

THE LAST ADAM AS THE “LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT” REVISITED:
A POSSIBLE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND
OF ONE OF PAUL’S MOST PERPLEXING PHRASES

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In 1 Cor 15:45b Paul declares, “So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”¹ Christ becoming a “life-giving Spirit” surprises the reader.² We expect the phrase “living Spirit,” paralleling the first Adam “becoming a living being.” Conzelmann contends, “This exegesis cannot be derived from the Old Testament text.”³ Fee likewise claims that 15:45b “is neither present nor inferred in the Genesis text.”⁴ From whence does Paul derive his hermeneutic? This article explores the notion that the Genesis narrative, specifically Gen 5:3, has indeed shaped Paul’s thinking with regard to Christ becoming a “life-giving Spirit.” Adam’s impartation of his image to Seth typologically parallels the last Adam’s impartation of his image to believers.

Scholars have generally placed Paul’s Adamic hermeneutic in either a Gnostic or a broadly Jewish stream of thought. The Gnostic background, though initially strong, has severely waned in recent years, whereas the Philonic backdrop ebbs and flows.⁵ Others see Paul developing his framework against the

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¹ Unless otherwise noted, all references are taken from NASB.

² I am grateful for G. K. Beale’s comments and suggestions throughout this article. This article is largely dependent on my dissertation, “Revealing the ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ: The Use of *Mystery* in Daniel and Early Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians” (Ph.D. diss., Wheaton College, 2008; forthcoming in *ZNW*).

³ Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 284.

⁴ Gordon Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 788. Cf. Mehrdad Fatehi, *The Spirit’s Relation to the Risen Lord in Paul* (WUNT 128; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 284, who claims that this expression has “*no conceptual parallel in Judaism at all*” (italics original).

⁵ For scholars who see Paul confronting a Philonic view of Adam, see, e.g., Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKKNT 7/1–4; Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1991), 4:303; Anthony Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1284; Gerhard Sellin, *Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung von 1 Korinther 15* (FRLANT 138; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and Its Relation to Gnosticism* (SBLDS 12; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1973), 15–26; Richard Horsley, “Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions of Spiritual Status among the Corinthians,” *HTR* 69 (1976): 269–88. The Corinthians, as these writers argue, held a vertical view of the “spiritual” body over against a “natural” body, wherein Paul counters these beliefs with

background of the OT and early Judaism.⁶ In this respect, some argue that Paul's Adamic Christology had its seeds in the Damascus road encounter with Christ,⁷ and that Paul further developed this Christology in the light of the OT and early Jewish tradition. The emphasis on the Jewish background is probably correct, but nobody has been able to explain convincingly why Paul uses the expression "life-giving Spirit" in its wider context.

an eschatological and horizontal view of redemption. Stephen J. Hultgren astutely notes that this view merely explains the Corinthian perspective and not primarily Paul's own Adam Christology: "At most it might explain the mind-set against which Paul reacts. To find the origin of Paul's own thought we must search elsewhere" ("The Origin of Paul's Doctrine of the Two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15.45-49," *JST* 25 [2003]: 343-70; quote appears on p. 344; see also Hultgren's extensive criticisms concerning a Philonic and general Hellenistic-Jewish background on pp. 344-57).

The Philonic view along with Gnosticism (see W. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971], 169-70; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* [2 vols.; trans. Kendrick Grobel; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955], 1:174) is unable to explain Paul's Adamic framework, for they both primarily depend on later reconstructions (see the critique of Egon Brandenburger, *Adam und Christus* [WMANT; Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1962] by A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Adam and Christ: An Investigation into the Background of 1 Corinthians XV and Romans V 12-21" [Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1970], 177-209; and Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* [WUNT 4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981], 159-92). As Albert Schweitzer so aptly puts it, "The Second Adam is, in Paul, an eschatological not a mythical conception" (*The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* [trans. W. Montgomery; London: A. & C. Black, 1931], 167). Moreover, instead of trying to perceive the opponents' view, especially in 1 Cor 15:35-57, perhaps the language of "natural" and "spiritual" is based not on a Hellenistic-Jewish debate, but on the Genesis narrative itself (cf. Hultgren, "Origin of Paul's Doctrine," 357; Jeffrey R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15: A Study in Metaphysics, Rhetoric, and Resurrection* [HUT 42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000], 112; note the overwhelming allusions to the Genesis narrative in 1 Cor 15). But even if these terms, viz., "natural" and "spiritual," did not originate from the Genesis narrative, they were at least used similarly throughout early Christianity (e.g., Gal 6:1; Jas 3:15). Note a very similar text in Jude 19: "These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit [ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες]." The juxtaposition of ψυχικοί and πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες is nearly identical to Paul's contrasting of ψυχικός and πνευματικός.

⁶ Some think that Paul's understanding of the two Adams depends upon rabbinic thought (e.g., Hultgren, "Origin of Paul's Doctrine," 359-66; Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966], 86-89). But the main problem with this view is simply the late date of the rabbinic texts (cf. W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* [4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980], 45-46).

