) recurs repeatedly in Paul's writings. It is presupposed in Col. 3.10, which contrasts our 'new man' created in God's image with our 'old man'. The relation between transformation and image is quite clear in II Cor. 3.18: 'And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed (μεταμορφουῖσθαι) into his likeness (εἰκῶν) from one degree of glory to another . . .' The same idea occurs in Rom. 12.2, where the 'likeness' is not specifically mentioned, but is implied by the verb μεταμορφουῖσθαι: ' . . . be transformed by the renewal of your mind . . .'<sup>375</sup>

Continuing this line of thought, he comments on the phrase συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος in Rom 8:29 and then turns to the resurrection passage in 1 Cor 15:

It is interesting that we find here the root μορφή closely followed by εἰκῶν, for this confirms the fact that Phil 2.6 really refers to Gen. 1.26. Similarly we read in Phil. 3.21: Christ 'will change (μετασχηματίζειν; cf. σχῆμα in Phil. 2.7) our lowly body to be formed like (σύμμορφος) his glorious body . . .' Finally we read in I Cor. 15.49, which is especially important because it follows immediately after the exposition about the two Adams, and thus represents its application to our human body and its transformation: 'Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (i.e., Adam), so we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.'<sup>376</sup>

While the above arguments seem to make a strong case for the presence of an Adam background in Phil 2, more recent studies call this claim into question. For example, many scholars are no longer satisfied with the equation of the Greek terms εἰκῶν and μορφή. Stephen Fowl contends:

The scholars who hold this view support their position by pointing out that in Gen. 1.26 the LXX translates אֱלֹהִים with εἰκῶν, and in Dan. 3.19 μορφή translates אֱלֹהִים. This does not, however, indicate that μορφή and εἰκῶν are interchangeable or synonymous in the LXX. On the contrary, whenever the Greek Bible talks about humanity as the image of God, εἰκῶν is used and never μορφή. Further, in the Daniel passage μορφή is

<sup>375</sup> Cullmann, *Christology*, 176.

<sup>376</sup> Cullmann, *Christology*, 177.

used to refer to the appearance of Nebuchadnezzar's face, while in 3.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 14, etc., εἰκὼν is used to refer to a golden sculpture.<sup>377</sup>

Although Fowl concedes that this does not in itself exclude the passage from having an Adamic background, he nevertheless maintains that it does serve to “undermine . . . a linguistic connection between Phil. 2.6 and Gen. 1.26.”<sup>378</sup> Dave Steenburg concurs with Fowl that these terms should not be seen as synonymous even though they have some indirect links such as the association of both with another Greek term δόξα.<sup>379</sup> Moreover, after analyzing the passages carefully where the terms are used, he concludes “that *morphē theou* expresses a more visual element, such that it is used to convey the visible/physical appearance/representation of God, in contrast to the less specific *eikōn theou*.”<sup>380</sup> Charles Cousar observes that “whenever in the LXX the Bible speaks about humanity as the image of God, *eikōn* is used and never *morphē*.”<sup>381</sup> In other words, there is a huge difference between saying that Jesus in his preexistence was in the “form of God” (in the very nature of God) and saying that he was in the “image of God” (a man in God's likeness).

Another important term related to this discussion is ἀρπαγμὸν in 2:6. The debate is over whether the term refers to something which Christ already had in his grasp or to something which he sought to grasp. Martin points out that the latter view is the more common one among those scholars seeking to find a parallel with Adam. In other words, as Adam sought to become like God by following the serpent's suggestion in Gen 2:5, so Christ sought a status which was not yet his (Phil 2:9-11). However, while Adam sought

<sup>377</sup> Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus*, JSNTSup 36 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 51.

<sup>378</sup> Fowl, *Story of Christ*, 52.

<sup>379</sup> Dave Steenburg, “The Case against the Synonymy of *Morphē* and *Eikōn*,” *JSNT* 34 (1988), 80.

<sup>380</sup> Steenburg, “Case against Synonymy,” 85.

<sup>381</sup> Charles B. Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 54.

to attain this status through disobedience, Christ accomplished it by submitting to the Father. Dunn takes a more radical position on this, denying that the text refers to Christ's pre-existence altogether and arguing that the "being in the form of God" refers to Jesus' humanity.<sup>382</sup> Hooker, however, sufficiently demonstrates that Dunn's interpretation is impossible in light of 2:7. How can one who is *already* man then *become* man?<sup>383</sup>

Romans 1:4 and especially Heb 2:9-13 could certainly be used in support of the idea that Christ obtained an exalted status after the resurrection. However, to admit this, and also to see an exalted status in Phil 2:9-11, does not in itself necessitate that Christ did not already possess divine status prior to the incarnation. Indeed, the high exaltation of the passage may be just a statement contrasting the low position Christ took as man and the return to his previous glory, an idea we see in John 17. However, even if this is true, there is still no clear link to the Adam story. As Cousar writes, "Jesus is not here exalted to the human dominion given at creation (Gen 1:28)" but to worship as deity.<sup>384</sup> Jesus is not being exalted to a position like that which Adam had before his fall but is being seated as the second Person of the Trinity in a seat of power at the right hand of God with all of humanity bowing down to worship him. This is an exaltation Adam never had and never will have.

An article by Roy Hoover on ἀρπαγμός has gained a great deal of acceptance in scholarly circles. He emphasizes an idiomatic meaning for the word and concludes that "in every instance which I have examined this idiomatic expression refers to something

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<sup>382</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 119.

<sup>383</sup> Morna D. Hooker, "Adam Redivivus: Philippians 2 Once More," in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North* (ed. Steve Moyise; JSOTSup 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 222, 231.

<sup>384</sup> Cousar, *Philippians*, 58.

already present and at one's disposal. The question in such instances is not whether or not one possesses something, but whether or not one chooses to exploit something."<sup>385</sup> Thus, the pre-incarnate Christ possessed divinity and the power and authority which comes with it but did not exploit this status. Instead, he surrenders to being a slave. This eventually results in his further exaltation but this eventual result was not at all the purpose of Christ. Hoover, in fact, accuses those like Martin, who endeavor to hold on to both the passive and active meanings of ἀρπαγμός and thus retain the idea that Christ was seeking a higher status, of "obfuscation."<sup>386</sup>

Most of the parallels which have been suggested between Phil 2 and the Adam story thus break down on closer examination. Hooker, however, does not believe that Adam and Christ need to parallel each other perfectly in order for Genesis to be in the background. She writes:

The chief problem with the idea that Adam is in mind in Phil. 2.6 is due to the assumption that Adam and Christ are being viewed as equals; they are not. To make sense of any parallel with Adam in Philippians, we have to understand Christ to be the 'blueprint' of what Man was *meant* to be, the perfect image of God and the reflection of his glory. If Paul has chosen to use the phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ rather than the one used of Adam in Genesis, that is with good reason, for it would make no sense at all to say that one who was 'in the image of God' (i.e. man) *became* man! The pre-existent one was *not* κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ, but ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ.<sup>387</sup>

Hooker thus wants to state that Paul makes a contrast between Adam and Christ while still endeavoring to retain the Adamic imagery. "Whereas Adam was stripped of his privileges, Christ deliberately emptied himself, becoming what Adam had become – a slave, subject to death."<sup>388</sup> However, as we have previously noted, Hooker's claim that

<sup>385</sup> Roy W. Hoover, "The Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution," *HTR* 64 (1971): 95-119.

<sup>386</sup> Hoover, "Harpagmos Enigma," 101.

<sup>387</sup> Hooker, "Adam *Redivivus*," 231.

<sup>388</sup> Hooker, "Adam *Redivivus*," 220.

Christ is meant to be a “blueprint” does not fit. Humanity was never meant to suffer and die, and humanity will never be exalted to divine status as Christ was.

One can certainly argue that in Rom 5 Christ is compared with Adam and that there contrast is equally, if not more, significant than similarity. Yet one must wonder with all the differences between Adam and Christ which Hooker sees in Phil 2 without any specific mention of Adam or any reference to creation, etc., if these differences do not negate the possibility of allusion. For example, Adam and his descendants became enslaved as Rom 6-8 proclaims, but humanity’s enslavement was to sin which was certainly not true of Jesus. Of course, Martin among others has noted that this could be Paul’s very point in using the phrase “likeness of men” in 2:7 (cf. Rom 8:3).<sup>389</sup> However, it is difficult to recognize contrast if one does not first form a substantial awareness of the things being contrasted. This, Paul does not do.

In light of the evidence then that the passage most likely refers to something already possessed by Christ, that Christ’s exaltation is far different than the glory of Adam, that Paul uses μορφή rather than εἰκὼν, and the lack of any clear images from Genesis to associate this text with the Adam story, I am rather reluctant to give any credence to the view that Phil 2 contains more than a passing reference to Adam which could be said to be true of any passage speaking of incarnation. The verses cited by Cullmann and others showing the close associations of μορφή, εἰκὼν, and δόξα are interesting but without Paul’s citation of the middle term or other compelling evidence, Phil 2 remains in my thinking only an unlikely allusion to Adam.

Fortunately, there are a plethora of other passages in Paul’s epistles which are far more promising. For example, 1 Tim 2:9-15 specifically mentions both Adam and Eve

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<sup>389</sup> Martin, *Carmen Christi*, 201.



and employs the creation story as part of Paul's argument regarding the proper behavior for women in the Ephesian church.<sup>390</sup> In 2:12 Paul places some kind of limitation on teaching by women and connects this with the fact that Eve, not Adam, was deceived. The word used for "deceived" here is valuable for our interpretation of Rom 7. In Rom 7:11 Cranfield notes that the compound verb for "deceived" is different than the LXX for Gen 3:13 but Paul's use of this same compound verb in 2 Cor 11:3 and here in 1 Tim 2:14 in reference to the Genesis account shows that he is thinking of that occasion in Rom 7 as well.<sup>391</sup> This evidence, however, cuts two ways. First, it does provide evidence that the compound verb can be used by Paul in place of the simple verb of the LXX. Secondly, however, in 1 Tim 2:14 we are told that Adam was *not deceived* while Eve was. If Paul is impersonating Adam in Rom 7, how can he say there that sin *deceived* Adam and say that he was *not deceived* in 1 Tim 2? We will need to address that issue when we come to our examination of Rom 7.

We move now, however, to the book of Colossians where Jervell argues that 1:15-20 is a Christological interpretation of Gen 1.<sup>392</sup> In response to those who would argue that the hymn is not Pauline, based on things such as a distinctive vocabulary, O'Brien responds: "The noun ἀρχή ('beginning') rather than ἀπαρχή ('first-fruits') is entirely fitting in a passage where the supremacy of Christ is emphasized and where the first creation and the new creation are paralleled, particularly as Christ is designated as

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<sup>390</sup> In the debate regarding authorship, the question of 1 Tim cuts both ways. To accept the letter as Pauline provides further evidence of Paul's interest in the Adam story. However, it also suggests a possible contradiction to Paul's statement in Rom 7 regarding the deception of Adam.

<sup>391</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; sixth ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 1:352.

<sup>392</sup> Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 200-1.

the beginning of the new creation and the One who has initiated it by his resurrection.”<sup>393</sup>

In other words, the distinct vocabulary is not necessarily a sign that the hymn is not Pauline, but rather a modification of the usual Pauline vocabulary to associate two distinct creations.

Wright in turn responds to those who favor a Wisdom background over the creation background of Genesis: “It is, of course, more usual to see the primary background of the Colossian ‘hymn’ (if such it be) in wisdom-Christology, but it may be suggested (a) that there are in fact several hints that Adam is, so to speak, about the place somewhere, and (b) that in fact we should not set up wisdom-Christology and Adam-Christology as mutually exclusive alternatives, but should rather see them as complementary emphases.”<sup>394</sup> In further support of the creation background, he continues by citing contextual evidence:

The description of Christ as *eikōn tou theou* in 1:15 does not stand alone. It is picked up by 3:10, where Christians are said to be renewed in knowledge ‘according to the image of the creator.’ Here there is clear reference to Genesis 1, which is strengthened by the other echoes of that passage in, for instance, 1:6, 10 (bearing fruit and multiplying) – not to mention the ideas of the creation of the world, and of the sovereignty of Christ over creation, which are found in the hymn itself and which clearly belong with the Adam-Christology we have outlined.<sup>395</sup>

Scroggs adds: “In the opening chapter of the Bible, ideas of creation, sovereignty, and divine image all appear, and these are the very motifs found in the passage in Colossians.”<sup>396</sup> Seyoon Kim may be noted among those who see a greater emphasis on Wisdom Christology in this passage. However, he notes at the same time that Paul can mix Wisdom Christology with Adam Christology. Indeed, he argues that Paul does this

<sup>393</sup> Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco: Word, 1982), 41.

<sup>394</sup> N. T. Wright, “Adam in Pauline Christology” (*SBLSP*; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 384.

<sup>395</sup> Wright, “Adam,” 384-85.

<sup>396</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 97.

very thing in 2 Cor 3:18-4:6 which we will turn to in a moment.<sup>397</sup> I would conclude then that Paul here is not restricting himself to one background but is mixing metaphors in order to portray differing aspects of Christ's work both as Savior and Creator.

Scroggs, however, notes that Jervell rejects the association between Christ and Adam based on the fact that Christ here is said to be the "image of God" and is the revelation of who God is and not the revelation of what God intended Adam to be.<sup>398</sup> Scroggs, while agreeing that "image" here does point to the revelation of God, says that Paul also, in relating it to Gen 1, "suggests that Christ is the reality of true humanity." Indeed, "Christ is the true revelation of God *precisely because* he is true man. . . . To see God one looks to Christ; thus the true humanity now realized in Christ is the true revelation of God."<sup>399</sup> Again, we need not choose. Paul is perfectly capable of including both ideas in a single context.

Also, while Christ is called *πρωτότοκος* here in relation to his supremacy over all creation (v. 15), he is also called *πρωτότοκος* in relation to the church as the first to rise from the dead (v. 18). Paul uses this same Greek word in Rom 8:29 where the context speaks of the future resurrection and how God has predestined the church to be "conformed to the image of His Son." Paul speaks of the resurrection also in 1 Cor 15 where he points out that Christ is the first to rise from the dead. In that passage, he contrasts the earthly body of Adam with the heavenly resurrected body of Christ. Thus, it may be argued that here in Colossians as well, Paul is associating "image" not only with Christ in relation to God, but also with Christ in relation to Adam who was originally created in the "image of God" (Gen 1:26).

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<sup>397</sup> Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1984), 144.

<sup>398</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 98, citing Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 214ff.

<sup>399</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 98.

That this is so may also be inferred from what Paul says later in Col 3:1-11. Many writers note that this passage is connected to 1:15-20 by the word “image.” In 1:15 Christ is said to be the image of God and now in 3:10 Christians are being renewed in the image of God. F. F. Bruce writes: “But it is in Paul that the presentation of Christ as the image of God is worked out most fully and consistently, with its corollary of the increasing transformation of the people of Christ into that same image by the power of the indwelling Spirit, until nothing remains of the earthly image in those who finally display the image of the heavenly man.”<sup>400</sup>

We see in this transformation a number of parallels with Romans. First, we may note Rom 6:1-11 where we also find the idea of being buried and raised with Christ (Col 2:20; 3:1, 3). Corresponding with this is the idea of not allowing the members of our body which have been put to death to be in service to immoral behavior (Rom 6:13, 19; 7:5, 23; Col 3:5). We also find the idea of doing away with the “old self” in both passages. Actually both passages employ the same Greek expression, παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος. In Rom 6:6 this “old man” is crucified with Christ; in Col 3:9 he is laid aside as a garment.

In Col 3:10 we are told that Christians have put on a new self. If we compare similar passages (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27), we find that this new self is said to be a person. For example, the Galatians’ passage says: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Now, if when we put on the new self, we are actually putting on a person, Jesus Christ, can we not assume that Paul associates putting off the old self with the laying aside of a person as well? I would argue that, since the putting to death of the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος in Rom 6:6 immediately follows the contrast

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<sup>400</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 123.

between Adam and Christ in 5:12-21, and since Paul explicitly tells us that the new self is Christ, then the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος must be Adam.

With this conclusion many commentators agree. For example, Kim writes: “The ‘old man’ refers to the Adamitic humanity which bears the ignoble image of the man of dust, and the ‘new man’ refers to the new humanity which has the image of God restored to it, i.e., which is conformed to the glorious image of Christ, the Last Adam.”<sup>401</sup> Markus Barth says: “The ‘old self’ is the Adam as representative of the old order, the sin of degenerative humanity and the ‘new self’ is Christ as representative of the new, redeemed order of humanity. To put on Christ and to take off (the old) Adam means then to allow the redeemed humanity to become visible in the deeds of the community (cf. Gal 3:27b/29), whose representative is Christ.”<sup>402</sup> O’Brien comments: “The ‘old man’ here, as in Romans 6:6 and Ephesians 4:22, designates the whole personality of man when he is ruled by sin. At the same time it signifies his belonging to the old humanity in Adam.”<sup>403</sup>

This last association leads us to another interesting similarity with Romans. In Eph 4:22 Paul writes that believers “lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.” I find it striking here that the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος of this verse is said to be corrupted by τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης. I have already noted in the earlier discussion of Jewish background that Philo makes ἐπιθυμία the fountain or source of all other sin (*Spec.* 4:84-85). In Rom 7 this specific command prohibiting lust is what was broken and resulted in the death of the “I.” We saw earlier that Lyonnet argued that this ἐπιθυμία for the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil

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<sup>401</sup> Kim, *Origin*, 322.

<sup>402</sup> Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *Colossians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (trans. Astrid B. Beck; AB 34B; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 412.

<sup>403</sup> O’Brien, *Colossians*, 190.

was the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Ephesians 4:22 would thus support this by stating that the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος was corrupted by this lust. Note further that it is the lust τῆς ἀπάτης. Again, we observed earlier that the deception of Eve in 1 Tim 2 was said by Paul to be the cause of the Fall and saw that deceit was also the cause of the downfall of the “I” in Rom 7:11. Here in Eph 4:22 Paul specifically associates deception with the old man which we have concluded is Adam.

In light of this suggested association with the lust for the tree of knowledge, we would further note that in Col 3:10 Paul writes that the new self “is being renewed to a true knowledge.” Dunn finds this very significant. “For knowledge was at the heart of humanity’s primal failure (Gen. 2:17; 3:5, 7), and humankind’s failure to act in accordance with their knowledge of God by acknowledging him in worship was the central element in Paul’s earlier analysis of the human plight, of ‘the old self’ (Rom. 1:21).”<sup>404</sup> Dunn notes this rejection of true knowledge is a key theme of Rom 1, and argues that this text also refers to Adam. Paul also speaks of knowledge in Rom 7 a number of times (e.g., vv. 7, 14, 15, 18). This repeated emphasis on knowledge in other texts which have been associated with the character of Adam would indicate that Rom 7 as well has Adam’s story in its background.

Another link between this passage and Romans may be mentioned. In Col 3:4 we read: “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” In our discussion of the Jewish background I argued that the loss of Adam’s glory was one of the major ramifications of the Fall. Furthermore, I pointed out that writers from this period believed that restoration of this glory would be an important

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<sup>404</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 222.

consequence of the new age. Here Paul states that believers will appear with Christ in glory at his coming.

One final note which I find significant from Col 3:11 is the fact that renewal in Christ's image necessitates unity in the body of Christ. This, we saw earlier was Paul's point in Acts when Paul argued that we have all descended from Adam. There is no longer any distinction between Greeks and Jews. We noted that Gal 3:27 should be recognized as a parallel passage where we are told we have been clothed with Christ. The result there is again the provision of unity for the body of Christ. Galatians 3:28 makes almost the exact same statement as Col 3:11 saying "There is neither Greek nor Jew." Thus, over and over again Paul uses these two figures of Adam and Christ as unifying figures for all of humanity. Adam unifies us all as sinners while Christ unifies us in salvation.

We could continue this examination of various other passages in the NT which are often suggested as employing the Adam story for their background. For example, I have only touched briefly on Heb 2 and have failed to mention Heb 1:1-3, a text which is often viewed as important to this discussion. I have only briefly touched on Eph 4:22 and Gal 3:17 and 6:15, and have failed to discuss Gal 4:4 as well. However, this chapter is already overly long and attention must be given to Corinthian letters. Given the fact that these epistles were written shortly before Romans and the fact that the Roman letter was written from Corinth itself, I would argue that these documents most likely reflect the closest parallel to Paul's thoughts in the Roman letter. And this is specifically true with regard to the Adam story.

The first clear reference comes to us in 1 Cor 6:16 where Gen 2:24 and the account of Adam and Eve becoming one flesh is used by Paul in a prohibition against joining with a prostitute. Although the use is similar to Jesus' employment of the text as a prohibition of divorce (Matt 19:5), it could be argued that Paul has certainly extended the use of the story and gone beyond the original intent. That this is so can be inferred by the comment by Joseph Fitzmyer defending its compatibility with the OT. "Paul's application of Gen 2:24 to fornication is not a misuse of the OT, because it indirectly repeats the teaching of Genesis, while directly speaking against casual sexual intercourse, in that it expresses the mingling of human bodies that is indeed pertinent to his argument."<sup>405</sup> Fitzmyer's defense is certainly commendable, but the need for the remark and the fact that Fitzmyer says Paul "indirectly" uses Genesis indicates once again that Paul is willing to use the old story in new ways.

In addition to the obvious reference to the Adam story and Paul's new way of handling it, this text also displays striking parallels with Rom 7 and its immediate context. For example, Paul's argument in 1 Cor 6 begins with a statement that he will not be "mastered by anything" (v. 12). Gordon Fee comments: "As the married partner 'has authority over' the other's body, so this might refer to coming under the 'power' of the prostitute. That is, by being joined to her in *porneia* the believer constitutes someone else, outside of Christ, as the unlawful lord over one's own body."<sup>406</sup> In Rom 6-7 we also find this very same issue of authority over the Christian. In the latter chapter, as here, Paul also makes his point regarding authority using a similar metaphor of sexual unfaithfulness (πορνείαν, Col 3:5; μοιχαλίδα, 7:3). As long as the first husband of a

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<sup>405</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 268.

<sup>406</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 253.



woman lives, the law has authority over her and for her to be joined to another man would make her an adulteress.

Another parallel is the use of the word “members” in conjunction with this story (1 Cor 6:15; Rom 6:13, 19; 7:5, 23). The members of our bodies are not to be involved in immoral activity since our bodies are “a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (6:19; cf. Rom 8). Thus, this passage reflects our assertion that Paul’s thoughts in Corinthians and Romans are quite similar and that both employ the Adam story.

The next passage I would reference in Corinthians is 11:1-16. This passage deals with proper decorum in worship and again Paul cites the Genesis story in his reasoning (vv. 7-9). Verse 7 refers to man’s creation in the image of God, a clear reference to Gen 1:26-27, and vv. 8-9 speak of the creation of woman both from man and for man’s benefit which is clearly the story of woman’s creation from Gen 2. Thiselton discusses the use of κεφαλή in this passage. “In theological terms this hints at a representative use: Christ stands for man or humankind in the new order, just as Adam is ‘head’ of the race without the gospel (1 Cor 15:21-24; cf. Rom 5:12-21). This is further corroborated by the language about shame, image, and glory common to 11:4-6 and esp. 11:7 (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα) and 15:49 (τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου).”<sup>407</sup>

Finally in 1 Corinthians we find Paul referring to Adam in the midst of his lengthy argument for the resurrection in chapter 15. Adam is cited by name both in verse 22 and again in verse 45. In this chapter, Paul is combating a false belief that there is no resurrection of the dead (15:12). He does so by using two universal representatives of humanity. Fee says: “Paul’s point is that death is inevitable because of our sharing in the

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<sup>407</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 816.

humanity and sinfulness of the one man, Adam. But believers' sharing in the resurrection from the dead through the second Man, Christ, who in his resurrection effected the reversal of the process begun in Adam, is equally inevitable."<sup>408</sup> While Dunn concurs with Fee's argument, he makes the further point that it was very necessary for Christ to pass through the experience of the first man, Adam, in order to fully become the second Man and restore humanity from the effects of the first Adam. Commenting on the OT quote in 15:45 he says:

Psalm 8:4-6 thus provided scope for a larger Adam Christology – an Adam Christology which embraced both earthly as well as the exalted Jesus. This development (in christological use of Ps. 8, backwards from v. 6 to v. 5a) probably predates Paul's letters too, since it seems to be reflected in I Cor. 15 and to provide the backcloth for Rom. 5:12-19. In I Cor. 15 it is likely that there is an underlying connection of thought between vv. 20, 27 and 45-9, to the effect that Christ too first bore 'the image of the man of dust' before he became 'the man from heaven' (v. 49), that he too was a 'living soul' before he became 'life-giving Spirit' (v. 45). . . . He went all the way with the first Adam to the end of Adam in death. But beyond death he re-emerged as a new Adam whose hallmark is life from the dead. By sinking to the depths with man in death, the depths of his present plight, he was able to catch up man in resurrection, to make it possible for God's original intention for man to be fulfilled at the last.<sup>409</sup>

Dunn notes further the contrast between the first Adam and Christ in their relationship to the living breath. He notes that Adam was only passively a *recipient* of life-giving breath while Jesus is "the *giver* of the life of the age to come, the life of the Spirit."<sup>410</sup> We, therefore, see Paul in this chapter using Adam and Christ as representative heads for humanity but in quite contrasting ways. Adam is dust, a recipient of breath from God, and the one who ushered in death and sin to humanity. Christ, on the other hand, although he took on fallen humanity and was willing to take on humanity's plight, "sinking to the

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<sup>408</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, 751.

<sup>409</sup> Dunn, *Christology*, 111.

<sup>410</sup> Dunn, *Christology*, 108.

depths with man in his death,” as Dunn states, still is raised triumphant over that death in his resurrection and is now able to powerfully provide life-giving breath to all the world, so that all might be restored to the image of God and the glory from which they have fallen.

Chris Vlachos has written an important work on the end of 1 Cor 15 in which he draws important parallels between the statements here and what Paul says in Romans. He endeavors to show that Paul is arguing in “*axiomatic* form” in 1 Cor 15:56 what he will endeavor to show in “*dramatic* form” in Rom 7.<sup>411</sup> He first notes, as we have just seen, that Adam typology is undoubtedly a key component of this chapter. He then observes that “sin” in “the articular singular form occurs elsewhere in Paul only in Romans 5-8. In many of these verses in Romans, Paul depicts sin as a personified power, reminiscent of  $\text{חַטָּאת}$  in Gen 4:7 and the *yēšer hāra* of Jewish thought. This is especially the case in Rom 7:9, 11, where sin, analogous to the edenic serpent, is the entity in the drama that exists prior to, and independently of the individual’s act of transgression and that rises from the shadows to beguile its victim into breaking the freshly given commandment.”<sup>412</sup> Vlachos says that this mention of sin can be traced back to 1 Cor 15:21 where Adam is named, and although sin is not specifically mentioned, it is certainly implied in Adam’s fall.<sup>413</sup> He also traces “death” in 15:56 back to this same verse and says: “Apart from the universal reign of death initiated by Adam’s sin, no other reality would seem to support the truism *the sting of death is sin*.”<sup>414</sup> We do not have time here to examine the many comparisons Vlachos makes between this verse and Rom 7 and what he describes as the

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<sup>411</sup> Chris A. Vlachos, *The Law and the Knowledge of Good and Evil: The Edenic Background of the Catalytic Operation of the Law in Paul* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 10.

<sup>412</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 70-71.

<sup>413</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 89.

<sup>414</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 91.

catalytic use of the law in both passages and the very interesting structural comparisons, but his arguments do provide further evidence for associating Adam typology in 1 Cor 15 with Rom 7.

We turn our attention now to Paul's second extant letter to the church at Corinth. Both Jervell and Kim see 2 Cor 3:1-4:6 as a defense of Paul's apostolic authority in light of Genesis and the events of Exodus.<sup>415</sup> Kim regards the appearance of Christ to Paul on the Damascus road along with the bright light which appeared as forming the basis of much of Pauline thought. In commenting on 2 Cor 3:1-4:6 and the need to defend his ministry, Kim writes: "This launches Paul into a full comparison between the ministry of the old covenant and that of the new (3.7-11) and between Moses the minister of the old covenant and Paul the minister of the new with the effects of their ministries upon Israel and the Church respectively (3.12-4.6). This he makes by comparing and contrasting the theophany to Moses on Sinai and his own Christophany on the Damascus road."<sup>416</sup> The specific tie to the Genesis account is revealed in Kim's further remark:

Numerous Rabbinic passages also draw a parallel between the creation and the Sinai revelation, in that the *כבוד* of God which accompanied the Sinai revelation of the law is compared with the glory which Adam originally possessed and then lost through his fall: at the Sinai revelation of the law the primeval glory was restored. This Jewish conception of the Sinai revelation as a second creation, as the restoration of the primeval glory, provides a good parallel to Paul's conception of the Damascus revelation of the gospel as a new creation, as the restoration of the primeval light of glory, in 2Cor 4.6.<sup>417</sup>

While not everyone agrees that 2 Cor 4:6 is a reference to God's creation of light in Gen 1:3 and Martin notes the possibility that the reference may be rather to the servant passages in Isaiah (e.g., 49:6), Martin still says that the common view is that the allusion

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<sup>415</sup> Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 173-97; Kim, *Origin*, 233-39.

<sup>416</sup> Kim, *Origin*, 234.

<sup>417</sup> Kim, *Origin*, 236.

is to Genesis.<sup>418</sup> In support of this opinion, he refers to the immediate context and his own previous thoughts on 3:18:

At all events, the discussion reaches its peak with Paul's assertion that believers in Christ live in a new age where 'glory' is seen in the Father's Son and shared among those who participate in that eon. It is the Spirit's work to effect this change, transforming believers into the likeness of him who is the groundplan of the new humanity, the new Adam, until they attain their promised destiny as 'made like to his Son' (Rom 8:29) and enjoy the full freedom that is their birthright under the terms of the new covenant.<sup>419</sup>

While the predominant background appears to be the Exodus account, these verses and the subsequent context do lend support to the fact that Genesis is also in Paul's purview.

Some argue that Paul's thoughts on the Adam story do not end with 4:6 but extend on to the end of chapter 5. Marvin Pate, for example, has done a thorough study of 2 Cor 4:7-5:21 in which he argues that Paul's views on suffering and glory "are informed by his belief that the lost *glory* of Adam has been restored by Christ, the last Adam's righteous *suffering*."<sup>420</sup> Pate contends that Adam underlies this passage based on a number of textual clues. First, he notes that the six uses of εἰκὼν in Paul (Rom 1:23; 8:29; 1 Cor 11:7; 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4, 6) all point to the creation account and all these references are in proximity to the word "glory."<sup>421</sup> Colossians 1:15 and 3:10 are not included in this list due to the fact that this book is not one of the undisputed Pauline epistles. Yet, it is interesting that the Colossian passages refer to creation as well and the subject of glory is also to be found in the immediate context (1:11, 27; 3:4). Margaret Thrall concurs with Pate that 2 Cor 4:4, 6 has Adamic overtones. She writes, in reference

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<sup>418</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco: Word, 1986), 80.

<sup>419</sup> Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 72.

<sup>420</sup> C. Marvin Pate, *Adam Christology as the Exegetical & Theological Substructure of 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:21* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1991), 1.

