

**ETERNITY AND THE NOW:
AN EXPLORATION OF PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING
OF A NEW CREATION
IN GAL 6:15 AND 2 COR 5:17**

By

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Supervisor

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- DECLARATION

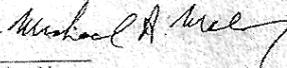
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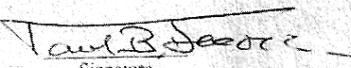
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Eternity and the Now: An exploration of Paul’s understanding of a New Creation in Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17.



ABSTRACT

This thesis forms the first part of a programme of research whose ultimate aim is to draw upon Saint Paul’s vision of a new creation in Galatians and Second Corinthians in order to provide a new window of access into the Christian hope of eternal life for people of this secular age. Many contemporary people are deeply concerned about the Cosmos (they would not term it ‘Creation’) but have lost all conception of a Cosmos of eternal dimensions, one which includes the human species in its resurrected state. As such, this programme of research, while drawing upon academic scholarship, is ultimately addressed to the woman and the man ‘in the street’.

This present thesis, albeit the first step in the broader programme, confines its scope to how a new creation would have been communicated by Paul to the communities which he addressed of the early church.

After the introduction and methodological issues, the study proper opens in Chapter 2 with a summary of the theology of the apostle Paul the author of the two NT letters concerned. Paul’s personality will also be touched upon here because of the forthright way in which Paul expresses himself in these letters. Building upon recent studies by a number of biblical scholars, Chapter 2 includes a study of how the previously scholarly Pharisee Saul, would have acquired his original sense of a new creation from his Jewish background as well as from his own Christ-encountered theology.

In Chapter 3 (Second Corinthians) and Chapter 4 (Galatians) interpretations of the new creation texts are undertaken within the context of the principal themes of the two letters

and the particular characteristics of the two communities being addressed. What emerges from this analysis is that, in spite of widely differing views amongst biblical scholars, Paul's understanding of new creation can be seen to manifest the three-fold characteristics of being anthropological, cosmological, and ecclesiological. This present thesis recognises this but attributes more significance to the anthropological. While eschatological considerations are often associated with the cosmological dimension, this, of course, is not exclusive, all three elements can have eschatological characteristics.

Two other aspects are addressed which seem to be understated in the existing literature, namely the importance of individual and corporate identity in the communities being addressed by Paul, and the nature of the relationship between new creation and the Pauline concept of 'being in Christ'.

In addition, a concern is raised which is absent in the literature. In the interpretation process for these two elliptical Greek texts the influence of some secondary sources over and against that of the texts themselves, as reflected in the prevailing translations of these texts, is interrogated. Accordingly, in these chapters, the following questions are raised and answers proposed for them: Why is Paul able to introduce the words of a new creation, *καινή κτίσις*, without any prior explanation? What accounts for the abruptness with which these words appear? Also, the practice of including verbs into the two texts (as the vast majority of translations do in varied ways in order to express the interpretations arrived at) is (controversially) critiqued, and an alternative approach – with alternative interpretations and translations – proposed; ones which further enhance the relationship between the concepts of 'a new creation', and of 'persons being in Christ'.

Chapter 5 summarises the main conclusions arising from this study, and identifies areas of further research (particularly those related to the subjects of *mystery*, *love* and *identity* in new creation). A closing 'Afterword' illustrates the significance of *καινή κτίσις* for today.

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¹ The Greek text of the NT does not speak of *the* new creation. The two occurrences (2 Cor and Gal) are expressed using the anarthrous noun, *creation*, preceded by its accompanying adjective, *new*: καινή κτίσις. Throughout this thesis it is regularly necessary to refer to the biblical passages in which these words appear as ‘the new creation texts’ or ‘the new creation passages’, and what is always meant is that these are the texts/passages where the (anarthrous) expression καινή κτίσις appears. It never implies that the NT speaks in terms of *the* new creation or that such a meaning is intended at any point in this thesis. One of the reasons for mentioning this is that some scholars do use the term ‘the new creation’ either quite unconsciously or even intentionally. [The title of Emerson’s paper is one such instance: Emerson 2013.]

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Chapter 1. Introduction and approach

The Greek texts:

2 Cor 5:17

ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ
so that if anyone in Christ a new creation the old things passed away behold has become new

Gal 6:15

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομὴ τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.
neither for circumcision anything is nor uncircumcision but a new creation

English translations:²

2 Cor 5:17

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! NRSV

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. KJV

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. NKJV

So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; new things have come. NAB

Gal 6:15

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!
NRSV

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. KJV

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. NKJV

For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation. NAB

² The default translation that will be used throughout this thesis will be that of the NRSV. Where other translations are used they will be referenced accordingly.

1.1. Background

This thesis constitutes the first step in an overall programme of research which seeks to address a major issue in our present secular age: the loss of hope in eternal life, in life after death.

1.1.1 Context: The overall programme of research – the ‘big picture’

“...I am not absolutely sure of anything and there are many things I don’t know anything about, such as whether it means anything to ask why we’re here...”

Richard P Feynman (1981)

American physicist

1918-1988³

Present-day scientific thought

As evidenced by my opening quotation from the distinguished theoretical physicist Richard Feynman, the circumscribing of human meaning within ‘the bounds of an equation’ has been an inhibitor to the exploration of human meaningfulness beyond the scientific domain.

In the same domain, contemporary society’s fundamental assumptions about human existence deserve to be challenged. E.g., under the heading ‘Man’s brief time on Earth’ a letter to the Economist by a geologist challenging the very term ‘species’ concludes: *“...we should at least enjoy an ironic chuckle that when the Anthropocene ends, we won’t know it”*.⁴

Present-day philosophical and sociological thought

Such meaninglessness is compounded by parallel boundaries in the psychological and sociological domains, and accordingly this topic is important across all of present-day society. The disappointment, the failure, and the reluctance to undertake self-reflection on the meaning of life (and of life and death) of our secular age has been

³ Richard Feynman in a BBC 1981 interview. Gleick 1992: 438.

⁴ Economist magazine 2016.

comprehensively catalogued in studies such as those by the philosopher Charles Taylor in his magisterial work *A Secular Age*:

The connection of death with meaning is reflected in two often-discussed features of human life as we understand it today. The first is the way in which facing death, seeing one's life as about to come to an end, can concentrate the issue of what we have lived for. What has it all amounted to? In other words, death can bring out the question of meaning in its most acute form. This is what lies behind Heidegger's claim that an authentic existence involves a stance of 'Sein-zum-Tode', being-toward-death.

The second is the way that those bereaved, or left behind, struggle to hold on to the meaning they have built with the deceased, while (unavoidably) letting go of the person. This is what funeral rites have always been meant to do, whatever other goals they have served. And since a crucial way of doing this is to connect this person, even in his death, with something eternal, or at the very least ongoing, the collapse of a sense of the eternal brings on a void, a kind of crisis. This we see today. The prospect that the person who has died is called to an eternal life, "in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection," is either denied or held in a kind of uncertain suspense by those close to him. And yet other kinds of continuing reality may not be really meaningful to him and his mourners. The ongoing political society, for instance, will certainly do for the deceased statesman, the continuing life of our town for the departed mayor. But many people were not connected in that way to these levels of society; they lived within them relatively unknown and didn't feel closely bound to them. It's not clear what ongoing reality we can latch on to. There is a sense of void here, and of deep embarrassment.⁵

Western or global?

Accordingly, we can say that present-day scientific and philosophical thought in the West, while still endeavouring to believe in a future for the cosmos, has decimated hope in a resurrected afterlife for humanity.

⁵ Taylor 2007: 722-723. Cf. Taylor *The Sting of Death* 2007.

But is this just a Western society issue? With religion on the decline in the ‘West’, there is a sense of religion growing elsewhere, such as in Africa and Asia. And religions, whether in terms of global religions such as Christianity and Islam, or African Indigenous Religions,⁶ do have various defined perspectives on life after death. That notwithstanding, the contrary influence of secular humanism is still challenging religion globally.⁷ It is not just affecting Western society.

The big picture

The envisaged overall programme of research would in due course aspire to speak into the scenario painted by Taylor, and the helplessness and avoidance evidenced in Feynman.

What would such a prospect look like?

Secular society across the board currently reflects a variety of *negative* tensions with regard to shared (or unshared) interests at a collective (group, community) level; ‘group’ being anything from the European Union to individual nation states to global corporations to neighbourhood criminal gangs, etc. In contrast, the same secular society broadly expresses *positive* interest in the environment, in the future of this planet and of the cosmos, as well as in the continuing evolution of the human species.⁸ The paradox is that this is all held within the secular milieu of void and despair at the level of the individual man and woman as outlined above by Charles Taylor.

As we shall see, the biblical concept of new creation will encompass all three domains (the individual human, the community, the cosmos) and witnessing Divine Revelation’s clear commitment to creation (past, present, and future – indeed eternal) and the concomitant hope which that implies, could open up a new domain of hope and of meaningfulness for the secular woman and man, not only for the cosmos which they are so concerned about but for each of them as well – including eternal life in a resurrected body.

⁶ Cf., Wacek 2011

⁷ “*In my case this critical reflection led to agnosticism. I do not believe there is sufficient evidence that God exists. Nor is there sufficient evidence that God does not or can’t exist. While my arguments for these claims must await future writing, my agnosticism means that I regard both believers and atheists as holding unjustified views.*” McKaiser 2016.

Urbanized Africa has been shown to effortlessly and rapidly take secular humanism on board, and in the process setting the agenda for a whole nation in the process. The law on abortion which was introduced into South Africa was one of the most ‘liberalized’ versions in the world.

⁸ Cf., Max 2017: 40-63.

The third dynamic, that of the collective/group/community, particularly when it comes to church, is more complex but the key to that lies in the revelation that the possibility of eternal life for the individual is revealed in Scripture (and in theology) as beginning in the present, in the lived reality of each life - life now, life *before* death. There is, of course, substantial Biblical support for such an experiential lived life in the now, but if framing such a concept within the notion of ‘a new creation/creature’ in (almost?) an evolutionary sense proves to be feasible, it might well prove to be life-transforming for those who, consciously or unconsciously, have limited their world-view to that of the immanent frame – and the concomitant despair which it entails.

From this one can see that my approach in this thesis is a theological approach and not only a historical–critical approach or a descriptive religious studies approach. My ideological position is shaped by contemporary Catholic Theology.⁹

A New Creation - a new dimension of human existence?

In previous theological research which I have undertaken, the potential for the further exploration of the terms new creation/new creature has been tentatively explored. Firstly in the context of the Incarnation and its implications for the salvation of the human race,¹⁰ and secondly within studies on the topic of the Eucharist. Specifically, in the case of the latter, I initially felt that perhaps I was pushing the boundaries of language by speaking in the following terms,

To bring home the new reality of a New Creation (alternatively, this New Creature) as being a new mode of existence, I like to describe the Church as being in reality a new species. Not in the biological sense, but in the scheme of God’s creative acts.¹¹

...only to find that Pope Benedict XVI (as he was at the time) was actually pushing such boundaries and doing so beyond what I had initially been prepared to do. Many months after I wrote the above words, Benedict XVI, in a talk given in Berlin on 22nd Sep 2011, revealed his desire to express the reality of the Church, and its relationship with Jesus Christ, using language in which – unlike myself - he was not reluctant to use the word biological:

⁹ Cf., Schneiders 1999; Tracy 1984; Ratzinger 1988; Benedict XVI 2007, 2009, 2011; O’Collins 2015.

¹⁰ Mahony 2014: 73-76.

¹¹ Mahony 2015: 121.

In the parable of the vine, Jesus does not say: "You are the vine", but: "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5). In other words: "As the branches are joined to the vine, so you belong to me! But inasmuch as you belong to me, you also belong to one another." This belonging to each other and to him is not some ideal, imaginary, symbolic relationship, but – I would almost want to say – a biological, life-transmitting state of belonging to Jesus Christ...¹²

Benedict XVI develops these ideas further in his book on Jesus of Nazareth, extending his ‘biological’ terminology to the point where he speaks about ‘a radical evolutionary leap’ and even ‘a new dimension of human existence.’¹³

1.1.2 The limited scope of this specific thesis

The small picture

This thesis, *Eternity and the Now: An exploration of Paul’s understanding of a New Creation in Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17* has considerably limited objectives, namely: to address the question, ‘What is the meaning of new creation in the two NT passages, Gal 6:15 and 2Cor 5:17? Firstly and primarily within their own context, and secondly, to lay a foundation for the big picture.

¹² Benedict XVI Berlin 2011.

¹³ Benedict XVI 2011: 205-206.

1.2. Current scholarship issues with respect to the new creation texts (Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17), including but not limited to, the topic of eternal life.

1.2.1 Current scholarship

The relevant scholarship can be considered in three parts:

Part (i) Scholars who have intentionally focussed upon *new creation* in the Old and New Testaments and in Jewish Apocalyptic writings:

Within this literature, considerable attention is given to discussing three biblical aspects of new creation; for the individual (anthropological), for the Cosmos/Creation, and, to a lesser extent, for the community (ecclesiological), and different scholars have interpreted Paul's new creation references in terms of one or more of these meanings.

Because this three-fold framework features so prominently in all studies of new creation a definition of terms is in order. I take, as my starting point, the perspectives of Owens and Jackson¹⁴, supplemented by others as per the subsequent references:

The *anthropological* reading of new creation primarily focuses on conversion and the inward/ethical transformation of individual Christ-followers. This definition provides a suitable basis for considering potential anthropological notions that might be associated with the portrait of new creation in the Pauline corpus.

The *cosmological* reading of new creation primarily interprets the phrase *καινή κτίσις* as the partial fulfilment of Isaiah's promised 'new heavens and new earth.' More generally in the New Testament, Cosmology refers to the attempt 'to explain the origin, structure, and destiny of the physical universe.'

What is understood as the *ecclesiological* reading turns out to be surprisingly complex, not nearly as definitive as the other two. It includes debates over whether new creation in Paul encompasses individual Christ-followers or the entire community of believers. In addition, some studies of the *corporate* element within Paul's understanding of new creation particularly focuses on the identity of the church as composed of Jewish and Gentile Christ-followers. Then, of course, one has to bear in mind the significant

¹⁴ Owens 2012: 2, Jackson 2010: 111-113.

community/nation understanding when one is considering the OT origins of new creation concepts.

At one extreme or interpretation one has Ulrich Mell¹⁵ who exclusively posits the cosmological interpretation.

At the other end of the scale, Moyer V. Hubbard¹⁶ insists upon a strictly anthropological interpretation.¹⁷

T. Ryan Jackson¹⁸ makes a case for including both dimensions. In David M. Russell's book,¹⁹ he argues for a new appreciation of our existing cosmic creation and the environment.²⁰ However he does link the creation's redemption²¹ with the redemption of humanity.²² Douglas J. Moo²³ also emphasises the cosmological dimension but without neglecting the anthropological. Indeed, he even goes as far as to refer to the latter as a 'new humanity'.

Mark D. Owens²⁴ has posited a balanced position in recognising all three characteristics. Like Hubbard, Owens is also a scholar who broadened the scope of his research; in his case to incorporate Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

Mathew Y. Emerson's book on new creation (while its approach was not credible initially) was encouraging in demonstrating the pervasiveness of the theme (if not the wording) of new creation throughout the NT corpus as well as its *already/not yet* tension.²⁵ He is also one of the scholars (although not alone) in commenting on the significance of the words for new creation where they occur in Jewish Apocalyptic literature, such as in 1En 72.1.

¹⁵ Mell 1989.

¹⁶ Hubbard 2002.

¹⁷ Prior to 2002 analyses of the new creation texts were predominantly focussed upon the specific verses within 2 Cor 5 and Gal 6 which refer to new creation, and another of Hubbard's contributions was aimed at extending the context to the full Pauline corpus.

¹⁸ Jackson 2010.

¹⁹ Russell 1996.

²⁰ Russell catalogued his book within a domain of scholarship labelled *Studies in Biblical Apocalyptic Literature*.