⁷ Seyoon Kim convincingly demonstrates how Paul's Adamic framework is dependent on the Damascus Christophany (*Origin*, 193-268; cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 793; Andrew Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 46-50). Since Paul saw Christ as the image of God and the Wisdom of God, he then worked backward, using the OT and later Jewish developments, and determined that Christ is indeed the last Adam who has come to restore Israel and bring about the new creation. Kim's reconstructions are, it seems, plausible in that they adequately account for the kernel of Paul's gospel. However, although Hultgren attempts to explain Paul's use of Gen 2:7 against the backdrop of Kim's reconstruction of Paul and rabbinic exegesis, I still do not think that he can adequately account for the peculiar language of 15:45b ("the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit"). Hultgren himself even says, "This [Damascus road] experience alone cannot explain Paul's doctrine of the two Adams, because Paul derives the doctrine *exegetically* from Gen 2.7" ("Origin of Paul's Doctrine," 369-70; emphasis original).

I. *Genesis 2:7 in 1 Corinthians 15:45*

First Corinthians 15:45 can be easily arranged and compared to Gen 2:7 as follows:

45a	ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος Ἀδάμ	εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν
45b	[ἐγένετο] ὁ ἔσχατος	Ἀδάμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν
Gen 2:7 (LXX)	ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος	εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν

Verse 45a is obviously a quotation from Gen 2:7⁸ but, surprisingly, 45b appears syntactically identical to 45a. Commentators have offered various suggestions as to the significance of 45b and its relationship to 45a (see below); however, despite these attempts, no one, as far as I am aware, has investigated the use of Gen 2:7 and its immediate context in much detail and related it to 45b.

1. *Brief Old Testament Context of Genesis 2:7*

Attempting to evaluate any quotation in the book of Genesis, or for that matter, Gen 1–3, is quite daunting. Divergent views on every imaginable option accost the reader, demanding rigorous investigation. Fortunately, since we are only concerned with the final form of the Pentateuch, the form that Paul was deeply familiar with, we will begin with the narrative of Gen 1–3.

Chapter 1 begins with the creation of the cosmos and climaxes with the creation of man on the sixth day in 1:26–28. This first creation account primarily describes the purpose of the creation of Adam and Eve, namely, that they are to “subdue” and “rule” over all things (cf. 1:22). Just as God rules over the entire cosmos, so mankind, created in the “image” of God, is to rule over the earth and its inhabitants.⁹ Furthermore, immediately after God emphatically creates “man in His own image” (1:27),¹⁰ Adam and Eve are charged with the mandate

⁸ The addition of πρῶτος in 45a is probably for the sake of Paul’s overall argument (vv. 46–47) and does not represent another textual tradition (so C. D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture* [SNTMS 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 208). The addition of Ἀδάμ in 45a is, however, a bit more complex, since two LXX mss., viz., Theodotion and Symmachus, read, καὶ ἔπλασεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ἀδάμ χεῖρ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀδαμᾶ καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τοὺς μυκτῆρας αὐτοῦ ἀναπνοὴν ζωῆς καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν. The inclusion of Ἀδάμ in this reading is probably to reinforce the notion that the individual Adam was from the “ground,” hence the addition of ἀδαμᾶ in 2:7a. Therefore, it is possible that Paul drew from a similar textual tradition, which already included the name Ἀδάμ. However, the addition of Ἀδάμ in 1 Cor 15:45a may also be a Pauline creation because of the immediate context (15:22). In the end, whether or not Ἀδάμ is part of the original quotation makes little interpretative difference.

⁹ Many commentators argue that “image” in Gen 1 corresponds to the function of images in the ANE, whereby the deity is functionally represented by the idol or image. Cf. John Walton, *Genesis* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 130–31; H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (trans. M. Kohl; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 160; Bernard F. Batto, “The Divine Sovereign: The Image of God in the Priestly Creation Account,” in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts* (ed. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 143–86; D. J. A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” *TynBul* 19 (1968): 53–103.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note the repetition of image and its relationship to “ruling” and “multiplying” in 1:26–28. In 1:26, God creates Adam and Eve in his image and then immediately he commands them (note the jussive וַיִּרְבוּ) to “rule” over the earth. Then in 1:27 God “created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them,” which immediately precedes the command to

to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the Earth” (1:28). Apparently the couple, created in God’s image, was commissioned to produce a family of image bearers. They too were to pass on God’s image to their progeny.

In ch. 2 we are provided more information concerning the creation of Adam:

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. . . . Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. (2:7-8, 15)

In 1:26-27 Adam and Eve, made in the image of God, are to rule over the created order and fill it with divine image bearers through their progeny. Here in 2:7 Adam receives the “breath of life.” In the first creation account, Adam is created in the image and likeness of God, whereas in the second account Adam receives the “breath of life.”¹¹ According to the narrative, therefore, receiving the “breath of life” is perhaps parallel in some way to being created in the image of God;¹² particularly the notion of being created from the “dust” may

“multiply” in 1:28. In other words, “image” is directly related to “ruling” and “multiplying.” But in what way is it related? In Gen 1:26-28, God creates Adam and Eve in his image primarily to accomplish a twofold task: “rule” and “multiply.” Just as God rules over the cosmos, so Adam and Eve are to rule over the earth. Furthermore, just as God created Adam and Eve in his image, so they are to create others in their image, an activity that ultimately reflects the image of God. Multiplying may therefore be a constitutive part of being in the image of God.