<sup>421</sup> Pate, *Adam Christology*, 82.

to Christ in these verses: “He is man as originally created in God’s image and now recreated in the divine likeness as the second Adam, the prototype of eschatological humanity.”<sup>422</sup>

A second support for Adam in this passage which Pate finds is the reference to γυμνοὶ in 5:3. He says that “the nakedness that Paul desires to avoid (2 Cor 5:3, 4) proceeds from his belief that Adam, originally clothed with divine glory, was divested of that covering because of his sin. In other words, Paul does not want to experience Adam’s nakedness.”<sup>423</sup> Of course, this suggestion by Pate works only to a very minor degree, since Adam was physically naked while he enjoyed God’s glory and was clothed only after he lost that glory.

Pate further sees the separation from the Lord that Paul speaks of in 5:6-8 in comparison to the exile from Eden. He notes both the reference to knowledge in 5:11 and the reference to εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε φαῦλον in the previous verse and combines these thoughts to make an association with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>424</sup> He also traces the groaning of 5:2, 4 back to the travail imposed upon Eve in Gen 3:16.<sup>425</sup>

While some might think some of Pate’s comparisons a bit of a stretch, there are others that see Adamic images in the context as well. Thrall, for example, comments on

5:14:

[T]he idea of Christ as second Adam may be in the background, and both the past tense of ἀπέθανον and the universal scope of οἱ πάντες need to be taken into account, whilst at the same time what Paul says elsewhere about incorporation into Christ and participation in his death suggests that on the individual level this depends upon the decision of faith and

<sup>422</sup> Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 1:319.

<sup>423</sup> Pate, *Adam Christology*, 115.

<sup>424</sup> Pate, *Adam Christology*, 127.

<sup>425</sup> Pate, *Adam Christology*, 117.

acceptance of baptism. Perhaps this verse could be seen as a counter-statement to the assertion in Rom 5.12 that sin and death entered the cosmos through Adam, and that death became pervasive because all sinned : ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον. Here the context requires that the ἥμαρτον should include an allusion to the participation of all mankind in Adam's primal sin, and the aorist tense would support this view, but at the same time the verb is the ordinary term for the commission of actual individual sins. It is a matter, it would seem, of 'both-and' rather than 'either-or'. If, then, in Paul's view, 'all' did participate in Adam's original act of sin, in addition to their personal commission of sinful deeds, it might have seemed necessary that they should also participate collectively in the initial event whereby the power of sin was destroyed, in addition to their personal appropriation of its results in baptism.<sup>426</sup>

Thrall raises some interesting points particularly when she argues that humanity suffers death both as a result of Adam's sin and as a result of its own actions. We observed such dual beliefs co-existing in our earlier study of Judaism. In addition, she points out that all potentially receive life through the individual act of Christ and his death on the cross, as well as from their own appropriation of that action by faith.

Clearly, too, 2 Cor 5:17 is to be associated with the Adam story in its comparing new life in Christ to the original creation. Murray Harris writes: "Already in this letter Paul has depicted conversion as a creatorial act of God, comparable to the initial creation of light (4:6). Now, with the adjective κοινῆ, he emphasizes the altered nature of the converted person or the newness of God's creatorial action."<sup>427</sup> For the Christian in many ways the old world has ceased and a new life has begun just as if God had brought a whole new world into existence.

<sup>426</sup> Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, 1:411.

<sup>427</sup> Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 432.

Another supporter of Pate's thoughts, at least in the light of seeing Adam typology in the immediate context, would be Hooker. A key verse from which she derives her participation theology is 2 Cor 5:21.<sup>428</sup> She defines what she means by this:

It is *not* that Christ and the believer change places, but rather that Christ, by his involvement in the human situation, is able to transfer believers from one mode of existence to another. Underlying this understanding of redemption is the belief that Christ is 'the last Adam' (1 Cor. 15.45), the true 'image of God', who by sharing fully in humanity's condition – i.e. by being 'in Adam' – opens up the way for men and women to share in his condition, by being 'in Christ.'<sup>429</sup>

Thus, Paul sees his ministry as returning to the glory of the original creation surpassing even the ministry of Moses whose glory faded away. Even though he now considers his body like that of the original Adam, composed of dust and frail, he knows that he will receive a glorious new body in the hereafter and is even now part of the new creation of those who have experienced redemption in Christ. Thus, as Jervell and Kim suggest, we find here a prolonged use of the Adam story as a defense of Paul's ministry.

Another lengthy argument certainly built in some measure upon the creation account is found in 2 Cor 11-12. The foundation of that reasoning is evidenced by the mention of Eve in 11:3. Paul argues that he fears Satan will deceive the Corinthians in the same way that he deceived Eve in the Garden. Thrall says:

The seriousness of the potential hazard is emphasized, however, by the comparison of their situation to that of Eve in the story in Gen 3. For in that narrative Eve's capitulation to temptation brought about the disobedience of Adam, and with Adam's disobedience, in Paul's thinking, came the introduction into the cosmos of the hostile powers of sin and death (Rom 5.12). The comparison suggests that he fears a similar corruption of the new creation. Just as the serpent deceived Eve (Gen 3.13: ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με), so the Corinthians may be deceived by the rival missionaries, with the possibility, as he sees it, that his own work in

<sup>428</sup> Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13-25.

<sup>429</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 5.



Corinth may come to nothing, with dire consequences for the church there.<sup>430</sup>

Thus, Paul fears not just the loss of individual Corinthians which alone is serious enough but, moreover, a corruption of his entire ministry in that area.

Thrall also compares the work of the false apostles (11:13-15) to Satan's disguising of himself in the Garden. Not only does the devil disguise himself as a serpent in Gen 3, but Pate notes additionally that, according to Jewish tradition, he is depicted as an "angel of light" (11:14).<sup>431</sup> One observes this for example in the following passage:

Eighteen days went by. Then Satan was angry and transformed himself into the brightness of angels and went away to the Tigris River to Eve and found her weeping. (*Life of Adam and Eve* 9:1)<sup>432</sup>

Thrall notes as well Judaism's suggestion that physical seduction may have played a role in the fall and points to the term "virgin" in 11:2. She cites *2 Enoch* 31.6 for evidence of the virginal corruption of Eve by Satan as well as the Talmud, *Yebam.* 103b. She observes the danger of their minds being seduced (φθορῆ) and says: "The verb φθείρω can be used of sexual seduction, and would be metaphorically appropriate to Paul's comparison."<sup>433</sup>

This extended imagery continues into 2 Cor 12 where Pate notes several indications of Adam typology. The clearest is the reference to "Paradise" in 12:3. Pate says: "Succinctly stated vis-à-vis 2 Cor 12:1-10, Paul's mystic ascent to the third heaven can be appraised as a proleptic experience of the *Parousia* and, as such, is a partial

<sup>430</sup> Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, 2:661.

<sup>431</sup> Pate, *Adam Christology*, 75.

<sup>432</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 2:260.

<sup>433</sup> Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, 2:662-63.

restitution of Paradise.”<sup>434</sup> Pate thinks that ἄνθρωπος in verse 2 also points to Adam. “He is a man (born in the likeness of the first Adam) who is now in Christ (remade in the likeness of the last Adam).”<sup>435</sup> Furthermore, he connects the ἄγγελος of 12:7 with the ἀνήγγειλέν of Gen 3:11 where God asks Adam who “told” him he was naked.<sup>436</sup> We can perhaps, too, hear a reminder of Satan’s exalting himself against God as well as a reminder of the cursing of the ground (Gen 3:18) in the mention of the “thorn.” This would, however, be more likely if Paul had chosen to use the same word as the LXX (ἄκανθα). It must be admitted that these images from 2 Cor 12 with the possible exception of “paradise” are unlikely in themselves to provide confidence in an allusion to Genesis. However, with the preceding reference to Eve, the association becomes more likely.

### Conclusion

I have now examined a number of NT texts in which one or more scholars have seen the story of Adam as forming at least part of the background and have endeavored to do so in an objective manner. I have indeed agreed with many opposing perspectives and rejected the Adamic background in many cases, or at least found them highly questionable. However, while doing so, quite a number of texts remain which do find a firm basis in the Adam story. I have at the same time observed that quite a number of these texts do not include the name Adam. The context alone makes it clear that the NT writer is referring to the original man. I have also noted a number of recurring ideas which may be important as they relate to the book of Romans. For example, we have

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<sup>434</sup> C. Marvin Pate, *The Glory of Adam and the Afflictions of the Righteous: Pauline Suffering in Context* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 107.

<sup>435</sup> Pate, *Glory of Adam*, 129.

<sup>436</sup> Pate, *Glory of Adam*, 131.

continually seen the character of Adam used in a unifying way as a federal head of all humanity. I again noted a number of links between the Adam story and Exodus, further evidencing a strong connection. Moreover, we have examined quite a number of texts which had parallels in Romans (e.g., Acts 17 and Rom 1; Jam 1:12-18 and Rom 7; Col 3 and Rom 6-7; 1 Cor 15:56 and Rom 7). All four of these provide further evidence that the Romans passages allude to the Adam story as well. Perhaps most important is the fact that in the Corinthian epistles which date from approximately the same time as Romans, we have seen Paul use the Adam story in extensive sections, making the story one never far from the apostle's mind.

## CHAPTER 5 – THE ADAM STORY IN ROMANS

*In this chapter I will argue that Paul employs the Adam story throughout Romans. This is especially the case in Rom 1 through 8 but is also evident in Rom 16:20. In addition, there are also hints of the Garden motif in the uniting of Christ's followers into one tree in Rom 11, a unity Paul later builds upon in his exhortations for unity in the church. This examination of the recurrence of the Adam story is intended to demonstrate the greater likelihood that it is also the background for Rom 7.*

In the previous chapter we examined the use of the Adam story throughout the NT excepting Romans. We found that this narrative was employed in all the divisions to varying degrees but that the most prevalent application occurred in the Corinthian epistles where Paul uses the story in lengthy and sustained arguments. As we now turn to Romans which is dated during the same time period as these Corinthian letters, I will again argue that Adam's narrative is not far from the apostle's mind, running from the opening chapter all the way to the book's conclusion.

We will also find that one primary purpose for employing this story coincides well with Paul's thesis in Rom 1:16-17, that is that the gospel of salvation is for all humanity. As Robert Jewett points out, "all" (πᾶς) occurs more than 75 times in the letter.<sup>437</sup> In the opening chapters Paul contends that all (both Gentile and Jew) have sinned (3:23) and have come under the wrath of God (1:18). In chapter 5 Paul will use Adam as the universal head of humanity and the one who ushered sin and death into the world. Moreover, here in contrast to Adam Paul names Christ as the universal head who brings reconciliation to God through grace. Thus, while Paul universally attributes sin to all humanity in 3:23, he also notes in 6:23 the universal offer of eternal life through Jesus Christ. In the analysis of structure in the following chapter I will indeed argue that this contrast forms the overarching pattern of Rom 5-8.

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<sup>437</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 139.

### Romans 1 – Exchanging Glory for Corruption

The story of Adam begins much earlier in Romans than the explicit reference to him in Rom 5 and the subsequent contrasts drawn between him and Christ in Rom 5-8 suggest. Indeed, as I have already intimated, I agree with those who see allusions to Adam in the very first chapter. This position stands in stark contrast to Fitzmyer's claim that the "alleged echoes of the Adam stories in Genesis are simply nonexistent."<sup>438</sup> However, Fitzmyer's rejection is rather strong in light of his own admission that 1:18-32 does allude to Gen 1. If, as Fitzmyer concedes, Paul alludes to Gen 1 in this passage, is not the creation of humanity part of the creation of the world (Gen 1:26-27)? Romans 1 does refer to creation in verse 20 and the Creator in verse 25, and the particular story of Adam and Eve's creation in the image of God is part of the larger creation. It must be inferred then that Fitzmyer's main complaint is that he fails to see allusions to the fall story of Gen 3. However, Rom 1:18-32 commences Paul's argument for the universal sin of humanity in which we see a long laundry list of various sins resulting from humanity's rejection of the knowledge of God. Furthermore, in Rom 5 Paul specifically argues that universal sin and death began with Adam. Thus I would have to concur with Dunn who writes: "There is no specific allusion to Genesis, but it was hardly possible for a Jew to think of man's place in creation, his knowledge of God, and his loss of that knowledge in a (single) act of willful rebellion, without reference to Gen 2-3."<sup>439</sup>

However, while coming to that conclusion, I would at the same time admit that there are a number of issues with some of the evidence mustered by defenders of this position. First, as supporters of the Adam background themselves admit, there are clearer

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<sup>438</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 274.

<sup>439</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 72.

allusions to another OT story, that is, to the events at Sinai. For example, Hyldahl concedes that Paul is using the words of Ps 106.20, and says that Jer 2:11 was also in Paul's thinking. He also notes a number of similarities in vocabulary with Deut 4:15-18.<sup>440</sup> All three of these texts would point to Israel's loss of the glory of God through their making of the golden calf as the background. This loss would indeed fit with Rom 9:4 where Paul tells us that glory was one of the unique possessions of Israel.

Peter Stuhlmacher concurs with another common view that Paul instead draws on the Wisdom of Solomon for many of his thoughts. He comments: "The paradigm for the apostle's concrete invective is the criticism of the idolatry of the Gentiles (of Egypt) attested in Wis. (11:15 and) 13:1-9, together with the following exposition in Wis. 14:12-14, 22-31 of the corruption of all morals that goes hand in hand with Gentile idolatry."<sup>441</sup> Thus, it would seem that both of these backgrounds point to the exodus story as the main backdrop for the Romans text.

Hyldahl, however, contends for the inclusion of an additional text for Paul's background, that being the creation text of Gen 1:20ff. He argues for its inclusion on a number of bases. First, Paul does not specifically refer to the calf or ox mentioned at Sinai and in the psalm. Why, if he is only interested in the Sinai story, does Paul replace the calf or ox with a list of other animals? Second, Paul not only replaces the calf with a list of other animals but also refers to the image of man which is not included in any of the passages mentioned above, but is included in the Genesis text. Third, Hyldahl argues that the order of the animals in Genesis follows Paul's list more closely than the other

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<sup>440</sup> N. Hyldahl, "A Reminiscence of the Old Testament at Romans i. 23," *NTS* 2 (1956): 285-88.

<sup>441</sup> Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (trans. Scott J. Hafemann; Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994), 35.

passages.<sup>442</sup> Fourth, Genesis uses the plural number for the animals as in Romans while Deuteronomy does not. Finally, when Paul refers to creation (1:20) and the Creator (1:25), this is for Hyldahl a clear indication that the creation story must be in Paul's mind.

Jervell concurs with this conclusion and notes that it is not necessary to choose between the Sinai and creation accounts. Indeed, as we have seen repeatedly, there is a close association between the two. "Die spätjüdische Theologie - wir fügen hinzu: das gilt schon für die vorchristliche Theologie - verknüpfte Schöpfung und Exodus. Wir haben gesehen, wie sich die Geschichte Adams mit Israel in der Wüste wiederholte. Wie Adam seine Doxa verlor, so Israel seine Gottgleichheit."<sup>443</sup> The Jews believed that the fall of Israel at Sinai was a repetition of the initial fall of Adam. In the previous chapter I cited the comment by Kim concerning the corresponding belief that the glory Adam originally lost in Gen 3 was restored to Israel at Sinai only to be lost again in the making of the golden calf. Both of these OT stories are important to Paul. Adam is employed as the progenitor of all humanity and the one who ushered in universal sin. Israel, too, is descended from Adam and thus implicitly a part of sinful humanity, but the Sinai story explicitly functions to force the Jews to recognize their own sinfulness and rejection of God. Thus, these two stories are meant to speak directly to the two halves of Paul's audience, Gentile as well as Jew.

As a result of this rejection of God by both Gentile and Jew, we see humanity being given over to a whole list of sins. Hooker notes that many of these are of a sexual nature and remarks:

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<sup>442</sup> To get the same order as Paul, Hyldahl must exclude the water creatures of 1:20 which list ἐρπετὰ before the περὶ ἕρποντων. As an indication that Hyldahl's move is rather arbitrary, Pate in fact argues that Paul deliberately reverses the order of Genesis; Pate, *The Glory of Adam*, 147.

<sup>443</sup> Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 321.

God gave men up to their own lusts, to the dishonouring of their bodies and to unnatural passions. Possibly there is in the phrase τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν an echo of the shame of Adam and Eve at their own nakedness (Gen. iii. 7-11). More important, however, is the rabbinic tradition which associated the Fall with sexual desire: in several passages the serpent's temptation of Eve is explained as being a temptation to unchastity; others speak of unnatural intercourse of Adam and Eve with demons.<sup>444</sup>

In making the association between the specifically sexual sins of Rom 1 and Eve, Hooker admits that she is relying on rabbinic texts which are later than Romans. However, she argues that they “probably reflect an exegesis current as early as the first century AD; similar ideas are found in pseudepigraphical writings, and Thackeray suggests that they lie behind 2 Cor. 11.2-13.”<sup>445</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, Thrall also cites this evidence in support of an Adamic background for 2 Cor 11. In addition, she cites Paul's use of the term “virgin” in 11:2 as an indication that Paul saw Eve's fall as sexual in nature. Fitzmyer, however, is highly critical of the lateness of Hooker's rabbinic evidence and subsequently rejects it.<sup>446</sup> Moreover, one could argue, contra Hooker, that the incident of the golden calf also involved sexual sin, and clearly *did include* idol worship, while there is no mention of idolatry in the Genesis account.<sup>447</sup> Sinai, therefore, is the more likely background for Paul's statements than this allusion to a Jewish belief in the sexual temptation of Eve which only *possibly* was concurrent with Paul.

However while this may be true, Stuhlmacher suggests another basis for seeing this emphasis on sexual sin in the Romans passage. He observes the repeated references to the idea of exchange Paul makes in 1:23, 25, and 26 and states: “With every indication

<sup>444</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 78.

<sup>445</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 78-79.

<sup>446</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 274.

<sup>447</sup> Although קָנַח in Exod 32:6 does not always have a sexual connotation (e.g., Gen 19:14), it certainly does in Gen 26:8



of his loathing, the apostle now pictures how the Gentiles profane themselves (in a sinful reversal of Gen. 1:27f.) in lesbian love and sodomy.”<sup>448</sup> In other words, Stuhlmacher contends that the sins mentioned here are meant to stand in direct contrast to the proper sexual relationship God established in Genesis. As we have already seen, both Jesus in Matt 19 and also Paul himself in 1 Cor 6 employ the Genesis story in this way. It is thus not out of the realm of possibility that Paul is doing the same thing here. Thomas Schreiner supports this perspective and suggests that “the phrase ‘contrary to nature’ (παρὰ φύσιν) is rooted in Stoic and Hellenistic Jewish traditions that saw homosexual relations as violations of the created order.”<sup>449</sup> The story of the union of Adam and Eve is thus used to contradict improper sexual behavior: divorce and the almost certain adultery to follow (Matt 19), sexual relationship with a harlot (1 Cor 6), and here homosexuality. One may also note in this regard that in Rom 1:24 Paul mentions the same basic flaw of “lust” which is also presented as the basic weakness in Rom 7:7-8. However, although an emphasis on sexual sin may be present in Rom 1, it is important to note that it is only one of the many sins produced by lust both here and in Rom 7.

While we are on the topic of the types of sins involved in Rom 1, it may be valuable to mention something which will play into the overall discussion of Romans below. Many commentators spend a great deal of time arguing over which sections of these early chapters Paul addresses to the Jews and which he directs toward the Gentiles. For example, many scholars claim that the sins of Rom 1 are primarily Gentile sins since most Jews during Paul’s time would have had nothing to do with idolatry. Moreover, while homosexuality was somewhat accepted among Gentiles, Jews abhorred the very

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<sup>448</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 37.

<sup>449</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 95.

idea. On the other hand, many interpreters see a shift toward the end of Rom 1 and the beginning of Rom 2 which indicates that Paul is now addressing the sins of the Jews and their judgmental attitude toward the Gentiles. The end of Rom 1 describes people who not only plunge headlong into horrendous sin but also take pleasure in enticing others to indulge with them. However, the person depicted at the beginning of Rom 2 at least *claims* to abstain and judges those who are involved in these sins. Thus, this change of attitude from promoting others in sin to judging those committing sin signals that Paul is now beginning to address Jews.

However, let me respond here in a number of ways. First, if, as we noted above, Paul is making allusions to the golden calf episode, it was the Jew Paul was thinking of and not the Gentile who was involved in idolatry and sexual misbehavior. Thus, while the Gentiles might fit this category better in Paul's present day, it would be the Jews who Paul is especially citing with the golden calf episode. This may in fact be Paul's point. You Jews are judging the Gentiles now for those sins that you yourselves have a history of participating in.

Second, as Tobin notes, Paul does not specifically name those involved in these sins until well down in chapter 2 and he does not even then indicate who should be lumped into which category, sexual idolater or legalistic judge. He rather repeatedly emphasizes that "all" who do these things are sinners, something Tobin says "was not characteristic of this kind of Jewish apologetic."<sup>450</sup> This suggests that Paul is not interested in placing Jews and Gentiles into separate categories. Rather he is interested in lumping all together in the same category, that of sinners. All are lost and all need Christ.

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<sup>450</sup> Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 108-12.

Moreover, once sinners are incorporated into Christ, they all become part of one body and should therefore love one another and work in unity. When Paul addresses the church in Rom 14 and 15, he speaks of those who are weak and those who are strong. Commentators again try to place Jews and Gentiles into one category or another. However, Paul himself refuses to compartmentalize. It might be tempting here to associate the weak with the Jews who had all kinds of food restrictions based on the law. However, it is possible that there were Gentile Christians who had embraced these things as well in response to legalistic influences. Then, too, there may be Jews like Priscilla and Aquila who through Paul's influence have set aside these Jewish strictures and Paul may now look at them as among the strong. Indeed, he places himself, a Jew, in this category of the strong (15:1). All of this suggests that Paul is not wishing to lump Jews or Gentiles into categories but wants to address all believers wherever they fit. In the same way, in Rom 1-3, he wants to show that all of humanity, Jews and Gentiles, are sinners however they may go about transgressing God's commands. Sin began with Adam and has infected all regardless of race.

Hooker continues to support her views on the use of Adam in Rom 1 by examining some of the vocabulary in the text. She, for example, suggests that the terms *ἀόρατος* and *σκότος* in Gen 1:2 may compare with *ἀόρατα* in 1:20 and *ἐσκοτίσθη* in 1:22. She writes:

Linked with *ἐσκοτίσθη*, which perhaps suggests a return to the primeval chaos, we find *ἐματαιώθησαν* in v. 21; although this verb is used only here in the New Testament, we find *ματαιότης* later in this epistle, at viii. 20. It is significant that the noun is used there of the futility to which the creation has been subjected as a result of man's sin; from this futility it will be set free as a direct consequence of the freedom arising from the

glorified state of the children of God, who are conformed to the image of Christ.<sup>451</sup>

The former term here (ἀόρατος) is also used in Col 1:15-16 which I argued in the previous chapter also likely included an allusion to the Adam story. However, it should be noted that this term is also employed in 1 Tim 1:17 without any clear association with creation.

The latter remark, however, by Hooker on the term ἐματαιώθησαν is more significant in that Rom 8 clearly refers to the subjection of creation to “futility” as a result of Adam’s fall. This term then, contra Fitzmyer, would link Rom 1 not just to Gen 1 and creation but also to Gen 3 and the Fall. We will look at this more closely when we come to discuss chapter 8. However, I would suggest here that this passage and Rom 8 are part of an extensive argument in which Paul sees the effects of the fall reversed through the work of Christ. Humanity and creation were subjected to futility (1:21; 8:20) but will be set free through the work of Christ (6:18, 22; 8:2, 21). Humanity exchanged the glory of God for idol worship (1:23) but that glory will be restored (8:17, 21). Humanity, in its rejection of God, fell under His wrath (1:18), but now through Christ believers experience reconciliation and peace (5:1, 10).

Another element that Paul will later emphasize which resulted from Adam’s disobedience is death (5:12). In Rom 1:32 the apostle states that death comes as a result of breaking the known ordinance of God. Douglas Milne says that “Romans 1:32 echoes Genesis 2:17 and its fulfillment in Genesis 3:19.”<sup>452</sup> Milne may be correct in seeing this reference to death as specifically relating to Adam in light of Rom 5. However, in the immediate context, we should concede that this death is said to come to all persons who

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<sup>451</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 80.

<sup>452</sup> Douglas J. W. Milne, “Genesis 3 in the Letter to Romans,” *RTR* 39 (1980), 11

knowingly transgress the command of God. Death is thus here not directly tied to Adam's transgression as in Rom 5 but rather the result of one's own personal disobedience.

A further allusion to Genesis has been suggested by the use of the word "lie" in 1:25. While most English translations omit the definite article, the Greek text actually says that they "exchanged the truth of God for *the* lie" (τῷ ψεύδει). This suggests that the article may be employed anaphorically and refers to a specific previous lie suggested by the context. Ephesians 4:25 might be cited as evidence against this suggestion since Paul also uses the definite article there and the verse speaks of the Ephesians not lying to one another. However, the context is interesting in that it immediately follows one of the "old man" passages we referred to earlier.<sup>453</sup> As we noted, Eph 4:22 speaks of our "old man" corrupted with the "lusts of deceit." It is possible, therefore, that Paul is associating the lying of the Ephesians to one another with the original deception of Adam and Eve, in which case both Rom 1 and Eph 4 allude to Satan's lie in the Garden.

Jewett, however, suggests a different lie may be the background of Romans given Philo's description of "Moses' consternation at seeing the golden calf that represented 'indeed how great a lie they had traded for so great a truth' (καὶ ὅσαν ψευδᾶς ἀνθ' ὅσης ἀληθείας)" (*Mos.* 2.167).<sup>454</sup> This would certainly coincide with the suggestion that the background is the Sinai event rather than Genesis. However, Jewett himself goes on to argue that "the singular use of 'the lie' in Romans implies an antecedent act from which all later lies about God derive, namely the primordial desire of humans to 'be like God' and to define evil and good for themselves (Gen 3:5)."<sup>455</sup> He thus sees not only a reference to Sinai but also a link to the original lie of the serpent in Eden and concludes:

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<sup>453</sup> The expression 'old man' is used in favor of carnal nature, etc., to show the connection with 'Adam.'

<sup>454</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 170 n.56.

<sup>455</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 170.

“This is not simply ‘a lie’ but ‘*the* lie,’ which involves the fundamental thrust of humans to replace God with themselves, a tendency visible from the fall to the crucifixion of Christ.”<sup>456</sup> In light of Rom 5 then, this initial lie is the starting point which brings about the wrath of God and the eventual death of all humanity.

Various other words and phrases have also been cited as possible links to Genesis. Hooker, for example, contends that the statement “God gave them over” (vv 24, 26, 28) should be seen as a declaration of God’s casting Adam and Eve out of the Garden.

“Although the verb which he uses is different, it may perhaps reflect something of the force of ἐξαπέστειλεν . . . ἐξέβαλεν in Gen. iii. 23 f.”<sup>457</sup> Shreiner points to 1:27 and argues that “Paul selected the unusual words θῆλυς (*thēlys*, female) and ἄρσεν (*arsēn*, male) rather than γύνη (*gynē*, woman) and ἀνήρ (*anēr*, man), respectively. In doing so he drew on the creation account of Genesis, which uses the same words (Gen. 1:27 LXX; cf. Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6).”<sup>458</sup>

I must say, however, that I find Hooker’s suggestion here unconvincing. There is no real reason to see παραδίδωμι as referring to the expulsion in Genesis other than a predisposition to do so. Schreiner’s attempt appears at first to be more feasible given the unusual vocabulary. However, in light of Hyldahl’s suggestion earlier that Deut 4:15-18 should be seen as background, it is important to note that the same words for male and female are found in verse 16 of that passage. One then need not go back to Genesis to find Paul’s vocabulary. Consequently, neither of these suggestions sufficiently requires a link to Genesis.

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<sup>456</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 170.

<sup>457</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 78.

<sup>458</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 94-95.

Before concluding our analysis of Rom 1, two further vocabulary items deserve attention. The first involves Paul's use of εἰκῶν and δόξα in 1:23. I have previously argued that these two are always linked together in Paul and should be seen as alluding to the Adam story and the making of humanity in the image of God and the glory the Jews saw associated with that. However, what about Rom 1:23? Can εἰκῶν here really refer back to creation and the fact that God originally created humanity in his image (Gen 1:26-27)? One might think in light of the Pauline usage elsewhere that this has to be so. However, Käsemann points to an obvious fly in the ointment. He notes that the text clearly refers not only to "image" in the sense of "idol" and not the image of God but, moreover, that it is not just man's image that is referred to by Paul but also the image of various animals.<sup>459</sup> Even if we overlook the fact that Paul is referring to idols, it is highly unlikely that the apostle would say that animals are created in the image of God.

Despite this rather strong critique of the allusion to Genesis, some interpreters have attempted to circumvent these difficulties. Hooker, for example, endeavors to overcome the absence of any reference to idolatry in the fall of Adam with the following remark: "In listening to the voice of the serpent, Adam has not only failed to exercise his rightful dominion over creation, but, by placing himself in subservience to a creature, has opened up the way to idolatry."<sup>460</sup> Wedderburn, while admitting the difficulty with the obvious reference to idolatry, suggests that Paul may be playing on both meanings. "At this point we may note that Paul was certainly aware that εἰκῶν could also mean 'image' in the sense of 'idol' and that means, to put it paradoxically, that man for him both was an

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<sup>459</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 45.

<sup>460</sup> Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 78.

image and could have one.”<sup>461</sup> He then goes on to argue that one often becomes like what one worships. Richard Bell reasons similarly: “Rom. 1.23a is not easy to translate. In the Greek Paul seems to be saying two things. First, rather than worshipping God they worshipped images resembling the human and animal form. Secondly, this process entailed exchanging their ‘image of God’ (cf. Gen. 1.26) for the ‘image of a mortal human being’, i.e. Adam and the image of animals. Paul then seems to be indirectly referring to human beings losing the *imago Dei*.”<sup>462</sup>

As to Bell’s last point, I would have to argue that earlier we saw no evidence in the Judaism of Paul’s time that suggests a belief in the complete loss of the image of God. However, his argument that we become what we worship may have some support in one of the background texts cited by Hyldahl. He noted that the idea of exchanging glory for vanity in the Romans passage is likely based on Jer 2:11. Just a few verses earlier we find in Jer 2:5:

What injustice did your fathers find in Me,  
That they went far from Me  
And walked after emptiness and became empty?

Stuhlmacher declares: “Whoever follows after that which is nothing, becomes nothing himself (Jer. 2:5)!”<sup>463</sup> Thus, this idea of becoming what we worship not only finds support, as Bell argues, in Paul’s other letters but also in the Jeremiah text which Hyldahl argues is one of the texts behind Paul’s comments here in Rom 1. It, therefore, could be contended that Paul is alluding to God’s making of man in his own image and also stating that man has exchanged this image of God for futility by becoming like the corrupt images he worships.

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<sup>461</sup> Wedderburn, “Adam and Christ,” 418.

<sup>462</sup> Richard H. Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18-3.20* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1998), 55.

<sup>463</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 36.