²¹ Its 'redemption' as contrasted with its 'replacement.'

²² Cf., also Sim 1993.

²³ Moo 2010.

²⁴ Owens 2012.

²⁵ Emerson 2013.

The analysis can be complicated in that for some researchers, the *world* is identified with that of the *cosmos* whereas for others it is forcefully equated with the whole of humanity.

Part (ii) Pauline scholars who have included comments on *new creation*:

Richard B. Hays, who supports the cosmic interpretation (but not exclusively so) does so, however, within a more general context in which he is positing Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament as a normative paradigm for intertextual theological reflection.²⁶

For a somewhat differently nuanced take on 'intertextual linkages' the work by Paul Sevier Minear (1994) has been much discussed.²⁷

John M.G. Barclay addresses the element of polemics in Galatians,²⁸ while Raymond E. Brown, John A. Davies, and Caroline Schleier Cutlers all prove helpful in unpacking the personal identity factor which became an important marker in this thesis.²⁹ (Personal identity in this context is not to be confused with 'the identity of the Galatians' – a different matter, albeit a complementary one. Section 4.1.4 below, refers.)

Part iii: The authoritative commentaries referenced in this thesis which proved most helpful were the following:

On Galatians were those by Frank J. Matera³⁰ and F.F. Bruce³¹, as well as Matera's 1988 paper.

On Second Corinthians were those by Margaret Thrall,³² Murray J. Harris (2005),³³ Victor Paul Furnish,³⁴ and Ralph P. Martin³⁵

²⁶ Hays 1989: 154.

²⁷ Minear 1994.

²⁸ Barclay 1987.

²⁹ Brown 1984, Brown 2009, Davies 2012, Cutler 2014, 2016.

³⁰ Matera 1992.

³¹ Bruce 1982.

³² Thrall 1994.

³³ Harris 1995 and 2005.

³⁴ Furnish 1984.

³⁵ Martin 2014.

Gaps and limitations in current research

The existing studies do not sufficiently address how new creation relates to eternal life and resurrection in Galatians and 2 Cor.

The community (*ecclesiological*) characteristic of new creation is very understated in the existing studies.³⁶

A number of other limitations are evident, which may be due, in part, to a focus on secondary sources at the expense of primary ones; according to the late Murphy-O'Connor, as quoted by Hubbard, papers on this theme sometimes give more weight to secondary than to primary sources. These limitations relate to the nature of the previous relationships between Paul and the two communities being addressed, the significance of the apostle's anger in these two letters, how it was possible for Paul to use the term *new creation* (καινή κτίσις)³⁷ without any prior explanation, and to do in such an abrupt and blunt manner.

Furthermore, certain considerations undergirding diverse interpretations of these NT new creation texts have given rise to a prevalent and widespread assumption concerning (supposedly) implied verbs in 2 Cor 5.17 and Gal 6.15. While these interpretations are accepted, they are also interrogated in this research, the implications of which are significant for the link between new creation and eternal life.

Three other elements very relevant to new creation and eternity, which are either understated in the current literature or are not dealt with at all, are that of *identity*, *love*, and *mystery*.

Recent history of scholarship on the two new creation texts

Prior to 2002 analyses of the new creation texts were predominantly focussed upon the specific verses in 2 Cor 5 and Gal 6 which refer to καινή κτίσις, and Hubbard's contribution was aimed at extending the context to the full Pauline corpus.³⁸

Within the literature, as already noted, considerable attention is given to discussing the three meanings of new creation: for the individual (anthropological), for the

³⁶ In the light of which, analysis within a Catholic framework can add considerable value to this dimension.

³⁷ The term καινή κτίσις is itself unique within the NT to these two instances.

³⁸ Hubbard 2002: 131.

community (ecclesiological), and for the Cosmos/Creation, and much is given to analysing what might have been in Paul's own background (Old Testament and Apocalyptic Judaism) which gave rise to him speaking in such terms.

The twentieth century saw a shift in interpretation of *καινή κτίσις* from anthropological to cosmological, from new creature to new creation, as per the innovative commentary by R. Strachan's on Second Corinthians in 1935,³⁹ which together with Adolf von Harnack's earlier (1918) work, led eventually to what prevails today. Hubbard is at the vanguard in regretting this development.⁴⁰

There are scholars who adopt a diametrically opposing view to that of Hubbard, holding instead that an exclusively cosmological interpretation is apposite. Such is the case with the work of Ulrich Mell, whom Hubbard, Owens, and Jackson take to task, on methodology grounds as well as breadth/scope grounds.⁴¹

Nonetheless, while some scholars still reflect a preference for one particular emphasis there is a measure of consensus that, while different preferences/emphasis may well be held, all three domains have a place in the interpretation of the texts in question.

The current research is of considerable value for this thesis in bringing together these three domains, and in identifying the sources behind the domains in question.

While soteriological terms such as eternal life and a new creation share a common foundational source, namely that of 'being in Christ', this thesis will argue that insufficient attention has been paid by scholars particularly to the *explicit* relationship between new creation and 'being in Christ'.

1.2.2 Approach

After the theoretical framework and methodology section (1.3 below), the study proper opens in Chapter 2 with a sketch of the personality and the theology of the apostle Paul, the author of the two NT letters concerned. An appreciation of Paul's personality and his rhetorical style is essential because of the forthright way in which Paul expresses himself in these letters, not least in the new creation passages. With respect to his theology, his

³⁹ Owens references Strachan 1935: 113–114 and then adds: 'Beginning with the RSV, major English translations of the New Testament [NT] since the publication of Strachan's commentary have translated the phrase *καινή κτίσις* in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 with the phrase 'new creation.'" Owens 2012: 2, FN 3.

⁴⁰ Hubbard 2002: 1-5.

⁴¹ Jackson 2010: 1-4, Owens 2012: 1. Both reference Mell's 1989 paper.

conception of new creation will be analysed in the context of associated Pauline theological constructs such as incorporation into Christ.

Building upon recent studies by a number of biblical scholars, Chapter 2 includes a study of how the previously scholarly Pharisee Saul, would have acquired his original concepts of a new creation from his Hebrew background.

In Chapter 3 (Second Corinthians) and Chapter 4 (Galatians) interpretations of the new creation texts are undertaken within the context of the principal themes of the two letters and the particular characteristics of the two communities being addressed.

In addition, the interpretation concern raised earlier⁴² is addressed in these two chapters, and the following questions are raised and answers proposed for them: Why is Paul able to introduce the words of a new creation, *καινή κτίσις* without any prior explanation? What accounts for the abruptness with which these words appear? Is there a rhetorical function in the appeal to *καινή κτίσις*, and is it different in the two contexts?

Chapter 5 summarises the main conclusions arising from this study, and identifies areas of further research.

⁴² In section 1.2.1

1.3. Theoretical framework and methodology

1.3.1 Theoretical framework

My Over-All Approach and General Theoretical Framework:

My over-all approach to biblical interpretation is a theological one, particularly, within the Catholic tradition. My general theoretical framework is articulated, for instance, in the Pontifical Biblical Commission document of 1993⁴³, and commented upon by several prominent scholars.⁴⁴

1.3.2 Approach and Methodology for This Thesis

Generally

In this thesis I limit myself to a historical, grammatical and literary exploration of Paul. In other words the thesis will combine a historical-critical approach with a literary one. No attempts will be made to contextualize or inculturate the theological theme of ‘new creation’.

Specifically

In Chapter 2, intertextual analysis is utilised indirectly⁴⁵ to explain some of Saint Paul’s knowledge of Old Testament perspectives on the concept of a new creation.

In Chapter 4, form and genre criticism is deployed in assessing the nature of the communication to the Galatians and its deviation from the format of a letter.

In Chapter 4, rhetorical analysis is deployed overall to the letter to the Galatians to assess the relationship between certain verses (Gal 5:6 and 6:15) within that letter.

⁴³ “[Accordingly], the text of the document inquires into how the meaning of Scripture might become known-- this meaning in which the human word and God’s word work together in the singularity of historical events and the eternity of the everlasting Word, which is contemporary in every age. The biblical word comes from a real past. It comes not only from the past, however, but at the same time from the eternity of God and it leads us into God’s eternity, but again along the way through time, to which the past, the present and the future belong.” Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993: Preface.

For ‘contemporary in every age’ see the two sources on *Normativity* in Decock 2017 and Bieringer 2010.

⁴⁴ The *Sacra Pagina* series of New Testament commentaries is an excellent representation of my approach and theoretical framework. It’s stated goal is “...to provide sound critical analysis without any loss of sensitivity to religious meaning,” thereby being “*catholic in two senses of the word: inclusive in its methods and perspectives, and shaped by the context of the Catholic tradition.*” Daniel J. Harrington in Lambrecht 1999: vii.

⁴⁵ *Indirectly*: The intertextual analysis in question has already been undertaken by Owens 2012. His treatment is thorough, also pointing out the weaknesses to which intertextual analysis is susceptible.

In Chapters 3 and 4, philological analysis is deployed, specifically grammatical construction, in order to critique the interpretation issue alluded to earlier.

Approach - dynamic tension

Dynamic tension in this thesis involves allowing for three elements: Binary choices; Continuities and Discontinuities, and the Jesus 'third window'. Amongst these three aspects there are often common elements such as unspoken (and often invalid) assumptions in the minds of participants in a text. For example, Jesus had questions of a binary nature constantly flung at him, 'stone the woman or not', 'heal on the Sabbath or not' 'pay the tax to Caesar or not', etc. Jesus seldom addressed such a question directly because it was invalid; invalid in that the underlying assumption behind each question only allowed for one of two possible answers. Instead he viewed the issues through a 'third window' in which he demonstrated the unfounded nature of the assumptions underlying the question, thereby destroying the validity of the question in the first place.

Beware the binary choice:

Throughout this thesis, an effort is made to avoid, wherever it occurs in the literature, being forced as it were to make choices between what are presented (and are genuinely conceived) as the only available competing perspectives or interpretations but which this analysis may not always or readily accept as such.⁴⁶

Continuities and discontinuities:

More generically, similar situations can arise between elements that are marked by discontinuities as opposed to continuities, diachronic vs synchronic understanding of texts, eternity in the linear sense of everlasting 'time' and eternity as a domain of (transcendent) existence where scientific time and space as we know them do not apply (as in the Eucharist for example), Transformation (of an existing creation into a new creation) vs Replacement (of an existing creation by a new creation), etc.

⁴⁶ As e.g., in section 4.2 below. Cf. section 3.4, under 2 Cor 5:14-15; section 3.6 under item (c).

The Jesus ‘third window’:

In instances such as the scenarios described above, adopting a posture of dynamic tension between the concepts concerned can constitute a ‘third window’ through which to view the issue at hand, with enriching results⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ Cf. sections 3.5 and 4.5 reflect this approach.

Chapter 2. Paul: his theology

This chapter presents a short summary (in section 2.1) of Paul's defining theology as well as a longer section (section 2.2) where his concept of a new creation had come from.⁴⁸ These will provide part of the context within which Paul's relationship and communications with the churches of Galatia and Corinth can be assessed.

2.1 Paul's defining theology: The good news of salvation – for all of humankind

Sources

The primary sources for this section are the NT Epistles of Paul in descending order of acknowledged authorship,⁴⁹ and the Acts of the Apostles⁵⁰. The essence of this section is otherwise drawn primarily but not exclusively from six secondary sources.⁵¹

Paul – the person

The particular background of Paul which provides pointers into his theology of new creation will be dealt with in section 2.2. Here we are want to uncover the broad strokes of the portrait of this extraordinary person and what constituted his defining theology.

As Saul of Tarsus his background was Jewish, a Pharisee with 'academic qualifications' from being tutored by Gamaliel, he would have been exposed to Hellenism, and was proud of his Roman citizenship.

His dramatic encounter with the Messiah of the Jews – *his* Messiah - on the road to Damascus, with the risen-from-the-dead Jesus Christ, was undoubtedly the defining moment of his life.⁵² His life would subsequently be viewed by him in terms of his life before and his life after that encounter. The dramatic mandate that Paul had received from the Risen Lord Jesus during that encounter made him deeply conscious of the significance of his own conversion, but not only for himself, also for his mission, particularly (but not exclusively)

⁴⁸ This chapter accordingly addresses the first Research Sub-Question posed of this thesis, namely, 'What was it in the background of Saul of Tarsus which gave rise to or contributed to Paul's concept of a new creation?'

⁴⁹ Of the thirteen letters which bear the name 'Paul' those to the Galatians and to the Corinthians together with Romans, are the four referred to as the Hauptbriefe (*main letters*), the (generally agreed) undisputed letters of Paul in terms of authorship. Three others are also regarded as undisputed by some scholars, namely Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon.

⁵⁰ Acknowledging in the process the portrait of Paul given for the benefit of the 'Acts project' of the author.

⁵¹ Fitzmyer 1968 *Pauline Theology*: 800-827; Brown 2009: 437-442; Benedict XVI 2009; Brown 1984; Cantalamessa 1994; Murphy-O'Connor 2007.

⁵² Benedict XVI 2009: 21-25; Murphy-O'Connor 2007:104-108; Fitzmyer 1968 *Pauline Theology*: 803-804

that to the Gentiles. The effect upon him of the further dramatic visions and ecstasies which he subsequently experienced also had a profound effect upon him and he manifested in his life an awareness of the (personal) guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Paul opted for the self-designation of himself as a *slave* of Christ compared with the designation of the (Twelve) Apostles as *disciples* of Jesus. Furthermore, his relationship with the Jerusalem church and its leadership under James and the other ‘pillars’ is full of paradoxes, on the one hand seemingly aligned and on other occasions apparently in conflict. Something similar is suggested about his relationship with Judaism in general; some letters seeming to indicate that Paul saw Christianity in continuity with his previous religion and others as superseding it.

Paul’s integrity in leading and modelling leadership was paramount while also allowing himself a license to exercise some guile. He was no respecter of persons or of ‘political correctness’ (e.g., Barnabas, Peter, Roman authorities, other Christian missionaries, etc.), and was uncompromising when it came to team members who had ‘let him/the team down’, but showing the grace to also subsequently be reconciled with them (e.g., Mark). All told, a much loved leader. He was aware of his own intellectual and multilingual abilities and (then) wise enough to appreciate when and when not to use them.

Paul’s defining theology: The essence of his good news for all of humankind

‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel [εὐαγγέλιον]; it is the power of God for salvation [σωτηρία] to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.’ [Rom 1:16].

To encapsulate Paul’s theology in a brief summary is challenging. In what follows it is attempted on the basis of eight aspects.

(i) Christocentric⁵³

Paul’s ministry was absolutely Christ-centred,⁵⁴ with salvation and redemption at the heart of Paul’s message. The good news of Jesus Christ, the εὐαγγέλιον⁵⁵, was central to, and

⁵³ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 805

⁵⁴ Benedict XVI 2009: 55-60. Brown points out that the claim by some that Paul was the architect of high Christology is much debated. Brown 2009: 439.

⁵⁵ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 806

extensive, in Paul's message, and the significance of the designation *Lord* accorded to the risen Jesus, κύριος emphasised.⁵⁶

(ii) God the Father and the Son of God

Without neglecting the role of the Holy Spirit, the root of Paul's good news lies in the pre-ordained mystery and wisdom of God, and Paul's theology incorporates God the Father,⁵⁷ as the Father of the Son⁵⁸ whom he has sent as Saviour⁵⁹ (such as in 2 Cor 4:3-6). In Paul's theology the designation ἐν Χριστῷ plays a major role⁶⁰ (unsurprisingly given the Christocentric focus) while the development of the designation κύριος is traced from the *Adonai* of the OT (LXX).⁶¹

(iii) The scandal⁶²

The humility and humiliation of God the Son is not only acknowledged by Paul, the very scandal of it is emphasised in his Gospel both by way of its content and the manner of communicating that scandal (such as Gal 3:13-14).