¹¹ It is common to view “man” in 1:26-28 and 2:7 as distinct from 5:3. Cf. Richard S. Hess, “Splitting the Adam: The Usage of Genesis I–V,” in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 41; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 1-15. Typically, when אָדָם appears without the article, it is translated “Adam.” But if the noun is articular (אָדָם־הַ), then the general noun “mankind” is normally used. Perhaps the root cause of this confusion is the so-called “J” and “P” traditions. Sections 1:1–2:4a and 5:1-28 are the “P” document and 2:4b–4:26 is “J.” The two documents purportedly reflect two creation accounts. But in 5:1 the P tradition uses the proper name “Adam,” whereas in 1:26-27 the generic “mankind” is used (see Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 160, for a discussion of this higher-critical problem). Though in 2:7 “man” occurs, in the remainder of the narrative in 2–3 (esp. 3:17-21) “Adam” and “Eve” are certainly names. Therefore, though “man” (אָדָם) occurs in 1:26-28 and 2:7, in the light of 5:1 and 3:17-21, it is appropriate for us to view these accounts as the creation of Adam and Eve.

¹² This notion is also found in “The Instruction for King Meri-ka-re”: “He [Re] made the breath of life (for) their nostrils. They who have issued from his body are his images” (trans. John A. Wilson [*ANET*, 417]). Many commentators even note the connection between receiving the “breath of life” and being created in the image of God (cf. James K. Hoffmeier, “Some Thoughts on Genesis 1 and 2 and Egyptian Cosmology,” *JANESCU* 15 [1983]: 47; Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 158-59; Walter Wifall, “The Breath of His Nostrils: Gen 2:7b,” *CBQ* 36 [1974]: 238-39). Another text describes the Egyptian deity Amon giving Amen-hotep III divine breath: “My beloved son, receive my likeness in this nose” (Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], 161).

Furthermore, not only does the pharaoh receive “divine breath”; he, in turn, issues “breath” to others. For example, Thut-mose III is seen imparting “breath of life” to his princes in the “Scenes of Asiatic Commerce in Theban Tombs”: “Giving praise to the Lord of the Two Lands, kissing the ground to the good god by the princes of every land, . . . seeking that there be given them the breath

be likened unto kingship.¹³ In addition, God appoints Adam to “cultivate” and “keep” the garden (2:15), a reference to the cultic work of laboring within the garden that possibly should be paired with “subdue” and “rule” in 1:28.¹⁴

In 5:1-2, the creation account is rehearsed, which is strikingly similar to 1:26-28:

5:1-2	1:26-28a
<p>This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when <u>God created man</u>, He made him in the <u>likeness of God</u>. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when <u>they were created</u>.</p>	<p>Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to <u>Our likeness</u>”; . . . <u>God created man in His own image</u>, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <u>God blessed them</u>.</p>

The rehearsing of the creation account at this point in the narrative is telling. This is the second genealogy thus far. Genesis 4:17-26 comprises the first, but, unlike that genealogical section, this is prefaced with a review of 1:26-28. Therefore, perhaps 5:1-32 is viewed, according to the Genesis narrative, as the beginning fulfillment or continuation of the 1:26-28 mandate and blessing;¹⁵ juxtaposed with the genealogical section of blessing is the ungodly line in 4:17-26.¹⁶

of life” (trans. John A. Wilson [*ANET*, 249]). Similarly, we find the same event under Thut-mose IV: “Presenting the tribute of Retenu and the produce of the northern countries . . . by the princes of all foreign countries, when they come to make supplication to the good god and to beg breath for their nostrils” (*ANET*, 249). One Egyptian inscription taken from Amen-hotep III’s temple mentions the pharaoh being in the image of the deity and imparting the “breath of life” to others: “Words spoken by Amon-Re, King of the Gods: —My son, of my body, my beloved, Neb-maat-Re, my living image, whom my body created, . . . I make the countries of the ends of Asia come to thee, bearing all their tribute upon their backs. They themselves present to thee their children, seeking that thou mightest give to them the breath of life” (“From Amen-hotep III’s Building Inscription,” trans. John A. Wilson [*ANET*, 376]). These pharaohs, who have received the “breath of life,” are certainly viewed as imparting “breath of life” to foreigners and others, perhaps in the same way they received breath from the deity. Whether or not, or to what degree, Paul may have been aware of such a background, these texts reinforce the “image of God”/divine breath parallelism in Gen 1–2, with which, as we will argue below, Paul seems to reflect some acquaintance.