Additionally, the emphasis on knowledge in Rom 1 (γνωστὸν, v. 19; νοούμενα, v. 20; γνόντες, v. 21) gives credence to the view that Paul has the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in mind. In this regard, Dunn's cited parallels between Wisdom and Romans become especially pertinent. He says: "There are clear references in Wisdom to the creation of the first human formed from the earth (Wis. 7.1) and given rule over the creatures (9.2-3), and to the first-formed father of the world's transgression (*paraptōma* – 10.1). Notable also is the echo of Gen. 3.19 in Wis. 15.8 and the accusation in 15.11 that the human fashioned from clay 'failed to know the one who formed him' (cf. Rom. 1.19-21)."<sup>464</sup> One must admit that the statements in Wis 15:11 and Rom 1:21 are both strikingly similar in form but also slightly different in point of view. Romans says that humanity did know God but failed to honor him, while Wisdom says they "failed to know." However, the passage in Wisdom could be making the same point by saying they failed to know God *in the appropriate way* with their failure to honor him. Indeed, how could the Wisdom writer argue culpability for this failure without some knowledge of God?

If we assume that Paul is following the Wisdom writer in Rom 1, Wis 15 is an important text since it deals with the same issue of idolatry. Paul may then be drawing his associations with idolatry not directly from Genesis but from the Wisdom account which combines the two. Commenting on Rom 1:22, Dunn concludes: "Here the echo of the Adam narratives becomes quite strong. Not that Paul alludes to it explicitly, although the γνωστὸν of v 19 may recall Gen 2:9. It is rather that the description of human aspiration for greater knowledge and a position of high regard which actually results in a decline into disadvantage and a position of low regard, set as it is in aorist terms, is obviously

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<sup>464</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 86.

modeled on the account of man's fall in Gen 3.<sup>465</sup> Moreover, the conclusion that the association between creation and idolatry are drawn from Wisdom may be further bolstered by the fact that Wis 15 uses the same illustration of the potter making his vessels for both honor and dishonor which Paul later draws upon in Rom 9. If Paul has Wis 15 in mind while writing Rom 9, he may be thinking of Wis 15 when writing Rom 1 as well. If this is the case, then we could expect Paul to mix creation and idolatry themes found in that text.

As a final overture at supporting the idea that the Adam narrative is in the background of Rom 1, I offer a passage from the *Sibylline Oracles*:

who created everything by a word, heaven and sea, untiring sun, full moon, shining stars, strong mother Tethys, springs and rivers, imperishable fire, days, nights. Indeed it is God himself who fashioned Adam, of four letters, the first-formed man, fulfilling by his name east and west and south and north. He himself fixed the shape of the form of men and made wild beasts and serpents and birds. You neither revere nor fear God, but wander to no purpose, worshipping snakes and sacrificing to cats, speechless idols, and stone statues of people; and sitting in front of the doors at godless temples you do not fear the existing God who guards all things. You rejoice in the evil of stones, forgetting the judgment of the immortal savior who created heaven and earth. Alas for a race which rejoices in blood, a crafty and evil race of impious and false double-tongued men and immoral adulterous idol worshipers who plot deceit. There is wickedness in their breasts, a frenzy raging within. They ravage booty for themselves and have a shameless spirit.<sup>466</sup> (*Sib Or* 3:20-40)

Of note are the parallels to Rom 1:24-32. First, the text specifically mentions Adam.

Second, humanity fails to worship and fear God, instead worshipping creatures as in Rom 1:23. Finally, humanity is depicted as indulging in all manner of sin as in Rom 1:24-32.

The *Sibylline Oracles*, like much of the other intertestamental literature, is notoriously difficult to date due to its fragmentary nature. However, two observations from J. J.

Collins indicate that this particular passage is one of its earliest. First, he says: "This

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<sup>465</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 60.

<sup>466</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:362-63.

material finds its closest parallels in the Jewish Orphic fragments, which probably date to the second century B.C., and also in Philo.<sup>467</sup> Secondly, he notes that this material immediately precedes verses 46-62 which “must be dated shortly after the battle of Actium” which took place in 31 B.C.<sup>468</sup> Based on this early dating, Thomas Tobin says that Paul may have been aware of this text among other Jewish writings which were commonly used to critique Gentiles.<sup>469</sup> If Paul did know this text, as the many parallels suggest, the fact that the author of the *Sibylline Oracles* explicitly refers to Adam in 3:24 provides further evidence that Paul, too, had the Adam story in view.

I could continue analyzing further data and give my own evaluation as to its merit. Having done so, however, I would probably agree with many of the critics of these positions and affirm that at least some of this so-called evidence is likely the product of a predilection to find Adamic material rather than solid exegesis. That is not to say that I do not find any of it compelling. Indeed, I do. However, these additional findings are not the main reason I believe that Paul is alluding to the Adam story in Rom 1. Even if all this other data were overthrown, I would still concur with the statement of Dunn in our opening paragraph. That is to say, even without any of the additional evidence, it is difficult to imagine that any Jew like Paul could write about creation, the rejection of the knowledge of God, and the subsequent plunge of humanity into sin without thinking of Adam, especially in light of the conclusion he eventually reaches in Rom 5. That Paul adds to the story by including what the Jews viewed as a second fall at Sinai, and that he sees Adam’s sin as repeated in the people of his own day is certainly also to be admitted, but that the apostle is at least in part thinking of the general story of Adam’s fall is, I

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<sup>467</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:360.

<sup>468</sup> Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 1:360.

<sup>469</sup> Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric*, 109.

would argue, fairly certain. This, after all, is Paul's eventual goal, to show that all have sinned. Beginning with Adam, repeated dramatically at Sinai, and continuing in every single Jew and Gentile down to Paul's day, all humanity has sinned, denying the knowledge of their Creator, becoming vain in their thinking, and exchanging truth and glory for all manner of corruption.

## Romans 2

In the intervening chapters leading up to this conclusion in chapter 5, Paul continues to strengthen his case that all have sinned, drawing especially on OT texts to prove his point. Some writers have also seen additional allusions here. While I do not find these arguments nearly as compelling as those for chapter 1, a few of them deserve mention. More important than these potential allusions, I would argue however, is Paul's use of terminology which I contend has important bearing on the conclusions I draw for Rom 7.

In his article, "Paul's Story of God and Creation," Edward Adams endeavors to show that Paul is re-writing the story of Adam in the book of Romans. He thus looks at many passages which he claims evidence a background drawn from the Genesis story and evaluates the strength of these allusions in the following comment:

One passage in Romans deals explicitly and unambiguously with Adam: 5:12-21. There are four other passages in which, in my view, Adam motifs can be identified with a fairly high degree of confidence: 3:23; 7:7-13; 8:19-22; and 8:28-30. A reasonable case can be made for the presence of Adam themes in 1:18-32; 2:1-11 (especially 2:7, 10); and 4:1-25 (specifically 4:13, 21). The allusions to Adam in these texts, however, are somewhat more controversial or less obvious than the preceding set. In

addition to all of these are a couple of passages that, I would argue, ‘carry over’ an Adam theme from a preceding passage: 6:1-23 and 7:14-25.<sup>470</sup>

While I would concur with much of what Adams says, I find his breakdown here rather surprising in light of the fact that, while numerous scholars also see a reference to Adam in 1:18-32, support for allusions to Adam in chapters 2 and 4 is nearly non-existent.

Adams writes in relation to chapter 2: “The allusion to Psa. 8:5 in Rom. 2:7 and 2:10 shows that the basis of God’s final judgement will be God’s original creative agenda.”<sup>471</sup> I would respond to Adam’s so-called “reasonable case for the presence of Adam themes” in Rom 2 in a number of ways. First, Jewett does mention the fact that the first two terms of the different triads that Paul uses in 2:7, 10 (δόξα, τιμὴ) are found in the same order in Psalm 8:5.<sup>472</sup> Moreover, Dunn does link the use of Psalm 8 to the Adam story in Heb 2 and argues that Christ in this Hebrews passage is being depicted as the second Adam.<sup>473</sup> However, while the use of Psalm 8 is quite obvious in Hebrews and Dunn may be correct in his analysis there, there is very little in Rom 2 to support the idea that Paul is thinking of Psalm 8. Indeed, Jewett goes on to say that the two terms Adams cites had become a traditional combination and appear in numerous other OT passages besides Psalm 8.

It could be argued in support of Adams that Paul’s use of ὁ ἄνθρωπος in 2:1 is a reference to the original man as in the case of παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος. However, Paul uses the term ἄνθρωπος over one hundred times in passages which have nothing to do with

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<sup>470</sup> Edward 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* (ed. Bruce W. Longenecker; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 26.

<sup>471</sup> Adams, “Paul’s Story,” 36.

<sup>472</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 205.

<sup>473</sup> Dunn, *Christology*, 108-13.

the historical Adam. Most then, like Tobin, acknowledge that the vocative here is simply a common dialogical formula.<sup>474</sup>

### Romans 3

In the opening section of Romans, Paul's major focus is on proving that all, both Jews and Gentiles, have sinned, and as a result humanity is declared to ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ (3:23). Although there is debate regarding how the verb ὑστεροῦνται should be translated here, Dunn notes that the verse should be traced back to the fall of Adam and the Jewish tradition of Adam's loss of glory:

the ambiguity as to whether the reference is to a glory lost or to a glory fallen short of probably reflects the ambiguous role of the tree of life in the garden: did the primal pair lose something they already possessed (Gen. 2.16), or were they deprived of the *opportunity* of attaining eternal life (Gen. 3.22)? At all events, humankind in seeking to grasp for God's glory (to be like God) had lost even the share in that glory which they had originally been given.<sup>475</sup>

While Adam is nowhere specifically named, it is noteworthy that almost all interpreters speak favorably of the Adam narrative as the background for Rom 3:23.<sup>476</sup>

Perhaps more important for our purposes is Paul's employment of terminology in Rom 3 which may provide insight into its subsequent use in chapter 7. First, we may recall that Chrysostom rejected the idea that Adam lay behind the impersonation of the "I" in Rom 7 since the focus is on Mosaic Law. Here, however, in Rom 3:19 we see that Paul speaks of "law" in reference to the OT passages he has just cited in 3:10-18, but the term here cannot refer to the Mosaic code for, as Dunn comments, none of the Jewish

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<sup>474</sup> Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 93.

<sup>475</sup> Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 93-94.

<sup>476</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 347, would be an example of the few who do not, accusing Dunn of eisegesis.

quotations in 3:10-18 come from the Pentateuch.<sup>477</sup> This ambivalence in the Pauline use of the word law suggests that Chrysostom's rejection of an Adamic background on this basis is premature.

Another noteworthy item here is Paul's use of the first person pronoun. Note that in 3:4 he refers to the possibility that "every man *be found* a liar." He then speaks of "our unrighteousness" (3:5) and more importantly says "if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory" (3:7). Paul moves from "every man" to "our" to "my" all in connection to the act of lying. On the basis of this passage as well as many others, Kümmel maintains that Paul is employing a stylistic form without any thought to his own person.<sup>478</sup> As in 1 Cor 13 where Paul uses the first person to speak of anyone, here he uses it to speak of "every man." Kümmel then reasons that Paul is doing the same thing in Rom 7 where the "I" stands for every human being without any specific autobiographical thought in mind. Gerd Theissen agrees with Kümmel's perspective in Rom 3, saying that indeed "Paul distances himself from this view."<sup>479</sup> In other words, when Paul speaks of "my lie," the lie is not really his own but rather that of humanity as a whole. Theissen, however, argues that this distancing is not true in a number of other passages where Paul uses "I" but does include himself.<sup>480</sup>

I will examine Theissen's analysis in greater detail in relation to Rom 7. However, for now, let us note a further comment regarding the use of the word "lie" here in 3:7. According to Dunn, Paul is attempting to link this passage to Rom 1 where Paul wrote that they exchanged God's truth for a lie. As I argued earlier, the Greek text

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<sup>477</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 152.

<sup>478</sup> Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 121-22.

<sup>479</sup> Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (trans. John P. Galvin; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 193.

<sup>480</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 190-201.

actually uses the definite article in 1:25 which indicates an anaphoric use pointing back either to Israel's sin in making the golden calf or to the original lie of the serpent. While it may be a stretch, and one would have to argue that as a result of believing Satan's lie Adam and his descendants became liars themselves, I do not think it is impossible here to see a hint that Paul already may be thinking of the connection, Adam = every man = I. It is noteworthy, too, in this regard that Rom 3 itself may provide support for the idea that all of humanity became liars by accepting the serpent's lie:

‘WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,’  
‘THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS’ (3:13)

Thus, humanity now spreads the very venom of deceit with which Adam was bitten.

Further undergirding this last conjecture is the fact that Paul repeats the same logic in Rom 6:1 which he employs here. In 3:7-8 the suggestion is made that my lie brings glory to God. In 6:1 the suggestion is made that further sin would cause God's grace to abound. Both indicate that a good result may come from doing evil. Moreover, Rom 6:1 follows the comparison between the work of Adam and the work of Christ in 5:12-21. Thus, 6:1 raises the possibility that imitation of the sin of Adam might lead to further grace since Adam's disobedience led to the coming of Christ. This points to the possibility that Paul is employing the same logic in the earlier passage. The lie Adam accepted led eventually to the glory of God. So, further lying may as well.

Vlachos makes a number of interesting remarks on Rom 3:20 which may connect Rom 3 to the Adam story and also to Rom 7. First, he ties the verse to 1 Cor 15 which we know specifically speaks of Adam. “An *edenic* referent might also be present in Rom 3:20b, a verse that appears to be expressing a *catalytic* notion of the law in an axiomatic



manner similar to 1 Cor 15:56: διὰ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτία.”<sup>481</sup> As noted above, Vlachos contends that 1 Cor 15:56 argues in axiomatic form what Paul demonstrates in dramatic form in Rom 7. In addition, Vlachos demonstrates a strong correlation between Rom 3:20 and Rom 7 based on vocabulary. “The terms (νόμος, ἐπίγνωσις/γινώσκω, ἁμαρτία), prepositional phrase (διὰ νόμου), and theme (ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας/τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνω) that are shared between Rom 3:20b and Rom 7:7 could hardly be more suggestive of a kinship between the verses, as is the manner in which the motif of *knowledge* occupies the rhetorical center position between law and sin in each statement.”<sup>482</sup> He then concludes: “Finally, if, as we will ponder, Paul’s knowledge of sin motif in Rom 3:20b is linked to the knowledge of good and evil notion in Genesis 2-3 and if, as we will propose, the latter notion depicts an experiential knowledge of evil, the Genesis Fall narrative might bring light to the interpretation of 3:20b.”<sup>483</sup>

Thus in summary, the lie in Rom 3:7 can plausibly be tied to the serpent’s deception in the Garden (3:13). Similarly, Paul’s reference to the knowledge of sin in 3:20 may be linked to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Finally, there is again the mention of the loss of glory which Judaism viewed as a primary result of the Fall (3:23). Although individually we might not assume that any of these statements necessitate a tie with Gen 3, taken as a whole, they at least suggest the possibility.

#### Romans 4

Adams’ evidence for Rom 4 is somewhat better than that for Rom 2 but still rather weak. In Rom 4 Paul uses the story of Abraham to argue that circumcision is not

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<sup>481</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 108.

<sup>482</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 108.

<sup>483</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 109-10.

the basis of the covenant but that it is instead based on faith. Paul then contends that the true people of God are those who have the same kind of faith as Abraham. This faith is described as believing “God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist” (Rom 4:17). There is quite a debate over whether or not this last expression refers to the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*. Although Moo admits that “Paul’s language is quite close,” he eventually rejects the association on the basis of the ὡς in the phrase τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα, regarding this expression as simply too weak to speak of the act of creation itself.<sup>484</sup>

Adams, however, like many, does accept the creation reference and links the statement back to Rom 1. He writes: “Abraham believed in the God ‘who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist’ (4:17). Moreover, he ‘gave glory to God’ (4:20 NRSV). Abraham thus did what the disobedient gentiles declined to do. In rejecting their creaturely estate, the gentiles repeated Adam’s core error. Abraham, in this display of faith, not only reverses the rebellion of the gentiles but also that of Adam.”<sup>485</sup>

I noted earlier in the comments by both Wright and Wedderburn that Abraham was believed to be part of the divine answer to the problem created by Adam. Dunn, writing on this passage, says:

Thereby Paul confirms his transformation of Abraham from being the pattern of the devout Jew to being the pattern of man as he was created to be – a universalizing of Abraham which further undermines Israel’s otherwise exclusive claim to him. Abraham is now clearly to be seen as the model of the proper creature, the man of faith who holds his whole life in total dependence on the life-giver, the model for all who thus believe, Gentile as well as Jew.<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 282.

<sup>485</sup> Adams, “Paul’s Story,” 35.

<sup>486</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 238.

Certainly, this does raise the possibility that Abraham is being contrasted with Adam, but the focus here is more on Abraham's belief in the birth of Isaac from Abraham and Sarah's dead bodies than a belief in God based on creation. That this may be in the background as well is possible, but if so, only as a secondary inference.

What might provide the most confidence that Abraham is being linked to chapter 1 is not the possible reference to creation in 4:17 but rather, as Adams notes, the reversal in giving glory to God (4:20) which those in 1:21 failed to do. Paul argues in Rom 15:8-9 that giving glory to God is now to be the privilege of all believers, both Jew and Gentile. As I have suggested, glory is an important theme in Romans (1:21, 23; 2:7, 10; 3:7, 23; 4:20; 5:2; 6:4; 8:18, 21, 30; 9:4, 23; 11:13, 36; 15:6, 7, 9; 16:27). The glory that had been exchanged for corruptible images in 1:21 is to be regained (8:18-25). What was once the unique privilege of Israel (9:4) will eventually be enjoyed by all believers (8:17) because it was originally intended to characterize all humanity. If Paul sees Abraham as part of this reversal, it is possible that the statements here are meant to link back to Adam's failure to recognize God in Rom 1 and the subsequent loss of glory.

### **Romans 5 – Adam and Christ Contrasted**

It is not until Rom 5:14 that we have the first overt mention of Adam. Indeed, it is the only time in the epistle where Adam is specifically named. Nevertheless, it is also clear that throughout the entire passage in 5:12-21 the "one" (ἐνὸς or ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου, vv. 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19) refers to either Adam or Christ. According to Paul, these two individuals are universal heads who affect the lives of all other human beings in contrasting ways. Moo puts it this way:

In a passage that rivals 3:21-26 for theological importance, Paul paints with broad brush strokes a 'bird's-eye' picture of the history of redemption. His canvas is human history, and the scope is universal. We hear nothing in this paragraph of 'Jew' and 'Gentile'; both are subsumed under the larger category 'human beings.' The perspective is corporate rather than individual. All people, Paul teaches, stand in relationship to one of two men, whose actions determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them.<sup>487</sup>

While Adam and Christ are alike in that they both have this universal effect upon the race, the results of their actions contrast sharply. Otto Michel comments on the passage: "Logisch steht unser Abschnitt unter dem Gesetz der *antithetischen Typologie*: Adam-Christus; ihr entspricht die Gegenüberstellung von altem und neuem Äon sowie die gegensätzliche Dreiheit: Gesetz-Sünde-Tod bzw. Gnade-Gerechtigkeit-Leben."<sup>488</sup> In Rom 4 Paul uses the figure of Abraham to argue that both Jew and Gentile are justified not on the basis of law but rather on the basis of faith. Thus, Abraham, too, like Adam and Christ is used as a universalizing figure. However, Abraham is primarily a Jewish character. Tobin writes: "Even more than Abraham, Adam is a figure prior to the Mosaic law and prior to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Because he stands at the ultimate origin of both Jews and Gentiles, he serves as an apt foil to Christ, who for Paul unites both Jews and Gentiles."<sup>489</sup> More significantly, Adam is a universal figure for the old aeon, while Abraham is used by Paul to characterize the new. Thus, the figure of Adam not only better encapsulates all of humanity, but is also a fitting contrast to the person and work of Christ.

It is important then to pause here and ask how the pictures of these two aeons fit into the structure of Romans. Romans 5:12-21 begins with διὰ τοῦτο which is

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<sup>487</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 314-15.

<sup>488</sup> Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), 185.

<sup>489</sup> Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 181.

commonly translated as “therefore.” Bultmann, however, argues that there is no strong connection with what precedes and suggests it is “probably nothing more than a transitional phrase.”<sup>490</sup> Scroggs concurs, calling it “an indefinite particle, loosely tying one subsection to another.”<sup>491</sup> Schreiner, however, says: “The weakness of this theory is that διὰ τοῦτο nowhere else is used in this vague transitional way.”<sup>492</sup> He, therefore, links this passage to the one immediately preceding it, 5:1-11, noting that the two are tied together by the theme of hope. He says: “The hope trumpeted in verses 1-11 is firmly based because Christ has overturned the negative consequences of Adam’s sin.”<sup>493</sup>

However, while Schreiner’s solution certainly finds a connection through the second person of the comparison, Christ, and the hope he has brought in 5:1-11, this immediately preceding passage has little to say about Adam and the results of his actions which, too, are a major concern of the latter passage. Moo, therefore, argues that the relationship expressed by διὰ τοῦτο is connected to all that has come before. “Thus, the emphasis on the justification secured by Christ, in contrast to the condemnation introduced by Adam (vv. 18-19), harks back to the central theme of 1:18-4:25 – particularly to the critical tenet that justification is available for all who believe’ (3:22).”<sup>494</sup> Similarly, Dunn argues: “This recollection of the indictment of humanity in Adamic terms (1:19-25) and its reversal ‘through Christ’ prepares the way for the explicit Adam/Christ contrast of the following paragraph (5:12-21). . . . Indeed, the whole course

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<sup>490</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul* (trans. Keith R. Crim; Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), 62.

<sup>491</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 77.

<sup>492</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 271.

<sup>493</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 271.

<sup>494</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 315.

of the argument so far is contained within 5:12-21, with the rule of sin corresponding to 1:18-3:20 and the rule of grace corresponding to 3:21-5:11.”<sup>495</sup>

However, while interpreters for the most part see the διὰ τοῦτο of verse 12 as retrospectively examining what Paul has written, there is also evidence that this passage serves to prepare the reader for several major themes in the coming chapters. Again, Moo remarks that “some of the concepts introduced in 5:12-21 – ‘grace,’ ‘death,’ and ‘sin’ as reigning powers, the sin-producing effects of the law (vv. 13-14, 20), the corporate structures of ‘in Adam’ and ‘in Christ’ – are precisely those that come to dominate chaps. 6-8.”<sup>496</sup> Michel maintains that we have in this passage a summary of what Paul will deal with in more detail in the chapters that follow. “Erkennt man diese wichtige Eigenart unseres Abschnittes, dann wirkt Röm 5,12-21 wie eine mythische und bildhafte Darstellung der großen eschatologischen Wende, die in Kap. 6-8 näher beschrieben wird.”<sup>497</sup>

I will indeed argue that the contrast between the sin ushered in by Adam and the salvation brought by Christ in the opening sections (1:18-3:20; 3:21-5:11), and summarized in 5:12-21, are again repeatedly contrasted in the following three chapters, making this passage of central importance to the first eight chapters of Romans. All have sinned as a consequence of Adam’s sin (1:18-3:20). Christ has provided a reversal to the reign of sin and death this transgression has introduced (3:21-5:11). These two consequences are then summarized in 5:12-21, and finally this summary, comparing and contrasting the consequences of Adam and Christ’s actions, is explored in greater detail in Rom 6-8. Thus, the importance of Adam and how Christ has reversed the results Adam

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<sup>495</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 242-43.

<sup>496</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 315-16.

<sup>497</sup> Michel, *Römer*, 185.

incurred give us a solid overall perspective on Paul's purpose in the opening half of Romans.

In doing so, the petty divisions between Jew and Gentile are erased. Beker writes: "Thus we see that Paul raises his argument to a new level in Rom. 5:12-21, where he points out that the social barrier between Jew and Gentile is not the ultimate human problem. Rather, the ultimate division in humankind is not between Jew and Greek, but between being 'in Adam' or 'in Christ.'"<sup>498</sup> This emphasis on unity "in Christ" resurfaces later in the epistle when Paul argues that believers are part of one olive tree (Rom 11) and that distinctions in belief should not divide us (Rom 14-15).

Before moving on to discuss potential allusions in later chapters, let us examine, at least briefly, what is meant by being "in Adam" or "in Christ." Paul, in this passage, repeatedly argues that the action of the "one" has affected the lives of the "all," or the "many." For example, the transgression of the one has brought death to all (v. 17). Moreover, this same transgression has also brought condemnation to all (v. 18). Adam's disobedience has somehow resulted in the fact that we are all sinners (v. 19). On the other hand, the obedience of the one, Christ, has not only made many righteous (v. 19) but also brought life (v. 18).

How is it that the actions of these two individuals have such a broad effect on the rest of humanity? A thorough answer to this question is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Moreover, most scholars admit that Paul himself does not provide a thorough answer to this question. For example, Moo states: "Paul says nothing explicitly about *how* the sin of one man, Adam, has resulted in death for everyone; nor has he made

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<sup>498</sup> J. Christiaan Beker, *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought* (trans. Loren T. Stuckenbruck; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 52.

clear the connection – if any – between Adam’s sin (v. 12a) and the sin of all people (v. 12d).”<sup>499</sup> Furthermore, many of the systems produced by later theologians go far beyond the text and introduce solutions to questions that most likely never occurred to the apostle. I will, therefore, attempt to limit my own observations to what is explicitly stated in Rom 5 and its immediate context.

First, I think it is clear that Paul, in agreement with the Jewish culture of the time, holds in tension the idea that people suffer the consequences of their own sin with the notion that they suffer directly as a result of Adam’s action. It is clear that we cannot completely escape fault because we all, without exception, have made the same choice as Adam. This idea of personal responsibility can be garnered from the passage if we allow the parallel between Adam and Christ to influence our understanding. The passage states that many are made righteous because of the action of Christ, but it also states that these who are made righteous and given eternal life also must “receive the abundance of grace” (v. 17). Since the results of the later aeon require action on the part of the recipient, it is reasonable to assume that each individual in the first aeon is at least partly responsible for their own destiny.

On the other hand, having said this, it is also reasonably certain that Paul is arguing that death has come solely as a result of Adam’s own action. Paul argues in verses 13 and 14 that death was in the world between the time of Adam and Moses even though there was no law to transgress and “sin is not imputed when there is no law.” In Rom 7:7-13 Paul writes that sin uses the law to bring about death. Since death, then, could not come to those living between the time of Adam and Moses as a result of their own transgression, it must have come through the sin of Adam. Paul thus indicates that

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<sup>499</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 323.



death was not the natural lot of humanity but was ushered in as a result of Adam's sin.

Paul goes on then to personify this death as a ruler which reigns over all humanity.

What is this death of which Paul speaks? Does it refer only to physical death or is it spiritual as well? Richard Watson, in his *Theological Institutes*, argues for the former. "But then the death of which he *here* speaks, is the death of the body; for his argument that 'death reigned from Adam to Moses,' obliges us to understand him as speaking of the visible and known fact, that men in those ages died as to the body, since he could not intend to say that all the generations of men, from Adam to Moses, died eternally."<sup>500</sup> However, there are at least two problems with this view that death here speaks only of physical death. First, if we again note the parallel with Christ, death is contrasted with life and this life is not merely physical life but rather spiritual. It would therefore appear that spiritual death is implied as well in the contrasting term. Perhaps equally important is the story in Genesis itself. God tells Adam and Eve that in the day they break his commandment they will die (Gen 2:17). While physical death would *eventually* occur, the *immediate* impact on Adam and Eve was not only separation from the tree of life but also expulsion from the Garden which resulted in their separation from God and their close relation with him indicated by their walking with him in Eden. Again, we may wish to mollify our abhorrence of this idea by the realization that we have all incurred our own guilt and responsibility for judgment, but Paul still views all humanity apart from Christ as separated from God, and, without some intervention by God, that separation will be eternal.

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<sup>500</sup> Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes: Or, a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity* (2 vols.; 26<sup>th</sup> ed.; New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 18-- ) 2:399.

Death, however, is not the first thing that Paul says Adam brought into the world. Death was a result of his first bringing sin there (Rom 5:12). We might associate this sin with Adam's specific act of disobedience (Rom 5:19), but Paul intimates that sin is more than an individual action. Moo notes that references to sin in the singular are characteristic of Rom 5-8. "Throughout these verses, Paul attributes to 'sin' a very active role: it 'reigns' (5:20; cf. 6:13, 14), can be 'obeyed' (6:16-17), pays wages (6:23), seizes opportunity (7:8, 11), 'deceives,' and 'kills' (7:11, 13). In a word, he personifies sin, picturing it as a power that holds sway in the world outside Christ, bringing disaster and death on all humanity."<sup>501</sup> In Rom 7:17, Paul will indeed declare that this "sin dwells in me." Furthermore, Paul says in Rom 5:19 that it was through Adam's disobedience that "the many were made sinners" (ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί). Again, Paul does not specify how this occurred, but this does indicate, in the context of Rom 5-8, that Paul believes that Adam's action caused humanity not only to eventually commit their own acts of sin but also that Adam's action caused humanity to have sin as a power dwelling within.

That this is so can be further inferred from what we noticed in Paul's use of the Adam story in Col 3:9-10 and Eph 4:22-24. When we become Christians, we are to put on the new man, Christ, which gives us the power to obey God and not sin (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27). Noting the parallel drawn between Adam and Christ in Rom 5:12-21 as well as the following statement in Rom 6:6 that our "old self" (literally παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος) is crucified when we are baptized into Christ, we concluded that Adam was the old man we are to put off. Thus a direct connection is drawn between the old self, dominated by the power of sin, which is crucified when we become a Christian and Adam. Again, how

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<sup>501</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 319.

Adam becomes a part of us is not so specifically stated by Paul as in later systems, but that Adam caused this indwelling power of sin is indicated by the apostle's statements.

Thus, through the initial sin of Adam, Paul concludes that two powers are ushered into the world, sin and death, which greatly affect all of humanity. These are part of the old aeon headed by Adam. However, while this view of sin and death was likely easily accepted by Paul's readers, it was probably surprising, especially to his Jewish kinsmen, that Paul uses the same language of entering into the world of another element a bit later on in this passage. In Rom 5:20 Paul says that the Law also "came in" (παρεισῆλθεν). Barrett notes that the verb Paul employs for "came in" is the same one used in reference to the false brethren in Gal 2:4. However, Barrett does not wish to give the verb here this same negative sense. "Paul does not mean to speak ill of the law as he does of the false brethren, but merely to indicate that it came in beside what was already in position, and consequently enjoyed an inferior status."<sup>502</sup> Nevertheless, the statement that the law entered not to prevent sin but rather to increase it gives credence to the argument that Paul is indeed making such a negative connotation. Dunn says: "So the more negative overtone suggested by the double prefix (BGD, 'slip in,' 'interpose') was probably intentional . . . the effect is to set the law alongside sin and death who likewise 'entered' human experience (v 12)."<sup>503</sup> Schreiner adds: "Jews believed that the law restrained people from sin and was instrumental in inclining people to righteous living. Paul, who once held this very view as a zealous Pharisee (cf. Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-11), now proposes a shockingly different alternative. Instead of curbing sin, the law was given by

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<sup>502</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 117.

<sup>503</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 286.

God in order to increase the transgression.”<sup>504</sup> Paul makes this point clear in Rom 7 where, while conceding that the law “is holy and righteous and good,” he will at the same time point out that the law has been sin’s instrument to cause death and that the law instead of inhibiting sin provokes it. While it is not likely that Paul would argue that this was God’s purpose in giving the law, the apostle make it very clear that it is one of its results.