(iv) What salvation achieves

Forgiveness of sin is paramount⁶³, and reconciliation (multidimensional) even leading to union⁶⁴ is significant for Paul, as are the terms grace [χάρις], justification [δικαιόω]⁶⁵, and

⁵⁶ Benedict XVI 2009: 58 (on Phil 2:6-11)

⁵⁷ Fitzmyer believes that "*Paul saw the gospel only as a part of the magnificent plan, itself gratuitously conceived by the Father for the salvation of men, which was revealed in Christ Jesus. This was the Father's 'purpose' (Rom, Eph, Gal) and 'will' 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Eph). This Pauline insight is important because it makes us aware of the historical, cosmological, and corporate dimensions of Christian salvation.*" Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 808

⁵⁸ "...that eternal existence in which he [the Son] is wholly one with the Father (**dimension before time**)...". Benedict XVI 2009: 57, where the emphasis is Benedict's.

⁵⁹ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 811

⁶⁰ Over 160 occurrences in Paul. Harris 2005: 431.

⁶¹ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 811

⁶² The scandal/folly/stumbling block of the Cross (Benedict XVI 2009: 61-65), especially as the expression of God's love; Benedict XVI 2009: 63. Likewise Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 805, 806, 812-813. Paul indeed, in one of the most ironic of perspectives ever, transforms a scandal into a boast of glory! Hubbard 2002: 214-215.

⁶³ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 806

⁶⁴ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 807, 814-815, and 821 where he links reconciliation, and a new union of man with God which "*Paul calls a 'new creation' (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17).*"

⁶⁵ But, where note Brown's insightful distinctions. Brown 2009: 441.

propitiation/atonement [ἰλαστήριον] which feature in Paul's presentation of salvation, including OT (LXX) insights.

Liberation. Both liberation *from*... and liberation *into*... including adoption is covered (cf., Gal 4:3-7), as is the necessity of salvation; both individually and corporately. This includes incorporation into Christ,⁶⁶ which implies (accordingly?) incorporation into a new creation.

Salvation also has good news attributes with respect to death, life, and eternal life, including bodily resurrection.⁶⁷

(v) The appropriation of salvation

Paul's theology includes the (complex) interacting dynamics of Law, Grace, and Sin. The 'how' issues are unambiguously expounded as well as the themes of Faith, Baptism, Christ, (and the Body of Christ⁶⁸), the designation Church [ἐκκλησία]⁶⁹ (local and beyond⁷⁰) and its relationship with the OT designation Assembly of God's People.⁷¹

(vi) The new life of salvation

The dynamics of Church, Body of Christ, and Head of the Body, loom large in Paul's theology, including individual, corporate, as well as cosmological characteristics.⁷² The fruit of the new life – the place of the Holy Spirit is also a key focus.

Paul makes his own unique contributions to the major NT themes of unity and Eucharist⁷³ as well as the *now* and the *not-yet* of the believer's life in Christ⁷⁴, as well as

⁶⁶ Cf., Harris 2005: 431 referenced above; Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 822f.

⁶⁷ Benedict XVI 2009: 66-71. Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 808. (Cf. Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 812-813).

⁶⁸ Brown 1984: 49-51; Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 823, (Cf. Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 824-825).

⁶⁹ Benedict points out that the term *ekklesia* comes for the first time from the pen of Paul, the first author of a Christian text. Cf. 1 Thes, Benedict XVI 2009: 66.

⁷⁰ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 809, and Brown who sees Paul extend the local church and *the* church beyond that of an earthly reality to one of eternal dimensions. Brown 1984: 49.

⁷¹ Benedict XVI 2009: 49-54; Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 809; Brown 2009: 437-438; Brown 1984: 21-22.

⁷² Benedict XVI 2009: 49-54

⁷³ Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 821, 824-825

⁷⁴ The mystery and the paradox of the Christian life in terms of joy and suffering, including the Christian's participation in the joy and suffering of Christ, is captured in Paul's letters. Cf. Harris 2005: 122-123.

having the Law (OT) revisited and then its relationship with the Law of Christ, the Law of the Spirit, the Law of Love, addressed.⁷⁵

(vii) Evangelization

In Corinth and elsewhere the proclamation [κήρυγμα] of the Gospel is emphasized over that of Greek philosophical discourse.⁷⁶ The latter, of course, retained its rightful place in discipleship and pastoral ministry.⁷⁷

The implications of the Pauline κήρυγμα on the subsequent development of the early Church – again in terms of content and process.⁷⁸

(viii) Eschatology

Paul's was an evolving eschatology, a development very evident in his letters (contrast 1 Thes 1:15-18 with 2 Tim 4:8).⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Murphy-O'Connor 2007: 108-113

⁷⁶ "In this way [the kerygma of the Apostles] Saint Paul offers a model for all time of how to approach theology and how to preach." Benedict XVI 2009: 67

⁷⁷ See the succinct encapsulation and the interrelationship of both by Paul in 1 Cor. Cantalamessa 1994:42. For the further implications of Paul's Evangelization theology for the church today see Section 5.2 below.

⁷⁸ Cantalamessa 1994: 41-45.

⁷⁹ Benedict XVI 2009: 72-77; Fitzmyer *Pauline Theology* 1968: 809-810; Brown 2009: 441-442.

2.2 The origin of Paul's theology of a new creation

2.2.1 Nature, nurture, and identity

In addition to specific commentaries on Second Corinthians⁸⁰ and Galatians⁸¹ the comprehensive research undertaken by a number of scholars, already referred to, on the specific issue of the origin of a new creation in Paul's thinking is referenced.⁸²

Three things are evident from such research. There is a measure of consensus (not universal) that much of Paul's original thinking on new creation can be traced (a) to Old Testament sources and (b) to intertestamental ones. However, there is not the same consensus with respect to the degree that Paul's new creation thinking was also (c) a product of his own personal theology, itself consequential upon his personal encounter with the risen Christ.

The dominant characteristics used by scholars in analyzing these texts come down to how new creation is perceived with regard to anthropological, cosmological, and ecclesiological characteristics – as defined in section 1.2.1 above.

A few preliminary comments are apposite in order to appreciate the limited scope of what is intended in this present chapter.

Firstly, the analysis is undertaken separately for each of the three source classes referred to above, (the Old Testament, Apocalyptic writings of the inter-testament period, and Paul's own Christ-encountered theology). There are, naturally, interrelationships between these three source classes, and these can be quite varied, ranging from being at a high level of independence, such as the apocalyptic Joseph and Aseneth⁸³, to intertextuality of the most intimate kind, such as Paul's explicit direct quotation of Is 49:8 in 2 Cor 6:2, and various combinations in between, such as the authors of the apocalyptic texts of 1 Enoch and Jubilees, and Paul referring to Isaianic texts, perceived as sharing parallel roles as fundamentally interpreters of the OT.⁸⁴ However, the significance of such interrelationships will emerge naturally when the detailed interpretations of the new creation texts are undertaken in chapters 3 and 4.

Secondly, this whole domain of the *origin* of Paul's thinking has been researched exhaustively already and the emphasis in this chapter is to summarize the outcomes from that

⁸⁰ Harris 2005, 1995, Lambrecht 1999, Furnish 1984, Martin 2014, and Thrall 1994.

⁸¹ Matera 1992, Bruce 1982,

⁸² Including: Owens 2012, Jackson 2010, Hays 1989, Russell 1996, Emerson 2013, and Nickelsburg 1972.

⁸³ Hubbard 2002: 54-76.

⁸⁴ Cf., Owens 2012: 102-103.

research as it pertains to our topic. In other words the outcomes and the main reasons for those outcomes arrived at by scholars will be described but not critiqued in detail. Where scholars align and where scholars diverge will be noted but, again, the significance of such views will only become clear in chapters 3 and 4.

The fact that the term new creation is used in the following subheadings does not indicate that those very words occur in all of the sources, but only that at least the notion or concept of new creation does.

2.2.2 The origin of new creation in the Old Testament

The words new creation do not appear anywhere in the Old Testament⁸⁵ and yet scholars freely refer to a whole body of OT texts as ‘new creation texts’.

OT Scriptures which constitute the body of texts from which scholars have drawn in this regard are almost exclusively from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and while scholars cover much common ground, each also approaches their analysis according to their own particular objectives.⁸⁶

Isaiah:

I focus upon Isaiah for the very simple reason that it is generally accepted that Paul’s new creation text in Second Corinthians includes direct allusions to a number of passages in that great book.

2 Cor 5:17

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! NRSV

The first echo from 2 Cor 5:17 is to the Exodus as creation in Is 43:15-19

¹⁵I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.

⁸⁵ Jackson 2010: 17.

⁸⁶ Examples: Owens groups his chosen texts as follows: Is 40:1-11; Is 43: 6-21; Is 52:7-12; Is 57:14-21; Is 65.17-25; Is 66:18-24; Jer 30-31, 33; Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36-37; Ez 40-48; and Ez 47. Owens 2012: 18-68. Hubbard addresses the Isaiah texts as two groups, Is 40-Is 55 and Is 65 and Is 66, and has Jeremiah and Ezekiel texts not unlike those of Owens. Hubbard 2002: Chapter 2.

¹⁶Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
¹⁸Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.
¹⁹I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

As described by Hubbard, the *old* here in Is 43 is the original Exodus (envisaged as the original creation of Israel) and the *new* is the redemption of Israel, the impending return from exile in which Israel is re-created by means of new redemptive act.⁸⁷ Adding,

...the author is also implicitly announcing “a new ‘creation’ of Yahweh’s people.” God’s new act of redemption (the new exodus), is described in terms of the re-creation of his people and, again, Bernhard Anderson states the issue well: “Second Isaiah understands the ‘New Exodus of salvation’ to be a new creation, comparable to the event of the creation of Israel in the first Exodus...The New Exodus will be the climax of Yahweh’s work and, in a profound sense, something never heard of before.”⁸⁸

Locating this Is 43 passage right at the centre of the broader ‘new Exodus’ motif in Isaiah 40-55,⁸⁹ Hubbard says that *“The paradigmatic function of the exodus narrative is admirably illustrated by 43:15–21, described by Kiesow in his study of this theme as the ‘Kernstelle’ of the exodus motif in Isaiah 40–55. This passage offers the closest parallel to Paul’s allusion in 2 Corinthians 5:17.”⁹⁰*

The second echo from 2 Cor 5:17 also contrasts former things with new, but this time the contrast is to a creation of a very different kind as promised in Isaiah 65 and 66.

⁸⁷ Hubbard 2002: 14. Therein he also quotes B. Anderson 1987 *“for Second Isaiah the time of Israel’s creation was the time of the Exodus. When he thinks of Yahweh as the creator of Israel he calls to mind the events of Heilsgeschichte, especially the great miracle of the sea.”*

⁸⁸ Ibid, 15

⁸⁹ Referencing Stuhlmüller 1970 and Anderson 1987 for lexical statistics, Hubbard claims that Isaiah 40-55 contains the highest concentration of creation language in the entire Bible. Ibid, 12.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 14.

Is 65:17-18

¹⁷For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy

Is 66:22

²²For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord; so shall your descendants and your name remain.

If the Isaiah 43 text spoke of anthropological renewal, then the majority⁹¹ of scholars support Hubbard and others in identifying Is 65-66 as the classic expression of cosmic new creation in the biblical tradition. Some scholars, such as Russell, opt to see both anthropological and cosmological characteristics in Is 65-66,⁹² while Owens sees anthropological, cosmological and ecclesiological characteristics in most of these OT Scriptures. The latter goes into considerable detail in the exegesis of these passages but I read his results often as inferences rather than as conclusive as he expresses them.⁹³

Jeremiah [Jer 31:31-34] and Ezekiel:⁹⁴

Each of these prophets brings out characteristics which will feature significantly in the understanding of the New Testament creation texts, namely the distinction between interior life and external observance. Jeremiah's new covenant goes as far as to declare circumcision itself irrelevant (Jer 9:25-26) while Ezekiel brings out the juxtaposition between new spirit/heart and hardness of heart (Ez 11:19-20; 36:26-27). Both prophets also introduce the element of everlasting/eternal into the future envisaged creation⁹⁵ – a factor of particular importance to this present thesis.

⁹¹ Hubbard 2002: 16.

⁹² Russell 1996: 75 FN 110. "*The antithetical formula 'heavens and earth' as in Gen. 1.1 is a widespread phenomenon in the ancient Near East denoting the totality of the universe.*" [and Russell adds some further supporting references].

⁹³ Owens 2012: 40 on Is 43:16-21: "*[Thus], Isaiah's account of the new exodus in Isa 43:16–21 is replete with cosmological undertones, which calls into question any attempt to exclude such notions from the depiction of new creation in the Pauline corpus.*"

⁹⁴ Hubbard 2002: 23-25, treats these together, and while Owens addresses them separately he also acknowledges the very closer parallels between them, Owens 2012: 70-89.

⁹⁵ Jer 32:40; Ez 16:60.

2.2.3 The origin of new creation in Apocalyptic Judaism

The journey of the ancient Hebrew scriptures is replete with moments of rediscovery, reinterpretation, and commentary on the sacred texts, not least at moments of significant transition such as the return from exile, revolts and rebellions, destruction of the temple, etc. The Dead Sea Scrolls have played a role in bringing the awareness of such extra-biblical literature into the public, even into the popular, domain, including Targums such as those of the book of Job.⁹⁶

One of the better introductions to the topic of Apocalyptic Judaism as a whole, and the notion of God bringing eschatological renewal is that provided by T. Ryan Jackson wherein he notes that the concept of new creation was understood in various ways throughout the literature:⁹⁷

The renewal of the world was portrayed both as an incremental progression (Jub. 1:29; 1 En. 45:4-6) as well as a cataclysmic event (1 En. 91:14-16; cf. 2 Pet 3:10,12).⁹⁸ Broadly speaking, the literature may be divided between two approaches to the question of continuity between creation and new creation. Some works envisage a completely new creation (e.g. 1 En 72:1; 91:14-16), usually understood to follow a total destruction of the earth, and others foresee a renewal of the present world (e.g. 1 En. 10:18-22; 45:4-5). These two perspectives may occur in the same book (e.g. 4 Ezra 6:13-16, 24-25; 7:30-32,⁹⁹ 75; 2 Bar 32:6; 44:12-15; 57:2) and it is sometimes difficult to determine which of these ideas is predominant.¹⁰⁰

Two sources come in for special mention by scholars of new creation because they each contain references to new creation – not just to the concept but to the actual words for new creation (in the Ethiopic language sources). As mentioned previously, no OT scripture contains these words.

The two sources being referred to and which are classified as apocalyptic, are 1 Enoch and Jubilees. In this chapter I will look at the outcomes of the study of these two works and then also at one other source, Joseph and Aseneth, because this latter one would have

⁹⁶ E.g., 4QtgJob and 11QtgJob dated to ca. 50AD.

⁹⁷ Jackson 2010: 37.

⁹⁸ Jackson actually had 1 Pet 3:10,12 here (a typographical error).

⁹⁹ Jackson actually had 7:30-2 here (a typographical error).

¹⁰⁰ Jackson references Mell 1989, Russell (but a 1964 work and not the 2002 source referenced in this thesis), Dahl 1956, Schrage 2005, and others.

provided Paul with much in the way of precedent for what he was trying to impress upon the Galatians in particular.

1 Enoch

The book of 1 Enoch is a pseudonymous work that relates a series of divine revelations (supposedly) given to the patriarch Enoch (cf. Gen 5:21–24). It is best described as a collection of related traditions, generally dated to between the fourth and first century BC, concerning Enoch and consisting of five main sections; the Book of the Watchers, The Astronomical Book, The Book of Dreams, The Epistle of Enoch, and The Similitudes.¹⁰¹ The focus of 1 Enoch is generally on “*the coming judgment in which God will adjudicate the injustices that characterize life as the authors and their readers experience it.*”¹⁰²

According to Owens, in the words of one prominent scholar, 1 Enoch is “*arguably the most important Jewish text of the Greco-Roman period.*”¹⁰³ And he concurs, not least because of the occurrence of the phrase new creation in 1 En 72:1. Yet, there is an irony here since little reference is made thereafter by scholars specifically to 1 En 72:1 and its use of this terminology.