¹³ Walter Brueggemann, “From Dust to Kingship,” *ZAW* 84 (1972): 1-18, contends that the motif of elevation from “dust” stems from a well-known royal tradition (cf. 1 Sam 2:6-8; 1 Kgs 16:2-3; Ps 113:7). He claims, “Adam, in Gen 2, is really being crowned king over the garden with all the power and authority which it implies” (12). If this is the case, which appears likely, then Adam created in God’s image to rule over the earth in 1:26-28 is very similar to God elevating him to kingship in 2:7.

¹⁴ Cf. J. Cohen, “*Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*” (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 18.

¹⁵ Cf. Howard N. Wallace, “The Toledot of Adam,” in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 41; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 23-24.

¹⁶ The importance of the blessed line through Seth’s descendants is rehearsed in the OT. For example, in Gen 4:26 we readily detect a continuation of a godly seed: “To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. *Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord.*” The same can be said for 1 Chr 1:1: “Adam, Seth, Enosh” (cf. Luke 3:38).

Genesis 5:3 literally reads: “he begot (a son) in his likeness, according to his image” (ויולד בדמותו כצלמו). Some translations unfortunately miss this emphasis. The thrust of 5:3 is not Adam “becoming a father”¹⁷ but the impartation of his image to Seth.¹⁸ The verb יולד is uniquely modified by two words—בדמותו and כצלמו.¹⁹ This is the only occurrence in the HB where יולד is paired with either of these terms. In addition, the verb uniquely occurs without an object,²⁰ further highlighting the manner in which Adam begot Seth. As Hamilton suggests, Adam is doing to Seth what God has done to him: “The reference to Gen. 1 at the start of this chapter [ch. 5] permits a contrast between a divine creative act and human creative acts. In a sense, Adam and his posterity are doing what God did.”²¹ In other words, just as God imparted his image to Adam, so also Adam imparts his image to Seth. The language of “likeness” and “image” in 5:3 immediately recalls 1:26a (“Let Us make man in *Our image, according to Our likeness* [בצלמנו כדמותנו]”), further suggesting this correspondence.

If this is the case, Adam’s unique image and likeness is passed to his son Seth. While most believe that Adam did indeed pass on the divine image to Seth,²² some claim that Adam simply passed on his physical appearance to Seth.²³ Several factors militate against this latter position.²⁴ (1) If Adam were simply passing

¹⁷ For example, NASB translates Gen 5:3b as “he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” (cf. NRSV, ESV).

¹⁸ NIV: “he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth” (cf. ESV, NET, JPS, NJB, ASV).

¹⁹ The prepositions prefixed to both of these key nouns could be synonymous in meaning when used with these nouns, since they are reversed in 1:26 (בצלמנו כדמותנו). The LXX confirms this in both instances when it uses the preposition κατά, describing the manner in which God created man. In 1:26 we read, ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν. Similarly, 5:3 says, καὶ ἐγέννησεν κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτοῦ. See the careful discussion of these prepositions in W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (CHANE 15; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 95-115.

²⁰ Not surprisingly, the editors of the MT want to insert בן. The verb יולד almost always has an object, especially in genealogies (e.g., Gen 4:17, 18; 5:4, 6-10; 10:1, 8, 13, 15, 21).

²¹ Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 255. Garr agrees: “Just as God’s דמות is intimately involved in the birth of Adam/humanity, Adam’s is intimately involved in the birth of Seth . . . *ad infinitum*. . . . God and Adam each create אדם in a manner that is appropriate to their nature. God ‘creates’ the human race [Gen 5:1-2]; Adam ‘fathers’ a son [Gen 5:3]; and, afterwards, ‘likeness’ is a mechanical, genealogical, and self-perpetuating inheritance” (*In His Own Image and Likeness*, 127); cf. George W. Coats, *Genesis* (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 71.

²² S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (15th ed.; London: Methuen & Co., 1948), 76; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (rev. ed.; trans. John H. Marks; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 70; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (IBC; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 68; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: SPCK, 1984), 360-61; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987), 127.

²³ E.g., Jeffrey H. Tigay, “‘He Begot a Son in His Likeness after His Image’ (Genesis 5:3),” in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (ed. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, and Jeffrey H. Tigay; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 139-47; Clines, “Image of God,” 100. See also *Targ. Ps-ḥ, Targ. Onq.*, and *Targ. Neo* on Gen 5:3.