Before leaving this passage, there is one further item to note in verse 14. Here Paul speaks of Moses as the one who was given the law. Prior to this, humanity between Adam and Moses died according to Paul in spite of their lack of any law to disobey due to Adam’s transgression. Furthermore, it is important to observe that Adam is depicted here as one who broke a law and disobeyed a specific command (v. 19; Gen 2:16-17). As Scroggs argues: “The similarity of Adam and Moses is that both were under the Torah of God. Paul here alludes to rabbinic teaching about Adam. Though the rabbis differed as to how extensive was the Torah set for Adam, there was general agreement that the first man was given specific requirements to obey.”<sup>505</sup> Dunn concurs and says that

Paul may have been aware of an already current tendency in other Jewish theologizing to speak of Adam’s sin as a breach of God’s commandments, as his description of Adam’s sin as ‘transgression’ (v 14) and his subsequent treatment in chap. 7 probably implies (cf. 7:7). But here he insists on preserving the historical time scale: the law did not come in until Moses. This is partly no doubt because the argument of chap. 4 is still in mind (Abraham received the promise before the law).<sup>506</sup>

Even if we agree with Dunn that Paul is “preserving the historical time scale” by placing the giving of the Law at the time of Moses rather than making it present at creation as we have seen some Jewish traditions do, Paul nevertheless equates Adam’s

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<sup>504</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 294.

<sup>505</sup> Scroggs, *Last Adam*, 80.

<sup>506</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 290-91.

act of sinning with people following the giving of the law at Sinai. That is, they are both transgressors (παράβασις) of law. This fact appears to nullify Chrysostom's statement regarding Paul that "it does not appear that he has ever called the commandment in Paradise 'Law' at all."<sup>507</sup> Chrysostom may argue that Paul does not view Adam as breaking the specific law given to Moses. However, the parallel Paul draws between Adam and Mosaic Law breakers certainly suggests that Paul looked upon the commandment in Genesis as law.

### **Romans 6 – The Contrast Continues**

As we move on to Rom 6, it is important to recall Michel's assessment that Rom 6-8 describes in greater detail the eschatological reversal summarized in Rom 5:12-21. In the next chapter on structure I will contend that these four chapters are built on the repeated contrast between the work of Adam and the work of Christ and the results of their actions on humanity. I will thus reserve many of the remarks I might otherwise make here for this later chapter.

However, I do want to suggest preliminarily some connections between Rom 5 and Rom 6 which highlight this continuation and thus help us understand Rom 6 in the light of these connections. Note first of all that the question beginning Rom 6 ties directly to what Paul states in Rom 5:20. Since he there argues that Christ's grace abounds and overcomes the increase of sin, he now asks if we should not therefore sin all the more in order for grace to be increased further. Romans 6:1 and following thus answers a possible implication derived from Paul's statement. However, not only does 6:1 connect back to the previous section but 6:23 does as well. There Paul says that the wages of sin is death

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<sup>507</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies* 12 (NPNF<sup>1</sup> 11:422).

and that the gift of God is eternal life. This is the same explicit contrast Paul draws in 5:21. In this way, both the beginning and the end of Rom 6 correlate directly with Rom 5:12-21.

Other terminology which is carried over includes the idea of transgression and obedience. Adam brought sin and death into the world through his transgression. Christ brought righteousness and life through his obedience. As a consequence, Paul exhorts believers to forsake the transgression of the old Adam and instead be obedient slaves of righteousness as evidence of their new life in Christ (esp. 6:15-19). Thus, the beginning, end and intervening context of Rom 6 further explains what Paul has already stated in 5:12-21.

These repeated connections underscore Paul's continuing focus on the two aeons represented by Adam and by Christ. Again, as in 5:12-21, most would likely accept the idea that sin and death are part of this old aeon. However, Paul once again characterizes these two aeons in another way which would likely be rejected by most Jews. In 6:14, he indicates that the transition from the old aeon to the new requires that one also move from being "under law" to being "under grace." Being "under law" is thus descriptive of the old aeon. This problem of the law and why we must move beyond it will be dealt with more fully in Rom 7 but here we see that Paul definitely aligns the law with the old era of sin and death.

In Rom 6:6 Paul exhorts believers not just to put off the "old man" as in other passages but insists that they have been crucified with Christ. This, along with 5:8, spells out the act of obedience which Christ is said to have performed in 5:19. Christ was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). The only human being

who had never sinned, and thus should not have been subject to the penalty of death introduced by Adam, experienced that death all the same on humanity's behalf.

Moreover, not only did Christ experience death on our behalf but, as Barrett comments, our "old, Adamic, self was crucified with Christ."<sup>508</sup> Two excellent quotes from Dunn link all of these actions together:

Jesus is the *only* one who, having reached the end of this age of Adam, broke through the road-end barrier of death into the age beyond; who, having died Adam's death as an act of obedience, rose to a new life beyond. Christ's death and resurrection thus provide the doorway – for Paul the only doorway – through death to life, from this age under the power of sin to the new age free from sin. To make the transition from old age to new age, from sin through death to life, one must as it were be carried through by Christ, and one must identify oneself unreservedly with the historical event of Christ's death in all its degradation and suffering, as sacrificial offering and act of obedience. Only those who make themselves one with his death can hope to experience the life which is his life in the new age beyond.<sup>509</sup>

In an important sense Christ's death and resurrection as obedient Adam counts for all Adam/humankind: Christ died for all, therefore all died (2 Cor 5:14); Christ died in the solidarity of sinful flesh, as a sin offering (8:3), therefore the body of sin has been done away with. Something of epochal significance has happened in the once-for-allness of Christ's death. And the point which Paul wishes to get over, even at the risk of overstatement, is that *believers can share in the epochal once-for-all results of Christ's death*. By the decisive act of conversion-initiation believers can begin already, even in this life, to benefit from the decisive act of Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>510</sup>

Thus, the move from the old aeon to the new comes about both through the death of Christ and our own participation in that death.

This answers clearly the question raised initially by Paul. We cannot continue in sin because we have transitioned from the old aeon where sin reigned to the new aeon where we are freed from sin (6:7). That old man dominated by sin has been crucified. We

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<sup>508</sup> Barrett, *Romans*, 125.

<sup>509</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 329.

<sup>510</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 332.

now walk in “newness of life” (6:5). Jewett observes: “Dying to the realm of sin means living in the realm of Christ; the two realms are as incommensurate as the antithesis between ‘life’ and ‘death.’”<sup>511</sup> Godet writes: “Just as a dead man does not revive and resume his former occupations, as little can the believer return to his old life of sin; for in his case also there has been a *death*.”<sup>512</sup> This idea of everything that is part of the old life ceasing and a new life beginning is very similar to what Paul writes in 2 Cor 5:17 where he specifically uses the idea of a new “creation” (κτίσις).

Jewett notes the connection between these two texts and includes a third text found in Gal 6:15 where κτίσις is also used. In this third text Paul states that circumcision is not the vital ingredient in a Christian life but rather a change of behavior, a point he made earlier in Rom 2:25-29. The Christian’s joining in the death of Christ does not just free us from the reign of sin and death. It further transfers us from the dominion of law. In Rom 7:1-6 Paul notes that only the death of a woman’s current husband enables her to marry another without committing adultery. In the same way he contends, participation in Christ’s death frees us from the law (7:6).

Juxtaposed between these two illustrations involving death, Paul includes another illustration employing slave imagery to speak of the Christian’s transference from the era of Adam to the era of Christ. Accordingly, Paul argues in 6:15-23 that when an individual is freed from one master to serve another, he or she is no longer under obligation to serve the original master. In the same way, Paul says the transition across aeons has enabled the Christian to no longer be in slavery to sin but rather has enabled God’s servant to live a righteous and holy life (6:19).

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<sup>511</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 396.

<sup>512</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Romans* (1883; repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1984), 236.



While the latter two illustrations might at first appear to have little connection with the Adam story other than the fact that Paul is repeatedly referencing the transition across aeons, there is at least one idea that ties all three together. In Rom 6:5 Paul uses the word *σύμφυτοι* to speak of our being united with Christ in his death and resurrection. Jewett, among others, downplays the original organic sense of this term which included “horticultural references to grafting or growing together,” preferring a more generic idea of being “joined together.”<sup>513</sup> However, the immediate context as well as the overall context of Romans suggests otherwise. For example, both the second and third illustrations speak of the Christian’s bearing “fruit” (*καρπός*, 6:22; *καρποφορήσωμεν*, 7:4). Obtaining “fruit” among the Romans was indeed given by Paul as one of his goals in coming to the city (1:13). Furthermore, the illustration of the olive tree in 11:17-24 which is employed by Paul to depict Jew and Gentile unity in Christ also evokes the idea of fruitfulness. It is thus not out of the realm of possibility that Paul is thinking here of the original command given to Adam and Eve to be fruitful (Gen 1:28), a command which was also fulfilled by the Israelites in Egypt (Exod 1:7). Consequently, the command to be fruitful given to the original pair continues to depict the appropriate behavior of God’s people (John 15:1-11).

### **Romans 8 – Glory Regained**

In Rom 8 Paul continues to contrast the two epochs, now setting in opposition the flesh with the Spirit (vv. 3-13) as well as the law of sin and death with that law associated with the Spirit and life (v. 2). Thus, for example, Cranfield says: “Verses 5-8 bring out forcefully the absolute opposition existing between the Spirit of God and all that belongs

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<sup>513</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 399.

to Him, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the flesh, that is, our fallen, ego-centric human nature and all that belongs to it.”<sup>514</sup> Again, we shall look further at these contrasts in the next chapter.

However for now, let us recall that in chapter 1, Keesmaat, who seeks to show that Rom 8 has its background in the exodus account, says that ultimately its roots must be traced back to the Garden. She speaks of both Israel groaning under the curse of a foreign power but also of all those in Christ Jesus groaning under the curse of Adam. Indeed for Paul, it is not only humanity groaning under this curse but all of creation. Jewett writes: “In the Genesis account, the divine curse upon the ground resulted in its producing ‘thorns and thistles,’ causing chronic frustration symbolized by the ‘sweat’ on the face of Adam’s descendants (Gen 3:17-19). In this powerful symbolization, humans trying to play God ended up ruining not only their relations with each other but also their relation to the natural world.”<sup>515</sup> Thus, the non-material world has not only been subjected to corruption and decay but has also ceased to be subject to humanity. Leenhardt emphasizes this lack of subjection in his discussion of “futility”: “Since man has not fulfilled towards creation the ministry with which he was entrusted, creation, for lack of guidance and control, is not evolving towards the end that was assigned to it; it moves purposelessly in the void; life leads nowhere except to corruption and death. Ματαιότης stresses this futility of existence, its essential vacuity or lack of substance and meaning.”<sup>516</sup>

In the history of interpretation scholars have debated who subjected creation to this futility: Adam, Satan or God. Of course, in some sense all three were involved, but as

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<sup>514</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:372.

<sup>515</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 513.

<sup>516</sup> Leenhardt, *Romans*, 220.

Dunn points out: “There is now general agreement that ὑπετόγη is a divine passive (subjected by God) with reference particularly to Gen 3:17-18.”<sup>517</sup> However, Paul indicates that God did this, already having restoration in mind, for He did it “in hope” (8:20). Moo writes: “But this decree of God was not without its positive side, for it was issued ‘in hope.’ Paul probably has in mind the *protoevangelium* – the promise of God, given in conjunction with the curse, that ‘he [the seed of the woman] will bruise your [the serpent’s] head’ (cf. Rom. 16:20).”<sup>518</sup> However, Fitzmyer offers the following objection: “This ‘hope,’ however, should not be facilely identified with Gen 3:15, *pace* Cranfield (*Romans* 414), which expresses not victory, but lasting enmity between the serpent and its offspring and the woman and her offspring.”<sup>519</sup> While Fitzmyer may be correct that Gen 3:15 expresses the idea of continual enmity between Satan and humanity, if we rely on the comment in Rom 16:20 cited by both Moo and Cranfield, we would have to agree that Paul is expressing not only continual enmity but also complete victory (συντρίψει). Interestingly, Fitzmyer himself believes Rom 16:20 is an allusion to Gen 3:15.<sup>520</sup> If Fitzmyer can see an allusion to Gen 3:15 in Rom 16:20 which clearly points to ultimate victory over Satan, why then is there a problem in interpreting the text in the same way in Rom 8?

Before looking at this last reference to Adam’s story in Rom 16:20, we should note one further allusion to Adam in Rom 8. Without the above reference to the Adam story which we have seen in the subjection to futility of creation as a result of Adam’s fall, it might be objected that we here are reading into the text an allusion to Adam which

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<sup>517</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 470.

<sup>518</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 516. Also, Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:414.

<sup>519</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 508.

<sup>520</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 746.

simply is not there. However, in this creation context, I believe it is fairly safe to argue that both Rom 8:3 and Rom 8:29 are employing an Adamic background. Commenting on the former, Dunn says that “this is the language of Adam Christology: another son of God (cf. Luke 3:38) whose entry upon this world had equivalently epochal significance (in effect recalling 5:12-21).”<sup>521</sup> Christ takes on the likeness of sinful flesh in order to deliver humanity from sin and that we might again be “conformed to the image of His Son” (8:29). Thus, Christ takes on the likeness of man that we might take on the image of Christ.

There is much discussion among theologians as to just what extent Christ took on “sinful flesh.” John Murray, for example, writes:

He is using the word ‘likeness’ not for the purpose of suggesting any unreality in respect of our Lord’s human nature. That would contradict Paul’s express language elsewhere in this epistle and in his other epistles. He is under the necessity of using this word here because he uses the term ‘sinful flesh’ and he could not have said that Christ was sent in ‘sinful flesh’. That would have contradicted the sinlessness of Jesus for which the New Testament is jealous throughout.<sup>522</sup>

However, scholars dispute just what would contradict this sinlessness of Christ. Barrett, for example, says that “Christ took precisely the same fallen nature that we ourselves have, and that he remained sinless because he constantly overcame a proclivity to sin.”<sup>523</sup> Schreiner, while affirming that “the Son was affected by the power of sin,” that the “word ὁμοίωμα, then, denotes the full identity of the Son with sinful humanity” and that “his body was subject to the disease, death, and weakness of the old order,” nevertheless,

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<sup>521</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 421.

<sup>522</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (NICNT; one vol. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 280.

<sup>523</sup> Barrett, *Romans*, 156.

affirms that Christ did not sin.<sup>524</sup> Both these writers then indicate that Christ had what Barrett describes as “a proclivity to sin.”

Two arguments, I believe, make this unlikely. First, as Godet observes, why does Paul use the word ὁμοίωμα if he meant to say that Christ by taking on sinful flesh was thus under sin’s power?<sup>525</sup> Schreiner’s answer to this is that ὁμοίωμα is meant to point to the differentiation that he never committed acts of sin. However, Witherington notes that the context is not primarily referring to the problem of sinful actions but rather, as we noted earlier in this chapter, to sin’s power and reign. “It does not speak of the deeds of Jesus and our deeds and so does not say that the Son came and did not sin like all other human beings, though Paul believes that is also true (cf. 2 Cor. 5.21).”<sup>526</sup> Witherington further bases this belief on the fact that the OT required the sacrifice to be without blemish.<sup>527</sup> Thus, Christ needed to be wholly free from sin not only in relation to sinful actions but also in regard to its power. Whichever way, however, one comes down on this point, it remains true that Christ is said to have taken on the likeness of Adam. This was done so that redeemed humanity might in turn take on the image of Christ. On Rom 8:29, Fitzmyer writes: “Behind Paul’s expression lies the OT idea of human beings created *kat’ eikona theou*, ‘according to the image of God’ (Gen 1:26-27; Sir 17:3; Wis 2:23), now adapted to the Son in this salvific process.”<sup>528</sup>

One final comment is in order in regard to Rom 8. In our earlier discussion of Rom 1, I summarily rejected Hooker’s suggestion that παρέδωκεν (vv. 24, 26, 28) might be an allusion to God’s casting the first couple out of the Garden of Eden. It simply is not

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<sup>524</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 403.

<sup>525</sup> Godet, *Romans*, 298.

<sup>526</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 213.

<sup>527</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 213 n.14.

<sup>528</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 525.

the same word as is used in the LXX. However, in Rom 8 where Christ takes on the likeness of man so that humanity might take on the image of the Son, it is interesting that this word παρέδωκεν appears once again (v. 32). Paul writes that God “did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all.” In light of the fact that God performs the same action on the Son that he had performed on sinful humanity in Rom 1, and in light of this exchange which we have seen in Rom 8 where Paul employs Adam theology, it may be that Hooker is indeed onto something. Käsemann would seem to agree when he states: “We have here a backward glance at the παρέδωκεν of 1:24 and also at the depiction in 5:12ff.”<sup>529</sup> Whether we accept this further allusion to Adam or not, it remains clear that the groaning of creation clearly indicates a reference to the curse on creation as a result of Adam’s sin and thus a clear allusion to the Adam story in Rom 8.

### Romans 9 through 15

In the remaining chapters of Romans, there are a few other indications that Paul is still thinking of the Adam account. For example, in 9:20 he speaks of God molding a vessel from clay. This certainly has some connection to Adam’s being formed from the ground (Gen 2:7), although the more likely immediate referent is Jer 18-19, or Wis 15. Additionally, in Rom 11:16, Rengstorf argues that ἀπαρχὴ alludes to Adam, arguing that it speaks of Adam as the “Stammvater” from which the entire lump of humanity originally comes.<sup>530</sup> We did see this word employed in Rom 8:23 in the context of creation groaning as a result of Adam’s sin. However, there, as well as here, the word cannot refer to Adam for a very good reason. In the earlier text, it is used for the “first

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<sup>529</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 235.

<sup>530</sup> K. H. Rengstorf, “Das Ölbaum-Gleichnis in Röm 11, 16 ff.,” in *Donum Gentilicium: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube* (ed. E. Bammel, C. K. Barrett, W. D. Davies; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978): 125-64.

fruits of the Spirit” and here Paul speaks of it as holy. We have seen though in Romans that these concepts are not associated by Paul with Adam. Instead, Adam is used for the contrasting epoch, the epoch under the domain of sin, and, as Dunn says, he is certainly not “a type or source of holiness (5:12-19).”<sup>531</sup>

### **Romans 16:20 – Protoevangelium Fulfilled**

However, while rejecting this latter association, I would suggest, as do many commentators, that Paul does allude to Adam at least one more time in the epistle, that is, in Rom 16:20. Even Fitzmyer, whom we have seen is generally opposed to seeing allusions to Adam in Romans, writes: “Paul alludes to Gen 3:15, as he interprets the serpent of Genesis as Satan, the personification of all evil, disorder, dissension, and scandal in the community.”<sup>532</sup> Cranfield, while believing that the allusion is conceivable, also wants to take other texts into consideration. He writes: “Paul possibly had the MT of Gen 3.15 in mind (not the LXX which has αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλήν) but there are other passages which should be compared: e.g. Ps 91.13; Lk 10.18-20; Test. Simeon 6.6; Test. Levi 18.12.”<sup>533</sup> The first cross reference Cranfield lists is especially interesting in light of the fact that Satan quotes from Ps 91:12, the immediately preceding verse, when he tempts Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple. Whether Paul is aware of the temptation and these connections with Ps 91 or not, he certainly may be thinking here of Jesus as the second Adam, born of the seed of the woman (Gal 4:4), who crushes the serpent (identified in Rev 12:9 as Satan). Dunn contends that this allusion is especially fitting in regard to Paul’s repeated contrast of the two aeons. He writes:

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<sup>531</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 659.

<sup>532</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 746.

<sup>533</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:803.

“Above all, the slogan, with its echo of Gen 3:15, effectively ties together the whole sweep of salvation-history: God’s purpose is nothing less than the complete destruction of all the evil which has grown like a large malignant cancer within the body of humankind and the restoration of his creation to the peace and well-being he originally designed for it.”<sup>534</sup> The conclusion of Romans thus points to the final end of the first aeon when the reign of sin and death will be forever destroyed with the final defeat of its author, Satan.

Additionally, if this text does indeed allude to Gen 3:15, and if it can be argued that Paul was aware of Jewish traditions regarding this text such as we see in a much later comment on Gen 3:15 from *Targum Neofiti*, then this allusion would be even more interesting. Neofiti reads:

*And it will come about that when her sons observe the Law and do the commandments they will aim at you and smite you on your head and kill you. But when they forsake the commandments of the Law you will aim and bite him on his heel and make him ill. For her sons, however, there will be a remedy, but for you, O serpent, there will not be a remedy, since they are to make appeasement in the end, in the day of King Messiah. (Tg. Neof. 3:15)<sup>535</sup>*

Thus, according to the rabbis, Satan is overcome by the keeping of the commandments, and contrariwise defeats humanity by getting it to forsake God’s law. This idea of overcoming through the keeping of the law is completely in contrast to what we see in Rom 7 where Paul regards the law as being used by sin to bring about death and as powerless to give victory over temptation. Instead for Paul, Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is the only means by which a Christian can defeat the enemy (Rom 8). This text in Rom 16 then could have much more importance than being

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<sup>534</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 907.

<sup>535</sup> McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1*, 61.



simply a statement of the ultimate victory and peace which God is soon to bring. It could in fact be another reminder of what Paul argues in Rom 7-8, that it is Christ and not the Law, as the rabbis thought, through which we are given victory over Satan. Clearly, it should be conceded that Paul was aware of Jewish views regarding the power of the law to help one overcome sin. That he was aware of this kind of specific interpretation of Gen 3:15 is at best for now only a far flung speculation.

### **Conclusion**

The same hesitation must be conceded about the suggestion I made regarding Rom 3:7. It is true that Dunn has connected “my lie” of this verse to “the lie” of Rom 1:25. Additionally, scholars like Kümmel and Theissen have also seen Paul here using the first person pronoun rhetorically as a generalization for all humanity. However, to link the two together so that Paul is preliminarily signaling the impersonation of Adam which he performs in Rom 7 is again a stretch. While these kinds of speculations may be interesting (at least to me!), they are not the kind of thing to base a case on. However, that is far from what we are trying to do. Unlike these speculations, many of the allusions to the Adam story examined in this chapter are based on far stronger evidence.

In conclusion then, let me sum up these stronger cases for the use of the Adam story in Romans. In Rom 5 we know without a doubt that Paul was referring to the Adam story for Paul specifically cites him by name. Furthermore, in spite of Fitzmyer’s objections, I find it difficult to believe that when Paul wrote Rom 1, he was unaware of what he was going to write in Rom 5:12 (“through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men”). Indeed, we have seen compelling evidence that Rom 5:12-21 serves both to summarize the preceding four chapters as well

as to provide an introduction to Paul's detailed study of the two aeons introduced by Adam and Christ in Rom 6-8. Thus, I can only conclude that when Paul talks about humanity's rejection of God as he is revealed through creation and its subsequent plunge into sin, that here, too, in Rom 1 Adam's story must at least be partly in Paul's mind. At the same time I would certainly concur with those scholars who wish to argue that Paul has incorporated additional background into this chapter such as material from the Wisdom of Solomon and also the Jewish belief in a second fall at Sinai. Indeed, I would argue that this dual backdrop of both creation and exodus is critical to Paul's agenda in that he wants to show that all of Adam's descendants, not just Gentiles but also Jews, are guilty of sin. Although the Jews would be included under the fall of Adam, Paul's incorporation of the additional Sinai material makes them explicitly culpable.

Moreover, Paul states that one thing that humanity has lost as a result of rejecting its knowledge of God is glory (1:23) which he mentions as the key consequence of sin (Rom 3:23). Thus, when Paul speaks of the groaning of all creation in 8:22-23, an obvious consequence of the Fall, and of the restoration of this glory in 8:17, I cannot fail to be persuaded that Paul agrees with the Jewish view regarding the loss and restoration of the glory of Adam. These three chapters (1, 5, and 8) along with the glory theme which runs throughout the epistle clearly reflect a background in the story of Adam. In turn, the recurring reference to the Adam story strongly suggest that other images such as the repeated references to fruitfulness, the illustration of the olive tree and the trampling of Satan under our feet also find their backdrop in this story. That some of the evidence for these allusions suggested in this chapter is probably to be rejected as reading too much into the text is readily admitted. However, there is more than sufficient evidence to

warrant the conclusion that the Adam narrative is much more prevalent in Romans than the mere twofold mention of the name "Adam" in Rom 5:14 seems to indicate. It is my contention that this along with the more thorough examination of structure immediately following and the exegetical analysis I will provide in chapter 7 will provide convincing evidence for my thesis that Adam is also the subject of Rom 7:7-25.

## CHAPTER 6 – STRUCTURAL ARGUMENTS

*This chapter endeavors to analyze the structure of Romans, focusing especially on the first eleven chapters. This analysis accepts the predominant belief that Rom 1:16-17 is the theme of the epistle. Paul's gospel which is for first Jews and then Gentiles is consequently examined in a salvation-historical framework through the lens of the effects of the two figures of Rom 5, Adam and Jesus, and how these two figures unite all humanity in both the universal plight of sin and the singular solution to that sin.*

The argument for Paul's impersonation of Adam in Rom 7 turns now to an examination of the structure and purpose of the book. We will first explore statements regarding the overall aim of Romans and clues regarding Paul's audience. Then we will proceed to examine the structure of the book as a whole. Finally we will complete our study by looking at smaller structures that have a specific bearing on Rom 7: 7-25.

### The Purpose of Romans

There is quite a diversity of opinion when it comes to the purpose of the book. There is the well-known explanation of Melancthon that this epistle was designed as Paul's compendium of Christian theology. Indeed, Donfried notes: "Up to the time of F. C. Baur, virtually all scholars would have agreed with Melancthon's evaluation of Romans as a *christianae religionis compendium*."<sup>536</sup> If any one epistle could sum up Paul's theology, certainly this would be it. However, as many point out, it too lacks a number of important theological points found in his other letters. For example, Paul has little to say about the resurrection, and while baptism is mentioned in Rom 6, there is nothing said about the Lord's Supper.

Others have suggested that Paul's purpose was to rehearse the message that he was planning to deliver in Jerusalem when he presents the Jewish Christians the offering

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<sup>536</sup> Donfried, *Romans Debate*, xli.

raised for them (15:30-32). For example, Jervell says that Paul is “absorbed by what he is going to say in Jerusalem” and that this explains the content, form and structure of the letter.<sup>537</sup> Some, in fact, believe that the epistle is not directed toward the Roman church at all but is rather preparation for this event. It should be noted that Paul does ask the Roman Christians to petition both that the offering be well received and for his own safety. Others point to Paul’s future goals regarding his own missionary activity (15:14-29). He has preached the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum and now seeks to take the gospel farther west, reaching all the way to Spain. He is, therefore, seeking a new base of operations at Rome, one much closer than his original base at Antioch.

While I do not think that any of the above views fully define Paul’s purpose, I would agree that each contains some measure of truth. At the same time, I would have to concur with Donfried that all of Paul’s other letters are situational and that it is therefore more than likely that this one is as well. Of course, Paul’s response to the current situation will undoubtedly be affected by his own past and his dealing with similar problems, but that admission should in no way negate the fact that Paul is dealing with the current situation in Rome. What then is this situation and how do these suggested purposes fit into the Roman context?

While there is great disparity regarding the purpose, most agree that its theme or *propositio* is to be found in Rom 1:16-17. Here Paul speaks of his gospel and how this gospel is the power of salvation for first Jews and then Greeks. Moreover, this gospel is offered to all through faith alone. If these two verses are indeed what the book of Romans is about, then we can see some support for Melancthon’s conclusion regarding this book

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<sup>537</sup> Jacob Jervell, “The Letter to Jerusalem,” in *The Romans Debate* (rev. and exp. ed.; ed. Karl P. Donfried; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1977, 1991): 53-64.

as a compendium of Pauline theology. It is certainly not a full catalog of Paul's doctrine, but it is a book designed by the apostle to summarize the gospel he preaches.

This gospel is also stated to be for both Jews and Gentiles, and so we may see reason for Paul's concern for the offering for the poor in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is where the gospel began and it is the capital city of the Jews. This offering then is not intended as just monetary relief for their poverty but will also hopefully bring closer unity between the Jewish and Gentile arms of the church. Indeed, Paul hopes not only for unification in Jerusalem but is also specifically concerned about the issue of unity within the Roman church itself (Rom 14:1-15:13).

Finally, the apostle is interested in furthering his missionary endeavors, and to accomplish this, he seeks the backing of a strong united church in Rome. Thus, it should be recognized that these individual purposes do all connect in some way back to the overall theme of the epistle.

### **Paul's Audience**

We have noted that the *propositio* states that Paul's *gospel* is for both Jews and Greeks. But, is the letter itself? There are several statements which might lead one to the contrary opinion, that is, that Paul is writing only to Gentile Christians in Rome and is not including Jewish believers (e.g., 1:5, 13; 11:13). A number of scholars, including Stowers and Das, believe that this is indeed the case.

It is of course true that Paul views himself as the apostle to the Gentiles and that his primary concern is to bring the gospel to them. However, even those who argue for this narrow focus in Romans, at the same time, must admit what is sometimes referred to as the "double character" of the book. This designation arises from the fact that, while

Paul does at times only address his epistle to Gentiles, the book also has a great deal to say about Jewish issues and especially the Mosaic Law.

Das himself summarizes many of the problems with arguing that this letter is only addressed to Gentiles:

For most scholars, the double character of Romans – a letter addressed to gentiles but dominated by Jewish concerns – requires the presence of Jews in the audience. The extensive quotations and allusions to the Jewish Scriptures, the sustained focus on the place of the Jewish people in God’s plan, and the discussion of Abraham, the Mosaic Law, and the blessings of Israel all point toward the presence of Jews in the Roman congregations. At one point, Paul even directly addresses ‘the Jew’ (Rom 2:17). Paul does seem to be identifying Christ-believing Jews in the Roman audience when he lists several of his ‘kinspeople’ in Rom 16:21. This evidence militates – conclusively for most – against an entirely or almost entirely gentile audience.<sup>538</sup>

In addition, Das notes the typically Jewish observances addressed in Rom 14:1-15:6.

However, while admitting these difficulties, Das nevertheless endeavors to provide solutions to these problems in order to maintain an exclusive Gentile audience. Unfortunately, we do not have space to examine his arguments in detail. However, I would briefly note that Das contends that Paul is employing familial language in his greetings when he refers to his “kinspeople” in Rom 16 and in the use of family language elsewhere in the book. I myself argued earlier that Rom 7:1 uses the term ἀδελφοί to refer to Paul’s fellow believers in Christ and that these are not strictly Jews. Das endeavors to argue that the one time Paul does use familial language to refer to Jews, he uniquely limits συγγενῶν with κατὰ σάρκα (9:3). However, it should be noted here that Das is not consistent in this argument for he still tries to make Abraham the father of the Gentiles, not the Jews, in 4:1 where Paul uses this same limitation (Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτερα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα). However, even if one were to concede this figurative

<sup>538</sup> A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 82.

use of *συγγενεῖς* in 16:21 (which few scholars do), one is still left with Prisca and Aquila in 16:3 who are without doubt Jewish Christians. Das suggests that they are named only because they are specifically connected with Paul's Gentile mission. He also alludes to the possibility that those addressed in Rom 16 may not be part of Paul's Roman audience at all but rather a third party. That is, they may feasibly be a distinct group that Paul wants the Roman church to greet.<sup>539</sup>

A large majority of Das' solutions rests on the presupposition that the Roman church consists not of Gentiles and Jews but rather of both liberal Gentiles who are not interested in the Mosaic Law and God-fearing Gentiles trained in the scriptures via the Jewish synagogue. While Das admits that in Rom 14:14 the "word Paul uses for 'unclean' (*κοινός*) is never used in Greek literature to express purity concerns apart from the influence of Judaism and the Mosaic Law," his solution is not to conclude that this passage is speaking to Jewish Christians but rather to argue that "Jewish observances are indeed in view, but as they are being practiced *by gentiles*."<sup>540</sup> It is these synagogue trained Gentiles then who are the "weak" in this passage and in dispute with other more liberal Gentiles. It is also because of their Jewish training in the scriptures that Paul frequently refers to the OT. Moreover, the Jewish concerns of the book are meant to speak to these God-fearing Gentiles rather than to Jews themselves.