Russell actually opens his study with a direct reference to 1 En 72:1, with these words:

The expressions, ‘the new heavens and a new earth’ and ‘new creation’ are rare in the biblical traditions. Yet the idea of a world renewal is widely attested in Jewish apocalyptic writings and is known even in the targumic and rabbinic traditions. The early Astronomical Book of 1 Enoch reveals that nature is to hold its order “till the¹⁰⁴ new creation which abides forever is created” (1 En 72:1).¹⁰⁵

The themes of 1 Enoch centre around the adverse effects upon God’s created order caused by human sin, and possibly by supernatural rebellion as well,¹⁰⁶ and the book describes the commissions given to various angelic agencies (including Raphael and Michael) to aid in

¹⁰¹ Russell 1996: iv.

¹⁰² Owens 2012: 89-90, wherein he references Nickelsburg 2001: xxiii.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 89

¹⁰⁴ Note the definite article. If this is in the original it could explain why some scholars transpose it into the NT wording (which does not have such).

¹⁰⁵ Russell 1996: 1 . Cf., a more substantial quote in Russell 1996: 94.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 132

bringing about “*restoration of the earth and cleansing of the earth*” etc.,¹⁰⁷ such that indeed even the first heaven will be replaced by a new heaven, all with eternal attributes – eternal righteousness and the rebuilding of the eternal temple.¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, in the part of 1 Enoch referred to as The Apocalypse of Weeks, in what Owens refers to as the primary description of new creation, he makes a probable connection between the first heaven/new heaven referred to therein and Is 65-66.¹⁰⁹

The outcomes from the studies by scholars of 1 Enoch are largely optimistic ones containing an inbuilt belief that, in spite of present disorder in creation, God’s creation is viewed as above all “*perfectly good*”.¹¹⁰ Also, with an eye on the three characteristics of new creation that form the parameters of this present thesis, Owens (again) sees evidence for all three in 1 Enoch, stating, “*The scope of new creation in 1 Enoch encompasses not only cosmological renewal (e.g., 1 En. 10:18–19; 11:1; 1 En. 91:16), but also anthropological transformation (e.g., 1 En. 10:3, 18–19, 21; 25:6; 90:32–33, 37–38) and ecclesiological restoration (e.g., 1 En. 10:16, 21; 90:37; 91:14)*”.¹¹¹

Jubilees

As was the case with 1 Enoch, Jubilees is a book which is generally applauded as being a very significant work in understanding Jewish thought immediately prior to the Christian era.¹¹² Opinions vary as to whether it can be (technically) regarded as apocalyptic (an alternative designation attested in ancient writing is that of The Apocalypse of Moses).¹¹³ The book is an account of an angelic revelation given to Moses (cf. Jub 1:27-28) where the topic is a dialogue between God and Moses concerning the history and fate of the Jewish people, embracing sinful waywardness, exile, restoration, and (then) God’s plans for the renewal of his people and his land.¹¹⁴ According to Hubbard, oftentimes the sin of Israel is laid by the author of Jubilees at the door of either Satan or of the Gentiles.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁷ Owens 2012: 90.

¹⁰⁸ Owens 2012: 95.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. The account of the destruction of the ‘first heaven’ and emergence of a ‘new heaven’ in v. 16 probably draws upon Isa 65–66 (cf. 2 Bar. 32:1–6; Jub. 1.29).

¹¹⁰ Russell 1996: 133.

¹¹¹ Owens 2012: 96.

¹¹² So Hubbard 2002: 26, quoting Zeitlin 1934/40, Charlesworth 1981, and Holder 1994. Similarly Owens 2012: 97 with further supporting sources.

¹¹³ Russell 1996: 105. Cf., the discussion on this aspect in Hubbard 2002: 27-28, and in Russell 1996: 105-106,109.

¹¹⁴ Owens 2012: 98.

¹¹⁵ Hubbard 2002: 38-43.

The book has also been categorized by some as a class of “*rewritten Bible*” presenting an interpretive account of the scriptural narrative from creation to the time of Moses.¹¹⁶

It is dated to around the time of the Maccabean conflict, with Hubbard adjusting a previous dating of 100 BC to c. 168-140 BC.¹¹⁷ The title, ‘Jubilees,’ reflects the writer’s division of the Genesis 1 to Exodus 12 text into jubilee periods of forty-nine years.¹¹⁸ In terms of possible relationship with Paul’s subsequent thinking, Jubilees offers insight into the Jewish response to the encroachment of Hellenization and, more particularly, illumination of the Hasidim who may well have been predecessors to the Pharisees.¹¹⁹ As Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee (Phi 3:5; Acts 23:6; 26:5; cf. Acts 5:34; 22:3) and he was called into a ministry to Gentiles, he is much occupied with dealing with Jew/Gentile relationships. Accordingly, the way in which Jubilees deals with Jew/Gentile culture-clash offers helpful comparative material.¹²⁰

If 1 Enoch has one reference to new creation, the phrase occurs twice in the book of Jubilees; in Jub 1:29 and Jub 4:26.¹²¹ Intriguingly, in his pioneering¹²² exegetical study of the relevant intertestamental texts, George Nickelsburg, in assessing Jubilees never references Jub 4:26, and only refers to Jub 1:19 twice: First, (the new creation) in a footnote to his comments on two other texts,¹²³ and again when discussing some Qumran texts.¹²⁴

Again in keeping with our three-fold framework for examining new creation themes (anthropological, cosmological, and ecclesiological) Hubbard places great emphasis upon anthropological renewal and Owens commends him for his ability to (accurately) identify such aspects in Jub. 1:7, 22-23, 29 (where new creation appears), and in 5:12 – in contrast to the absence of anthropological aspects in other works from the Second Temple period.¹²⁵

More than one commentator includes this direct quote from Jub 1:29 which reads:

¹¹⁶ Owens 2012: 97.

¹¹⁷ Hubbard 2002: 26. Owens 2012: 97.

¹¹⁸ Russell 1996: 105.

¹¹⁹ Jackson 2010: 39. Hubbard 2002: 26ff.

¹²⁰ Jackson 2010: 39.

¹²¹ Hubbard 2002: 36.

¹²² Nickelsburg 1972: 9-10, incl FN 5.

¹²³ On the light of the theophany which will replace that of the sun and other luminaries. Sibylline Oracles IV and 4 Ezra 7 in Nickelsburg 1972: 141 incl FN 40.

¹²⁴ Also a footnote reference to luminaries in the context of persecution as a setting in some scrolls. Nickelsburg 1972: 148 incl FN 26. In fairness to Nickelsburg he does allude to new creation when addressing the topic of resurrection (sometimes bodily and sometime as resurrection of the spirit), such as in his exegesis of the mother and her sons in 2 Maccabees 7, where “*Their resurrection involves a new creation*”. Nickelsburg 1972: 107.

¹²⁵ Owens 2012: 98; Hubbard 2002: 36-46.

...from [the time of creation until] the time of the¹²⁶ new creation when the heavens, the earth, and all their creatures will be renewed like the powers of the sky and like all the creatures of the earth, until the time when the temple of the Lord will be created in Jerusalem on Mt. Zion (1:29).¹²⁷

Interestingly, Owens goes on to join the dots between new creation here in Jub 1:29 and Is 65-66. He says:

*Jub. 1:17, 27–29 and Jub. 4:26a point to the presence of a restored temple in Jerusalem within the eschatological age. This temple is connected with Zion traditions within both texts (cf. Jub. 1:28bc, 29; 4:26). The presence of this “sanctuary” is directly connected to the phrase new creation and the renewing of heaven and earth in 1:29. The combination of these textual features thus creates strong links with the “new heavens and new earth” of Isa 65–66.*¹²⁸

In terms of scholars having different perspectives, even though Hubbard will be seen to come down later to a somewhat exclusively anthropological interpretation of new creation, he actually underlines the cosmic renewal dimension of Jubilees.¹²⁹ Indeed, within his conclusions upon the latter, he writes:

*The examination of Jubilees, supplemented through corroborating material, has shown that new creation in apocalyptic was formulated in response to the dilemma as it was perceived by these writers. Particularly important in their analysis of the plight was the oppressive dominion of Satan and the Gentiles, and the book of Jubilees represents an especially eloquent statement of this position. Battling both earthly and heavenly forces, the apocalyptic visionaries felt the cosmos itself closing in around them, and it is hardly surprising that their picture of the future was that of a completely transformed universe.*¹³⁰

¹²⁶ (Again) note the definite article. If this is in the original it could explain why some scholars transpose it into the NT wording (which does not have such).

¹²⁷ Hubbard 2002: 37-38; Jackson 2010: 47; Russell 1996: 107.

¹²⁸ Cf. Section 2.2.2 above.

¹²⁹ Cf., Hubbard 2002: 46-52.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 46-53

In the light of Hubbard's posture with regard to Jubilees, both Owens and Jackson bemoan the fact that he does not associate such interpretation of a cosmological nature when he comes later to consider Paul's use of new creation language in his letters.¹³¹ More about that anon.

Not much more is made by any scholar of new creation of the second occurrence of new creation in Jubilees. For interest, the Jub 4:26 reference to these words does occur elsewhere in studies of Apocalyptic Judaism, including being identified as one of "*the four places that belong to the Lord*".¹³²

Joseph and Aseneth

This work is referenced by Thrall and Hubbard, with only a passing comment by Nickelsburg¹³³. Hubbard's purpose is unambiguous and, from amongst all of the Apocalyptic works it is the most readable.

The story is a narrative that dates from before the 6th century AD; Hubbard dates it to between 100 BC and 100 AD.¹³⁴ And I personally see significant value in this story not only because of the whole Gentile (pagan) element which became central to Saul-become-Paul in his dealings with the Gentiles (and Jews) of Corinth and Galatia, but because it zones in upon the issue of communal identity, itself dependent upon personal and individual identity, a factor which became a key marker for me in this study.¹³⁵

Without going into the considerable detail which Hubbard (along with his rich collection of other sources) recounts, a few elements of the book are worth mentioning in the light of Paul's new creation texts which we shall come to in due course.

¹³¹ Owens 2012: 98; Jackson 2010: 39-40.

¹³² Cf., Andrew Geist, James C. VanderKam 2012, *The Four Places That Belong to the Lord (Jubilees 4:26)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0951820712467877>

¹³³ And that in a footnote to this text in his exegesis of the Isaianic Exaltation Tradition [particularly Is 52-53 – "*exaltation of the persecuted ones and the (impending) judgment of their persecutors*"]. Nickelsburg 1972: 81-92 incl 92 FN168. Given that Nickelsburg's focus is primarily anthropological this is surprising.

¹³⁴ Hubbard 2002: 55, who classifies it as a Hellenistic romance of Diaspora Judaism, *Ibid*, 54.

¹³⁵ Cf., Section 4.1.4 below.

Social setting:

The content clearly reveals that tensions between existing Jewish and Gentile communities are being referred to and addressed, culminating in that “*the polluting effect of intermarriage and of table fellowship with gentiles was of grave concern to the author.*”¹³⁶

New Creation:

Hubbard identifies one text as the thematic centre of the book. Verse, 8:9, introduces the heart of the conversion cycle; the passage in question consists of a prayer offered by Joseph who, after piously dismissing Aseneth’s kiss of greeting on the basis of her status as a Gentile, is so moved by her anguish that he prays for the conversion of the smitten Egyptian. The short prayer is beautiful, expressing thoughts and hopes relevant to this thesis, including creation, human ‘refashioning’, death/life, identity, and eternal life.¹³⁷

Hubbard’s analysis of this prayer and of further aspects of the book are too technical and detailed to be addressed here but his summary comparison of the plights being addressed by the established Jewish Apocalyptic on the one hand and this present story, which he labels a product of Diaspora Judaism on the other, is worth noting:

*In Jubilees, the plight was intimately associated with the historical situation of foreign domination, which was exacerbated through the harassment and enticement of the evil angelic realm. To the apocalyptic visionaries, the answer came in the form of the destruction of the political and spiritual agents of evil, and the reconstitution of the entire created order. In Joseph and Aseneth however, the issue to be resolved was how a pagan, born in sin and nurtured in idolatry could ever become a full member of the family of God. The solution of this community was that the proselyte was re-created by the Spirit of God, so all prior involvements were irrelevant.*¹³⁸

It does not take a huge imagination to see how much it must have meant to St Paul – if he had read this book - to realise that what was previously an impossible aspiration expressed in

¹³⁶ Chesnutt 1988: 24 as quoted by Hubbard 2002: 57.

¹³⁷ Hubbard 2002: 58.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 75-76.

myth and fantasy, was actually now being realised in his own lifetime by the miracle of regeneration; re-creation of anyone, irrespective of their previous identity, be it Jew, Gentile, pagan, slave, free, male, female, rich, or poor. Truly a new creation.

It is worth noting that Margaret Thrall quotes from this same story in her analysis of new creation in Second Corinthians and also emphasises the aspect of the social transformation of the individual with its consequential change in personal status, and seeing it through the prism of an instance of the renewal “*of the one (true) original creation*” than as an anticipation of eschatological events of the future.¹³⁹

2.2.4 The origin of new creation in Paul’s Christ-encountered theology

At this stage in their monographs/papers, some scholars of new creation plunge directly into the New Testament and even into one of the two new creation texts, sometimes allowing in the process for some context¹⁴⁰ but not always.¹⁴¹ Jackson and Hubbard hesitate before doing so. Jackson first has a preliminary chapter, “*Roman Imperial Ideology and Paul’s Concept of New Creation*”,¹⁴² and it is with great reluctance that I resist the temptation to recount the latter’s salient features.¹⁴³

Jackson then adds the comment that, heard in this light, Paul’s expression *καινή κτίσις* could take on important associations not typically recognised in Pauline studies. If the Roman colonies in Corinth and Galatia served as outposts on the imperial frontier, the use of *καινή κτίσις* could very well have suggested the establishment of a new social order very different from that propagated by the imperial ideology.¹⁴⁴

When I first introduced this topic of the origin of Paul’s theology of a new creation,¹⁴⁵ I mentioned that there was some measure of consensus amongst scholars that much of Paul’s original thinking can be traced (a) to Old Testament sources and (b) to extra-biblical ones

¹³⁹ Thrall 1994: 429-422.

¹⁴⁰ Russell has a substantial 26-page contextual introduction. Russell 1996: 134-159.

¹⁴¹ Owens, for example, launches at this point into Gal 6:14-16. Owens 2012: 104. (We can forgive his typo, Gal 5:14-16)!

¹⁴² Jackson 2010: 60-80.

¹⁴³ In accounts of the life of Romulus, Rome’s first king, the term *κτίσις* is used explicitly with reference to the founding of Rome, while Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews* 18:373, actually uses the phrase *καινή κτίσις* (in the plural) in a way perfectly congruent with the typical pagan usage of the founding of a city. Josephus relates how the Jews left Babylon and formed new settlements (*καινή κτίσις*). Jackson 2010: 65. Note: The lexicons of course confirm this meaning of the word *κτίσις*. E.g., Abbott-Smith 1991: 260.

¹⁴⁴ Jackson 2010: 66.

¹⁴⁵ Section 2.2.1 above.

(apocalyptic in nature) of the inter-testament era.¹⁴⁶ However, there is not the same consensus with respect to the degree that Paul's new creation thinking was also (c) a product of his own personal theology, itself consequential upon his personal encounter with the risen Christ.

Hubbard is largely the champion of the latter element, framing the issue around choices or degrees of choice between primary and secondary sources, and he cites Murphy-O'Connor's (valid) criticism of Mell's analysis¹⁴⁷ as particularly illustrative of this error in methodology.¹⁴⁸

In order to give specific emphasis to his approach, Hubbard devotes an entire section (Part II) of his monograph to the topic "From Death to Life: New Creation in the contours of Paul's thought".¹⁴⁹ His thesis is essentially one of attempting to place Paul's new creation statements within the theological context in which they are found, his death-life symbolism.¹⁵⁰ I find myself empathizing with such an approach since in my own research what has emerged as the key to unlocking Paul's new creation motif is that of Paul's repeated focus on what constitutes being in Christ¹⁵¹ which, I would argue, is the more over-arching theological concept within which Paul's death-life symbolism is located.¹⁵²

No attempt will be made here to summarise the 43 pages which Hubbard devotes to this aspect, but a quick glance through a couple of windows into his analysis will not go amiss.