²⁴ For further argumentation that Adam did not merely pass on his human appearance, see Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 117-76.

on his human appearance to Seth, why do we not see the image language in the previous genealogy (4:16-24)?²⁵ The reason why this language appears in the second genealogy stems from the emphasis on God's blessing upon those particular descendants. (2) Adam's creative act parallels God's act in creation in 1:26-28. God did not pass on a physical representation of himself to Adam but instead made Adam *as* a representative.²⁶ (3) Related to the first point, Gen 5:1-32 is intended to be read in light of 1:26-28 as a continuation or fulfillment, thereby implying that Adam's descendants have begun to "rule" and "subdue" the earth and not merely reflect Adam's physical appearance. Therefore, if Adam's impartation of the divine image to Seth is more than simply a human appearance, Adam appears to be begetting a blessed line that will remain faithful to God, albeit imperfectly as that may be (e.g., Noah). After a detailed analysis of "image" and "likeness" in 1:26-28 and 5:3, Garr concludes,

The early Priestly tradition presents a consistent picture of human "likeness" and "image." An ever-narrowing branch of male descendants from Seth shares the (cap-)ability to reproduce, proliferate, and maintain an ever-lasting human genealogy. They are depicted as co-creators of the world. The same branch also holds royal power to rule the world's creatures, control the land, and regulate human behavior by administering justice.²⁷

Therefore, in 1:26-28 Adam and Eve are created in the image of God and commanded to build a community of image bearers that will eventually rule and subdue the created order. God, in 2:7, "breathes" into Adam the "breath of life." The act of God issuing forth the "breath of life" (2:7), as we have seen, parallels being created in the image of God (1:27-28). Though the fall obviously hampers and brings serious dilemmas to humanity's mandate, Adam and Eve begin to fulfill Gen 1:28 and continue to produce other legitimate image bearers, albeit imperfectly. God's blessing does not flow through the line of Cain (4:1-24) but Seth (4:25-5:32) who has replaced Abel (4:25). Adam passes on his unique image to Seth and ultimately Noah (5:28-32), who functions as a second Adamic figure (cf. 9:1-17). Hamilton agrees: "That Adam reproduces himself through Seth, and Seth through Enosh, etc., demonstrates that God's blessing has become effective. They are not only created by God but blessed by God. Such blessing is manifested in multiplication."²⁸

²⁵ The targums explain this conundrum by interpreting 4:1 as a reference to sexual union between Eve and Sammael and not Adam, maintaining thereby that Adam imparted his image only to Seth (see *Targ. Ps.-J* 4:1). In 5:3, *Targ. Ps.-J* says, "When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he begot Seth, who resembled his image and likeness. For before that, Eve had borne Cain, who was not from him [Adam] and who did not resemble him. Abel was killed by Cain, and Cain was banished, and his descendants are not recorded in the book of the genealogy of Adam. But afterwards he begot one who resembled him and he called his name Seth."

²⁶ Cf. Walton, *Genesis*, 130.

²⁷ Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 174-75.

²⁸ Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 255.

2. *Brief New Testament Context*

In v. 35 the question is posed: “But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?’” Verses 36-57 constitute Paul’s lengthy reply to this question. Asher has cogently and persuasively argued that Paul uses a type of deliberative and didactic rhetoric that would have been familiar in Corinth—a sophisticated argument in vv. 35-57 consisting of adaptation or “accommodation” of the audience’s currently held beliefs, followed by Paul’s correction.²⁹ In vv. 36-38 Paul condemns his audience or the “pupil” (note “fool” in v. 36) for *denying* God’s power in creation: “That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; . . . God gives it a body just as He wished.” In other words, as demonstrated in nature, God is able to *transform* a dead seed to a living plant or tree.

Verses 39-41 unpack the nature of spatial polarities: “there is *one flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts . . . birds and . . . fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars” (italics original). Contrary to a number of scholars, Paul’s point is not to explain the presence of a multitude of “glories” or flesh;³⁰ rather, Paul has in mind only two polarities: earthly and heavenly.³¹ Furthermore, some of the Corinthians probably even affirmed such a distinction, which led to their denial of the resurrection in the first place.³²

In vv. 42-44a Paul brings together his two previous points—that God can transform things in nature from death into life (vv. 36-38), and that two polarities indeed exist (vv. 39-41)—and therefore makes an inference concerning the nature of the resurrection: “*So also* [οὕτως καί] is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body [cf. vv. 36-38]; . . . it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body [cf. vv. 39-41].” By bringing together these two previous points, Paul has, in effect, made room for a doctrine of the resurrection within his established framework. God is able to transform (vv. 36-38) a terrestrial body into a heavenly one (vv. 39-41).

Moving beyond the spatial polarities in vv. 39-44a, he now argues for a temporal polarity in addition to the spatial in vv. 44b-47: “If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven” (italics original). The terms “first” and “last” set a chronological distinction, whereas “natural” and “heavenly” reveal a spatial

²⁹ Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 48-90. Much of my understanding of Paul’s basic structure in vv. 35-54 is based upon Asher’s work. For a more detailed and thorough analysis, see pp. 91-175.

³⁰ E.g., Fee, *First Epistle*, 782-84.

³¹ So Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 103-6.

³² As mentioned above, the Corinthians apparently denied God’s creative ability to transform creation from death to life as spoken of in vv. 36-38 (cf. 15:50-53).

distinction.³³ Apparently, Paul's interpretation of Gen 2:7 fuses the temporal and spatial polarities³⁴ and provides the basis for such a claim. The next two verses, vv. 46-47, reinforce temporal polarity of the first and last Adam. Verses 48-49 then relate the believers' identification with the first and last Adam. Those in the image of the first Adam are "earthly," and those in the image of the last Adam are "heavenly."