To some extent in our earlier discussion of Rom 7:1, I agreed with Das on this matter of the scriptures since Gentile God-fearers may be included among those whom Paul describes as "those who know the law." In addition, Gentile God-fearers may also be among the "weak" of Rom 14 and 15. However, it is at the same time difficult to

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<sup>539</sup> Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 90-103.

<sup>540</sup> Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 107, 109.



accept the idea that Jewish Christians are to be completely excluded from Paul's audience. First, the specific reference to circumcision in Rom 2:25-29 points to Jewish Christians since few God-fearers went so far as to undergo this Jewish rite which was considered abhorrent among Gentiles. More important, however, is the fact that in Rom 9-11 Paul specifically focuses on the issue of the Jewish people, raising the question: If the gospel is for the Jew first and then the Greek, as the *propositio* affirms, then why aren't more Jews coming to salvation? This indicates that Paul is interested in more than just his Gentile mission. He is very concerned about the Jews as well (9:1-5), and he repeats this emphasis throughout the book by specifically referring to Jews as well as Gentiles (1:16; 2:9-10; 3:9, 29; 4:17-18; 9:24, 30-31; 10:12).

In the end, a decision to concede Das' point serves to eliminate Moo's claim that the "I" of Rom 7 is focused on the Jews.<sup>541</sup> My own argument works equally well for an audience of Gentile God-fearers as it does for a mixed audience of both Gentile God-fearers and Jewish Christians. However, while Paul's ministry may be *primarily* focused on Gentiles, his gospel is not, and it is this gospel which he proclaims as his thesis in Rom 1:16-17. Moreover, if Acts is to be believed, Paul's normal practice in each city he visited was to first proclaim his message in the Jewish synagogue (9:20; 13:5, 14, 43; 14:1; 17:1-2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8). Indeed, upon arriving in Rome itself one of Paul's first actions is to proclaim the gospel to the Jews of the city (Acts 28:17-28). However, we need not merely accept the testimony of Acts. Paul himself declares in 1 Cor 9:20 that he still makes every effort to minister to Jews. As I have pointed out, the Corinthian letters and Romans were written about the same time. It should not come as any surprise

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<sup>541</sup> One could still argue, I suppose, that Moo's solution was ultimately directed toward gentile God-fearers as Das argues in other texts directed toward Jews.

then to see that in Romans this same effort continues. I would therefore conclude that while Paul sees himself as primarily responsible for the Gentiles and addresses his letter to them, his own heart (9:1-5) and the double character of the message makes it clear that Romans is addressed “to *all* who are beloved of God in Rome” (1:7; emphasis mine).

### **Outline of Romans**

What then is this gospel which Paul proclaims to all nations? The apostle declares that “in it the righteousness of God is revealed” (1:17). This righteousness of God consists first of all in the fact that God is “just” (3:26). Since God is a righteous judge, his wrath is revealed against all humanity for all have sinned (1:18; 3:23). From the time of creation itself humanity has turned away from God, beginning in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit. This rebellion was fully displayed at the time of the giving of the Law when Israel worshiped the golden calf. Thus, humanity as a whole, and the Jews in particular, have all sinned from the very inception of their existence. Paul specifically states this (2:9; 3:9) and evidences it throughout his early arguments (1:18-3:20). Both Jews and Gentiles are sinners and, as a result, the focus of God’s wrath. Furthermore, as a just judge, God must be impartial in the execution of his judgment, not favoring Jews over Gentiles (Rom 2).

Moreover, Paul clearly shows that humanity’s punishment is directly commensurate with its own actions. They themselves have exchanged the glory of God for the worship of images (1:23). They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie (1:25). They themselves have rejected the knowledge of God and as a result have received a depraved mind (1:28). Note here that the Greek reflects the parallel far more clearly than English translations (οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν leads to an ἄδόκιμον νοῦν). E. Stanley

Jones, writing about God's creation of the world and its proper function, says: "If it works some other way, it works its own ruin, not by decree from without, but intrinsically; it is ruined by violating the law of its own nature. It is self-destroyed."<sup>542</sup> God's wrath is thus in a very real sense the result of humanity's own action; in effect, it is punishing itself.

However, the righteousness of God consists not only in his being a just judge expressed negatively through his wrath. The revelation of his righteousness also expresses itself positively in redeeming humanity from the consequences of its sin through the redemption purchased by God's own Son, Jesus (3:21-4:25). God's justice is thus still maintained through Christ taking on the punishment for humanity's sin, and at the same time, God is also able to restore humanity and make it righteous. This occurs first by offering sinners a sacrifice so that their guilt may be removed. However, God is interested in far more than this. He also desires that the redeemed now live holy lives in this present world.

We can see that Paul carefully lays out these contrasting aspects of God's righteousness in the structuring of his letter. In the *propositio* he declares that the gospel consists in the revelation of the righteousness of God. Then in the very next verse (1:18) he states that "the wrath of God is revealed" and supports this by displaying the fact that God has delivered all over to judgment for all have sinned. Paul then, however, makes a strikingly parallel statement in 3:21 ("the righteousness of God has been manifested"), this time focusing on God's offer of forgiveness and willingness to make sinful humanity righteous.

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<sup>542</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *The Word Became Flesh* (upd. ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 59.

Jean Aletti lays out the initial statement of the thesis and the recapitulation of it in chapter 3 in order to emphasize the parallels:

1:16f	3:21-22a
unto salvation to every one that believes the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith	unto all and upon all them that believe the righteousness of God manifested by faith in/of Jesus Christ without the law <sup>543</sup>

Aletti maintains that Paul is first of all signaling the beginning of a new section in 3:21 through this repetition. However, Aletti also draws special attention to the last two lines and the variation there. He says that Paul in Rom 3:21-22 interprets the earlier phrase “from faith to faith” with “by faith in/of Jesus Christ without the law.” This emphasis on faith rather than law sets up later arguments with the law’s inadequacy becoming a major component of Rom 7. The law is part of the old epoch and not the new. Salvation is offered through faith in Jesus Christ and not through the keeping of the law which Paul illustrates through the story of Abraham in Rom 4.

Romans 5, we have found, is a transitional chapter. It does point backward in Romans to the epoch of sin which began with Adam’s disobedience in the Garden, and contrasts that with the forgiveness provided through the obedience of Christ. However, as we have suggested, Paul is interested in more than mere forgiveness. Elliott says “that ch. 5 plays a pivotal role within the letter, channeling the *paradigmatic* argumentation of chs. 1-4 into the predominantly ethical argumentation in chs. 6-8.”<sup>544</sup> Paul indeed insists on a subsequent change in the life of those who have been forgiven. Romans 5 therefore also

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<sup>543</sup> Jean Noël Aletti, *God’s Justice in Romans: Keys for Interpreting the Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Peggy Manning Meyer; Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2010), 54.

<sup>544</sup> Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul’s Dialogue with Judaism* (JSNTSup 45; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 67.

sets up the ensuing discussion of how those in the new epoch of Christ are now to live in contrast to how they lived under the old epoch of sin, death and law.

Aletti notes structural arguments which connect the beginning of Rom 5 to the end of Rom 8 and thus provides evidence that Rom 5 is tied to the latter chapters. He contends that in 8:31-39 Paul will

take up again in a dramatic manner Rom. 5.1-11, which, for this reason (and others, cf. *infra*), can be considered an *exordium*, where the elements of the discourse that will follow are expressed. However, more than the lists of words or expressions, it is the correspondence of ideas which allows one to see how the entire section prepared in 5.1-11 finishes in 8.31-39; justification obtained through Christ gives us the assurance of glory and salvation, because God has given us everything in him.<sup>545</sup>

Aletti's chart in footnote 12 shows the parallels in vocabulary in these passages:

	5.1-11	8.31-39
Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Κύριος ἡμῶν	vv. 1, 11	8.39
χάρις—χαρίζομαι	v. 2	8.32
θλίψις	vv. 3	8.35
δίδωμι—παραδίδωμι	v. 5	8.32
ἀγάπη—ἀγαπάω	vv. 5, 8	8.35, 37, 39
ἀποθνήσκω—θάνατος (Christ's Death for us)	vv. 6, 7, 8, 10	8.34

Schnackenburg also takes up the question of whether Rom 5 should be seen as the conclusion and high point of Rom 1-4 or as the beginning of a new section. He notes:

“Manche Forscher verlegen die Zäsur auch in die Mitte des Kapitels, weil der Abschnitt 5,1-11 noch zum Vorangehenden gehöre, aber mit der Adam-Christus-Typologie eine andere Terminologie und Blickweise beginne.”<sup>546</sup> However, he himself notes that the earlier portion of Rom 5 already begins the shift to the new section. He first remarks on the connection of 5:1 to the preceding material: “Dazu kurz folgendes: Sicher zieht 5,1 einen Schlußstrich (οὖν) unter die bisherigen Ausführungen über die durch den *Glauben*

<sup>545</sup> Jean-Noël Aletti, “Rhetoric,” 298.

<sup>546</sup> Schnackenburg, “Römer 7,” 286.

erlangte Rechtfertigung (vgl. 3,21-26), die zuletzt am Glauben Abrahams expliziert und nach der Schrift begründet wurde (Kap. 4).”<sup>547</sup> However, he then notes as did Aletti that 5:2 already begins to look forward to the hope expressed more fully in 5:20 which is then climactically described in chapter 8.

However, while Rom 8 focuses on our ultimate hope when we shall be joint heirs with Christ following the resurrection, Paul does not reserve the Christian’s hope only to the time of the *Parousia*. Christians are to be different now, no longer continuing in sin and subjugated to its rule. Thus, the intervening passages focus on this present change. The Christian’s old man has been crucified in order that he or she may have new life in Christ (6:1-14). Believers have also put off their old master and service to impurity and lawlessness in order to serve their new master God, bearing fruit resulting in sanctification and eternal life (6:15-23). Most surprisingly, those in Christ have been released from the letter of the law in order to serve in newness of the Spirit (7:1-6).

The need for this last change is explained by Paul in the remainder of chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 8. While the law is holy, and righteous and good, it could not provide the necessary change that God was seeking for his people. Even the OT prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel realized that something more was required (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27). Indeed, Paul says that the law had become sin’s tool to bring about humanity’s death. Furthermore, it served to incite sin, rather than to curb it as current Jewish theology proclaimed. Paul on the other hand says that only through Christ and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit can humanity be delivered from the power of sin in order to serve God. Accordingly, the law of the Spirit becomes Paul’s new ethic for

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<sup>547</sup> Schnackenburg, “Römer 7,” 286.

righteous living. The Spirit alone gives the Christian the ability to resist the lusts of the flesh.

This change of epochs also now opens up the way for the Gentiles to enjoy all the privileges God had once reserved largely for the Jews. However, this change raises questions which the apostle must now answer. Paul Achtemeier comments that “the basic logic of his argument was drawn from the way history has been, and continues to be, guided by God. If, for example, the Jews were God’s chosen people, with whom God communicated in a way he had not previously communicated with any other people, that fact will have to be taken into account in any understanding of the way God presently communicates both with the Jews and with non-Jews.”<sup>548</sup> Aletti concurs and expresses the problem in a bit more detail. “And as described by Paul in Rm 6-8 (freedom from the Law, filial adoption, election, glory) does not this status immediately render obsolete all the titles that glorify the Jews, does it not indicate the change of the promises’ addressees, and in the end, does it not raise the question of a failure of the divine plan of salvation?”<sup>549</sup> Additionally, Paul himself recognizes that the Jews now for the most part are not accepting the gospel which he has declared in his thesis is intended for both Jew and Greek.

All of these things require an explanation and Paul fulfills that expectancy in the next section of the epistle, Rom 9-11. Paul argues that God’s plan for his people, the Jews, has not failed (9:6). Instead, they too will come to the gospel and ultimately both Jews and Gentiles will be grafted into one tree (11:17-24). They will all enjoy the blessings of God once seen as only the possession of the Jews (9:4-5). Dunn makes the

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<sup>548</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 9.

<sup>549</sup> Aletti, *God’s Justice*, 177.

following comment on 11:29 showing how what is now taking place among the Jews also fits with what we have seen previously in the letter. “The point here is that now the place and role of Israel within the larger two ages view of history (Adam/Christ) has been clarified and can be summed up in similar terms: the period of disobedience (Adam’s, the world’s) includes that of Israel; the period of divine mercy (through Christ, to all/the many) will likewise include Israel.”<sup>550</sup>

Paul concludes his epistle with exhortations based on the arguments he has made to this point. First of all, let us remind ourselves again just what these arguments are. The book begins by pointing out that all people, Jews as well as Gentiles, are sinners (3:23). Thus, they should in no way despise one another since they were all lost and under the wrath of God and in need of his grace. Moreover, the solution to that need is found only in one source. Everyone must exercise faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ. The law cannot save. It rather is sin’s accomplice in bringing death. Only through the indwelling of God’s Spirit can one live a righteous life. Thus, the Jews have no special market on salvation by their possession of the Mosaic Law. God has a plan for both Jews and Gentiles but that plan is Christ and nothing else. That the Jews for the most part are now currently rejecting the gospel is also no surprise to God. It all fits within the scope of his divine plan. Eventually, Jews too, in response to his divine providence will turn to Christ and all will share together in the blessings of the gospel.

As a result of this equanimity in that all are sinners, all have the same source of salvation, and all are eventually intended by God to share equally in his blessings, Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome to see themselves as part of one body (12:3-8). Most importantly, although they may have differences in the way they believe, they are now to

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<sup>550</sup> Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 687.



strive together to serve God. They should not judge one another but rather do all in their power to aid one another in the fulfillment of their calling (14:1-15:13). This will result not only in the blessing of the church at Rome itself but will also allow them to be an important component in Paul's ministry as he seeks to spread the gospel all the way to the regions of Spain (15:28).

The above analysis fits very closely with the views of Achtemeier who notes that interpreters who focus on a breakdown based on the doctrine of justification by faith run into difficulties. He argues that

the framework of Paul's thought may be more significantly influenced by his thinking about historical problems, for example, the problem of the place of the Jews as chosen people within God's larger plan for human salvation, than had often been suspected by those who saw in Romans primarily the explication of the doctrine of justification by faith. Reading Romans from an awareness of Paul's own historical perspective will often yield clarity where otherwise the yield tended to be confusion.<sup>551</sup>

Achtemeier proceeds to explain his own views on this framework:

Paul's thought runs from the beginning of humankind in Adam to its final fate at the Parousia (Christ's return in glory). For Paul, the history of humankind prior to Christ is under the power of the sin introduced by Adam and his disobedience (chaps. 1:18-3:20). As all human beings are related to Adam and to his disobedience by their physical birth, so Christians have come to be related to Christ and to his obedience by their new birth, baptism (6:3-11). Adam and Christ are therefore in a sense each the epitomization of a new direction for humanity: Adam through sin to death and Christ through righteousness to life (5:12-19).<sup>552</sup>

In fact, according to Achtemeier, the entire doctrinal section of Romans may be structured on this historical framework:

[T]he sweep of Paul's thought in Romans concerns not so much the spelling out of the implications of a doctrine like justification by faith as it concerns the course of the history of God's dealing with his creation, from its rebellion against him to its final redemption. The outline of the first

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<sup>551</sup> Achtemeier, *Romans*, 3.

<sup>552</sup> Achtemeier, *Romans*, 11.

eleven chapters of Romans can be seen from the course of that history between God and his creation. It is the story of God's gracious lordship rejected and restored.<sup>553</sup>

In fact, Achtemeier argues that Paul's thesis is not to be found in Rom 1:16-17 upon which many commentators have based their views that the theme of Romans is justification by faith. He says we should recognize the real theme much earlier.

In these three verses (1:2-4), we have summarized for us the entire sweep of God's relation to us and to his whole creation: The chosen people, to whom a messiah (Christ) was promised (v. 2), the birth of messiah to that people (v. 3), and the resurrection of that messiah which established messiah as Lord of all the peoples (v. 4; cf. Phil. 2:9-11). It is precisely that sweep which Paul explicates in the remainder of his letter. The 'theme' for Paul's letter is thus announced here in its very opening verses.<sup>554</sup>

I myself find no need to follow Achtemeier in this last move. Romans 1:16-17 also has its focus on the gospel for both Jews and Gentiles. Moreover, the doctrine of justification by faith is an integral part of that gospel and an important part of Paul's presentation. Furthermore, we have already seen structural signals cited by Aletti which point to the breakdown of the earlier part of Romans, and this coincides well with the thesis remaining where most scholars place it. Additionally, rhetoricians would argue that 1:2-4 falls far too early in the epistle to be a declaration of the *propositio*. Paul must first build rapport with his audience and gain their confidence before alluding to his thesis.

At the same time, I do think that Achtemeier is correct that Paul is already hinting at this theme in 1:2-4. Moreover, I would also note that Paul here introduces two other terms which will later play key roles in the epistle, flesh and Spirit. Christ's fleshly birth is from the seed of David. This is one of the key blessings in 9:5 which has been accorded to Israel. However, it is not nearly as important as the declaration of Christ as

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<sup>553</sup> Achtemeier, *Romans*, 13-14.

<sup>554</sup> Achtemeier, *Romans*, 30.

Son of God with power by the Spirit. While Paul would not view Christ's flesh in the same negative way he will later view the flesh in Rom 7, it is still part of the old order. Christ entered into that order (Gal 4:4) in order to become the second Adam. However, he has now left that lowly status behind at his resurrection and the declaration of his exaltation by the Spirit. In the same way, the Spirit alone provides Christians with the power to overcome sin and the lusts of the weak flesh. Note that the thesis focuses on the gospel as "the power of God for salvation." That power is not based on any physical descent even if one's ancestor is King David. Rather it is based on the power of God given through his indwelling Spirit.

### **Contrast in Romans**

This may be a good time to note that much of Romans is built on contrasts. Already here at the beginning of the epistle Paul hints at the contrast between flesh and Spirit. Then, too, we have noted that two of the first major sections are the contrasting revelations of the righteous wrath and the righteous pardon of God. We have previously examined the important *synkrisis* beginning in Rom 5:12-21 which contrasts the opposing effects on humanity from the disobedience of Adam and the obedience of Christ. I have further suggested that this passage sets the stage for us to then break down Rom 6-7 along the following lines: old man/new man (6:1-14), old master/new master (6:15-23), and old husband/new husband (7:1-6). These contrasts culminate finally in the description of the servitude and death of Adam/humanity under the law as used by sin in 7:7-25, and the freedom and life given humanity through the indwelling of the Spirit in Rom 8.

Speaking of Rom 5-8, Aletti says: “*Synkrisis* is thus the leading figure of the section.”<sup>555</sup> Feuillet extends this further and says that three antitheses dominate the thought of Paul from time to time in Rom 1-8.<sup>556</sup> In Rom 1-4 Feuillet finds the sin of man which provokes the divine anger of God and the justice of God. In Rom 5-8 he notes the antithesis of death and life. “Il nous paraît certain que l’antithèse *mort-vie* constitue le thème capital des chapitres 5-8 de l’Épître aux Romains, que l’on mette le commencement de cette section au début du chapitre 5, ou bien qu’au contraire on préfère le reculer jusqu’en 5, 12.”<sup>557</sup> He cites this contrast in 5:10, 17, 21; 6:4, 23; 7:10 and 8:2, 6, 13. Finally, he notes that in 7:7 through 8:39 we have the antithesis of letter and spirit which is announced in 7:6. “En réalité, quand on s’est rendu compte du sens exact de cette opposition, on constate qu’elle constitue véritablement la donnée fondamentale des chapitres 7 et 8 de l’Épître aux Romains.”<sup>558</sup>

Similarly, various other commentators note a plethora of contrasts in Rom 5-8.

For example, Paul Meyer writes:

Employing the polarities of sin and grace, death and life, and disobedience and obedience that were set up by contrasting Adam and Christ in chap. 5, three separate trains of thought turn aside that essentially libertinistic deduction to answer the question ‘Why not sin?’

(1) An irrevocable death (Christ’s) has taken place, in which the destiny of all for whom he died is reshaped. It follows that justification involves a new life of righteousness because it is a death to sin (6:1-14). (2) Justification is a change of controlling allegiance; it sets one free from sin only insofar as it makes one an obedient ‘slave’ to God (6:15-23). (3) Both these aspects of justification are illustrated by an example for the general area of human social law: While living with another man before her husband’s death brings upon a married woman the damning epithet of an adulteress, exactly the same action after her husband’s death has no such result, and she is free to enter the new relationship. The marriage

<sup>555</sup> Aletti, “Rhetoric,” 306.

<sup>556</sup> Feuillet, “Attaches Bibliques”, 323-49.

<sup>557</sup> Feuillet, “Attaches Bibliques”, 333-34.

<sup>558</sup> Feuillet, “Attaches Bibliques”, 340.

legislation is not abrogated, but a death has broken its power to condemn (the point resumed in 8:1). Just so, by the death of Christ all those for whom he died have been ‘vacated’ from that power of the law, and a new allegiance and a new productive life have been legitimated for them (7:1-6).<sup>559</sup>

We may note here not only Meyer’s emphasis on antithesis but also the fact that his three “trains of thought” parallel the three illustrations I argue that Paul is employing.

Moo writes of the relationship he sees between 5:12-21 and chapters 6-8 and then lists a number of resulting contrasts:

Since in terms of salvation history, the realm of Christ has been instituted after that of Adam, we can also speak in temporal categories and call the realm of Adam the ‘old age’ or ‘aeon’ and that of Christ the ‘new age’ or ‘aeon.’ This concept is a basic premise of much of what Paul has to say in Rom. 6, 7, and 8 . . . . For he now ‘personalizes’ this ‘two-realm’ or ‘two-age’ conception by proclaiming that believers are ‘transferred’ from the one realm to the other and by showing how this transfer creates a new relationship to sin (chap. 6) and the law (chap. 7). We are using the word ‘realm’ because it captures well the emphasis in these chapters that the transfer from Adam to Christ, from old age to new, involves particularly a change in masters. Thus Paul presents the Christian as one who has moved from the ‘reign’ of sin and death to that of righteousness and life (5:21); from the servitude, or ‘lordship,’ of sin to that of righteousness and God (6:6, 14, 17-22); from being ‘under the power of’ the law to being ‘under the power of’ grace (6:14, 15); from service ‘in oldness of letter’ to service ‘in newness of Spirit’ (7:6); from the ‘law,’ or ‘compelling power,’ of sin leading to death to that of the Spirit who brings life (8:2). By using this imagery of a transfer of realms, or ‘dominions,’ with its associations of power and rulership, Paul makes clear that the new status enjoyed by the believer (justification) brings with it a new influence and power that both has led and must lead to a new way of life (sanctification).<sup>560</sup>

In commenting on Rom 6:12-23, Dunn writes: “The principal feature of the section is the sustained sequence of antithesis –

13 ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῆ ἀμαρτία  
14-15 οὐκ ὑπὸ νόμον

ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ  
ἀλλὰ ὑπο χάριν

<sup>559</sup> Paul W. Meyer, “The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7,” in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*. (ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa. Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 71-72.

<sup>560</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 352.

16	ἦτοι ἀμαρτίας εἰς θάνατον	ἡ ὑπακοῆς εἰς δικαιοσύνην
18	ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας	ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ
19	δοῦλα τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ . . . εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν	δοῦλα τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ εἰς ἀγιασμόν
20	δοῦλοι τῆς ἀμαρτίας	ἐλεύθεροι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ
22	ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας	δουλωθέντες τῷ θεῷ
21-22	τέλος θάνατος	τέλος ζωῆν αἰώνιον
23	τὰ ὀψώνια τῆς ἀμαρτίας θάνατος	τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος <sup>561</sup>

This kind of detailed analysis can be performed on other sections in Rom 5-8 with similar results. For example, in 6:2-11, I find the following contrasts:

2	ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἀμαρτία	ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ
4	βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον	ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν
5	τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ	καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως
6-7	δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἀμαρτία	δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας
8	ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ	συζήσομεν αὐτῷ
11	νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἀμαρτία	ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ

We will not here take the space to examine further sections. However, such an examination would clearly confirm the conclusion of Aletti that the key component of Rom 5-8 is *synkrisis*, the continuing contrast between two epochs or kingdoms, that instituted by Adam and that inaugurated by Christ.

Shall we continue to sin? Absolutely not; we have died to sin. Shall we continue to use our members in service to sin resulting in death? Absolutely not; we are now to serve God and bear fruit for eternal life. The Christian has completely changed realms and the characteristics which were emblematic of the former should no longer be evident in the latter. Such a strong dichotomy as is found here in Paul is not unique to the NT. For example, we find a very similar perspective in 1 John 3:4-10, in that, if one sins, he or she is of the devil, not God. In other words, one either belongs exclusively to one

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<sup>561</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 335

dominion or the other, not to both. However, as John admits elsewhere, the Christian may occasionally sin (1 John 2:1). Thus, the actual picture of the Christian life is not as black and white as at times it is prescribed to be. The same is true in Paul and this is exemplified in Romans by the continual exhortations for believers to do what has already been accomplished. For example, according to Paul believers have “died to sin” (6:2) and been “freed from sin” (6:7), yet they are still exhorted to “not let sin reign in your mortal body” (6:12).

This so-called already/not yet perspective raises the question as to where the line is to be drawn on this continuum. That is, to what degree are Christians under the new dominion of Christ and how much does the old dominion of sin still have its hold upon them? This is especially pertinent as to where to place the Christian in relation to Rom 7. I have argued repeatedly that the enslavement to sin spoken of in 7:14 is contrary to the freedom spoken of in both chapters 6 and 8. However, could it be that this is yet another example of the already/not yet in Paul? Michael Middendorf notes that 7:25 speaks of both an enslavement of the flesh to sin *and* an enslavement of the mind to God (δουλεύω). He writes:

On the one hand, the ‘I’ declares αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοί δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ. It is difficult even to consider that Paul would use this phrase to represent a nonbeliever. What it describes is characteristic of the Christian who has been bound to the Law of God by the Holy Spirit and now willingly endeavors to be a slave of it. Paul has previous spoken of enslavement to God in terms which indicate that this slavery is completely different in its essence and its results from slavery to sin (6:19-22; 7:5-6). However, at the same time, the same ‘I’ continues to be enslaved τῇ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας. As the text stands, it would seem to indicate that until the final fulfillment of the longed-for deliverance arrives (v. 24), the ‘I’ exists ‘on both sides of the warfare and servitude.’<sup>562</sup>

<sup>562</sup> Michael Paul Middendorf, *The ‘I’ in the Storm: A Study of Romans 7* (Saint Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 1997), 119; citing Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 398.

Thus, the picture which emerges in Rom 6:15-23 is that there is an exclusive enslavement either to one master or the other, but not to both. In 7:24, however, according to Middendorf, we find a divided self who is serving both masters. In which kingdom does this individual then belong, under the dominion of sin or under the rule of the Spirit?

Dunn argues that the divided self and the personal pathos expressed in the passage both reflect the fact that the speaker is the Christian Paul:

In effect Paul begins with a statement which reflects the complexity of the situation, distancing both the law and the 'I' from the real culprit, sin (7.14-17). But then he breaks down the statement into a more careful description, first of the divided 'I' (7.18-20) and then of the divided law (7.21-23). The 'I' is divided: it is the 'I' which wants to do good and to avoid doing evil; but it is the same 'I' which fails to do the good and commits the evil (7.18-19). The culprit is sin: it enslaves the fleshly 'I' and thus prevents the willing 'I' from achieving what it wills (7.20). Correlated with the divided 'I' is the divided law. The willing 'I,' the inner person, the 'I' as mind, approves the law as the law of God (7.21-22). But the law used by sin (as indicated in vv. 7-13) battens on the fleshly 'I,' 'constituent parts' of the 'I.' And the powerful combination of sin, law, and flesh ensures the failure of the willing 'I' (7.23). None of this, it has to be said, reads like the description of a state or experience which is now wholly past for the writer. The existential anguish of 7.14-24 sounds like an experience Paul knew only too well.<sup>563</sup>

Dunn maintains that we see this same kind of divided "I" in the community of Qumran:

However, I belong to evil humankind to the assembly of wicked flesh; my failings, my transgressions, my sins, {...} with the depravities of my heart, belong to the assembly of worms and of those who walk in darkness.<sup>564</sup>  
(1QS 11:9-10)

Here we have a member of the Qumran community, very devoted to living a righteous life, still expressing himself as if he were the worst of sinners. Is this type of language then merely an expression of humility in a rather righteous individual, and is Cranfield

<sup>563</sup> Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 473-74.

<sup>564</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 389; Martinez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 18.



correct when he attributes the expression “sold under sin” in Rom 7:14 to Paul’s own humility and his recognition of continuing sinfulness?<sup>565</sup>

In support of a positive answer to the above questions, Dunn contends that Rom 5-8 is a passage dealing with the Christian life. While he acknowledges the established view of most scholars that the “most plausible suggestion has been to see 7.7-25 as an elaboration of 7.5, and 8.1-17 as an elaboration of 7.6,” he objects and says: “My problems with the main consensus exposition begin with the amount of space Paul gives to the theme. If the experience in 7.5 belongs so completely to the convert’s past, why does Paul interrupt his exposition of the convert’s privileges and obligations by casting such a lengthy glance back over his shoulder? If the law was so little relevant to believers, why should he spend so much time defending it?”<sup>566</sup> Accordingly, he concludes: “The tension of Rom. 7.7-25 is the tension of the already-not yet. It arises because the believer lives in the overlap of the ages and belongs to both *at the same time*.”<sup>567</sup>

I will respond to a number of these arguments more thoroughly in the next chapter. However, there are several points related to structure which are best addressed here. First, Dunn only gives part of the story when he contends that Rom 5-8 is about the Christian life. We have seen repeatedly that what Rom 5-8 actually deals with is the *contrast* between the old epoch of Adam and the new epoch of Christ. It is the *contrast* between the non-Christian life and the Christian life. It should then not be surprising to see lengthy passages in which these two dominions are contrasted, and this is exactly what we have in 7:7-25 and chapter 8.

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<sup>565</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:346-47.

<sup>566</sup> Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 472-73.

<sup>567</sup> Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 474-75.