In his chapter 5, he first places the notion of death-life symbolism within the broader context of socio-religious anthropology. Then, borrowing from Robert Tannehill, he distinguishes between those passages in Paul in which dying and rising with Christ form the basis of the new life, and those Pauline passages in which the structure of the new life is expressed. The former, according to Hubbard, is best illustrated by what Paul had to say in Rom 6:1-14; 7:1-6, and in Gal 2:19-20, and he devotes chapters 6,7 and 9 to this aspect on the understanding that "*it is to this family of texts that 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 belong*".¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ The so-called extra-biblical material witnesses to the way in which the biblical material was understood at that time whereas Paul's own experience of Christ and thinking about it was expressed and articulated by means of the biblical tradition as re-written in the intertestamental period.

¹⁴⁷ Section 1.2.1 above refers.

¹⁴⁸ Hubbard returns to the question of 'prejudicial selectivity' later in his book when he questions limited domains of interpretation within the secondary literature itself. Hubbard 2002: 43.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, chapters 5-9, 77ff.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 77

¹⁵¹ The expression 'being in Christ' is as understood in its broadest sense, such as also to include Christ in us/me, and (ultimately) Christ being all in all/being in all, etc.

¹⁵² Sections 3.4 and 4:4 below, refers.

¹⁵³ Hubbard 2002: 77, 79-90.

Alongside this material, Hubbard addresses, in chapter 8, The Pauline Antecedents, confining himself however almost exclusively to primary sources, firstly the OT Scriptures¹⁵⁴ and then to the relevant NT texts in Romans and Galatians.¹⁵⁵

How all of this contributes to the actual interpretations of the Pauline new creation passages will become evident in chapters 3 and 4 below, but I want to emphasise at this stage that I agree with Hubbard full heartedly that

*...his (Paul's) experience of the risen Christ was powerful enough to establish an independent foothold in the apostle's thought, and this regenerative encounter he likens to new birth...and that the primary context for the explication of Paul's religious symbolism must be Paul's letters themselves, along with the historical-social contexts in which they were penned.*¹⁵⁶

2.2.5 Terminology concerning the origin of Paul's theology of new creation

In addition to the monographs which have provided most of the secondary source material on this topic, a number of other scholars have made recent contributions in the form of research papers. One such is Douglas J Moo, who in his 2010 paper on this topic,¹⁵⁷ essentially endorses the perspective of the previously referenced sources but contributes some independent insights of his own including the point that the actual phrase new creation, while indeed appearing in the extra-biblical sources, never occurs in the OT. This goes along with his methodological distinction between the concept (and indeed concepts) of new creation and the language, new creation.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ In the context of Spirit and Life, Hubbard does include some Qumran material but having done so, concludes that the scholarship referenced in this regard "leaves the reader considerably underwhelmed". Ibid, 118.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 120-122

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 90

¹⁵⁷ Moo 2010.

¹⁵⁸ The latter point is a critically important distinction.

2.3 The approach to the interpretation of the two new creation texts

In terms of the order of composition, Galatians was written prior to Second Corinthians but that in itself is no reason why the analysis needs to follow in that order.

Both letters share the element of defence which Paul has been obliged to make as a result of personal criticism which had been directed against him. Such criticism included attempts to undermine Paul's claim to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, an apostle upon equal par with those of the Jerusalem community under the leadership of James the 'brother of the Lord'. The likely identity of the various critics will be discussed in the context of each letter.

I address Second Corinthians first and Galatians second, for a few simple reasons. There is more mileage to be gained by analysing 2 Cor first as it is the richer in relevant context. It is accordingly the better platform for covering common or related aspects which, in turn, minimizes duplication of thought when discussing Galatians, which, it goes without saying, has its own very distinct elements unique to its situation, and accordingly, one needs to be discerning in not assuming that what was applicable to the Corinthian situation automatically applies equally to Galatians.¹⁵⁹

The form which the analysis will take for each letter will be as follows:

- (i) Each letter will be discussed initially in the context of the corpus of Paul's letters, with regard to the theme of creation/new creation and then the new creation passage will be discussed in the context of the letter as a whole.
- (ii) A suggestion will be made as to what constitutes the main message of each letter and a perspective given on how that relates to the new creation passage of the letter.
- (iii) A comment will be made upon an issue regarding the prevailing translations of the new creation passage – namely the insertion of verbs absent in the original Greek text.
- (iv) The interpretations of new creation which emerge from the analysis in the letter will be discussed and a perspective proposed.
- (v) The assumption of 'implied verbs' in each letter will be interrogated and an alternative rhetorical-based interpretation proposed.
- (vi) A possible broader scope of a mutual relationship between Paul's being in Christ and new creation in the relevant letter will be explored.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Hubbard echoes this sentiment – with the caution though that one should not a priori rule out legitimate parallels where such apply. Hubbard 2002:187, 222.

¹⁶⁰ As explained in chapter 4, the analysis undertaken in chapter 3 suffices for both.

Chapter 3. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians

3.1 Second Corinthians in the context of the corpus of Paul's letters with regard to the theme of creation/new creation

3.1.1 Broad context

In section 2.2 (the origin of Paul's theology of a new creation) we considered those Old Testament passages which may well have helped to form the thinking of the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus about the notion of a new creation. One of the texts which featured large in that analysis¹⁶¹ was the (First) Exodus motif, Is 43:16-21, and specifically, 18-19a (Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?) and it is broadly acknowledged that 2 Cor 5:17 (So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!) as a metaphor for a (New) Exodus, is the only point in the undisputed letters where Paul explicitly links new creation with the OT.¹⁶²

That said, Second Corinthians (and Galatians) are not the only NT Pauline passages which touch upon the themes (if not necessarily the terminology) of creation/new creation, and scholars generally agree that the creation theme in Second Corinthians while (obviously) having a direct affinity with Galatians, also has echoes with a number of texts in Romans (Rom 6:1-14, 7:1-6, 8:1-17, and 8:18-28).

The new man/new self element of new creation in 2 Cor also evokes echoes from Ephesians (Eph 2:15, 4:24) and Colossians (Col 3:10), while Owens also links new creation with certain passages in Colossians (Col 1:15-20) and breaks new ground in his thesis by making a comprehensive study of new creation as a *concept* (noting the absence of new creation *terminology*) in Ephesians 1-2.¹⁶³ The Ephesians and Colossians connections are of particular interest to me as they include insights into the aspects of *mystery* and *identity* which are important to this present study, being somewhat neglected in other treatises. The relevant specific references will be given when the detailed interpretation is given in section 3.4 below.

¹⁶¹ Section 2.2.2

¹⁶² Owens 2012: 131.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 176-243

3.1.2 The Corinthian church

The Christian community of Corinth would always hold a very special place in Paul's heart, not least because of their reception of his proclamation, κήρυγμα, of the Gospel¹⁶⁴.

I am emphasizing this up front because I believe that this factor of the κήρυγμα to be the underlying power behind what Raymond Brown meant when he said that 2 Cor may well be the most oratorically persuasive of all of Paul's writings.¹⁶⁵ Brown went on to refer specifically to 2 Cor 5:16-21 (which includes our new creation text) as a passage of remarkable oratorical power.¹⁶⁶ This characteristic of Paul's manner of communicating will play a significant role later in this thesis when the existing interpretations of 2 Cor 5:17 are interrogated.¹⁶⁷

3.1.3 A window into Second Corinthians

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is well known for its polemical character, an aspect which it shares with his letter to the Galatians. This common characteristic (albeit for different reasons) is explained, in part, by the other common characteristic of these two epistles; they are both letters in which Paul felt obliged to defend himself against accusations leveled against him¹⁶⁸. These accusations came to him via the members of these two communities but originated, at least partly, from elsewhere – generally understood to be from Christians of the Jerusalem church¹⁶⁹ under the leadership of James.¹⁷⁰ It is unfortunate that Second Corinthians is often remembered for its polemics, because, as already emphasized, what actually undergirded all that Paul said in this letter, as in his epistles generally, was his deep love for the Christians of Corinth.

¹⁶⁴ 2 Cor 2:4; 6:11. Cf. Lambrecht 1999: 31, 117.

¹⁶⁵ Brown 2009: 541.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 545

¹⁶⁷ Section 3.5.

¹⁶⁸ Although the motivation is different (there is no personal defence involved), the same characteristic applies to parts of Paul's letter to Titus in his polemics against the character of the people of Crete, not least against those fellow Christians who are of 'of the circumcision'. Ti 1.10ff

¹⁶⁹ The contending apostles who were so critical of Paul (whom Paul labels as false apostles, 2 Cor 11.13) may well have come from the church of Judea, but that does not automatically imply that in speaking out against Paul they were doing so with the backing of the Jerusalem church leadership.

¹⁷⁰ Again, if this is where the criticism had originated from, it had done nothing to lessen the zeal with which Paul raised up financial support from amongst 'his' churches for the Christian brethren suffering famine in that region. Acts 11.29-30. 2 Cor 8-9.

3.1.4 Historical and contextual

Paul's Second Missionary Journey (c. AD 49-52) included Corinth, while his Third Missionary Journey (c. AD 53-57) included revisits to South Galatia¹⁷¹ towns, new visits to North Galatia areas and a revisit to Corinth. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is dated to AD 56-57 and was (probably) sent from Ephesus. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians is dated to late AD 57. However, this 'second' letter may have been either just a single letter or a composite of a number of individual letters.¹⁷²

Of the thirteen letters which bear the name Paul those to the Galatians and to the Corinthians together with Romans, are the four referred to as the Hauptbriefe (*main letters*), the (generally agreed) undisputed letters of Paul in terms of authorship. Three others are also regarded as undisputed by some scholars, namely Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon.

3.1.5 Literary aspects and structure

2 Cor (as we now have it) follows the general pattern of letters of that age. In 2 Cor, consistent with that pattern, four parts are recognizable: the Opening Formula (itself consisting of supplementary information – sender, addressee, greeting), followed by a Thanksgiving, the Body of the letter, and finally the Concluding formula of greetings and blessings.

For structure with respect to content, the body of 2 Cor can be structured at various levels of detail. Brown has three subsections, (Paul's relations with the Corinthian Christians, The collection for the church in Jerusalem, and Paul's response to challenges to his apostolic authority.)¹⁷³ Harris affirms Brown's three-fold division (namely Chapters 1-7, 8-9, 10-13) as normative amongst most commentators.¹⁷⁴ At a macro level, Lambrecht also has effectively the same divisions, but after isolating the opening and the closing, separating out the matter of Paul's reliability from chapter 1, and likewise Titus's return from the rest of chapter 7, he lays out his slightly more detailed structure in five parts (Paul's Reliability, Paul's

¹⁷¹ See section 4.1.2 below.

¹⁷² Opinions vary as to whether the total number of letters written by Paul to Corinth were the two which we have in the NT along with one lost letter (the so-called 'tearful' letter), or actually as many as five letters of which we have various fragments. Lambrecht 1999: 8-9. Irrespective of such theories, for the purposes of this thesis the two letters, First and Second Corinthians, are treated in the form and structure in which we have them today. We are on safe enough ground for adopting this posture. Brown 2009: 548-551.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 542, 548-551 incl 551 FN 25

¹⁷⁴ Harris 2005: 114.

Apostleship, Titus' Return, The Collection, Paul's Self-Defense), the whole letter broken down further into a total of 18 subdivisions.¹⁷⁵

In terms of content, Harris captures the essence of Paul's theology identifiable in Second Corinthians within eleven items: The Godhead, Salvation, The Gospel, The Church, Apostleship, Christian Ministry (in the sense of pastoral service, with five sub-characteristics), The Christian Life, Suffering, Stewardship, Satan, and Eschatology.¹⁷⁶

It follows that, while the new creation passage (2 Cor 5:17) is *structurally* located in the first part of the letter (Paul's relations with the Corinthian Christians) *thematically* we shall see (in section 3.4) that it encompasses more than one theme, touching certainly at least upon Salvation, The Church, and Cosmology.

In terms of the literary context of 2 Cor 5:11-21, and bearing in mind what was said above (a) about a number of originally individual letters probably contributing to the finished product that we have today, and (b) as to how the thirteen chapters of 2 Cor can be structured from content and thematic points of view, for our purposes chapters 1-9 (with the exception of six contiguous verses)¹⁷⁷ will be treated as a self-contained subunit, as will chapters 10-13.

If verses 16 and 17 of 2 Cor 5 have been lauded as being amongst "*the most famous in the whole of the New Testament*,"¹⁷⁸ the letter itself has often¹⁷⁹ been described as Paul's most personal letter, and the personality, as well as the heart of the person of Paul, is manifest from as early as the opening chapter's verses 3-4, right through to chapter 7. After illustrating this claim with multiple references,¹⁸⁰ Hubbard concludes that there is an emotive dynamic to 2 Corinthians which must be reckoned with... "*in which Paul has placed himself conspicuously in the mid-point of this letter, and this is evidenced in the way he personalizes its argument and themes, but he does so in a manner which does not sever these seven chapters from the situation in Corinth.*"¹⁸¹ Added to which, I will be drawing attention (particularly in section 3.5) to the 'spoken/speaking' characteristic of the manner in which

¹⁷⁵ Lambrecht 1999: 10-11

¹⁷⁶ Harris 2005: 114-125.

¹⁷⁷ 2 Cor 6:14-7:1. Hubbard 2002: 133 refers, who, in turn, references Murphy-O'Connor and Furnish.

¹⁷⁸ Martyn 2014: 269 as quoted by Hubbard 2002: 131.

¹⁷⁹ Seven scholars are referenced in Ibid, 134

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 134-135

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 135

Paul expresses himself in this particular letter.¹⁸² This will prove to be an important element in both the interpretation and translation of 2 Cor 5:17.

It will be posited below (section 3.2) that the theme of reconciliation permeates the life of the church of Corinth – at multiple levels – and that the axis of Paul’s message in that regard is structurally located at the new creation text, 2 Cor 5:17, midway through the letter.

3.1.6 Theological frameworks

When it comes to theological frameworks, the salvation-historical framework of the first nine chapters of 2 Cor is frequently noted, in which the promise-fulfillment schema features prominently, illustrated particularly by 2 Cor 1:21-22 and 2 Cor 5:5. This is developed comprehensively by Hubbard and will not be repeated here. It is worth just noting that, in the context of promise-fulfillment, terms such as promise, down-payment, guarantee, and pledge, occur to give tangible effect to this notion when referencing the action of the Spirit, all of which must also take cognisance of “*the Jewish traditions which lurk behind nearly every turn of phrase in this segment.*” We also must not be shy to see the personal ecstatic experiences of Paradise which he recorded in this very letter, as central to the formulation of Paul’s theology – both as expressed in this letter and in others.

3.1.7 Paul’s defence and his opponents

A considerable¹⁸³ amount of ink has been expended upon the *Gegnerfrage*¹⁸⁴ issue in 2 Cor and we will take it up again in section 3.4 and more especially in section 3.5. But, for our purposes in this thesis, what will become clear is that it is not a ‘battle of orators’ as such which is the source of contention in this letter (Paul is supposedly poor at it and his opponents are perceived as wonderful) but rather the differences in heart attitudes and values (Paul’s humble proclamation of the scandal of the Cross contrasted with self-promoting boasters exercising oratory for financial gain or for societal prestige or even for political – ambassadorial - positions).¹⁸⁵ Yes, *political*; there is a reason why Paul refers to himself, right at the heart of the new creation passage in this letter, as an *ambassador*¹⁸⁶ for Christ.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Cf., Hubbard 2002: 134-135, 150.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 141

¹⁸⁴ The question of the opponents of Paul.