II. *Hermeneutical Use of Genesis 2:7 in 1 Corinthians 15:45*

From all appearances, Paul typologically recasts Gen 2:7 and applies it to Christ. The quotation is simply reconfigured to fit Paul's immediate purpose. Goppelt concludes, "This is not an inference that Paul makes, but something he perceives [in Gen 2:7] to be a typological fulfillment with respect to Christ."³⁵ The first Adam is from the earth, whereas Christ is from heaven (cf. 15:47). Death is the result of Adam's failure, and eschatological life is the result of Christ's obedience (15:21). However, does the typological interpretation strictly fit Paul's use of Gen 2:7 as Goppelt and others contend? The phrase "life-giving Spirit" (πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν) seems to indicate otherwise. Paul appears to *surpass* the type, for we expect to read the following: "The first man Adam became a living soul [ψυχὴν ζῶσαν], and the last Adam became a living Spirit [πνεῦμα ζῶν]."³⁶ In other words, how can Paul typologically infer from the

³³ Bultmann contends that "spiritual" in this context means ethereal (*Theology of the New Testament*, 1:190-203), and, unfortunately, some have followed his lead. But this interpretation is to be strongly rejected for several reasons: (1) the nature of Christ's resurrection was bodily (1 Cor 15:1-23); (2) the adjective πνευματικός concerns the influence and the re-creation of the body by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:14-15); (3) the believer's resurrected body is likened unto Christ's *physical* resurrection (1 Cor 15:20-22, 49-57). Cf. Ronald J. Sider, "The Pauline Conception of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians XV. 35-54," *NTS* 21 (1977): 428-39; N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), 354-61; Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, 41-42; Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (SMTMS 29; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 164-66. The following analysis of vv. 44-58 will lend further evidence in favor of this connection.

³⁴ In v. 45 notice the language of "first" and "last" (temporal) along with "natural" and, implicitly, "spiritual" (spatial).

³⁵ Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 134. Goppelt contends that the antitype is "greater" than the original type (199-200). In other words, the antitype is escalated in its correspondence. Here in 1 Cor 15:45 Paul's typology seems to fit this framework, since Paul views the second Adam (and his actions) as greater than the first Adam (cf. Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, 43; Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930], 169 n. 19; J. Jeremias, "Ἀδάμ," *TDNT* 1:142).

Wright takes issue with the typological interpretation and prefers the label "narrative" (*Resurrection*, 354 n. 128). He explains that Paul's use of Scripture is, in addition to the narrative of Gen 1-2, dependent upon 15:20-28 and 35-41. I am unsure why he views a typological interpretation to be mutually exclusive from a narrative explanation. Moreover, Wright does not explain why Paul calls Christ a "life-giving Spirit" and whether or not that is based upon the Genesis narrative.

³⁶ A Trinitarian dilemma is created because of the ostensible collapse of the distinction between Christ and the Spirit. There tend to be two responses to this problem. Fee argues that Paul's thrust in 1 Cor 15:45 is soteriological rather than christological and pneumatological: Paul's point is to

Genesis narrative that the last Adam is not simply a “living Spirit” but a “life-giving Spirit”?

A few scholars understand 15:45 as a distinct unit comprised of the Gen 2:7 quotation *and* its interpretation.³⁷ Paul is following the syntax of the LXX in both 45a and 45b. Since this is the case, Paul ostensibly appears to be utilizing a well-known Jewish technique called *pesher*,³⁸ whereby a scriptural passage is given an “inspired” interpretation and applied to the present situation, usually as it relates eschatologically. In v. 45a Paul quotes almost verbatim Gen 2:7: “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” Then in v. 45b Paul *interprets* Gen 2:7 as referring to Christ: “The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

But, in light of our analysis of Gen 1–5, the former interpretation appears more likely—Paul typologically interprets Gen 2:7. Unlike most scholars who

demonstrate two kinds of bodies: “natural” and “spiritual.” He adds, “The language [of 15:45b] has been dictated both by the Genesis text and the concern to demonstrate that Christ is the foundation of believers’ receiving a ‘spiritual body.’” According to Fee, πνεῦμα does not designate a non-physical body but a new creational body, a body made in the image of the last Adam. It does not refer to the Holy Spirit. (Fee, *First Epistle*, 790; Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007], 116-19). Even though the contrast is between the first and last Adam, we should not straitjacket the last Adam’s correspondence to the first. Despite the first Adam becoming a “living being” or a “natural body,” it does not necessitate that the last Adam solely become a “spiritual being” or a “new creational body,” hence the appellation “life-giving.” Moreover, Fee’s interpretation of πνευματικός tends to separate it from Paul’s earlier discussion in 2:12-14. In 2:12-14, πνεῦμα/πνευματικός certainly refers to the Spirit. As far as I am aware, the best response to Fee is Richard Gaffin, “‘Life-Giving Spirit’: Probing the Center of Paul’s Pneumatology,” *JETS* 41 (1998): 573-89 (esp. 580-81). Gaffin claims that “to deny a reference to the Holy Spirit in v. 45 at the very least undercuts a reference to his activity in the cognate adjective ‘spiritual’ in v. 44” (580). Secondly, Fee argues that Paul is making a soteriological claim and not a Trinitarian one, but Gaffin responds by noting that despite Paul’s emphasis on soteriology, he can nevertheless make a Trinitarian claim as well (580-81).