Second, most scholars argue that 7:5-6 contains general statements which are then particularized in 7:7-25 and 8:1-17. Accordingly, Aletti describes this rhetorical structure as follows:

Let it be said in passing, that one sees how an exact location of the *dispositio*, in particular of the *partitio* constituted by Rom. 7.5-6, allows one to avoid an erroneous interpretation of Rom. 7.7-25. The *partitio*, in fact, indicates clearly that in 7.7-25 Paul does not consider the *present* situation of the baptized, as though he were *simul justus et peccator*, but rather that of a person remaining within the frame-work of the (Mosaic) Law and which, according to Paul, belongs to the past ('when we were . . .').<sup>568</sup>

Thus, Rom 7:5-6 contrasts being in the flesh and the arousal of sinful passions by the letter of the Law with the newness of the life lived in the Spirit. Fung especially focuses in on the adjectives in 7:6 which distinguish the two epochs and says:

If *kainotēs* and *palaiotēs* point to the distinction between the new aeon and the old, the distinguishing characteristic of each is designated by, respectively, *pneuma*, a reference to the Holy Spirit, and *gramma*, a reference to the law in its character as that which is merely written and which as such has absolutely no power to bestow new life (cf. 2:29). The advent of the Holy Spirit is the *kainotēs* which gives rise to the *palaiotēs* and shows that the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah is realized in the new aeon.<sup>569</sup>

Dunn himself comments on this passage and relates it to the past failure of the Jews to break out from under the old dominion:

Where Paul's kinfolk had gone wrong, in terms of the present analysis, is that they thought the law would stop sin bringing forth its fruit of death, and so would break the nexus of sin and death (cf. Lev 18:5). Paul disagrees profoundly: only Christ broke that deadly connection, and precisely by his death. Apart from Christ the law cannot achieve this vital

<sup>568</sup> Aletti, "Rhetoric," 300.

<sup>569</sup> Ronald K. Fung, "The Impotence of the Law: Toward a Fresh Understanding of Romans 7:15-25," in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation: Essays presented to Everett F. Harrison by His Students and Colleagues in Honor of His Seventy-fifth Birthday* (ed. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 41.

breakthrough, cannot liberate from the dominance of sin and death (but must rather be liberated – 7:4-6).<sup>570</sup>

In other words, Dunn says 7:5-6 is describing the problems experienced by the Jewish nation in trying to live under the old covenant. The letter of the Law could not give those living under this covenant the means to break the chains of sin. This is precisely the reason why prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel called for a new covenant in which the law would be written on the heart. Romans 7:25 thus describes perfectly the person under the old covenant who is trying to serve God while enslaved to sin. Dunn is correct in seeing parallels with Qumran which also speaks of this tension. However, Christians are not living under the old covenant as were the people at Qumran. The Holy Spirit has now come and the bondage to sin depicted in both the prophets and at Qumran no longer applies.

That Paul is contrasting the epoch of the law with that of the Spirit is readily apparent from an examination of the vocabulary Paul employs. Vernon Robbins, in his book *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, argues that writers often signal a transition in focus through a shift in vocabulary usage.<sup>571</sup> While Robbins supports his argument by citing a number of texts, there is no clearer example of this in the NT than here in Romans. This can first be seen in Paul's contrast of law and Spirit. In Rom 7 he employs the terms ἐντολὴ or νόμος 30 times while there are only 5 occurrences in Rom 8. Of these 5 occurrences in Rom 8 most contrast the failure of the letter of the law with the success of the Spirit in overcoming sin and death. For example,

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was

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<sup>570</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 404.

<sup>571</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996), 8-14.

through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh (8:2-3)

While law is pervasive in Rom 7, πνεῦμα only occurs one time and that is in the general statement of 7:6. By way of contrast, πνεῦμα appears 21 times in Rom 8. This clearly supports the contrast which is set up in the general statement.

Some scholars contend that the absence and presence of the Spirit does not provide a sufficient basis for the presence of this contrast since the Spirit is also lacking in Rom 6 which also speaks of the Christian life. However, this objection does not hold since in Rom 6 Paul is dealing with different contrasts between the two epochs such as service to sin versus service to God. Fung further responds by saying: “In Rom 6:14, the Spirit is not mentioned; the contrast there is between *hypo nomon* and *hypo charin*. It is significant, however, that in Gal 5:18, which occurs in a context similarly dealing with the believer’s moral life, *hypo nomon* is contrasted with *pneumati agesthai*; and that two verses before *pneumati peripatein* is stated to be the way to avoid *telein epithumian sarkos*.”<sup>572</sup>

Furthermore, another change in vocabulary is even more striking. This is the contrast Paul draws between the “I” and the Spirit. The following chart based on the NASB makes the change in focus very apparent:

“I” (7:1)	“Spirit” (7:6)
“I” (7:7)	“Spirit” (8:2)
“I” (7:7)	“Spirit” (8:4)
“I” (7:9)	“Spirit” (8:5)
“I” (7:9)	“Spirit” (8:5)
“I” (7:14)	“Spirit” (8:6)
“I” (7:15)	“Spirit” (8:9)
“I” (7:15)	“Spirit” (8:9)
“I” (7:15)	“Spirit” (8:9)
“I” (7:15)	“spirit” (8:10)

<sup>572</sup> Fung, “Impotence of the Law,” 41.

“I” (7:15)	“Spirit” (8:11)
“I” (7:15)	“Spirit” (8:11)
“I” (7:16)	“Spirit” (8:13)
“I” (7:16)	“Spirit” (8:14)
“I” (7:16)	“spirit” (8:15)
“I” (7:17)	“spirit” (8:15)
“I” (7:18)	“Spirit” (8:16)
“I” (7:19)	“spirit” (8:16)
“I” (7:19)	“Spirit” (8:23)
“I” (7:19)	“Spirit” (8:26)
“I” (7:19)	“Spirit” (8:26)
“I” (7:20)	“Spirit” (8:27)
“I” (7:20)	
“I” (7:20)	
“I” (7:21)	
“I” (7:22)	
“I” (7:23)	
“I” (7:24)	
“I” (7:25)	
“I” (8:18)	
“I” (8:38)	

As the chart shows, the only occurrences of “I” in Rom 8 are in 8:18 and 8:38 which are both outside the parameters Dunn draws for the comparison (7:7-25 versus 8:1-17). The lone occurrence of Spirit in Rom 7 is again in the general statement of 7:6 which sets up the overall comparison. Thus, it is evident that this terminological shift signals a change in focus.

Theissen further notes that “Romans 7:7ff. speaks emphatically of a lost and isolated I; Rom. 8:1ff., on the contrary, speaks in the first-person plural: a cosmic union has taken the place of isolation.”<sup>573</sup> In Rom 7:7-25 the first person singular pronoun occurs 26 times with only one occurrence of the plural in the reference to “our Lord” in 7:25. On the other hand the singular pronoun is not used at all in Rom 8 but the plural occurs 15 times. Again, the contrast is dramatic. The “I” of Rom 7 is totally isolated and dependent on itself while the person in Rom 8 is not only filled with the Holy Spirit but

<sup>573</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 184.

also has the support of the believing community and indeed of the entire creation. Etienne Trocmé argues that the indwelling of the Spirit and the support of the community are both necessary for a righteous life.<sup>574</sup> He further argues that this need for community serves to set up Rom 9-11, the inclusion of the Jews, and the exhortations to unity in Rom 12-15. “This was a difficult task for people whom mystery religions had prepared for an individualistic piety or whose Judaicity made them little able to co-exist with pagans.”<sup>575</sup> Yet, unity in the church is essential for godliness just as is the indwelling of God’s Spirit.

A further contextual clue showing the change from Rom 7 to 8 is found in the fact that Rom 7 is filled with an abiding sense of condemnation, something which we saw in Rom 5:16 was a result of the Fall. Romans 8:1, however, begins with the statement: “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” The condemnation which Adam ushered in by his sin has been erased by the obedience of Christ on the cross.

Moreover, if Rom 7 is about the Christian life, this creates a problem for Paul’s diatribe at the beginning of Rom 6. He asks there if Christians are to continue to sin and responds with an emphatic *μη γένοιτο*. Since Rom 7 depicts an individual who cannot do otherwise than sin, this constitutes a contradiction with what Paul has already said in Rom 6.

Additionally, while Dunn wants to argue that Rom 7 depicts the “not yet” stage of the Christian’s life and the remaining struggle with the old epoch, this remaining struggle is already depicted by Paul in Rom 8. The Christian there is still struggling with temptation after his deliverance by Christ. The difference now is that there is victory over

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<sup>574</sup> Etienne Trocmé, “From ‘I’ to ‘We’: Christian Life according to Romans, Chapters 7 and 8,” *ABR* 35 (1987): 73-76; trans. Marie Benedict.

<sup>575</sup> Trocmé, “From ‘I’ to ‘We,’” 76.

sin through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit whereas prior to conversion there was only defeat since the "I" was relying on its own power to fulfill the law. Thus, for the Christian, there is a "not yet," but that time is described at the beginning of Rom 8, not in Rom 7.

Finally, I would suggest that Paul may even be revisiting the three pictures he gives of the old epoch in reverse order in Rom 7:7-25. The three parallels of Rom 6 and 7:1-6, and the revisiting of the old epoch in Rom 7:7-25 may be laid out as follows:

A Old Man / New Man (6:1-14)	C' The Law (7:7)
B Old Master / New Master (6:15-23)	B' "bondage to sin" (7:14)
C Old Husband / New Husband (7:1-6)	A' "body of this death" (7:24)

Witherington, writing about Rom 6:6, says: "The body of sin, described here, is no different from the body of death that the 'I' cries out for deliverance from in 7.24."<sup>576</sup>

This interpretation of 7:24 certainly fits the context better than Augustine's suggestion that the verse speaks of the believer's death since the earlier portion of Rom 8 deals with the present life. If these two verses are both referring to the believer's salvation and death to the "old man" as Witherington suggests, and if the above themes are being revisited in reverse order as I suggest, then we may have another example of what Charles Myers refers to as Paul's practice of "chiastic inversion."<sup>577</sup>

Myers offers the following example of this Pauline practice noting the repetition of ideas in Rom 3 and Rom 5:

[A] " <i>justified by his blood at the present time</i> " (3 24-26)
[B] " <i>our boasting</i> " (3 27)
[C] " <i>a person is justified by faith</i> " (3 28)
[C'] " <i>since we are justified by faith</i> " (5 1)
[B'] " <i>we boast</i> " (5 2-3)

<sup>576</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 159.

<sup>577</sup> Charles D. Myers, Jr., "Chiastic Inversion in the Argument of Romans 3-8," *NovT* 35 (1993): 30-47.

[A] " *now we have been justified by his blood* " (5 9)<sup>578</sup>

Many scholars would choose to reserve the idea of chiasm to shorter passages like

Myers' example from Rom 2:7-10:

[A] "to those who seek for glory and honor he will give eternal life (2 7),  
 [B] while for those who obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury (2 8)  
 [B'] There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil (2 9),  
 [A'] but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good " (2 10)<sup>579</sup>

Nevertheless, even if one chooses not to use the word chiasm for passages like Rom 3 and 5, it remains clear that Paul tends to revisit previous ideas and often does so in an inverse order. If, as I am suggesting, such an inversion takes place in Rom 7:7-25 with the repetition of these earlier illustrations of the old dominion, then this further serves to connect Rom 7:7-25 with the old epoch of Adam.

### Conclusion

What can we conclude from the above observations regarding the structure of Romans? First, Romans is a book that revels in contrasts, specifically the contrast between the effects of Adam's sin and its direct counterpoint found in the gracious offer of salvation through Christ's obedient death upon the cross. The effects of Adam's sin are universal resulting in God's wrath being poured out upon both Jew and Gentile. The offer of salvation is also made to all of humanity in one distinct way, through faith in Christ. The Jews thus have no advantage in their possession of the Law. Indeed, that Law only serves as sin's instrument of death and to further provoke sin. Only in Christ can humanity be both forgiven and enabled to live righteously.

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<sup>578</sup> Myers, "Chiastic Inversion," 38.

<sup>579</sup> Myers, "Chiastic Inversion," 33. See Joachim Jeremias, "Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen," *ZNW* 49 (1958): 145-56 for further examples of chiasm in Paul.



Romans 5-8 focuses on this last purpose of Christ's salvation by contrasting what life was like for humanity under sin, death and the law with what is presently possible under grace and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The repeated contrasts (Adam and Christ, 5:12-21; old man and new man, 6:1-14; old master and new master, 6:15-23; old husband and new husband, 7:1-6) suggest that 7:5-6 serves to set up another contrasting section in 7:7-25 and chapter 8 between life lived under the letter of the law and that lived under the Spirit. Unfortunately, scholars who view Rom 7:7-25 as referring to the Christian life fail to give due consideration to these repeating contrasts.

It should be admitted, however, that this structural analysis with its clear manifestation of these repeating contrasts does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the "I" of Rom 7:7-25 is Paul's impersonation of Adam. Indeed, while 5:12-21 does contrast Adam and Christ, many of these other contrasts speak as much of the effects of Adam and Christ on those "in Adam" and those "in Christ" as they do of the progenitors themselves. It is clear that the heads of the respective aeons are still in view in statements such as the ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος of 6:6 and the marriage to *Christ* in 7:4. Nevertheless, the structural analysis of this chapter can only point to the likelihood that Rom 7:7-25 deals with the old epoch and that the "I" is enslaved under that dominion. The "I" thus must have some relation to Adam based on this structural analysis, but that the "I" is the voice of Adam himself requires the detailed textual analysis of the next chapter and specific statements like the one in Rom 7:9 which notes that this "I" originally was "alive apart from the law," a phrase which I argue in its fullest sense can only be true of Adam. We thus press on now to this detailed analysis of Rom 7.

## CHAPTER 7 – ADAM IN ROMANS 7

*This chapter examines the four primary solutions suggested for the “I” of Rom 7 (autobiography, every man, Israel, Adam) in light of the detailed statements found in the text. Having rejected the first three, I focus on demonstrating how identifying the “I” with Adam most fully agrees with Paul’s statements. I also respond to arguments against Adam including the issue of Adam’s possession of the law. In addition, I recognize the effect of scholars’ failure to consistently maintain the impersonation of Adam throughout the entire passage and offer possible ways of rectifying this shortcoming.*

As I noted in our previous discussion, Rom 7 continues Paul’s thoughts on the transition between the epochs. He has already declared that Christians have died to sin and have been raised with Christ to a new life (6:1-14). As a result they have ceased being enslaved to sin and have now become servants of God (6:15-23). In Rom 7 Paul uses another picture drawn from marriage to illustrate the third element of the old epoch, the law, in order to argue that through the death of Christ, believers have been released from the law in order to serve in the newness of the Spirit (7:1-6). Theissen notes that Paul thus speaks of “three symbols and images – the symbolism of burial, change in rule, and marriage” which “increasingly illuminates the time before his conversion as a contrast to the condition of redemption.”<sup>580</sup>

### Paul’s View of the Law

However, such a negative stance toward the law as the third symbol represents would have been problematic for many of Paul’s readers. Indeed, we have seen this as one of the leading reasons why Kümmel does not accept Rom 7 as an autobiographical depiction of Paul. Jews, especially Pharisees, looked upon the Law as a way of overcoming the *yetzer hara*, not as a bane. However, if Paul, now as a Christian, is

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<sup>580</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 181.

arguing for a release from the law, is he himself now saying that the law itself is evil? Moreover, if his audience does abandon the law, how will they then be able to live a righteous life? How can they then please God? Paul raises and responds to these questions in the form of a diatribe in 7:7-25, and chapter 8 gives us Paul's answer as to how a Christian may live a righteous life apart from the law.

Paul begins in Rom 7:7-25 by asking the question: "Is the law sin?" In other words, if one is released from the law as part of being released from the reign of sin and death, then is the law itself an evil thing? Paul objects strongly to this question (μὴ γένοιτο). On the contrary he affirms that he believes that the law is "holy and righteous and good" (7:12). Paul indeed notes that the individual in this passage strives with great effort to follow the law, believing rightly that it expresses the will of God. And, if one were able to follow it, it would lead to a righteous life. However, as Paul affirms both here and throughout his writings, such a pursuit inevitably results in failure. Human beings in the Garden chose to disobey the law and as a result their natures are now bent toward disobedience. Their minds may affirm the value of the law and they may desire to do the will of God, but their natures are inclined toward evil and enslaved to sin (7:14). This sober thinking reflects not only Pauline theology but also the perspective of the OT prophets who realized that the people of God, even the most righteous, needed another solution (e.g., Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27). The law written on tables of stone, or "the oldness of the letter" (7:6), simply could not enable righteous living. Accordingly, Paul argues that believers must be released from this failed relationship with the law in order to "serve in newness of the Spirit" (7:6).

Consequently, to properly interpret Rom 7 one must first recognize that Paul is speaking of the need for a transition from serving God by means of the law to serving God through the Spirit. Indeed, Paul the Christian would never put such an emphasis on trying to serve God through the law as we see in Rom 7. Galatians reacts very strongly against such a plan. Such an endeavor only leads to a cry of despair. Thus, Augustine's later interpretation which views Rom 7 as referring to Paul the Christian, along with similar efforts by scholars such as Middendorf, fail because of this un-Pauline positive emphasis on law. Also, despite Middendorf's best efforts to fit Rom 7 into the life of the Christian Paul, by mitigating the degree of enslavement to sin in 7:14 and by citing texts like 1 Tim 1:13-16 which speak of Paul as the foremost of sinners, such enslavement to sin as is depicted here is contrary to the freedom Paul describes for Christians in both the preceding and following chapters.

In 7:14, Paul writes that the "I" is πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. This statement cannot describe the Christian much less the apostle. Das notes:

Paul never describes believers in Christ as 'under' (ὑπό) the forces of the old era. Those who rely on the works of the Law are 'under (ὑπό) a curse' in Gal 3:10. 'Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law (ὑπὸ νόμον) until faith would be revealed' (Gal 3:23). With Christ's arrival, the Galatians are no longer 'subject to a disciplinarian' (ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν; 3:25). Until the date set by the father, minors are 'under guardians and trustees (4:2), 'enslaved to the elemental spirits' (ὑπὸ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου; 4:3).<sup>581</sup>

Furthermore, the "description of the 'I' as 'fleshly' (ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινος) stands in tension with Rom 8:9: 'But you are *not* in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you (ὁμοῖς δὲ οὐκ ἔστε ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι).'<sup>582</sup> Even Middendorf admits that "Romans 7:14-25 is unique. Paul nowhere else speaks directly of himself with

<sup>581</sup> Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 205.

<sup>582</sup> Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 206.

the same terms and in the same manner as the 'I' speaks there."<sup>583</sup> Rather, Paul argues that Christians are no longer enslaved to sin (Rom 6:15-23) and, as a result, are free from habitual submission to its reign, unlike the individual depicted in Rom 7.

### **"I" as Autobiography**

In addition to endeavoring to mitigate the degree of enslavement to sin spoken of in 7:14, Middendorf and others also point to other expressions in Rom 7 which they believe support the view that the "I" must be a Christian.

In contrast, the will, the inner man, and the mind of the 'I' are exhibiting traits which are clearly not characteristic of a mind which is set on the flesh (8:6). Far from being enslaved to sin (6:6), controlled by sinful passions (7:5), at enmity with God (5:10), and hostile to his Law (8:7), the 'I' in 7:16 agrees with the Law of God and his inner man 'rejoices' in it (7:22). His *voûs* willingly enslaves itself to God's most excellent Law and intends to live according to it (7:16, 18, 23, 25).<sup>584</sup>

However, that such delight in the Law and dedication to its fulfillment is not necessarily reserved only to the Christian is shown by Psalm 1:2 where the righteous man has "his delight in the law of the LORD." In addition, Moo point to "abundant evidence that Jews in Paul's day professed a delight in God's law, and passages such as Rom. 10:2 – 'for I bear witness that they [Israel] have a zeal for God' – show that Paul regarded that delight as genuine."<sup>585</sup> Indeed, we saw in chapter 1 that Augustine, who argued strongly for a Christian interpretation of Rom 7 based largely on this "delight," also witnessed to a delight in the law prior to his conversion.

In this same verse we also find the expression "inner man" (*ἔσω ἄνθρωπον*).

Cranfield comments that this must refer to the Christian since Paul uses it in a Christian

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<sup>583</sup> Middendorf, *The 'I' in the Storm*, 182.

<sup>584</sup> Middendorf, *The 'I' in the Storm*, 193.

<sup>585</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 461.

context in 2 Cor 4:16, Eph 3:16, Rom 6:6, Col 3:10, and Eph 4:24.<sup>586</sup> That the Christian possesses an inner man is undoubtedly true. However, again as in the case of “delight,” it is not necessary to say that only the Christian possesses an inner man. Indeed, the Corinthian text cited by Cranfield mentions that the Christian possesses both an inner man *and* an outer man. The latter is decaying while the former is being renewed. Certainly we must all admit that everyone, not just Christians, possess an outer man which is dying. Given this parallel, one should assume that all people also possess an inner man as well.

Interestingly, Cranfield seems to agree with this point, for he goes on to equate this “inner man” with the “mind” used later in Rom 7. Accordingly, Witherington remarks: “Paul is clear enough that the mind exists before conversion; thus if there is a parallel between mind and inner self, or an overlap between the two, it does not necessarily imply a mind renewed by the Spirit. Philo, for example, equates the mind with the inner person without adding that he has in view the enlightened person (see *de Plantatione* 42; *de Congressu* 97).”<sup>587</sup> Just as the mind can either be “depraved” (1:28) or in the process of being renewed (12:2), so the “inner man,” which many equate with the “mind,” can be the possession of either a believer or a non-believer. Herman Ridderbos concurs with this conclusion and says that ἔσω ἄνθρωπον and νοῦς refer to the “inward, invisible, spiritual side of human existence” as opposed to the “outward, visible, physical” side of that existence.<sup>588</sup> Godet thus remarks concerning the vocabulary of the passage: “Paul has avoided, with evident design, every expression specially belonging to

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<sup>586</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:363.

<sup>587</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 202.

<sup>588</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (trans. John Richard de Witt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 115.

the Christian sphere, and the term πνευμα, the *Spirit*, in particular, to make use only of terms denoting the natural faculties of the human soul, like that of νοῦς, the mind.”<sup>589</sup> It is the possession of the Spirit that Paul recognizes as the one key for setting apart a Christian from a non-Christian (Rom 8:9). In this regard it is important to recall the striking evidence presented in the last chapter which shows Rom 7 and Rom 8 are clearly differentiated by the absence and presence of the Spirit.

### “I” as Every Man

Nevertheless, while I would again maintain that Kümmel’s conclusion that the text cannot be an autobiographical account of Paul the Christian, at least two critiques from Middendorf demonstrate that Kümmel’s own solution, that the “I” is a rhetorical device signifying “every man,” is problematic. First, contra Kümmel, “every man” must of necessity include Paul in some way. One cannot completely exclude the unconverted Paul from the kind of struggles with sin depicted in Rom 7 by citing Phil 3:5-6 without contradicting Paul’s universal claims in Romans. Paul has argued in Rom 5 that the actions of Adam have affected every single individual, making all humanity subject to death and enslaved to sin, and so this universal claim must include even the “blameless Pharisee.”

Middendorf maintains that the differences between the passages are the result of perspective. Phil 3 expresses Paul’s viewpoint as a Pharisee and Rom 7 his view as a Christian.<sup>590</sup> Theissen concurs and says: “Phil. 3:4-6 reflects the consciousness of the pre-Christian Paul, while Romans 7 depicts a conflict that was unconscious at the time, one

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<sup>589</sup> Godet, *Romans*, 292-93.

<sup>590</sup> Middendorf, *The ‘I’ in the Storm*, 161-66.

of which Paul became conscious only later.”<sup>591</sup> At least two points call such a solution into question, however. First, Paul’s overall perspective in Phil 3 is rather strongly Christian, not Pharisaical. A Pharisee would not compare the list in Phil 3:5-6 with “rubbish” (3:8). Moreover, even though Paul compares the list to rubbish, he nevertheless recognizes the value of his former life while contrasting it to the far superior life he now has in knowing Christ. For this comparison to have strength, the worth of the former must be true in the eyes of the comparer, and that comparer is the Christian, not the Pharisaical, Paul. Secondly, the Philippian letter is judged by most scholars to be later than that to the Romans, suggesting that Paul’s thinking is even farther removed from his Pharisaical perspective in the latter letter than in the former. Despite these criticisms, one must still admit that Paul the Pharisee must in some sense have struggled with some of the things unconverted humanity has struggled with since the Garden. “Blameless” then cannot imply that Paul did not battle with and occasionally give in to sin. Yet the struggle of the “I” in Rom 7 goes far beyond any such picture of Paul in the NT.

Others seek a solution which contrasts external performance (Phil 3) with internal struggle (Rom 7). Ziesler writes: “If our argument is correct, then it is possible that in observable matters, matters subject to the control and scrutiny of the community, the Law may be fully kept (Phil. 3.6), while secret desires are out of control.”<sup>592</sup> Lambrecht cites Ziesler’s article and says: “One can therefore, it would seem, hold that Romans 7 and Philippians 3 are autobiographically reconcilable. According to this view, in Romans 7 Paul would concede that, notwithstanding his outward radical religious stand and zeal for

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<sup>591</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 235.

<sup>592</sup> J. A. Ziesler, “The Role of the Tenth Commandment in Romans 7,” *JSNT* 33 (1988), 51.



the law, his inner desires were not without sinful covetousness.”<sup>593</sup> Gundry too, we saw in chapter 1, argued that Paul had a specific inner battle with lustful desire. We have already seen there, however, that Paul’s use of the word ἐπιθυμία is not restricted to sexual lust. Moo notes: “The Greek verb is ἐπιθυμέω, which Paul nowhere else uses to describe sexual desire as such (13:9; 1 Cor. 10:6; Gal. 5:17; 1 Tim. 3:1). And only three of his seventeen uses of the cognate noun ἐπιθυμία outside this context focus on sexual desire (1:24; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:6).”<sup>594</sup> Moreover, Rom 7 speaks of not merely internal thought, as these scholars suggest, but also of external evil actions as well as the failure to perform good actions.

May we then explain the differences by arguing that the “I” in Rom 7 is a purely fictive “I” as Kümmel seeks to do? Theissen discusses the various uses of “I” in Paul’s letters and, even after rejecting most of Kümmel’s examples, admits that the fictive “I” of which Kümmel speaks is a possibility and cites Rom 11:19 as an example. “The ‘I’ of the gentile Christian can naturally not be the ‘I’ of the Jewish Christian Paul – not even if the introductory formula *ereis oun* were lacking.”<sup>595</sup> Theissen goes on, however, to compare the fictive “I” of Rom 7 with the fictive “I” of Wis 7:1-13. He argues that we have the same kind of change in tense from past to present there as we have in Rom 7 and that when this change takes place the “change in tense signals the transition from the ideal biography of King Solomon to the communication of general insights.”<sup>596</sup> He says: “The statement ‘Life is short’ affects every individual; the statement ‘Life was short’ is more

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<sup>593</sup> Jan Lambrecht, *The Wretched ‘I’ and its Liberation: Paul in Romans 7 and 8* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1992), 77-78.

<sup>594</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 434 n.34

<sup>595</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 193.

<sup>596</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 197.

suggestive of a particular person.”<sup>597</sup> If this comparison holds validity, then that which is more specifically true of only the “I” in the past tense statements of Rom 7:7-13 gives way to more typical statements about humanity in general in Rom 7:14-25.

However, Theissen is unwilling to concede that the past tense statements are about Adam for three reasons: the use of the commandment from the Decalogue; the lack of any reference to coveting in Gen 2-3; and the fact that he says the fall in Rom 7 is one of “inner processes.”<sup>598</sup> He does, however, admit the value of some of Kümmel’s motives for rejecting the passage as Pauline autobiography, and concludes: “What suggests itself most readily is to think of an ‘I’ that combines personal and typical traits.”<sup>599</sup> His conclusion then is to see the passage as speaking of both Paul and also of things typical of humanity in general. However, if the comparison with Wis 7 has validity regarding the tenses of the verbs, one should expect the typical traits to be found in the present tense section and not in Rom 7:7-13. Further, if the author of the Wisdom of Solomon can write in the first person in the past tense section as if he were Solomon, can one not argue that Paul can write as if he were Adam in Rom 7:7-13? Moreover, I would argue that this parallel with the Wisdom of Solomon becomes even more important due to the many other similarities scholars have noted between Romans and this book. We will then need to look more fully later at Theissen’s arguments against the Adam association.

Before doing so, it is important to reiterate that one cannot fully exclude Paul by following a purely fictive “I” without negating the apostle’s own message. Paul must be allowed some part in Rom 7. The claims in Rom 5 regarding the effects of sin on humanity are universal. Thus, *some* of the typical things about fallen, carnal humanity

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<sup>597</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 195.

<sup>598</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 202-3.

<sup>599</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 201.

must be true of Paul as well. In light, however, of Middendorf's own admission that nowhere else in the NT do we find such a depiction of Paul as we have in Rom 7, and in light of Kümmel's rejection of many of the statements as contrary to Paul's life, I would argue that the earlier section is likely not about him at all and only in the latter section where the statements become more typical is there any association with Paul, and then only to a limited extent.

However, that the apostle is included, at least to this limited extent, may in turn *partly* explain the emotion that Moo and others have maintained points to Paul. The apostle does know what it is to have struggled with sin and to be delivered from its reign. Moo writes: "Paul's emotional cry in v. 24 – 'wretched person that I am!' – certainly implies that he identifies with the situation he has been describing, and it would be straining credulity to think that he would not himself have experienced the situation that he is attributing to Jews generally under the law."<sup>600</sup> Again however, to admit that Paul has some understanding of past enslavement to sin and deliverance through Christ does not necessitate the conclusion that the "I" is an autobiographical description of the apostle prior to his conversion. Too many statements remain problematic.

Another valid critique of Kümmel by Middendorf is that the "I" of Rom 7 does not fit "every man," if we mean by that all unconverted individuals. This is evident in Rom 1-3 where Paul discusses the typical Gentile and Jewish sinner. The sinners depicted in Rom 1 are clearly *not* endeavoring to keep the law, unlike the individual portrayed in Rom 7. In fact, they take delight in going against the law and in encouraging others to do the same (1:32). Furthermore, while the sinners in Rom 2 might be described as those who *do* delight in the law and teach it (2:17f.), the sinners in Rom 2 are very complacent

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<sup>600</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 450.

regarding their own sinfulness in contrast to the great remorse of the “I.”<sup>601</sup> Thus, to say that the “I” represents all lost humanity is to misconstrue the typical Pauline sinner. It should be admitted here, however, that Kümmel himself endeavored to respond to this criticism. He argued that the solution was to view the passage from Paul’s own Christian perspective of the longing of the unconverted for redemption.<sup>602</sup> Yet clearly not all sinners express this longing, and the scope of the “I” must be limited. Therefore, the view that the “I” refers to every unconverted individual is not tenable.

### “I” as Israel

In response to the above objection, Moo seeks to narrow the range which the “I” represents. He says that “Paul in Rom. 7 uses *egō* to represent himself, but himself in solidarity with the Jewish people. Because of this solidarity, Paul can put himself in the shoes of those who received the law at Sinai (vv. 8b-10a). Now, in vv. 14-25, he portrays his own condition as a Jew under the law, but more importantly, the condition of all Jews under the law.”<sup>603</sup> This allows Moo to argue that not all of the events mentioned in the passage were personally experienced by the apostle but are rather drawn from the experience of all Israel.

We saw above that “delight” in God’s law can certainly be the mark of a Jew as indicated by texts such as Psalm 1:2, Psalm 19 and 119, as well as Paul’s own statement in Rom 10:2. However, does this suggestion by Moo that Paul is speaking of the Jews really solve the problem? I have already noted Middendorf’s claim that Paul’s description of the unconverted Jew in Rom 2 does not fit the “I” of Rom 7. Both delight in the law,

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<sup>601</sup> Middendorf, *The ‘I’ in the Storm*, 147.

<sup>602</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 118.

<sup>603</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 448.

but the Jew of Rom 2 is rather complacent about his own keeping of it, while the “I” of Rom 7 laments his inability to do so. Furthermore, the “I” recognizes that the Law only leads to further sin and death and needs a deliverer from this situation while the sinner of Rom 2 appears satisfied that his or her very possession of the Law is enough to save.