¹⁸⁵ Cf., Hubbard’s thorough treatment of this issue, Ibid, 168-170.

¹⁸⁶ Α πρεσβεύω - 2 Cor 5:20. Cf., Eph 6:20. Cf., Abbott-Smith, 377: *πρεσβεύω (< πρέσβυς), 1. *to be the elder, to take precedence.* 2. *to be an ambassador* (v.s. πρεσβύτερος): 2 Co 5:20, Eph 6:20.†

¹⁸⁷ Cf., also section 3.5 below.

3.1.8 Newness and creation

As mentioned previously, much of the debate around Paul's deployment of *new creation* (καινή κτίσις) is occupied with the issue of whether the transformation implied by the words καινή κτίσις refers to an anthropological, cosmological, or ecclesiological newness or combinations of some or all of these elements. We will address each one in turn, but doing so conscious that they are not regarded (by most scholars at least) as mutually exclusive.¹⁸⁸

3.1.9 Anthropological newness

With the exception of Mell (and to a lesser sense some others¹⁸⁹) scholars are generally agreed that Paul's meaning of καινή κτίσις includes at least an anthropological one (either exclusively or together along with other elements), and this is supported by the wider context within Second Corinthians where four concepts (but not necessarily the exact same wording) are introduced by Paul. These are: the new man (καινός ἄνθρωπος), interior transformation contrasted with outer behaviour (ἔσωθεν/ἔξω), renewal by the Spirit (κατεργάζομαι), and Adam/Christ (Ἀδάμ/Χριστός). While these four anthropological elements are obviously tightly interrelated with one another, we will first look briefly at each one of these four separately in the wider context of 2 Cor.

(a) Transformation and the New Man (καινός ἄνθρωπος)

Unlike Ephesians and Colossians, Second Corinthians does not deploy anywhere in the letter the actual words καινός ἄνθρωπος together as an expression of human transformation, but instead describes those who turn to the Lord as being transformed into his very likeness. The text in question occurs in the third chapter of 2 Cor where the Moses-veil narrative of the Old Covenant in Exodus 34 is contrasted by Paul with the New Covenant: 'Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed... And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.' (2 Cor 3:15-16,18).

¹⁸⁸ Thus Moo argues for a broad view that includes all three. Moo 2010: 42

¹⁸⁹ Mell is singled out by Hubbard as the odd man out both on methodological and content grounds; likewise to a lesser extent Cousar and Schneider. Hubbard 2002: 6, 36 incl FN 47, 88, 175 incl FN 230, 179, 185.

Herein, Paul deliberately alters¹⁹⁰ the verb in the OT which describes Moses as entering in (εἰσπορεύομαι) before the LORD (Ex 34:34) to anyone turning (ἐπιστρέφω¹⁹¹) to the Lord (2 Cor 3:16) and thus being transformed into the image (εἰκόν) of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18). The nearly universal agreement amongst scholars is that this change in the verb introduces the idea of conversion.¹⁹²

(b) Inner/Outer Transformation (ἔσωθεν/ἔξω)

The authentic transformation of the inner man at the level of the human heart is spelt out in the fourth chapter of 2 Cor, ‘so we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day... because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.’ (2 Cor 4:16, 18). Paul here echoes the transformation of the prophesied inner man of Jeremiah/Ezekiel which we identified previously as likely contributors to his new creation motif (including Jer 31:31-34 and Ez 11:19-20; 36:26-27).¹⁹³

Notwithstanding my caution about binary mindsets¹⁹⁴, there is prolific evidence that inner/outer antitheses are liberally scattered throughout the six chapters of 2 Cor 2-7. For one subset within that long part of the letter, 2 Cor 3:4-4:6, Gerd Theissen’s observation that “*the train of thought is antithetical throughout*”,¹⁹⁵ receives support from Hubbard who adds, with strong endorsement from a number of scholars,¹⁹⁶ “*that ‘similar evaluations can be found in every paragraph of this prolonged (six-chapter) digression,*”¹⁹⁷ and in support he tabulates a series of internal vs external characteristics with an emphasis particularly on *interiority* (where the word *versus* is emphasized by Hubbard):

3.1–3 ink on tablets of stone versus the Spirit on tablets of human hearts

3.6 letter versus Spirit

4.6–7 internal treasure versus external vessel of clay

4.7–12 visible affliction versus invisible life

4.16 outer person versus inner person

¹⁹⁰ So Hubbard 2002: 155.

¹⁹¹ G1994 ἐπιστρέφω, from G1909 and G4762; to *revert* (literally, figuratively or morally): - come (go) again, convert, (re-) turn (about, again).

¹⁹² Ibid, 157-158.

¹⁹³ Section 2.2.2. Cf. Also Ibid, 139.

¹⁹⁴ Section 1.3 refers.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in Ibid, 152.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 152.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 152.

4.18 *seen versus unseen*

5.7 *walking by faith versus walking by outward appearance (εἶδος¹⁹⁸)*

5.12 *boasting in appearances versus boasting in the heart*

This terminology is recognised as covenant language, “or more precisely, *New Covenant language*, as Stockhausen explains: ‘It is entirely typical of the new covenant which Paul ministered, the new covenant of Jeremiah 38:31–34 (LXX), to be interior, to be in the heart.’”¹⁹⁹

As emphasised in Section 2.2.4, much of what Paul spells out in 2 Cor is intensely flavoured by his own personal experiences, but in describing the impact on himself interiorly of his encounters with God, he incorporates the hearts of those to whom he is writing, encouraging them to own what they too have received as a result of being illuminated by the risen Christ, ‘For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ (2 Cor 4:6 cf. Gen 1:2-3). Hubbard is quite correct to emphasize that

the apostle offers his own experiences as somehow typical of believers generally (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν)... Entirely in keeping with the dominant themes of 2 Corinthians 2–7, Paul presents the significance of this momentous apocalypse not in terms of what happened around him but in terms of what happened within him (cf. Gal. 1:16).²⁰⁰

Finally, with respect to the inner/outer motif, one may ask how close really is the link between it and the new creation passage of 2 Cor? The answer to this is more than implicit as the transformation role of the Holy Spirit in 2 Cor will demonstrate.

(c) Transformation and Renewal by the Spirit (κατεργάζομαι²⁰¹)

The bridge from what has been expounded above and 2 Cor 5:17 is to be found near the beginning of chapter 5, ‘...so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.’ (2 Cor 5:4b-5). This, of course, reiterates what Paul had already spelt out in the sealing and giving of

¹⁹⁸ This translation of εἶδος (as against ‘sight’) is attributed to Furnish, Collange, and Thrall.

¹⁹⁹ Hubbard 2002: 152.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 158-159.

²⁰¹ 2 Cor 5:5.

the Spirit as early as in 1:22 deploying the same terminology of *pledge, promise, guarantee*, etc (ἀρραβώνα). After first quoting Murphy-O'Connor²⁰², Hubbard goes on to question his translation of *κατεργάζομαι*, suggesting that “prepared for” is deficient in terms of the dynamic creative power being referred to here:

The force of the verb κατεργάζομαι, however, is obscured by rendering it “prepared.” To be sure, the word can bear this nuance, though this meaning is poorly attested²⁰³ and not in line with Paul’s usage. More appropriate to the context and lexical evidence would be ‘to fashion’ or ‘create.’²⁰⁴

If the verb *κατεργάζομαι* has been validly interpreted here, then the proposed creation terminology of 2 Cor 5:5 not only underlines the transformation role of the Spirit in 2 Cor 3:18, but also provides the bridge between the inner/outward motif of 2 Cor 4:16 above and the creation terminology of 2 Cor 5:17. In fact it is claimed that it “serves to explicate Paul’s *καινή κτίσις* statement found there.”²⁰⁵

(d) Transformation and Adam/Christ (Ἀδάμ/Χριστός)

At the risk of stating a truism, these four anthropological aspects of new creation which we are analysing in Second Corinthians (new man, interior/outer, Spirit renewal, and Adam/Christ) are closely, even intimately, related to one another, and yet the particular characteristics of each aspect contribute distinctive insights into what constitutes Paul’s concept of a new creation. Thus while Adam/Christ shares much with that of the new man, including that of the image (εἰκών) of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18), the latter was developed above with respect to Moses, whereas here we shall be examining its relationship with the original creation and the person of Adam.

From his first letter to them (not to mention what he had previously spelled out verbally to them in person from the beginning²⁰⁶) the Corinthians would already have been more than familiar with Paul’s references to Adam and to the (original) creation: ‘...for as all

²⁰² Murphy-O’Connor “*God has prepared us for eschatological life by giving us the down-payment of the Spirit*” in Hubbard 2002: 138.

²⁰³ Hubbard 2002: 138 references the Lexicons as well as Furnish and Thrall.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 138 adding, “*The larger context suggests that Paul has in mind the re-creative work of God’s Spirit which effects transformation into the eikon of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4 –6). This same idea is clothed in metaphor in 2 Cor 3:3, where Paul describes the Corinthians as ‘epistles of Christ...written by the Spirit.’*”²⁰⁴ Ibid, 138, with extensive references throughout.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 139.

²⁰⁶ 1 Cor 15:1ff. (1 Cor 15 will feature prominently again in section 3.4 in the course of the fine-grained exegesis of 2 Cor 5:17.)

die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ (1 Cor 15:22)²⁰⁷, and later in that chapter, after quoting directly from Gen 2:7²⁰⁸, he states, ‘...As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image (τὴν εἰκόνα) of the man of heaven.’ (1 Cor 15:48-49).²⁰⁹

One might ask, ‘what brought the image of Adam to mind - to Paul’s mind?’

At least two elements are at work here, one in the distant past and one in the immediate past; one in the heritage of the person named Saul and the other in the person who became Paul after his encounter with the risen Jesus. The apostle’s Hebraic roots are unambiguous in the deployment of his Adam-Christ typology in his 1 Cor 15:45-49 reading of Genesis,²¹⁰ and aligns historically with the literature of the Second Temple period with its increased interest in Adam and the eschatological restoration of the glory which was his prior to the Fall.²¹¹ And while not belittling this influence in any way, I concur with the perspective that it was the recent past²¹², specifically Paul’s encounter with the risen Jesus, and his revelation of Christ as the true εἰκὼν [of Christ] ‘the glory of God in the face of [Jesus] Christ’,²¹³ which led to Paul’s deployment of Adam and not only his prior understanding of Adam as the image of God.²¹⁴ Such a dominant influence upon Paul’s Adam/Christ motif is widely attested in the literature; Hubbard references twenty sources.²¹⁵

Unsurprisingly, the Adam-Christ typology will recur in this chapter, but viewed through a different window, namely when the aspect of newness with respect to the cosmological aspects of Paul’s thinking are addressed.

²⁰⁷ Cf., Rom 5:12-21 as per Hubbard 2002: 157.

²⁰⁸ In 1 Cor 15:45.

²⁰⁹ See all of 1 Cor 15:45-49; Cf. Rom 5:14; Phil 3:21; Col 1:15.

²¹⁰ Cf. Gen 1:26-27; 5:1, 3; 9:6. So Hubbard 2002: 157.

²¹¹ Hubbard 2002: 157, where the further association of Paul’s Genesis-imagery with the Wisdom literature is made, wherein it speaks of Wisdom (σοφία) as ‘the untarnished mirror of God’s active power, the εἰκὼν of his goodness,’ (Wis 7:26) and ‘For God created humanity for immortality, as the εἰκὼν of his own nature’ (Wis 2:23).

²¹² Cf. section 2.2.4 above.

²¹³ 2 Cor 4:6.

²¹⁴ So, Sayoon Kim, as quoted by Hubbard 2002: 158 in his comments upon the parallelism of 2 Cor 3:18, 4:4, and 4:6.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 158. Included amongst his 20 sources referenced here are Fitzmyer 1993b, Lambrecht 1994d, and Thrall 1994. Cf. also Hubbard 2002: 185.

3.1.10 Cosmological newness

Many interpreters of 2 Cor 5:17 (particularly in recent years) have intentionally opted for wording which points to a cosmological rather than an anthropological understanding of the newness being referred to in this verse, or, at least, strives to keep the interpretation open to more than one (prescribed) interpretation. The NIV translation is typical, ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the²¹⁶ new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!’, which stands in stark contrast to the familiar, and obviously anthropological, reading (at least in its protasis) of the NKJV ‘Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.’ This interpretation issue is taken up as an important consideration in its own right later in this chapter;²¹⁷ and is only mentioned here in order to make the point that a cosmological understanding of *καινή κτίσις* is regarded by a number of scholars as an element of newness which is to be taken very seriously indeed.²¹⁸ The detailed interpretations of 2 Cor 5:17 which are given later in this chapter²¹⁹ will, in turn, vindicate this posture. For now, we confine ourselves to the letter as a whole.

The noun²²⁰ *κτίσις* is relatively rare in the NT. Of the nineteen occurrences²²¹, it is to be found in only one of the Gospels, in four of Paul’s letters, and the rest in a few other books (see below).

As the root of the word suggests, it has meanings associated with making or creating, including that of a building or a foundation, even the foundation of a city, or that of an ordinance. Translators tend to translate *κτίσις* –

- consistently only as *creation* in Mk 10:6; 13:19, **Rom 1:20, 25; 8:19, 20, 21, 22**, Heb 9:11, 2 Pt 3:4, and Rev 3:14;
- consistently only as *creature* in **Rom 1:25** and Heb 4:13;

²¹⁶ As previously queried, one wonders where the deployment of the definite article here was based upon?

²¹⁷ Sections 3.3 and 3.5.

²¹⁸ I experience a certain tension within Moo’s posture on the cosmological interpretation of new creation. On the one hand he clearly is a champion of it, but then has chosen the overarching phrase with which to label it as the “*new state of affairs*”, inaugurated through Christ’s first coming and to be consummated at his second coming. Moo repeats this terminology as a continuous thread throughout his paper. Moo 2010: 39, 47, *passim*. This expression is far too low key for a new creation which (as I shall argue) is to be equated with being in Christ. The return from Babylon was ‘a new state of affairs’, just as the Exodus had been, but Paul’s new creation is a ‘now and not yet’ transformation having eternal consequences on all of the three axis under discussion.

²¹⁹ Sections 3.4 and following.

²²⁰ The twelve occurrences of the related verb *κτίζω* in the NT do not add any distinctive insights to our topic.

²²¹ Mk 10:6; 13:19; 16:15. Rom 1:20, 25; 8:19,20,21,22, 39; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Col 1:15, 23; Heb 4:13; 9:11; 1 Pt 2:13; 2 Pt 3:4; and Rev 3:14.

- as either *creation* or *creature* in Mk 16:15; **Rom 8:39; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15, Col 1:15, 23;**

- and usually as *ordinance* in 1Pt 2:13.

The Pauline texts are shown in **bold** above, and although Second Corinthians and Galatians are the only letters which contain the phrase *καὶνὴ κτίσις* Paul's words with regard to creation in his letter to the Romans contribute cosmological insights into our understanding of new creation. Of course Romans is a later epistle than Second Corinthians but, obviously, carries considerable weight as a reliable source of Paul's personal thinking.

As anticipated in our previous section,²²² it is in the Adam/Christ (Ἀδάμ/Χριστός) contrast that significant cosmological elements appear in Romans alongside those of the anthropological. A summary headline of these insights could read as follows: In the OT story of creation, the earth was cursed because of Adam's sin (Gen 3:17-19; 5:29); and so, unsurprisingly, as we noted previously in Chapter 2, aspirations for a new heaven and a new earth are to be found in the OT prophets (Is 65:17; 66:22) and in dreams for the same in Apocalyptic Judaism. (We dealt with these in some detail in Chapter 2.²²³) Accordingly, as part of his contrast between Adam and Christ²²⁴, Paul (Rom 8:18-23) speaks also of Christ's healing effect on all material creation (including the human body). It will be freed from the bondage of decay and brought to freedom.²²⁵

As we trace the argument at a more detailed level, in defining our terms we understand that the *creation* referred to is to non-human creation.²²⁶ The theme of such a creation in need of redemption does, however, have its initial references to *κτίσις* back in Chapter 1 (v.20, 25) of this great epistle, where, in a context of judgment upon humanity, God's wrath is revealed to people for not recognising and glorifying God for his creation. The indictment is given a forceful emphasis in that people are actually accused of intentionally suppressing the truth (Rom 1:18-20), a charge repeated 'because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature (*κτίσις*) rather than the Creator,' (Rom 1:25) when the penalty due is about to be enunciated²²⁷. As shown here, the use of *κτίσις* in this verse is

²²² See (d) immediately above.