On the other hand, there are others who affirm a Spirit Christology in 15:45b, thereby blurring the ontological lines between the Spirit and Christ (e.g., James D. G. Dunn, “1 Corinthians 15:4—Last Adam, Life-Giving Spirit,” in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule* [ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973], 139-41). In this particular view, Christ and the Spirit are virtually the same person. See Fee’s rebuttal of Dunn’s Spirit-Christology (“Christology and Pneumatology in Romans 8:9-11—and Elsewhere: Some Reflections on Paul as a Trinitarian,” 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], 320 n. 34). Obviously, all three members of the Trinity are agents in the resurrection (e.g., John 5:21; Rom 8:11; Gal 6:8). In 1 Cor 15:45 Paul simply desires to highlight the role of Christ and the Spirit and their relationship to “natural” and “spiritual” bodies.

³⁷ E. Earle Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957), 143 n. 3; John Paul Heil, *Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* (SBL Studies in Biblical Literature 15; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 234-35; cf. Stanley, *Paul*, 209 n. 99; Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 114.

³⁸ Several scholars argue that Paul is indeed using the *pesher* technique in 15:45: Scott Brodeur, *The Holy Spirit’s Agency in the Resurrection of the Dead* (TGST 14; Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1994), 104; Michael F. Hull, *Baptism on Account of the Dead (1 Cor 15:29): An Act of Faith in the Resurrection* (SBL Academia Biblica 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 202; Lincoln, *Paradise Now*, 42. Fee calls this a “midrash pesher” (*First Epistle*, 788). Pearson even labels this an “eschatological targum” of Gen 2:7 (*Pneumatikos-Psychikos*, 24). E. Earle Ellis agrees that this is an instance of *pesher* and even surmises that this interpretation of Gen 2 existed before Paul, circulating as “testimonia” (*Paul’s Use*, 97).

restrict the typology to Gen 2:7, it is best to include Gen 5:3, since it is alluded to only four verses later in clear development of the Gen. 2:7 quotation in v. 45. Being created as a “living being” and receiving the “breath of life” (2:7) is functionally equivalent to being made in the image of God (1:27-28). *Adam was created in God’s image (1:27-28), and he passed that divine image on to his son, Seth (Gen 5:3)*. The allusion to Gen 5:3 is thus conceptual.

Not only must we widen the OT background to include Gen 5:3, we should also incorporate the immediate context of 1 Cor 15:45b. Verses 50-53 constitute the climax of Paul’s argument thus far and the answer to the question in v. 35. Paul, in v. 50, takes the argument to its logical conclusion: “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” But unlike those in Corinth, Paul believes that God has the ability to refashion and transform those in their earthly bodies into a heavenly one, a point that he previously has made in vv. 36-38. Paul then in vv. 51-52 asserts that all individuals must be *changed*. Therein lies the key that was “hidden” from the Corinthians. The only way for earthly humans to be “clothed” (v. 53) or to bear the “image of the heavenly” (v. 49), whether dead or alive, is to change from one mode of existence to another.³⁹ In v. 45b, Christ and the Spirit are the agents of transformation outlined in vv. 49-53. Christ functions therefore as a “life-giving Spirit” by clothing them with his image.

Putting all the pieces together, just as the first Adam imparts his image to Seth and continues the line of blessing,⁴⁰ so now the last Adam imparts his image to believers giving them eschatological and consummate blessing (cf. 15:22-23). This interpretation is much more in line with the OT conception of Adam bestowing his image to Seth and offers a less problematic interpretation of Christ functioning as “the life-giving Spirit.”

III. *Genesis 5:3 in 1 Corinthians 15:45*

Finally, in 15:49, as a number of commentators have pointed out, Paul alludes to Gen 5:3.⁴¹

³⁹ Cf. Asher, *Polarity and Change*, 157-72.

⁴⁰ Jewish commentators spoke of Seth as the beginning of a godly or righteous line (*Midr. Tanh* 1.26). *Pirq R. El.* 26a. i. likewise comments, “Hence thou mayest learn that Cain was not of Adam’s seed, nor after his likeness, nor after his image. (Adam did not beget in his own image) until Seth was born, who was after his father Adam’s likeness and image” (cf. *Midr. Ps.* 117.1; *Rab. Gen.* 23.5; *b. Erub.* 18b; *L.A.E.* 38:4 [Apoc]). In addition, Seth receives the Adamic title “image of God” in *L.A.E.* 10:12 [Apoc] and 12:2 [Apoc], thus affirming his prominence and close association with Adam (see Matthew Goff, *Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction* [STDJ 50; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2007], 90-91; A. F. J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature* [NovTSup 46; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977], 1-47). Also note the prominence of Seth and Gen 5:3 in Gnostic literature (see Birger A. Pearson, “The Figure of Seth in Gnostic Literature,” in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the Conference at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28–31, 1978* [SHR 41; ed. Bentley Layton; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981], 2:472-504).