Moo’s solution has other problems as well. First, we have the problem that Kümmel noted in interpreting this text of Paul. Jews would never speak of a time in their own life when they were “alive apart from the Law.” Rather, all Jews including Paul recognized themselves to be under the law from earliest childhood.<sup>604</sup> Lyonnet argues that circumcision which takes place on the eighth day of a child’s life places one under the law from that point on.<sup>605</sup> As Paul himself argues in Gal 5:2, to be circumcised places one under total obligation to the law.

Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the Christian Paul would say that Jews were “alive” in the sense required here before entering into a relationship with Christ.<sup>606</sup> In fact, Moo himself admits a similar difficulty with the concept of “death”:

‘I died,’ because of the connections in the passage, must refer to the same ‘death’ that is spoken of in vv. 5 and 13. And this is clearly ‘total death,’ the condemnation that comes as a penalty for sin. It is this consideration that is most damaging to the identification of *egō* as either Paul or the people of Israel. Paul ‘died’ spiritually long before his coming to maturity or his alleged pre-conversion ‘awakening,’ and the people of Israel were certainly under condemnation before the giving of the law (see 5:13-14).<sup>607</sup>

Neither Paul nor any other Jew could have been considered alive in this spiritual sense and then have died in this spiritual sense before their conversion. Moo is thus forced to relax his definitions in order to defend his position. As stated earlier by Käsemann, there

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<sup>604</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 81-82.

<sup>605</sup> Lyonnet, “L’histoire,” 122.

<sup>606</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 78-79.

<sup>607</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 429.

is really only one individual who can properly fit the strict definitions required here and that is Adam.<sup>608</sup>

Additionally, the idea that death entered as a result of Israel's sin contradicts Paul's very recent point in Rom 5. Michael Reichardt writes: "Das für Röm 7,7-13 bedeutsame Sterbens- bzw. Todesmotiv (vgl. V. 10a.d.11c.13a.c) is in Röm 5,12-21 zudem mit der Person des Adam und nicht mit der des Mose verbunden (vgl. V. 12.15.17)."<sup>609</sup> In other words, to say in Rom 7 that death was ushered in by Israel's sin would contradict Paul's earlier argument that it came in as a result of Adam's sin.

Finally, I must note that for Paul to narrow his point here to only Jews, as Moo suggests, would be to contradict the apostle's overall purpose in Rom 5-8 and indeed of the universal scope of the plan of salvation expressed in the theme of the epistle (1:16-17). Chapters 5-8 deal with a contrast between two epochs, that of Adam and that of Christ. Paul has characterized these two epochs in 6:14 as being ὑπὸ νόμον and ὑπὸ χάριτι. There is no third category for unconverted Gentiles. Consequently, everyone outside of Christ is described as being, at least in this context, "under law," or under the dominion of law (7:1: ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), which is also characterized as being under the reign of sin and death.

Paul continues this ὑπὸ νόμον theme in 7:2 where he uses the term ὑπανδρος to describe a woman who is married and thus *under the law* relating to marital fidelity. The apostle speaks of her release from obligation to this law in the case of the husband's death which is meant to depict the Christian's release from the law, an idea picked up in

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<sup>608</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 196.

<sup>609</sup> Michael Reichardt, *Psychologische Erklärung der paulinischen Damaskusvision? Ein Beitrag zum interdisziplinären Gespräch zwischen Exegese und Psychologie seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1999), 293.

Rom 8:1, where release is expressed as release from the condemnation which comes from this law. Of import is Paul's claim that this condemnation is also a component of those in Adam (Rom 5:18). "Those who know the law" in 7:1 (being at one time ὑπὸ νόμου) are now those who are "in Christ Jesus" (or are ὑπὸ χάριτι) in 8:1. Thus, while it is true that Paul uses ἀδελφῶν in Rom 9:3 to speak of his kinsmen, the Jews, it is highly likely that in Rom 7:1 the term stands for all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who formerly knew the law by endeavoring to serve God by that means. In all probability, the church at Rome in this early period would have been primarily composed of former Jews *and* God fearing Gentiles who would have had first-hand experience of the difficulties presented by Paul in Rom 7 of trying to live a godly life solely through one's own determination to follow the law.

Thus, none of the above proposals are fully adequate. Many of the statements in Rom 7 fail to fit into the life of Paul either as a Christian or as a Pharisee. Middendorf himself admits that the autobiography he claims to find is quite distinct from the overall picture of Paul given in the rest of the NT. On the other hand, the purely fictive solution which argues that the "I" speaks of every unconverted man fails first by not admitting the inclusion of Paul himself, but more importantly because it does not agree with Paul's own description of the unconverted in Rom 1-3. Finally, while the solution which sees the "I" as Israel endeavors to solve this discrepancy by narrowing the category to Jewish sinners who delight in the law, this solution contradicts the vocabulary of the text, Paul's statements in Rom 5, and also the universal scope of Paul's message.

### “I” as Adam

Thus, in light of the above, I return to my original thesis which is also found among the earliest interpreters of the church, that is, that the “I” is Paul’s impersonation of Adam. Moreover, I would note that this is not only the solution of the early church. Some kind of Adamic backdrop is seen by nearly every scholar, even by those who eventually reject the Adam solution for some other interpretation. For example, Moo who ultimately favors an Israel solution writes: “Most contemporary interpreters, while not thinking that vv. 7-11 describe only Adam, think that reference to Adam is present and prominent.”<sup>610</sup> Later he continues: “Direct allusion to Adam is, as I have argued, unlikely; but the parallels between Adam and Israel in Jewish literature, as well as 5:13-14, would suggest that the experience of Israel with the law here is parallel to and, to some extent, recapitulates the experience of Adam with the commandment of God in the Garden.”<sup>611</sup> Thus, although Moo does not want to see direct allusion to Adam, he nevertheless maintains that the parallels are very close.

Similarly, Middendorf, who ultimately argues for the autobiographical interpretation, still quotes Theissen and writes:

The most that can be said in this regard is that ‘Adam is not the *subject* of the conflict in Rom. 7:7ff. but rather its *model*.’ Paul, through the use of the first person singular, *starts with his own previous existence* under the Law’s lordship. However, in so doing, the ‘I,’ at least by implication, confesses *not* that he himself *is* Adam, but that he is a child of the one man through whom sin came into the world and spread to all people (5:12).<sup>612</sup>

In other words, for Middendorf and Theissen, Paul’s struggles reflect those of Adam, but he is nevertheless writing about himself, not Adam.

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<sup>610</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 426.

<sup>611</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 438-39.

<sup>612</sup> Middendorf, *The ‘I’ in the Storm*, 238-29; Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 203.



Some scholars, however, argue that Adam, rather than playing a minor role in the overall story, is instead crucial to the overall context. For example, I noted earlier that Witherington stated “that the story of Adam is either the text or the subtext for not only argument five, but all the way through Romans 7. This story, which tells what is true of all humanity (for all died in Adam), underlies and undergirds everything that is said from 5:12 to 7:25”<sup>613</sup> In the same way, Vlachos, in arguing against Moo’s Israel solution, writes: “The prototypical character of the primeval account is evident, for example, in 5:12ff., where Paul presents Adam as a paradigm of those under the law. Indeed, in the historical sweep of 5:12-21, Eden and Calvary are *epochal*, whereas Sinai is *parenthetical*.”<sup>614</sup> In other words, this epoch of the dominion of sin and death was ushered in by Adam, and, thus, when Paul writes about such an epoch, Adam must be the primary example. Israel did not usher in humanity’s fall and neither did Paul. They may be examples of the Fall’s consequences but they are not its prototype. Neither do they completely exemplify the experience of Adam who knew what it was like to be fully alive before the Fall.

This is not to say that other backgrounds cannot be helpful to our understanding. Jewett, for example, points to Hellenistic writings and draws some striking parallels between Rom 7 and statements from Ovid and Epictetus.<sup>615</sup> Stowers indeed argues on the basis of these parallels that Paul is addressing Gentiles in Rom 7 and particularly the Greek view that sin could be overcome through self-control and reason. “Romans tells the story of sin and salvation, problem and solution, punishment and reward at its most

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<sup>613</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 60.

<sup>614</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 196.

<sup>615</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 461-64.

basic level as a story of the loss and recovery of self-control.”<sup>616</sup> Paul, however, depicts the “I” in Rom 7 as having such knowledge based in the law yet lacking the ability to control his own desires. Consequently, self-control and knowledge, Paul argues, do not provide a solution for the sinner’s problem. Moo’s argument on the other hand that Rom 7 is addressed to Jews and begins with the story of Sinai could be the basis for Paul’s contention that the Mosaic Law is not the solution to the sin problem either. Indeed, the emphasis on Law in the passage makes this much more likely than the Gentile background of Stowers. However, it may be that Paul plays on both and maintains that neither reason nor Law can solve the sin problem. Aletti argues that by uniting these traditions Paul shows that the Jew is equally as desperate as the Greek in his powerlessness to overcome sin.<sup>617</sup>

While Paul *could* be uniting Greek and Jewish traditions, I would contend that at most these other backgrounds are only secondary. Throughout the letter Paul has been addressing universal concerns and the thesis of Romans is that the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (1:16). It would not serve Paul’s ultimate purpose then to utilize a background that would appeal primarily only to one group. Aletti writes: “Mais en faisant allusion à Gn 2–3, avec des motifs – convoitise, duperie – que ces chapitres ont en commun avec le topos hérité des Grecs, il rejoint ses lecteurs Juifs et non Juifs dans leurs traditions respectives: l’égô qu’il décrit est représentant de l’humanité entière.”<sup>618</sup> As Vlachos states above, Eden is epochal. Only Adam provides a sufficient background for the sin problem of all humanity.

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<sup>616</sup> Stowers, *Rereading*, 42.

<sup>617</sup> Jean-Noël Aletti, “Rm 7.7-25 encore une fois: enjeux et propositions,” *NTS* 48 (2002), 372.

<sup>618</sup> Aletti, “Rm 7.7-25,” 366.

However, while the overall context of Romans supports the Adam interpretation, there are also many indications in Rom 7 itself which contribute to the idea that Paul is speaking of the first man. In other words, I have not resorted to the idea that Paul is impersonating Adam here merely because an autobiographical interpretation would contradict the portrait of Paul found in the rest of the NT as Thurén's indictment suggests. Rather, many clues support προσωποποίηση, or impersonation, besides any so-called predilection on my part. It is to this evidence that I now turn.

First, we need to admit that the name Adam is not specifically mentioned in Rom 7. It would have simplified things a great deal and eliminated the "spilling of much ink" if Paul had merely introduced Adam as the speaker. However, in response to this criticism, we have seen repeatedly that Adam and the story of Adam have been referred to many more times in both Paul and the NT without using Adam's name than by explicitly citing him. Indeed, explicit use of the name is rare. Readers of the NT then are often expected to pick up references to Adam based on contextual clues. Detractors may argue that the Roman Christians could not be expected to pick up such verbal clues. However, Paul himself in Rom 7:1 has told us that the chapter is primarily addressed to "those who know the law." Thus, many in the audience would have been familiar with the story, and these could in turn explain it to those less cognizant of the OT. Moreover, I have demonstrated that Paul alludes to the Adam story many times in the preceding chapters of Romans and explicitly speaks of him in Rom 5. Thus, the Adam story does not appear "out of the blue," so-to-speak, in Rom 7. In addition, the continuing comparison of the Adam and Christ epoch should have clued Paul's audience to the idea that Adam was still very much in play. Finally, as I have noted, this letter would have

been read aloud, allowing the reader to signal the start of the impersonation with a dramatic change of voice.

Although Stowers does not support the view that Paul is impersonating Adam, he still provides evidence that Paul is employing προσωποποιία:

The section begins in v. 7 with an abrupt change in voice following a rhetorical question that serves as a transition from Paul's authorial voice, which has previously addressed the readers explicitly described by the letter in 6:1-7:6. This constitutes what the grammarians and rhetoricians described as change of voice (*enallgē* or *metabolē*). These ancient readers would next look for *diaphōnia*, a difference in characterization from the authorial voice. The speaker in 7:7-25 speaks with great personal pathos of coming under the law at some point, learning about his desire and sin, and being unable to do what he wants to do because of enslavement to sin and flesh.<sup>619</sup>

We have heard various interpreters argue for Paul's personal involvement in the text due to the strong emotion present in Rom 7, especially in 7:24 near the end of the "I" passage.

We have acquiesced that this may be *part* of the reason for the emotion. Paul did know both the lure of indwelling sin and Christ's deliverance. However, as we see in Stowers' comment, and as we also observed in chapter 1, Quintilian states that one should expect just this kind of emotion in a well constructed impersonation where the writer builds the pathos of the impersonation to an ultimate climax.

Then too, we saw that Aphthonius noted that one option for composing an impersonation was to employ a known historical figure. This particular figure would often be chosen because it was believed that he or she would know a good deal about the subject being discussed. Who, I would then ask, would be more appropriate to speak on such a subject as indwelling sin in Rom 7 than the individual whom we have just been told in Rom 5 introduced it into the world?

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<sup>619</sup> Stowers, *Rereading*, 269-70.

The structure of the passage further points to the idea that Paul is impersonating someone. As noted earlier, the text is in the form of a diatribe with a series of questions and answers. Angelika Reichert performs a literary analysis on Rom 7:7-25 and notes that, as one would expect in a diatribe, there is an interchange of speakers.<sup>620</sup> The first person plural is used in verses 7, 14, and 25. She refers to these verses as Paul's normal communication with his audience. The "I," however, is a distinct voice. Reichert then provides various reasons for seeing the Adam story as background to the text. While she concludes that one should not press the details of the Adam story, nevertheless general themes are to be associated with it. I would go further than Reichert to not only contend that Adam is the background to Rom 7 but also to argue that, when the text changes to allow the "I" to speak, it is Adam's voice that we are meant to hear. He is the other speaker.

That Paul is doing something unusual here must be admitted. Nowhere else in his letters is there such a profusion of the first person singular. There are 27 occurrences of the first person singular verb and 25 occurrences (7 emphatic) of the first person pronoun in these 12 verses, an average of more than four occurrences per verse. The nearest competitor to these figures is found in 2 Cor 12 where Paul defends himself to the Corinthians. However, even there we find a ratio of less than three to one. Compare these numbers to the surrounding context of Rom 7 where the first person singular verb occurs not once in Rom 5, only one time in Rom 6 and twice in Rom 8. Thus, this passage stands out not only from Paul's epistles as a whole but certainly from its immediate context. Paul does not normally speak about himself to this degree, and to see him do so should

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<sup>620</sup> Angelika Reichert, "Literarische Analyse von Römer 7,7-25a," in *The Letter to the Romans* (ed. Udo Schnelle; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2009), 297-325.

signal us that something unusual is occurring. I would argue again that this signal is meant to make us hear the voice of Adam.

The I/we interchange mentioned by Reichert could also play an important role in solving a difficult interpretational crux. Several scholars have noted the problematic nature of having a divided “I” still present (7:25b) even after the thanksgiving for deliverance (7:25a). Some have indeed seen this verse as so difficult as to suggest that the cry of deliverance and thanksgiving is either a gloss or has been moved from its original location. Käsemann, for example, argues that it must be a gloss and says, if it is not “All that Paul says about baptism, law, and the justification of the ungodly, namely, all that he says about the break between the aeons, will have to be interpreted differently.”<sup>621</sup> Matthew Black, on the other hand, suggests that we must look for a solution in a dislocation. He writes: “A problem may still be felt to remain here, so that the suggestion of Michel may be welcomed by many, namely, that we should take 8:2 immediately after the thanksgiving in verse 25. It is possible that there has been some dislocation in these verses. Verse 25<sup>b</sup>, for instance, would come much more logically within the argument of the previous verses if it followed immediately after verse 23.”<sup>622</sup> However, while the solutions of Käsemann and Black of a gloss or dislocation *would* solve the difficulty, *there is absolutely no textual tradition which supports either conjecture*. One must thus look elsewhere for a more likely solution.

One such possibility is found in a recent monograph entitled *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*. Bruce Longenecker describes in detail a rhetorical practice which he refers to as a “chain-link transition,” a method regarded by both Quintilian from the first

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<sup>621</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 211.

<sup>622</sup> Matthew Black, *New Century Bible Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 108.

century and Lucian of Samosata from the second as a valuable method of connecting a speaker or writer's arguments. Longenecker writes that it "is best illustrated by means of an A-b-a-B pattern, with upper-case letters representing the overlap that is sandwiched on the boundaries of the text units. . . . Instead of text-unit A simply coming to an abrupt end and being immediately followed by text-unit B, text-unit A gives way to a brief signaling of material B, followed by a resumption of material A, and finally a full commencement of text-unit B."<sup>623</sup> In support of this method, he cites not only an example from Quintilian's own writings but also writings from other ancient writers including passages from the Old and New Testaments.

By way of illustrating the form of a chain-link transition, we cite Longenecker's translation of Quintilian's own practice: "[M]y final book [i.e., Book 10] will explain the nature of the difference between our language and that of Greece. But I must bring this book [i.e., Book 9] to a conclusion without more delay, since it has already exceeded the limits designed for it. To sum up then . . . ."<sup>624</sup> What we see here is that Quintilian has been writing an argument in his ninth book, he refers briefly to what he will say in book ten, then returns to summarize book nine. If we have this same formula in our passage, then Paul with his cry for deliverance and thanksgiving is jumping ahead to chapter 8 before he gives a summary of what he has been talking about in 7:14-25. Accordingly, Paul would then be tying separate portions of Romans together more closely by means of this transitional chain.

This solution by Longenecker may indeed be the correct one. However, it may also be that the identification of different speakers through the change from first person

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<sup>623</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 18.

<sup>624</sup> Longenecker, *Rhetoric*, 14-15.

singular to first person plural and back to singular noted by Reichert gives us another alternative. If the first person singular, as I suggest, is Paul's impersonation of Adam but the first person plural, as Reichert suggests, is Paul and the Roman church, then Adam cries out for deliverance ("I", "me"; 7:24) but it is only Paul and the Roman church who give thanks for it ("our Lord"; 7:25a). Adam himself then remains divided at the end of the passage for no deliverance has come to him ("I myself," "my mind," and "my flesh"; 7:25b). Deliverance has only come to Paul and the Roman church. Accordingly, it is their deliverance, not Adam's, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

One difficulty with the above proposal is the presence of the probable variant  $\sigma\epsilon$  in 8:2. If this singular pronoun is meant to reflect back on the "I" of Rom 7, then as Kümmel notes, the "I" first of all cannot refer to Paul.<sup>625</sup> However, if it points back to the singular first person, there is also now a problem with the immediately preceding solution. Paul would then leave the "I," Adam, undelivered in 7:25b and then turn around and speak of his deliverance in 8:2. That would be a contradiction. Moreover, the Adam of the OT did not have the kind of deliverance which is described by Paul in Rom 8. Whatever one decides on these issues, the text remains difficult. Why does Paul speak of deliverance in 7:25a using  $\eta\mu\omega\upsilon\upsilon$  and then not include himself in that deliverance in 8:2? He does indeed include himself in 8:4 ( $\eta\mu\hat{\iota}\nu$ ). Also, why does he use the second person singular if he is speaking to the Roman church? He later switches to the expected plural in 8:9. Given the overall question as to which variant in 8:2 is the correct one, it is probably best not to extend this discussion further. However, without this difficulty presented by the  $\sigma\epsilon$  in 8:2, I find the solution presented by alternate speakers an interesting one. Also, if we adopt Theissen's earlier suggestion that the past tense verbs

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<sup>625</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 110-11.



point specifically to an individual while the present tense speaks more typically, this might in turn indicate that Paul himself does not completely separate statements about Adam and others in the latter passage. He could then be transitioning from statements which fit only Adam (7:7-13), to those fitting Adam and/or his audience (7:14-25), to statements which fit only Christian believers (8).

I turn now to a more solid footing for our arguments for Adam, and the first item I would note is Paul's repeated use of the word "commandment" (ἐντολή, vv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). Witherington comments: "Rom. 7.8 refers to a 'commandment' (singular). This can hardly be a reference to the Mosaic Law in general, which Paul regularly speaks of as a collective entity. Only Adam, in all biblical history, was under only one commandment, and it was about coveting."<sup>626</sup> The one possible exception that might be cited to Paul's not using ἐντολή collectively is 1 Tim 6:14, depending, of course, on one's view of the authorship of this letter. However, Paul's normative pattern is not to refer to the Mosaic legislation as one ἐντολή but rather as a collection of many commandments (1 Cor 7:19; Eph 2:15). Moreover, that ἐντολή can in Paul refer to non-Mosaic legislation is also evident (Col 4:10; Tit 1:14).

We have seen, too, that Paul's usage of νόμος is not consistent. For example, it can certainly refer to passages besides the Mosaic code both from the Psalms as well as the Prophets (Rom 3:10-19). While I would not wholly exclude reference to the Mosaic legislation here in Rom 7, still references to νόμος in 7:21 which many translate as "principle," his use of ἕτερον νόμον ("another law") in 7:23, and the distinct phrase τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ("the law of sin") make it likely that Paul is not speaking of the

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<sup>626</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 189.

Mosaic Law alone. Reichert argues that Paul is employing the device of antanaclasis whereby he employs the same word but allows its meaning to vary.<sup>627</sup> Witherington concurs and says: “There may be some interplay here between the use of *nomos* of a ruling principle or law (other than the Mosaic Law) and of the Mosaic Law as well.”<sup>628</sup>

Furthermore, Vlachos says that “ἐντολή (vv. 8, 9, 10, 11) recalls ἐντέλλομαι in LXX Gen 2:16; 3:11, 17.”<sup>629</sup> In response to Kümmel’s argument that the command here deals with eating not coveting, Vlachos further states that “the commandment οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις in v. 7 recollects Eve’s desiring after the forbidden fruit (at Gen 3:6 the verb  $\tau\omicron\mu\pi$  occurs, which is the verb used in Exod 20:17:  $\tau\omicron\mu\pi\eta \aleph^b$ ; although not the case in Gen 3:6 in the LXX the verb is usually translated by ἐπιθυμέω).”<sup>630</sup> Moo, in the same vein as Kümmel, argues that ἐπιθυμέω and its cognates are not used in Gen 1-3 and notes that it is used in Ps 106:14 for Israel’s temptation in the wilderness.<sup>631</sup> One may note, however, that while the golden calf incident is referred to in this Psalm (v. 19), this particular verse almost certainly refers to Israel’s incident with the quail rather than the sin at Sinai. This does not negate Moo’s view but it would make this temptation more convincing as a background to Rom 7 if it were directly in association with the giving of the Law. In other words, one can find many covetous events in Israel’s history but one would think that Paul would choose a more defining moment, one like I am suggesting with the Fall.

Kümmel is, however, correct that the word ἐντολή is used later in Rom 13:9 specifically in reference to commandments of the Decalogue including the specific

<sup>627</sup> Reichert, “Literarische Analyse,” 302.

<sup>628</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 175.

<sup>629</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 99-100 n.64.

<sup>630</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 99-100 n.64; Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 86-87.

<sup>631</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 434 n.35.

command of Rom 7, “You shall not covet.”<sup>632</sup> Hammerton-Kelly thus argues for a dual allusion in Rom 7:7-13, saying that Paul “uses the terms νόμος and ἐντολή in 7:7-13 as he reads the Decalogue in terms of the primal prohibition and vice versa.”<sup>633</sup> Jon Levenson “suggests that Israel became increasingly reflective and self-conscious about her practices as time went on. In some cases, she developed multiple understandings of the same commandment, as in the case of the Sabbath, which was seen as imitatio Dei (Gen 2:1-3), the sign of the Sinaitic covenant (Exod 31:12-17), a humanitarian institution (Deut 5:14), and a memorial to the Exodus (Deut 5:15).”<sup>634</sup> If Israel viewed the fifth commandment as initially having its foundation in Creation, then why might not the tenth commandment be viewed as having its basis there as well? I have already argued on the grounds of Rom 5:14 that Paul is endeavoring to draw a parallel between Adam’s sin and those who sinned against the later Mosaic legislation. Consequently, I would contend that Paul’s point in Rom 7 is to show that the Romans’ own problems with the Mosaic Law were like Adam’s sin against the original Garden commandment.

That Paul says this commandment was “to result in life” (7:10) does not help to distinguish between the original command and that of the Decalogue, for observing the former allowed Adam and Eve continual access to the tree of life, while we are told that the purpose of the Mosaic Law was also life (Lev 18:5). However, that the “I” was “alive apart from the Law” (7:9) is much more problematic for those who do not accept the Adam interpretation. Vlachos states that “the durative ἐζῶν (v. 9) is reminiscent of

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<sup>632</sup> Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 87.

<sup>633</sup> Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly, “Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire: Paul’s Interpretation of Adam’s Sin in the Letter to the Romans” in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (ed. R. T. Fortna and B. R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 47.

<sup>634</sup> Jon D. Levenson, “The Theologies of Commandment in Biblical Israel,” *HTR* 73 (1980), 33.

ζῶσαν in LXX Gen 2:7.”<sup>635</sup> While the Genesis text could speak of both Adam’s spiritual and/or physical life, I contend that Rom 7 certainly must speak of spiritual life for the person who “dies” in Rom 7 goes on to commit further acts of sin, indicating that the death must be a spiritual one. Thus, life should be regarded as spiritual as well. And, as Käsemann asserts: “In the full sense only Adam lived before the commandment was given.”<sup>636</sup> Schreiner agrees:

The claim that ‘I’ was living formerly apart from the law’ (v. 9) is true only of Adam, strictly speaking. Romans 5:12-19 says that the entire human race, excepting Jesus Christ, enters the world dead and condemned in God’s sight. Therefore Paul would hardly say of sinners born in Adam that they were *living* before the arrival of the law. Only Adam was truly alive in the full theological sense before encountering and transgressing the commandment given in the garden of Eden. Any attempt to understand ‘life’ psychologically or in a relative sense should be rejected. ‘Life’ must have the full theological sense that it usually possesses in Paul: genuine spiritual life before God, so that the one who has life has right standing in God’s sight. No other person besides Adam could properly be said to have ‘life’ before receiving a commandment.<sup>637</sup>

Dunn states: “The stages marked by ἐζῶν ποτέ and ἀπέθανον (v 10) clearly reflect the stages of Adam’s fall.”<sup>638</sup> Vlachos further notes that “εἰς θάνατον (v. 10) recalls LXX Gen 2:17, θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε.”<sup>639</sup> Only by limiting the full sense of “living” can one make Rom 7 apply to someone other than Adam. Note, too, that here the Adam story fits Rom 7 much better than the Israel quail story. The former centered on the spiritual death that occurred, while the latter focuses on the physical death of those involved.

Other similarities in vocabulary provide further evidence of a connection between Rom 7 and Genesis. First, there is the parallel between “sin ‘seizing’ (λαβοῦσα) the

<sup>635</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 99-100 n.64.

<sup>636</sup> Käsemann, *Romans*, 196.

<sup>637</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 360. Unfortunately, Schreiner rejects his very own position later on pp. 363-64, and tempers his definitions much like Moo.

<sup>638</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 381.

<sup>639</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 99-100 n.64.

opportunity in vv. 8 and 11 [which] recalls the woman ‘seizing’ (λαβοῦσα) the fruit in LXX Gen 3:6.”<sup>640</sup> I have already noted the repeated references to fruit in the surrounding context (6:21-22, 7:4-5). Vlachos also comments on “Paul’s combined use of γινώσκω and οἶδα” (ἐγνων, ἤδειν; 7:7) with the similar combination in the LXX of Gen 2:9 (τὸ ξύλον τοῦ εἰδέναι γνωστὸν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ).<sup>641</sup> Besides this specific combination in 7:7, there are numerous other references to knowledge throughout (7:14, 15, 18).

“Furthermore, while Paul’s motif of *knowledge* finds a match in Eden, such a theme, if not missing altogether from the Sinai and wilderness accounts, is certainly not as notable there as it is in the Eden narrative. The knowledge motif thus would appear to be a distinct *edenic* thread that strings the allusions in Romans 7 past Sinai and ultimately to the Fall narrative and to its conspicuous motif of the knowledge of good and evil.”<sup>642</sup> Moreover, Paul speaks not merely of knowledge but of a knowledge corresponding to the forbidden tree of the Garden. Vlachos again notes that “though the exact LXX tandem καλός and πονηρός are absent, the edenic notion of *good and evil* may, in fact, be echoed in the contrasts of ἀγαθός and κακός in 7:17, 18 and καλός and κακός in 7:19, 21”<sup>643</sup>

As we noted previously the evidence regarding the language of deception in Rom 7 passage cuts both ways. Although Paul’s statement in 7:11 adds a prefix to the verb (ἐξηπάτησέν) which is not present in the original statement of Eve in the LXX of Gen 3:14 (ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με), the apostle’s usage elsewhere supports the fact that he does use the prefixed form to refer to the serpent’s deception of Eve (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim

<sup>640</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 99-100 n.64.

<sup>641</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 99-100 n.64.

<sup>642</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 196.

<sup>643</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 181.

2:14). However, while this supports the idea that Paul may be thinking of the Genesis text, the passage in 1 Tim argues that it was Eve, not Adam, who was deceived. Moo thus contends: “Paul uses the verb ἐξαπατέω three other times (Rom. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:3) without any allusion to the Garden of Eden narrative, and it is, of course, Eve, not Adam, who is deceived according to Genesis (a point Paul makes in 1 Tim. 2:14).”<sup>644</sup> Moo goes on to say: “Probably Paul thinks of the way that the ‘promise of life’ held out by the law ‘deceived’ Israel into thinking that it could attain life through it.”<sup>645</sup>

Although it is possible that Paul viewed Israel as deceived into thinking that it could attain righteousness and life through the law, he does not use this specific verb in doing so. Moreover, while Paul may make such claims elsewhere, there are a number of problems with maintaining that such a claim is being made in Rom 7. First, death entered the world through the action of Adam, not Israel. Secondly, the sin here relates to coveting and for Israel in the wilderness that meant the desire for meat (Num 11:34). That event did bring death as in Rom 7 but it was not due to deception as Moo proposes. There is thus no event in Israel’s history which specifically relates being deceived about the purpose of the Law with death, unlike the direct correlation between Eve’s deception and the resulting death in Genesis.

The more significant objection Moo raises is that the deception involved Eve, not Adam. Austin Busch notes this as well and writes an entire article on why Rom 7 is really about Eve.<sup>646</sup> I would agree with Moo and Busch on this point if it could be proven that Paul in Rom 7 was endeavoring to make some distinction between men and women as he does in 1 Cor 11. However, this is not Paul’s purpose here, as it also is not in Rom 5. If

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<sup>644</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 440 n.67.

<sup>645</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 440.

<sup>646</sup> Austin Busch, “The Figure of Eve in Romans 7:5-25,” *BibInt* 12 (2004): 1-36.