²²³ Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 refer.

²²⁴ Cf., Romans Chapter 5, in particular Rom 5:12-21. Cf., Hubbard 2002: 157.

²²⁵ Brown 2009: 569.

²²⁶ Jackson 2010: 150.

²²⁷ From Rom 1:16 onwards.

translated by the majority of scholars as creature.²²⁸ In terms of the fall of Adam, the anthropological sense dominates in Romans for the first seven chapters, but then, in Romans 8, the link, the causal link, between Adam's sin which brought death upon humanity (Rom 5:12f), and Adam's sin which adversely affected creation – its 'bondage of corruption' – emerges; the γὰρ which connects Rom 8:19 to Rom 8:18 suggests just such a causal connection,²²⁹ and echoes the original connection explicitly stated in Gen 3:17.²³⁰ God was the 'subjugator' there and, despite various debates on the matter²³¹, God is the subjugator referred to in Rom 8:20 notwithstanding that five alternatives have been presented in the literature for the role of subjugator: God, Christ, Satan, humanity and, the most commonly held opinion, Adam.²³²

The text in question reads much more sensibly if the words **in hope** are attached to the beginning of verse 21 instead of where it currently is conceived to reside at the end of verse 20. If we lay out the relevant text in question (and drop the numbering), the positive tone – and the positive message – within which the origin of the subjugation resides, moves us from that negative origin of the coupled problem (humanity and creation) to the coupled solution (humanity and creation):

...for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, **in hope that the creation itself** will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God...²³³

The thesis being that creation itself is affected by human sin, and that creation is redeemed when humanity is redeemed.²³⁴ This (claimed) close link between creation and humanity is further supported by the above passage, with its personification of creation,²³⁵ and (again) we encounter OT echoes therein from both Jeremiah and Isaiah: Jer 4:27-28 (LXX) records YHWH's devastating judgement upon the land which compels the earth itself to mourn (πενθείτω ἡ γῆ). In Is 24:4-7 (LXX) the earth (γῆ) is said to mourn (πενθέω) as a

²²⁸ Jackson 2010: 151. Who also adds that the final occurrence of κρίσις in Romans (namely 8:39) should be understood similarly to Rom 1:25. Most translations of 8:39 do suggest this sense anyway, expressing it as either 'any other creature' or 'anything else in all creation'.

²²⁹ Ibid, 157.

²³⁰ Ibid, 152 and supporting sources.

²³¹ See the following.

²³² See the argument in Ibid, 157-158.

²³³ Rom 8: 20-21

²³⁴ Jackson 2010: 156f

²³⁵ Ibid, 159

direct result of human sin, ‘the earth is lawless on account of its inhabitants (Is 24:5)...’ The resulting curse affects both the natural world as well as humanity.²³⁶

To complete the coupling picture, creation, as exemplified in the personified expectation it has for humanity to come into *its* expected revelation (Rom 8:19), waits expectantly no less for *itself* (v.21), namely to (jointly) share in the same liberty expected (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι) by and for humanity.²³⁷ And the credibility of all of this rests upon the hope in the personal resurrection of every believer. In other words, the Christ event, in all the dimensions in which Paul experienced and appreciated it, is central for his listeners/readers; the importance of the resurrection of Jesus cannot be overstated²³⁸, no matter which aspect of this radical newness we are considering. For Paul, the resurrection of believers is the resurrection *of* the body,²³⁹ and not redemption *from* the body.²⁴⁰

Given the valuable insights which Rom 8 gives us in regard to the anthropological-cosmological interrelation aspects of God’s intended newness for his creation, a comment upon the only other Pauline text²⁴¹ which contains the word κτίσις is apposite, namely Col 1:15, 23. More than apposite actually since some scholars regard Rom 8 as not only a critical commentary on the new creation text of Second Corinthians, but equally on the transformation described in Col 1:15-23, with both its cosmic and anthropological elements. Russell observes,

According to Romans 8, which Moule calls the best commentary on this verse (Col 1:20), humanity’s sin has disrupted the harmony of the created order. In dealing with the sin of humankind God also has dealt with creation’s plight. On this view of reconciliation, the entire universe has been²⁴² returned to its divinely created and intended order through the resurrection. In Christ the universe has been restored under its proper head, accomplishing cosmic peace.²⁴³

²³⁶ Ibid, 160

²³⁷ Ibid, 162

²³⁸ Ibid, 163

²³⁹ The point being the solidarity of our bodies with the whole of creation.

²⁴⁰ See Jackson’s defence of this viz a viz Lietzmann’s contrary assertion. Jackson 2010: 163, FN 78. Cf., The insightful and clinical defence of the corporality of the resurrected bodies of believers (pages 175-176) within the whole topic of the Resurrection of the Dead in Ratzinger 1988: 165-194.

²⁴¹ That is, of course, apart from Gal 6:15.

²⁴² Note the past tense!

²⁴³ Russell 1996: 184.

The similarities between Romans and Second Corinthians in the literature have not been as widely noted as those between Romans and Galatians²⁴⁴, and some interesting questions have been posed, such as “*If Paul’s understanding of new creation is similar in Galatians, Second Corinthians and Romans, why does he not employ the term *καὴν κτίσις* in Rom 8 which is clearly cosmic in its scope?*” Jackson answers what is his own question by referring to Paul needing to be politically savvy and to avoid using a term which could have set alarm bells ringing in Rome given the imperial ideology prevalent at the time.²⁴⁵ The relationship between Romans and Second Corinthians is actually a strong one, and it is intriguing and encouraging to see Jackson draw upon the authority of such a distinguished scholar as Murray Harris to endorse the Romans/2 Cor relationship, specifically with regard to Jackson’s claim that the same movement from suffering to glory in his own life which Paul lays out in 2 Cor 4:16-5:10 may be observed in Rom 8:17 where Paul embarks on a discussion of future glory in the context of creation (cf. 2 Cor 5:17).²⁴⁶ Jackson then goes on to substantiate Harris’ claim that “*the nearest (Pauline) parallel to 2 Cor 4:16-5:10 as a whole is Rom 8:18-25*”.²⁴⁷

The Christ event had been the originator of personal transformation; it had been inaugurated but would only reach completion with the resurrection of their own individual bodies. The cosmological transformation was likewise a consequence of the Christ event, but there was little or no evidence that it had even been inaugurated – not withstanding the fact that Paul had clearly already²⁴⁸ given a ‘start date’ for all of this transformation, it was the date of the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah from the dead. At best, his listeners (the Jewish-Christian listeners?) would catch the vision, with the consequential hope, that the hopes of Isaiah that God would create new heavens and a new earth (Is 65:17) would be realised (perhaps even in their lifetime?) and that, in turn would secure the assured existence of the people of God as also prophesized by Isaiah:

For as the new heavens and the new earth,
which I will make,
shall remain before me, says the Lord;
so shall your descendants and your name remain. (Is 66:22).

²⁴⁴ Jackson 2010: 165.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 166. Cf. Ibid, 148-149.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 165.

²⁴⁷ Harris 2005: 409, FN 254; Jackson 2010: 165.

²⁴⁸ To the Corinthians at least. We shall deal with this in section 3.4 when we unpack the key Second Corinthians passage in detail.

However, such “descendants” were not to remain unchanged. Something new was destined to replace the old:

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth,
do you not perceive it? (Is 43:18-19)²⁴⁹

And with this reference to ‘your descendants’ the issue of the ecclesiological newness of creation presents itself.

3.1.11 Ecclesiological newness

When Isaiah foresaw ‘your descendants’ what did he expect his listeners/readers to perceive? And is it also (consequently) what Saul-become-Paul perceived? Is such reflected in his letters?

The former was originally addressed in section 2.2.2 above, including the explicit expectation of God re-creating his people through a new Exodus; the *old* above in Is 43 is the original Exodus (envisaged as the original creation of Israel) and the *new* is the redemption of Israel, the impending return from exile in which Israel is re-created by means of new redemptive act.²⁵⁰ Owens is particularly strong on the new Exodus motif being reflected in passages of Second Corinthians other than the one which explicitly refers to new creation:

*(Within) 2 Cor 6.1–18. The Isaianic quotations in 2 Cor 6.2b and 2 Cor 6.17abc, in particular, have significant implications for grasping the significance of new creation in this letter. As with 2 Cor 5.17, both of these texts clearly link Paul’s argument with Isaiah’s new exodus (cf. Isa 49.9–13; 52.7–11). Significantly, these two Isaianic passages suggest the new exodus is associated with the restored Zion/Jerusalem and the redemption of the nations (cf. Isa 49.1, 6–8, 12, 14–26; 52.7–10).*²⁵¹

Other scholars agree but can be more nuanced.²⁵²

With regard to the perception of Saul-become-Paul, this can be answered with confidence – and beyond. Paul was privileged to perceive, even incarnationally so, happening before his

²⁴⁹ Cf. Section 2.2.2 above.

²⁵⁰ Section 2.2.2, quoting Hubbard 2002: 14.

²⁵¹ I have found Owens’ research to be thorough but he sometimes draws conclusions from inferences. In the present instance, he says that, “*While the search for Paul’s logic in 2 Cor 6.1–17 may be arduous at times, there are ample grounds to presume that this passage builds upon his statements in 2 Cor 5.11–21.*” Owens 2012: 173. Cf., also Owens 2012: 153.

²⁵² Jackson admits that the degree to which Isaianic language actually influenced Paul’s writing about new creation is difficult to ascertain. Jackson 2010: 113.

eyes, the whole grand picture of the OT prophets in which the Gentiles also would be incorporated into ‘your descendants’. These, however, would be recreated descendants, people re-born, irrespective of their anthropological origins (Jew or Gentile), constituting God’s new people. Paul’s letters are replete with this foretold eschatological event occurring in his midst, and not least he being God’s instrument thereof!

Accordingly, the anthropological newness which we addressed in section 3.1.9, has a corporate dimension which, (as far as we can tell), had not even been so explicitly envisaged by the prophets, namely the re-creation of Jew and Gentile into one new type of person, the one ‘new man’ of Eph 4:24²⁵³, consequent upon being baptised into the Messiah (Christ) Jesus (Rom 6:3-10), the ‘old man’ having died and his new life ‘hidden with Christ in God’ (Col 3:3).

As stated, ecclesiological newness in the Pauline corpus is extensive, far too much to cover here, but we cannot end this section without at least including some of the elements so evident from Paul’s first letter to the church being addressed in this chapter, the church at Corinth.

The concept of oneness out of diversity (without eliminating the intrinsic diversities) permeates First Corinthians: the variety of references in the text to the body²⁵⁴ of Christ and the many being that one very body²⁵⁵, explicitly that both Jew and Gentile experience birth (into a common single new body) through baptism (a new birth),²⁵⁶ which in turn finds its ultimate transformation in bodily resurrection.²⁵⁷ There can hardly be a more attractive prospect of newness for humanity!

This oneness is, of course, not to be understood apart from the broader motif of ‘being one in Christ’. This latter notion, so prevalent in Paul, and encompassing anthropological, cosmological, and ecclesiological characteristics, will feature significantly in our unpacking of the meaning of new creation in sections 3.4, and 3.5 (and again, in the parallel sections in Galatians, 4.4, and 4.5).

²⁵³ Cf. Eph 2:14-16.

²⁵⁴ Paul’s use of the body is the classic Christian use of the metaphor of the body as a symbol of social unity (cf. Rom 12:4-5); cf. Eph 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:1-16; Col 1:18-24; 2:17-19; 3:15). Collins 1999: 460.

²⁵⁵ 1 Cor 12:16-17.

²⁵⁶ 1 Cor 12:12-13

²⁵⁷ 1 Cor 15:20-23.

3.2 The main message of Second Corinthians and how it relates to the new creation passage of the letter

Murray Harris may well indeed be correct in concluding that the main purpose of this letter was to build up (edify) the community, and he references 2 Cor 10:8 and 13:10 (and also 12:19) to this end.²⁵⁸ However, that would have required all sorts of levels of reconciliation,²⁵⁹ and *the* reconciliation which provides the ultimate reference point for healing and restoration is the one described in chapter 5 of the letter. This was the reconciliation whose instigator was God (5:18), which was motivated by Divine love (5:14), effected by God-in-Christ (5:19, 21), and whose beneficiaries are those who are in Christ (5:17). This act of reconciliation was one of such magnanimous and generous merciful love that it cries out for a response (5:20).

That is what I see as the main appeal²⁶⁰ of this passionate letter with the new creation passage as its very nucleus. Martin endorses this Reconciliation perspective,²⁶¹ and when Harris undertakes his detailed exegesis of the new creation passage, his conclusion, based upon the theological content of the word group that relates to reconciliation, is that *“It is little wonder, therefore, that some scholars regard reconciliation as the ‘leading theme’ or ‘center’ of Paul’s thought and ministry.”*²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Harris 2005: 51-54.

²⁵⁹ Cf., Lambrecht 1999: 106.

²⁶⁰ At a more localised level, Lambrecht emphasises that for the passage 2 Cor 14-21 itself, *“...it would seem that the appeal to reconciliation in v.20 can be called the centre of vv.14-21”*. Lambrecht 1999: 100.

²⁶¹ In the original preface to his commentary, Martin said, *“The key element in Paul’s relations with this [Corinthian] community may well be stated as reconciliation.”* He then further expanded upon the significance, and the necessity, of such a theme in the church and in the world of today. Martin 2014: 8-9.

²⁶² The scholars whom Harris references here include, Kim, and Martin, (and the latter’s sources, J. Weiss, T. W. Manson, H. Ridderbos, and P. Stuhlmacher). Harris 2005: 435 incl FN 79.

3.3 The prevailing translations of the Greek text of 2 Cor 5:17 on the assumption of ‘implied verbs’

Before plunging ourselves immediately into the various interpretations of 2 Cor 5:17, an issue needs to be addressed briefly, namely the practice, practically universal amongst scholars, of inserting implied verbs into the text during the translation process.

This is not necessarily an unusual occurrence during the translation of ancient texts. Furthermore, of the four units that comprise the verse, the first two are taken to be obviously elliptical:²⁶³ ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις. Accordingly, it is not regarded as a significant issue, certainly not a violation, to supply the implied verbs –especially the verb ‘to be’.²⁶⁴ If that is so, why is it being raised as an issue in this instance?

It is an issue because not only do virtually all translators of the Greek text of 2 Cor 5:17 into English compensate for implied verbs by inserting them, but, as will become evident, scholars who have, as it were, made up their minds upon a particular interpretation based less on the text itself but on other considerations (e.g., the influence of Apocalyptic Judaism upon Paul’s thinking) or the desire to ‘square the circle’ of conflicting interpretations, translate the text to reflect this perspective.²⁶⁵ That does not inherently render the resultant interpretation and translation incorrect but it can circumscribe the scope of possible interpretations. As already mentioned, such a conundrum is not, of course, unique to this particular text, and, as Ratzinger has pointed out, may indeed be unavoidable in certain instances.²⁶⁶

In what follows, (a) the new creation text is first quoted within its immediate context of 2 Cor 5:16-19, using the NRSV translation. (b) Then the Greek text from the UBS version is shown (with the literal wording in English underneath it). (c) This is followed by the Greek-English interlinear as given by the UBS interlinear. (d) Then, twelve translated versions of 2 Cor 5:17 are given, all of which are in English. These are followed by the Latin Vulgate version accompanied by English translations of that Latin text.

²⁶³ Harris 2005: 430. Thrall 1994: 424, attributes the literary construction to ‘Paul’s elliptical style’.