⁴¹ So NA²⁷; Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 243; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), 377-78; Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 572; Wright, *Resurrection*, 356; Hans Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (2 vols; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 2:208; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 4:311-12.

Gen 5:3	1 Cor 15:49
He begot (a son) in his likeness, according to his <i>image</i> [τὴν εἰκόνα].	Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear <i>the image</i> [τὴν εἰκόνα] of the heavenly.

Paul contends that believers will “bear”⁴² the “image” of the last Adam or “represent him in their appearance.”⁴³ “Bearing” or “donning” the image of the last Adam parallels Seth receiving Adam’s image. Pertinently, *Rab. Gen.* 4.8 comments, “*And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them. . . . They were robes of honour which subsequent firstborn used. When Adam died he transmitted them to Seth. Seth transmitted them to Methusaleh. When Methusaleh died he transmitted them to Noah*” (italics original). This later Jewish interpretation suggests that Adam passed on his “garments” to Seth, which is in the same interpretive vein as Christ clothing believers with his “garments.”⁴⁴

If we thus connect v. 45b with vv. 49-52, then the picture is relatively clear: Christ, as the last Adam, imparts his image to believers at the resurrection. What was a tacit and conceptual reference to Gen 5:3 in v. 45b finally becomes explicit in v. 49. In v. 45b, Christ and the Spirit are the focus, whereas in v. 49 believers receive the attention. The event and the typology remain the same, but the focus shifts. *Paul therefore alludes to Gen 5:3 in order to assert that Christ functions typologically as an Adamic figure* (vv. 45-47) by passing on his image to believers or “sons” (vv. 49-52; cf. Rom 8:14; Gal 3:26; 4:6-7).

IV. Conclusion

This interpretation addresses the difficult problem of Paul’s comment that Christ became a “life-giving Spirit.” If the Genesis narrative, particularly chs. 1–5, is kept in mind, the phrase is far less enigmatic and offers a way forward in

Lindemann is unsure whether or not εἰκὼν in v. 49 alludes to Gen 5:3 or Gen 1:27, but he is at least willing to make the intertextual connection (*Der erste Korintherbrief* [HNT 9; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000], 362-63).

⁴² Whether or not the text should read the cohortative “let us bear” (φορέσωμεν) does not affect the inter-textual link. Although external support for the subjunctive is quite strong (P⁴⁶ ⳑ A C D F G Ψ 075 0243 33 1739 M latt bo Ir^{lat}), many retain the future φορέσωμεν because of internal evidence such as Paul’s overall didactic approach in the immediate context and the emphasis on the final resurrection (e.g., Bruce Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998], 502).

⁴³ BDAG 1064; cf. Heil, *Rhetorical Role*, 243; Fee, *First Epistle*, 794; Brodeur, *Holy Spirit’s Agency*, 138.

⁴⁴ Jung Hoon Kim suggests that Christ clothing believers with garments here in this context may allude to God clothing Adam and Eve in Gen 3:21: “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” (*The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus* [JSNTSup 268; London: T&T Clark, 2000], 198-99). If Kim is correct, which appears at least plausible, then this conceptual allusion reinforces our contention that Paul is deeply aware of the Genesis narrative and depends upon it to form his argument.

this debate. The OT rather than other cultural backgrounds may adequately explain Paul's hermeneutic. Just as Adam passed his image on to Seth, so Christ imparts his image to believers.

The Last Adam, also given as the Final Adam or the Ultimate Adam, is a title given to Jesus in the New Testament. Similar titles that also refer to Jesus include Second Adam and New Adam. Twice in the New Testament an explicit comparison is made between Jesus and Adam. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul argues that "just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19, NIV). In 1 Corinthians 15:22 Gladd, Benjamin L. "The Last Adam as the 'Life-Giving Spirit' Revisited: A Possible OT Background of One of Paul's Most Perplexing Phrases." *Westminster Theological Journal*. Gordon, James. "'A Glaring Misunderstanding'? Barth, Schleiermacher, and the Nature of Speculative Theology." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16 (2014): 13-30. . Forthcoming. "Is It Possible and Desirable for Theologians to Speculate After Barth?" Benjamin L. Gladd, "The Last Adam as the 'Life-Giving Spirit' Revisited: A Possible Old Testament Background of One of Paul's Most Perplexing Phrases," *Westminster Theological Journal* 71.2 (Fall 2009): 297-309. Philip E. Hughes, "Adam and His Posterity," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 14.3 (July 1942): 161-173. pdf [Reproduced by permission of the current copyright holder]. Mark W. Karlberg, "The Original State of Adam: Tensions Within Reformed Theology," *Evangelical Quarterly* 59:4 (1987): 291-309. pdf. Stephen Hultgren, "The Origin of Paul's D