Paul intended to distinguish between Adam and Eve in Rom 5, he would have had to affirm that sin really was initiated by Eve and that death entered the world through her. As Dunn argues, "Paul's 'I' here includes Eve."<sup>647</sup> In other words, Adam and Eve were deceived together. *They* disobeyed God, and death came through *them*. Paul specifically chooses the male figure because Adam is the head of the race and his name in Hebrew, as we have seen, is generic for humanity. Vlachos thus makes this conclusion regarding our passage: "In 7:7-11 Paul appears to be identifying himself with the circumstances leading up to the Fall without distinguishing formally between Adam and Eve."<sup>648</sup>

In connection with this idea that the text is speaking of the serpent's temptation of Eve, some from the earliest days of the church have argued that Paul has replaced the serpent in the Garden with the concept of sin. Indeed, we saw in the first chapter that Origen, the earliest extant commentator on Romans, wrote: "It is possible that here he has called the author of sin, 'sin,' concerning whom it is written, 'The serpent seduced me'" (6.8.10).<sup>649</sup> Modern interpreters like Leenhardt and Lichtenberger agree. "The suggestion that sin is 'dead' apart from the law reminds us of the serpent lying inactive, motionless, hidden, and as it were dead in the garden: nothing resembles a dead serpent more than a living serpent so long as it does not move!"<sup>650</sup>

Die Sünde übernahm die Rolle der Schlange der Paradiesgeschichte verführte „mich“ und brachte „mir“ damit den Tod (7,11). Röm 7,14-25 nimmt den unbegreiflichen Sachverhalt, daß sich Adam aus dem Gehorsam gegen Gott in den Gehorsam der Schlange begab abermals auf, setzt an die Stelle der Schlange wiederum die Sünde und stattet sie mit Herrschaftsprädikaten aus (Besitz V. 14, Einwohnung V. 17.20, Gefangenschaft V. 23).<sup>651</sup>

<sup>647</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 385.

<sup>648</sup> Vlachos, *Law*, 100 n.67.

<sup>649</sup> Origen, 34.

<sup>650</sup> Leenhardt, *Romans*, 186.

<sup>651</sup> Lichtenberger, *Das Ich Adams*, 164.

An objection to this association is sometimes made based on the fact that Paul later says that this sin “dwells in me” (7:17). Gundry writes: “Paul recognizes that sin was not dwelling within Adam before the Fall, for he explicitly says that ‘sin entered the world’ at the Fall (Rom. 5:12).”<sup>652</sup> With this Godet agrees: “But this interpretation is excluded first by the words ἀμαρτία νεκρά, *sin is dead* (ver. 8). In paradise, according to St. Paul, sin was not *dead*; it did not exist (ch. v. 12).”<sup>653</sup> Even Lyonnet who strongly supports the Adam interpretation of the text concedes a difference:

Avec cette différence, bien entendu, que dans le récit de la Genèse le diable-serpent demeure toujours extérieur à l’homme, tandis que pour saint Paul le péché, d’abord complètement étranger à Adam qui « vivait » - « je vivais naguère » - devient en lui un principe interne d’activité qui, l’opposant à Dieu, le sépare de Dieu, source de toute vie, et partant lui donne la mort ; comme nos premiers parents d’ailleurs, acceptant la suggestion du serpent, désirent devenir comme Dieu, c’est-à-dire s’affranchir de toute dépendance par rapport à lui, violent son précepte et y trouvent la mort.<sup>654</sup>

However, while it is true that before the Fall sin did not indwell Adam and that sin was *in this sense* dead as far as he was concerned, sin as a force which impelled humanity to commit disobedience did already exist in the form of the serpent and was given the opportunity to come to life through the commandment given to Adam. Moreover, one can argue as well that the sin which was at one time external in the form of the serpent before the Fall was then internalized as a result of Adam’s sin. Paul only says that sin “dwells in me” in the second paragraph where he switches to the present tense forms. If the past tense describes Adam’s action, then one could argue that the

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<sup>652</sup> Gundry, 231.

<sup>653</sup> Godet, 280.

<sup>654</sup> Lyonnet, “L’histoire,” 134.



present describes the *results* of that action. Sin was external as a serpent to Adam before his sin but became internal to him as a result.

Theissen speaks of the two parts of 7:7-25 in the following way: “The ‘I’ of Rom. 7:7ff. goes through a history. In this section, two parts of the text are clearly distinct from each other – a narrative part (vv. 7-13) and a descriptive part (vv. 14-23), which can be distinguished on the basis of formal criteria.”<sup>655</sup> Lichtenberger writes:

Dem entspricht ein Wechsel der Gattung: 7-13 erzählt eine Geschichte, 14-25 schildert den Zustand eines dauernden Konflikts. Dies wirkt sich auch sonst auf den Sprachstil aus: 7-13 führt in ruhigem Erzähl- und Argumentationston den Beweis von der Güte des Gebotes und der radikalen Sündhaftigkeit der Sünde, 14-25 dagegen spitzt die Argumentation unerbittlich auf die Asuweglosigkeit des „Ich“ in seiner Gegangenschaft in Sünde und Tod zu. 14-25 ist ungleich dramatischer und „betroffener“ als 7-13.<sup>656</sup>

The latter descriptive part, however, does not describe the way Adam was before the Fall, but it could be argued that it does describe the way he was as a result of it.

That this is the case is evidenced by the difference in tone between the two sections. F. F. Bruce, for example, comments on the latter part and says that “there is an inward tension here which was absent from the preceding section.”<sup>657</sup> Although Fung and Barrett attribute this to the tension of the Christian now living in two aeons, they nevertheless recognize that the latter paragraph describes a tension not existent in the former.<sup>658</sup> I have already stated why I disagree with those who interpret 7:14-25 as a description of the Christian life. However, these scholars’ recognition of a distinction in the tension level of the “I” could be equally explained by the fact that sin now dwells

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<sup>655</sup> Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 184.

<sup>656</sup> Lichtenberger, *Das Ich Adams*, 161.

<sup>657</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 143.

<sup>658</sup> Fung, “Impotence of the Law,” 36; Barrett, *Romans*, 151-52.

within the “I” and attacks from within and is constantly present rather than existing as it did before the Fall as merely an external force which Adam only became aware of when in direct confrontation with the serpent.

Another objection to associating sin with the serpent revolves around the interpretation of ἀνέζησεν in 7:9. Jewett notes: “Scholars have averted this implication by suggesting an ‘inchoate’ interpretation of the prefix ἀνα-, resulting in the translation ‘sprang/came to life,’ but no evidence has been adduced in support of this connotation.”<sup>659</sup> Witherington, however, remarks: “Some have seen v. 9b as a problem for the Adam view of vv. 7-13 because the verb must be translated ‘renewed’ or ‘live anew.’ But we should notice the contrast between ‘I was living’ in v. 9a and ‘but Sin coming to life’ in v. 9b.”<sup>660</sup> He, therefore, supports the view of Cranfield who writes: “The contrast between νεκρά here and ἀνέζησεν in the next verse well suits the serpent lying motionless and hidden, and then stirring itself to take advantage of its opportunity.”<sup>661</sup> Godet, who we noted above rejects the idea of the serpent, still admits that “it is true that many verbs compounded with ἀνά do not at all include the idea of a *return* to a previous state; thus ἀνατέλλω, *to spring* (speaking of plants), and *to rise* (speaking of the stars); ἀναβοάω, *to raise the voice, to cry*; ἀναζέω, *to bubble up*.”<sup>662</sup> It should be admitted as well that the translation “sin came to life again” is also problematic. Das notes what Paul had written in Rom 5. “Sin was not ‘dead’ or dormant but ‘reigned’ from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:12-14).”<sup>663</sup> To say that it was not ἐλλογῆται (5:13) in the time between Adam and Moses is not the same as saying it was not “alive”

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<sup>659</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 451.

<sup>660</sup> Witherington, *Rhetoric*, 146.

<sup>661</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:351.

<sup>662</sup> Godet, *Romans*, 276.

<sup>663</sup> Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, 219.

and operating. Moo in Rom 7 must argue that “sin was ‘dead’ does not mean that it did not exist but that it was not as “active” or “powerful” before the law as after.”<sup>664</sup> As we heard Lyonnet contend, however, sin was indeed very much “alive” as is evidenced by the events leading up to the flood of Noah as well as those resulting in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. To be reigning and to lead to the destruction of not only cities but also the entire world is far from being dead. Sin cannot then “come to life again” at the time of the giving of the Law for it has been alive and reigning since the time of Adam.

Most of the evidence I have marshaled thus far in defense of the Adam interpretation is taken from Rom 7:9-11. However, Paul continues to employ the “I” until the end of the chapter. One of Middendorf’s objections to the Adam interpretation is that most scholars who favor it drop the impersonation after the opening paragraph. He writes: “Those scholars who support identifying the ‘I’ in verses 7-11 with Adam or Israel make too light of the connection between the two sections. In fact, this is one of the greatest weaknesses in proposing Adam or Israel as the referent in verses 7-11.”<sup>665</sup> Earlier I agreed with Kümmel that any interpretation of the “I” of this passage should show consistency. One should not jump from impersonation to impersonation as Origen did in his commentary. Although there may be development in the “I” from paragraph to paragraph, from past tense to present, the “I” must retain some consistency. We also saw in chapter 1 that Quintilian said that when using impersonation any climax should come near the end of the passage. In agreement with this we observed that Didymus argued that the προσωποποιία of Rom 7 does not conclude with the opening paragraph but rather continues from 7:7 to 7:24. Middendorf’s objection is valid. Those who drop the Adam

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<sup>664</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 437.

<sup>665</sup> Middendorf, *The ‘I’ in the Storm*, 171.

impersonation in the second paragraph do damage to the argument and should instead seek to maintain the impersonation to the end of the chapter as Didymus has done.

I have already suggested in fact some ways in which this may be accomplished. For example, I have postulated that the cry of the “I” for release (7:24) followed by a thanksgiving (7:25a) and yet a still divided “I” (7:25b) may be explained by the intervention of a different speaker in 7:25a as the “our Lord” might indicate. Accordingly, Adam would not need to have had specific knowledge of Jesus and his deliverance. Adam knows only of his own desperation, and nothing of the redemption known by Paul and the Roman Christians. However, I might note that my assertion that Rom 16:20 points back to Gen 3:15 might indicate that Paul did indeed believe that Adam looked forward to Christ and his defeat of Satan. In addition, I have also suggested that Rom 7:7-13 may reflect a past tense narration of Adam’s fall followed by a present tense description of the resulting state of Adam’s life following that fall.

Two things, however, need to be said regarding such an approach. First, scripture does not provide a detailed description of what Adam’s life was like after the Fall. We are told in Gen 5 that he had children and the age of his death but not much more in the way of biography is provided. Moreover, what non-canonical stories were available to Paul and how much he drew upon them is simply not known. However, according to Quintilian, writers could surmise what a character might say if placed in a given situation. Accordingly, Paul may then have imagined Adam’s life after the Fall, employing typical human struggles with sin to create a story that would resonate with his audience. If this is the case, the question then becomes whether or not the depiction of the “I” in Rom 7 in any way contradicts this picture of Adam. Paul states in Rom 5 that as a result of Adam’s

fall sin began to reign as a power over humanity. Adam would surely have been subject to this reign as well, so the struggles with sin in Rom 7 can be applied to Adam. Moreover, Adam had walked with God in the Garden and so would have been knowledgeable, at least to some extent, of God's will for his life. Although Adam is driven from the Garden, we still see God's care for Adam in clothing him (3:21). Eve also remarks that she has received a child from God (3:25). Thus, one can see that both Adam and Eve are still being blessed by God, and one can assume that they still wished to please him. It is, therefore, plausible that Paul intends to depict Adam as an unredeemed human being struggling against sin while seeking to please God and crying out in despair over his inability to do so.

At the same time, while I agree that interpreters should endeavor to maintain the Adam impersonation to the end of the chapter, I would also contend that Paul does not tell stories about OT characters merely in order to teach a history lesson. For example, we are told about Abraham in Rom 4 in order for Paul to make a point about the Roman Christians' own lives. Similarly, in Rom 7 Paul is telling the Adam story but it is primarily for the instruction of the Roman Christians. Theissen's observation that the past tense verbs speak more specifically to an individual while the present tense speaks of what is more typical leads to a similar conclusion. That is, Rom 7:7-13 speaks more specifically of Adam while Rom 7:14-25 speaks more broadly of those in Adam.

It should not be surprising then to see the Adam story begin to bleed over to language that is more applicable to the Romans before they became Christians. Paul is writing to those who know the Mosaic Law (7:1). He is arguing that the Law was a part of the old Adam epoch and that a commandment parallel to the last in the Decalogue had

originally been a tool in Adam's death. In a similar way (though not exactly!), the Mosaic Law had been a tool of death for the Romans. Before Christ, they were "dead in trespasses and sins" (see Eph 2:1) and under the condemnation of the Law. Moreover that Law could not deliver them from the power of sin any more than it was able to prevent Adam from sinning. Adam through the original command could not resist sin as an external force much less when sin indwelled him. The later Mosaic Law was not sufficient to overcome it either. Neither was the Roman belief in knowledge and self-control a sufficient deterrent. The Roman church therefore had to be released from the Law through participation in the death of Jesus Christ and be in-filled with the Holy Spirit in order to overcome sin.

### **Conclusion**

I have argued in this chapter that the various positions regarding the interpretation of the "I" all have problems; I readily acquiesce that the Adam solution does as well. However, I would also note that almost every interpreter admits that an Adamic background is at play in Rom 7, at least to some extent. Indeed, many conclude that only the character of Adam fits the full definitions of life and death required by the text. While it would have been fortuitous for interpreters if Paul had simply stated that he was impersonating Adam, we have seen that explicit references to Adam in scripture are rare. Readers normally are required to pick up on the verbal clues provided. I have endeavored to argue, both in this chapter and the previous one, that such clues are manifold. However, while I would argue that the Adam solution is clearly indicated and best fits the statements of Rom 7, I would also concur with Theissen and others that the statements in the present tense section are also meant to be more typical and speak of more than just

Adam. Furthermore, I would agree with Middendorf that Rom 7 does not speak to the average sinner in Adam, either Jew or Gentile, as Paul describes them in Rom 1-3.

Romans 7 is rather addressed to specific sinners who knew and delighted in the law and now, looking back, admit their own inability to follow it. This I would argue fits well with the believing Christians at Rome, Jews and Gentile god fearers, who look back upon their own failure to keep the Law and live righteous lives. Paul is thus not merely providing us a history lesson about Adam but rather is showing the Roman Christians that the law (primal or Mosaic) does not and can not provide a solution for humanity's struggle with sin. This comes only through Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Law only brings death and further sin. The Law is part of the old Adam epoch where sin and death reign, and believers must be released from it in order to enjoy a full life of victory over sin.

## CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSIONS

In chapter one of this dissertation we examined the history of interpretation for Romans 7. We found that, while the later Augustinian belief that the “I” is truly autobiographical and refers to Paul himself has been the prevailing position of the church for most of the two thousand years since the apostle first wrote this letter, this position has been greatly called into question due to the work of Kümmel in the early part of the twentieth century. Moreover, this autobiographical position was also rejected by the earliest extant commentary we have on Romans, that by Origen, since, as Kümmel has also more recently fully expostulated, the statements do not coincide with other NT descriptions about Paul’s life. Efforts are still made today to maintain the Augustinian view but even Middendorf acquiesces that the statements of Rom 7 are quite distinct from any other canonical picture of the apostle.

As a result of this discrepancy, scholars have proposed other solutions for the “I.” For example, Kümmel suggests that the “I” is a rhetorical device in which Paul speaks of all those who are “in Adam” and who are under the power of the Adamic nature. However, as Middendorf demonstrates, the statements in Rom 7 do not fit Pauline descriptions of the typical sinner. For example, the sinners in Rom 1, unlike the “I” in Rom 7, disdain the law rather than try to keep it. And, while the sinners of Rom 2 admire and even teach the law, they, unlike the “I” of Rom 7, are rather complacent about the keeping of the law. Moreover, if the “I” speaks of “every man,” as Kümmel suggests, then this “I” must in some measure also include Paul himself, for as the apostle states in Rom 5, Adam’s sin has affected everyone without exception.



Moo, following Chrysostom, argues that the “I” must refer to a narrower group of those who are “in Adam.” Given the emphasis on the law in Rom 7 and the fact that the passage is addressed to “those who know the law,” Moo contends that this narrower group is Israel. However, I maintain that Moo’s solution fails to recognize the universal nature of Romans. That is, Paul recognizes two categories when it comes to the history of salvation, those in Adam and those in Christ. Moreover, those in Adam are further defined as those “under the law” while those in Christ are defined as those “under grace” (6:14). Paul thus lumps Jews and Gentiles together in Rom 5-8 as either “in Adam” and “under the law” or “in Christ” and “under grace.” Indeed, as I have demonstrated, the entire epistle intends to unify Jews and Gentiles together: they are all sinners; they all find salvation in only one source, Jesus Christ; they are all part of a people united together into one tree; and they must work together as part of one church. Moo’s proposal unfortunately fails to give due consideration to this emphasis and separates Jews off in Rom 7 as alone having issues with the sin nature.

In light of this, I proposed that the best solution for the identity of the “I” is the interpretation that goes back to the earliest Greek Fathers, that is, that the “I” is Paul’s impersonation of the man who instituted the sin problem in the first place, Adam. Subsequently, I endeavored to substantiate this in a number of ways. First, to reiterate this important point, the Adam interpretation was a common view among the writers of the early church. Even the early Augustine referred to Paul’s impersonation of Adam in Rom 7. Furthermore, nearly every expositor who has dealt with Rom 7 has seen some connection with Adam as they have interpreted Rom 7:9-11. If such is the case, then consistency would argue that the “I” of Rom 7:9-11, which as Käsemann argues fits

Adam and Adam alone, should in some way relate to Adam throughout the passage. In this regard Didymus proposes that the προσωποποιία, or impersonation, extends from 7:7 all the way to 7:24. Moreover, according to ancient rhetorical convention, in order for impersonation to be effective, rhetors should draw the impersonation to a climax near the conclusion of the passage and this is just what Paul does when he places the cry of despair in 7:24.

In addition to defending my position on the basis of textual evidence, I have also attempted to show that the Adam story had gained a prominent place in the thinking of the Jews by the time of Paul's writing. Although the creation story itself is ubiquitous in the OT, a focus on the story of the Fall itself, much like the doctrine of the resurrection, took time to develop in Judaism. However, by the time of the NT, or a short time later depending on one's view regarding the dating of the *Life of Adam and Eve*, entire books were being written about Adam and the Fall. Jewish writers were seeking a reason for their suffering and were seeking an explanation for the events of the Babylonian exile, the Roman occupation and the subsequent fall of Jerusalem. This explanation usually centered in the recognition of their own sinfulness which in turn was in some way linked back to the Fall. Moreover, Jews not only sought a reason for their present plight but also hope for a new day. Such hope was expressed as a return to the world as it existed before Adam's sin. Thus, there was a great interest in writing about the glory which Adam lost and the restoration of that glory in the future. As I have argued, this loss of glory and its restoration is a major emphasis in Romans.

The Adam narrative was not only of interest to Jewish writers of the Second Temple period, but also played a significant role in Christian circles, as the examination

of various passages in the NT amply demonstrates. Thus, in the fourth chapter I provided examples of the employment of the Adam story in every major portion of the NT. Moreover, the passage in Acts 17 where Luke reports Paul's own words to the Athenians, has strong parallels with Rom 1 which I argued has strong allusions to the Adam narrative. Furthermore, Paul's speech in Acts immediately precedes his journey to Corinth and I suggested as a result that this event may have precipitated the apostle's initial interest in the Adam story. We certainly saw that Paul's focus on Adam in the Corinthian epistles was extensive and that he employed the account in lengthy passages in those letters.

The Roman letter which was written at approximately the same time as those to the Corinthians explicitly mentions the name Adam only two times (Rom 5:14). However, I noted that in a number of other passages, both in the Pauline corpus and in the NT as a whole, the story of Adam is employed without direct reference to his name. This, I argued, suggests that the same may be true of Romans. In a chapter like Rom 1 which refers to creation, "the lie" (vs. 25), and the extensive plunge of humanity into sin, one cannot help but think of the original scene in the Garden. This is especially true when Paul clearly states later in Rom 5:12 that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men." Moreover, that the theme of glory which predominates in Romans is tied to Adam's original loss of glory is clearly shown by the fact that Rom 8 contextualizes the return of that glory as an end of the groaning of creation which occurred as a result of the Fall. In Rom 1 Paul claims that humanity rejected the revelation of God which was given through creation and as a result exchanged the glory of God for the worship of corruptible images and plunged into sin.

Now, in this same creation context, that glory is to be restored. This led to the suggestion that numerous other texts in Romans also employed the Adam background and that it was the backdrop for Rom 7 as well.

This emphasis on the Adam story is further evidenced by a structural analysis of the epistle. We noted that not only are Adam and Christ specifically contrasted in Rom 5:12-21, but that this contrast extended throughout much of Rom 1-11 as well. Aletti argues that *synkrisis* is the leading structural motif of Rom 5-8 and Feuillet contends that three contrasts heavily flavor the first eight chapters of the writing. Indeed, I argued that the contrast between the epoch of Adam and the epoch of Christ serves to explain much of the epistle. In the first three chapters Paul writes that all have sinned beginning with Adam and extending to all of humanity. The further result of the Fall was that sin and death became ruling powers over the entire race. Paul surprisingly also places law under this old dominion since it cannot break sin's power but rather is actually employed as a tool of sin to bring about death and incite further disobedience. Christ, however, came in the likeness of man and broke this stronghold, freeing humanity from its enslavement and enabling people through the power of the Holy Spirit to live righteous lives.

In addition, I argued that these contrasts not only serve to structure much of the epistle but that *synkrisis* is to be recognized as a key factor in understanding Rom 7. A number of scholars recognize that Rom 7:5-6 is a general statement which serves to set up the more detailed description that follows. Romans 7:6 specifically states that "we have been released from the Law" in order that we may now serve in the "newness of the Spirit" in contrast with the "oldness of the letter." Thus, Rom 7:7-25 specifically deals with trying to serve God through the letter of the Law and the despair which results,

while Rom 8 deals with the victorious life over sin provided the Christian who follows in the Spirit's leading.

While this structural examination clearly indicates that Rom 7:7-25 speaks of the old epoch and thus of those who are in Adam, a more detailed examination of the passage itself was required in order to demonstrate that the "I" there first speaks of Adam before it also speaks to the Roman Christians who had formerly experienced Adam's enslavement under the Law. The strongest indicator that Adam is clearly in Paul's mind is the fact that Paul speaks of someone who was "alive apart from the Law." This could be true of only one individual in the full spiritual sense that the term "alive" here requires. Coupling this with the other images in the immediate context (deception, good and evil, death, knowledge), which most scholars recognize as having at least some connection to the Adam story, strongly supports the conclusion that Paul is indeed impersonating Adam.

However, this conclusion also raises some issues that require explanation. For example, how did Adam possess the law when the Bible tells us that it was instituted through Moses at Mount Sinai? In response, I examined Jewish traditions such as that represented in *Jubilees* which trace the law back to Adam's own time. Furthermore, I noted that Paul himself indicates in Rom 5 that Adam sinned against law just as those after Moses did. This is not to say that Paul agreed with *Jubilees* in seeing the Law passed down from Adam through the patriarchs. He indeed speaks in Rom 5:13 of a time between Adam and Moses when humanity did not possess law. However, he does indicate by means of the word "transgression" that Adam himself did have the law in some sense. I thus examined Jewish tradition again to see what this law might have been

and saw numerous indications in Jewish writers prior to Paul that suggest that the law which sums up all others is the prohibition against coveting, the specific command Paul cites in Rom 7. We also heard various writers indicate that Eve's  $\text{תַּמְתֵּן}$  in Gen 3:6 should be seen as this covetous desire prohibited by the tenth commandment.

In response to the objection that Adam's temptation was an external one, while Paul speaks of "sin which dwells in me" (7:17), I contended that this seeming discrepancy could be explained by the difference in tenses in Rom 7:7-13 and 7:14-25. I suggested that the earlier past tense verbs refer to the actual event of the Fall where sin, or the serpent of Gen 3, confronted Adam from without, while the present tense verbs of the latter section describe Adam's state as a result of the Fall, that is, he experienced the indwelling of sin like the rest of humanity after him.

This retention of the impersonation all the way to the end of the "I" passage both reflects the earlier interpretation of Didymus as well as responds to those who object that Adam proponents fail to be consistent in their interpretation of the "I." While this is true, however, I did note that Paul employs OT stories not just for their historical value but rather to directly speak to his audience. Thus, the faith of Abraham in Rom 4 is meant to not only speak of Abraham's own justification but also point to the manner of how all humanity is to be justified before God. Similarly, Rom 7:7-25 is more than Paul's impersonation of Adam. Rather, by means of this technique, Paul speaks to the Roman church in order to emphasize for them the impossibility of living a righteous life merely by one's own efforts in following the Law.

This last conclusion is perhaps the most significant with regard to the interpretation of Rom 7. Fortunately, it is also one with which most scholars agree, a

rarity in a passage which remains otherwise a point of strong contention. Thus, proponents of each of the four views of the “I” can agree that, for Paul, any attempt at living righteously before God merely through one’s own efforts to follow the letter of the law will only lead to failure and despair. It is only through God’s Spirit that believers are enabled to live righteous lives.

Moreover, it matters little whether one follows Kümmel’s “every man” interpretation or the Adam solution which I have defended. Again, the point ultimately is the same. That is, Paul is writing about the old epoch and the problem of the Adamic nature regardless of whether or not he intentionally alludes to Adam.

I have also through this study come to be more accepting of Moo’s position which contends that the text speaks to the specific failure of Israel in relation to the Mosaic Law at Sinai. Not that I believe that this is the primary backdrop which Paul employs, but I have noted on numerous occasions throughout Romans and scripture as a whole that the events of creation are tied very closely with the events of Israel’s own history. For example, as Keesmaat has shown in Rom 8, Paul’s comments are strongly connected to the events of the exodus, but the passage ultimately has its backdrop in the story of Adam. In the same way the statements of Rom 1 have a secondary background in the making of the golden calf even though Paul begins his argument with the events of creation. The story of creation and the story of the exodus are thus frequently intertwined and I would concede that this may be occurring in Rom 7 as well.

Furthermore, I have admitted that Rom 7 must also in some way include Paul himself. While I would agree with Kümmel that most of the statements in this chapter do not fit with Paul’s life as described elsewhere in his own writings and in the NT as a

whole, Paul's own remarks in Rom 5 indicate that Adam's Fall affected every single individual including the blameless Pharisee of Phil 3. In some ways then that Pharisee was every bit as enslaved to the sin nature as the rest of fallen humanity. Thus, even the strictest adherent of the Law could not fully fulfill its demands and like the rest of humanity was overcome by sin.

However, while searching for points of agreement, I finally had to part company with interpreters who view Rom 7 as in any way related to the Christian Paul or any other Christian. I have clearly demonstrated that Rom 5-8 deals with two contrasting epochs, that of Adam and that of Christ. Furthermore, I have shown that the description of the "I" in Rom 7:7-25 falls under that earlier epoch and refers to the individual who is enslaved to sin and trying to live by the letter of the law and not the Spirit. In addition, the structural analysis demonstrates that Paul clearly distinguishes between these epochs in Rom 7 and 8. This is not to say that Christians already fully enjoy the eschatological benefits which Christ has inaugurated. Paul indicates that believers are still tempted to sin and still struggle with the flesh in Rom 8. However, the division between the earlier chapter and the later one is structurally clear. Thus, the Christian is freed from the dominion of sin and need no longer fulfill the lusts of the flesh as does the individual of Rom 7.

In chapter two I examined the work of Richard Hays who proposed seven criteria to determine whether or not a passage was actually alluding to an earlier text. As I conclude this dissertation, I would again turn back to these criteria in order to analyze whether or not the Adam story I propose for Rom 7 fits his criteria. Hays, first of all, says one should ask if the source of the echo was available to the author and/or the audience. I



have determined through my examination of Jewish literature, the NT as a whole, and especially Paul's letters that the Adam story is a narrative that was both well known and becoming increasingly important in Paul's time. Moreover, Paul employs the story a great deal, especially in the Corinthian epistles written at approximately the same time as Romans.

Hays' second criterion considers the congruence of the passage with the original text. This involves the length of the quotation as well as unusual words or ideas. This cuts both ways with respect to Rom 7. First, Paul uses the Greek word ἑξαπατάω of Rom 7:11 to speak of the deception of Eve in the Garden in both 2 Cor 11:3 and 1 Tim 2:14, thus mitigating the difference with Gen 3:13 (LXX) where the uncompounded form is employed. However, he also uses the same word in other contexts which do not involve the Adam story, and he specifically says that Adam was not deceived in 1 Tim 2. Aside from this specific term, there are also other ideas present in Rom 7 which appear to allude to the Genesis story such as the emphasis on knowledge and the notion of death coming through sin. On the other hand, Paul's quotation of the specific command prohibiting coveting most closely parallels the commandment given at Sinai.

Criterion three asks if the writer uses the story elsewhere. This has been shown to be the case and is most clearly demonstrated in the immediately preceding passage in Rom 5 but is true in quite a number of other places as well.

Hays' requirement four asks if the allusion harmonizes well with the argument of the passage. I have suggested that it does. Indeed, based on Rom 5 there could be no character better suited to depict the problem of indwelling sin than the individual, Adam, who first introduced sin to the human race. This is true despite the objection that sin was

external to Adam while Rom 7:17 speaks of the “sin which dwells in me.” This supposed discrepancy vanishes when one realizes that the past tense passage (7:7-13) describe the actual Fall where sin in the guise of the serpent was external to Adam, while the present tense passage (7:14-25) portrays Adam’s state after the Fall where sin now dwells within him.

Stowers, predicating his work on that of Levison, has objected to an Adamic background based on criterion five, that Paul could not have said things about Adam which were only devised by later church theologians. However, while Levison does note that Judaism held various views regarding the effects of the Fall and that the tie between Adam’s sin and human depravity is rather late, he, at the same time, does not reject the idea that Adam is the background for much of what Paul writes. In fact, he claims, contra Stowers, that the Adam narrative is the backdrop for Rom 1. In Rom 5 Paul argues that Adam has introduced sin and death as powers domineering over humanity as a result of Adam’s disobedience. Nothing in Rom 7 goes beyond this.

Criterion six of Hays is certainly fulfilled by the fact that other interpreters have seen the Adam story as the backdrop to Rom 7. As we have noted, this interpretation is articulated in the earliest extant commentary of Origen, is also found in many of the Greek Fathers, and continues to be defended by scholars today.

Finally, Hays asks if such an echo is satisfying. I argued above that no one depicts the Adamic nature better than Adam himself. Furthermore, I endeavored to show that Romans is structured heavily upon the depiction of two epochs introduced by the representative heads of Adam and Christ. This repeated *synkrisis* is most evident in Rom

5-8, and Rom 7:6 is best interpreted as a generalization which introduces the particular descriptions of these two opposing epochs in Rom 7:7-25 and Rom 8.

In sum, I contend that the proposed allusion to the Adam story in Rom 7 meets all seven criteria that Hays has laid down with only item two evidencing both positive and negative points. Does this mean that the allusion is clear and that there remains no further need to contend for its acceptance? Obviously not. If that were so, there would have been no reason for all the ink that has been spilled down through the centuries. However, it is my hope that in laying out all the evidence together for the Adamic backdrop, I have provided a more cohesive argument for its endorsement. Furthermore, as most commentators readily admit, the Adam narrative fits many of Paul's statements about the "I" extremely well. Indeed, only Adam can truly be identified as being spiritually alive without the law. The above solution accepts this identification, conforms best to all the evidence laid out, and further suggests a means whereby this impersonation can be maintained throughout the passage while still allowing Paul to address an important topic for the Roman church, that is, only the Spirit, not the Law, provides victory over sin.

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