²⁶⁴ Indeed it is recognised that “implied verbs” are part of Greek literature (also Koine). As we shall see in what follows it is the question of *which* verb is implied; understandably, different interpretations will result in different verb choices.

²⁶⁵ As indicated below, in the case of the diverse variety of implied second verbs which is inserted into the text of 2 Cor 5:17.

²⁶⁶ In 1977, in the last book of his to be published prior to being consecrated bishop, *Eschatology – Death and Eternal life*, the then fifty year-old Joseph Ratzinger with regard to Luke 17:20-21 readily admitted that the statement in question was so hard to translate that every translation had to be an interpretation. Ratzinger 1988: 32.

Editorial note 1: Because of the technical nature of what follows in this section, particularly the role played by interlinear text, the word-formatting, including font size, has been intentionally adjusted for readability purposes in parts of this chapter.

Editorial note 2: As previously mentioned, the default NT version deployed throughout this thesis is that of the NRSV, and consequently the source of the text of a passage of Scripture will only be shown if different from that of the NRSV. Here in this present chapter (and in its Galatians parallel chapter 4.3) given the very purpose of this chapter, the contrasting versions are being quoted.

(a) **2 Cor 5:17** (In its immediate context, 2 Cor 5:16-19)

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷**So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!** ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

(b) **2 Cor 5:17** (The original Greek text with the literal English wording underneath it)

ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά.²⁶⁷
so that if anyone in Christ a new creation the old things passed away behold has become new

The Greek text shown here is as per the UBS *Greek New Testament* version, with its included punctuation – commas after Χριστῷ and παρῆλθεν and a terminating full stop after καινά. The original Greek manuscript text has no punctuation.²⁶⁸ It is worth pointing out that the UBS apparatus does indicate four possible versions of the Greek text of verse 17 based upon different original ancient manuscripts. With a confidence factor of {B}, UBS favours the one shown. This is hardly surprising given that included amongst its manuscript sources are P⁴⁶, Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) and Codex Vaticanus (B). No supposedly implied verbs are reflected in any of these four original Greek language manuscripts, the only difference being that the other three manuscripts add a word alongside the second occurrence of the adjective *new* (καινός) at the end of the verse (καινά), namely the word παντα²⁶⁹ [πᾶς], (*all or all things or everything thing*) in three slightly different grammatical constructs.²⁷⁰ That said, it will be evident from what is shown below that many translations do include the words ‘everything has become new’. This does not necessarily mean that such translators are endorsing the alternative manuscript sources; the point is simply that the verb γέγονεν (third person,

²⁶⁷ 2 Co 5:17. UBS 1983.

²⁶⁸ See, for example, the Sinaiticus version - <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>, Quire 83, Folio 7.

²⁶⁹ παντα – adjective, nominative, plural, neuter of πᾶς.

²⁷⁰ Thrall 1994: 424, FN 1634 summarises in a succinct note, why the shorter version (i.e., the UBS preferred version) has better attestation than those which add the παντα.

perfect, singular) requires a noun as subject. Some translators opt to see καινά in this role (the new has come) which I think works quite well; amongst the latter some scholars introduce an extra word (the new *order* has come). Other options available are ‘he (she), it, or everything (referencing τὰ ἀρχαῖα) has become new’; some translators in so referencing even translate the singular verb γέγονεν with the plural ‘all things have passed away’. All of these will be found amongst the translations below.

(c) 2 Cor 5:17 (The Greek-English UBS Interlinear)

ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά.
 so that if anyone [is] in Christ [he is] a new creation; the old things passed away, behold he has become new

The UBS Interlinear translation shown here inserts an implied verb, the [is] bracketed as shown – ‘if anyone [is] in Christ’. All English translators insert this verb ‘is’, and is not an insertion challenged in this thesis, nor will it be commented upon any further.

(d) Various English translations, all of which insert one or more verbs and other words that are not in the Greek text:

As shown below, some of the translations indicate by means of *italics* where some of their insertions have been made; others do not.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!
 NRSV

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
 NKJV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the²⁷¹ new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
 NIV 2011

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!
 NIV 1984

So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; new things have come.
 NAB

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
 KJV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
 ESV

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.
 NASB

²⁷¹ One wonders where the justification for the definite article in this translation came from?

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order has passed away; see, a new order has begun
Harris²⁷²

So that if anyone (is) in Christ, (that one is) a new creation: the old passed away, behold the new has come
Lambrecht²⁷³

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation
Furnish²⁷⁴

Consequently, if anyone is in Christ, there is a newly-created being: the old has passed away, behold the new has come.
Thrall²⁷⁵

The Latin Vulgate reads as follows with English translations of the Latin beneath it:

Si qua ergo in Christo nova creatura, vetera transierunt: ecce facta sunt omnia nova.
Lambrecht²⁷⁶

If then any be in Christ a new creature, the old things are passed away. Behold all things are made new.
The Douay-Rheims translation²⁷⁷

If [there is] in Christ a new creature, [then] the old [things] have passed away: behold all [things] have been made new.
Translation of the Latin by Lambrecht²⁷⁸

So, if any new creature is in Christ, old things have passed away: look! Everything has become new.
Translation of the Latin by Harris²⁷⁹

Clearly, as we proceed with the interpretations the diversity of interpretation is already very evident.

²⁷² Harris 2005: 430.

²⁷³ Lambrecht 1999: 96-97.

²⁷⁴ Furnish 1984: 332.

²⁷⁵ Thrall 1994: 400.

²⁷⁶ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

²⁷⁷ New Advent Multilingual Bible.

²⁷⁸ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

²⁷⁹ Harris 2005: 430.

3.4 Interpretations of 2 Cor 5:17 as reflected in the prevailing translations

UBS Interlinear:

ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά.
so that if anyone [is] in Christ [he is] a new creation; the old things passed away, behold he
has become new.²⁸⁰

NRSV:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see,
everything has become new!²⁸¹

Quite apart from the introductory ὥστε to this verse (*For*, or *So that*, or *Therefore*) which would require explanation anyway, the immediately preceding context, 2 Cor 5:14-16 is key to the interpretation of Paul's new creation, containing, inter alia, insights into Paul's perception – indeed his perceptions – of Christ, no longer according to the flesh.

2 Cor 5:14-15

¹⁴ ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο ὅτι εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν· ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· ¹⁵ καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι. [¹⁴ For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.]

Treating verses 14 and 15 together, in v.14a Paul speaks about how the motivating force within him is his appreciation of the love which Christ has for him, indeed for all of them, evidenced climactically by Jesus' death, 'For the love of Christ urges us on...' (14a). This 'urges us on', is the NRSV's translation of συνέχει ἡμᾶς and is variously translated as compelled or constrained but it is clear from most of the commentators that this is something evoked by the Lord from *within* Paul and not imposed upon him by the Lord from the *outside*.²⁸² Supporting and underlining this interpretation is Paul's understanding of 'the love of Christ'. There are two possible meanings of such love of Christ; either ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ

²⁸⁰ UBS Interlinear 1990: 633. Those words which are bracketed have been inserted along with their brackets by the interlinear translators.

²⁸¹ NRSV 1989.

²⁸² Hubbard 2002: 194. Cf. Ibid, 158-159, 174, 193, 207.

means the love of Christ in the sense of our love for Christ (an objective genitive) or as Christ's love for us (a subjective genitive). The consensus lies with the latter²⁸³ and that surely has to be the determining force at work here.²⁸⁴ However, being alert to unwarranted binary contrasts²⁸⁵ it is reasonable to expect that such love from Jesus, demonstrated by his death on the cross, also evoked a deep love for his Saviour from within Paul²⁸⁶ (as it does from each of us who have encountered the risen Christ) which propelled him out into being the witness that he was.

In these verses,²⁸⁷ the much debated issue of Jesus' death being that of a substitute or as a representative for humans is addressed as well as the equally much discussed, and related, matter of *for which* humans, 'For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that (i) one has died for all [πάντων]; (ii) therefore [ἄρα] all [πάντες] have died. And (iii) he died for [ὕπερ] all [πάντων], so that those who live [οἱ ζῶντες] might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for [ὕπερ] them.' (5:14-15). Again, while neat definitions are helpful they do not necessarily imply binary alternatives as even a compiler of such definitions is quick to acknowledge.

*A substitute dies so that others do not, whereas a representative embodies the community as its delegate and so includes others in his/her sacrificial act (cf. Heb. 7:9–10). This reading is strengthened by 15bc, where ὕπερ certainly carries the more general sense of “for the benefit of.” Substitution may be an appropriate category elsewhere in Paul (e.g., 5:21) and, as (per) 1 Corinthians 5:7–8... the two images cannot be neatly separated.*²⁸⁸

Clearly, substitution also implies 'for the benefit of' and I concur with Harris that in fact both substitution and representation apply here.²⁸⁹ Lambrecht comes to the same conclusion in his analysis of the whole issue of reconciliation.²⁹⁰

As to the issue of *which* humans are being referred to here, the debate centres around the meaning of the word *all* [πάντων/πάντες] taken in conjunction with the expression *those*

²⁸³ Harris 2005: 418 wherein he lists further sources. Cf., Thrall 1994: 400.

²⁸⁴ Cf. also Rom 5:5-8

²⁸⁵ Chapter 1.3.2 above refers.

²⁸⁶ Harris 2005: 419 who also references Zerwick's *Biblical Greek* 1963 §36.

²⁸⁷ Includes the broader considerations of associated usage by Paul elsewhere in his letters, such as Rom 5:8, and 1 Cor 15:3. Harris 2005: 420.

²⁸⁸ Hubbard 2002: 172

²⁸⁹ Harris 2005: 421

²⁹⁰ Lambrecht 1999: 105-106.

who live [οἱ ζῶντες]. The conclusion reached by many scholars²⁹¹ is that the occurrences here of *all* means to all of humanity, and I give the interpretations below which make the most sense to me based upon the literature. But there are problems; one of these occurrences has presented scholars with quite some difficulty in establishing its meaning so I have labelled the occurrences from (i) to (iii) in relating to them:

#(i) one has died for all [πάντων]. This means that Jesus Christ died for all of humanity without exception, in every age – before and after his time. Whether all of humanity accept this gift²⁹² of Jesus’ representation/substitution is another matter.

#(ii) therefore [ἄρα] all [πάντες] have died. What this expression means remains a mystery to me²⁹³. A new sentence ‘All have died’ (without the ‘therefore [ἄρα]’,²⁹⁴) would make some sense, or likewise, ‘in Adam all have died’ would have been meaningful²⁹⁵; but I am not alone in this dilemma, many scholars seem to be in much the same boat,²⁹⁶ while others make a confident and specific assertion about it which eludes me.²⁹⁷

#(iii) he died for [ὑπὲρ] all [πάντων], so that those who live [οἱ ζῶντες] might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for [ὑπὲρ] them. This repeats the wording of occurrence #(i) but in addition adds that some of those for whom Jesus died live; they receive a new life. Not all of humanity is included here, ‘those who have died with Christ must respond and live for Christ’.²⁹⁸ Accordingly, ‘those who live’ constitute a new category of persons²⁹⁹, and Thrall ventures into creation/recreation terminology at this point,

having affirmed the fact of Christ’s death on behalf of humanity, Paul now indicates that its purpose was to bring to an end man’s self-centred existence. This is the essence of the fallen state, and its destruction through Christ’s death as the

²⁹¹ Not all.

²⁹² Cf., Rom 5: 15, 16.

²⁹³ Cf., Rom 6:8 But *if* [εἰ] we have died with Christ...

²⁹⁴ The problem seems to lie with the fact that the particle ἄρα is dominantly expressing a consequence. Accordingly, ‘therefore’ is to be preferred to ‘then’ (the latter is deployed by the NKJV). This issue is not resolved in either Abbott-Smith 1921 reprinted 1991: 57, nor Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 544.

²⁹⁵ Romans Chapter 5.

²⁹⁶ Including Harris 2005: 420-421 and Thrall 1994: 409-411. Thrall explores six different interpretations but remains dissatisfied with all of them. Hubbard, intentionally excludes it from his study for reasons of scope and relevance to his theme but references Thrall favourably in the process. Lambrecht’s interpretation “...in the death of the new Adam, Christ, all died because of their sins and died (to sin); cf. v. 15(b)” is not convincing. His reference to 15(b) makes no allowance for the qualifier ‘...so that those who live [οἱ ζῶντες]’. Lambrecht 1999: 94.

²⁹⁷ So, Owens: While some have understood the phrase εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν in a substitutionary sense, it nonetheless is strongly reminiscent of Paul’s first Adam/second Adam typology (note the corollary assertion ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον in 2 Cor 5.14d). Owens 2012: 141.

²⁹⁸ Lambrecht 1999: 95.

²⁹⁹ Harris 2005: 423. Likewise Lambrecht 1999: 95.

*representative of fallen mankind makes possible a new kind of existence with the risen Christ at the centre.*³⁰⁰

The text itself points to the responsibility which comes with having such regenerated/re-created lives, and Hubbard captures this in a succinct sentence which merges the anthropological with the ecclesiological, “*The movement of thought between verse 14 and verse 15 is from the universal (πάντες) to the ecclesiological (οἱ ζῶντες),*³⁰¹ as Paul spells out the behavioral consequences of dying with Christ.”³⁰² I would just add, the consequences of dying and rising with Christ; the received hope of rising with Christ – eternal life - manifests itself in joy-filled service.

2 Cor 5:16

Ὡστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα· εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν.³⁰³ [16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view³⁰⁴, we know him no longer in that way.]

This verse opens with a time statement which is essential for the expanding significance of new creation, ‘From now [νῦν] on, therefore, . . .’ The question is immediately posed: which *now* is Paul referring to? Two interpretations dominate the debate: that this *now* is ‘the great turning-point of conversion’³⁰⁵, contends with the interpretation that this *now* signifies a new age “the turn of the ages in the death and resurrection of Jesus”.³⁰⁶ The third option, that elements of both are evident in Paul’s statement makes sense to me, as it does to others.³⁰⁷ Hubbard does make a very convincing argument for the influence of Paul’s own

³⁰⁰ Thrall 1994: 411-412.

³⁰¹ Here, Hubbard 2002: 173 references Breytenbach 1989: 184.

³⁰² Hubbard 2002: 173.

³⁰³ 2Co 5:16 BNT

³⁰⁴ The NRSV translation here (the default translation for this thesis) in certain respects anticipates the debate by this choice of wording for κατὰ σάρκα; ‘according to the flesh’ would be preferable.

³⁰⁵ Hubbard 2002: 173-174, who holds with this view, references Windisch 1924: 184 as well as nine other scholars, including Furnish 1984: 312, Lambrecht 1994: 369 and Thrall 1994: 415. (However, see footnote below).

³⁰⁶ Hubbard 2002: 173-174, who opposes this view, references Martyn 167: 274, unsurprisingly Mell 1989: 366-367, and six other scholars.

³⁰⁷ Harris 2005: 426; Owens 2012: 145-146; Jackson 2010: 132. I also find that, contrary to Hubbard’s previous assertion (referenced above), Thrall suggests that in this statement Paul ‘probably’ has the moment of his own

personal conversion on his use of this *now*, but unnecessarily overplays his hand by insisting upon limiting it to this meaning.³⁰⁸ Harris catches the more all-embracing sense concisely,

The expression ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν, common in the papyri (Deissmann 253), means ‘from now on,’ ‘henceforward,’ ‘for the future,’ with the point of orientation (implied in ἀπὸ) being not the time of writing or even the time when Paul reached the conclusion of vv. 14-15 (cf. κρίναντας, v.14),³⁰⁹ but the time of salvation that was inaugurated with the death and resurrection of Christ (cf. the repeated νῦν in 6:2)³¹⁰, that is, the new age, and more particularly the time of Paul’s own conversion.³¹¹

Thrall does indeed express the same sense, succinctly so, while also adding some very valuable examples of its usage by Paul elsewhere:

The phrase [ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν] in its ordinary sense means “from now on”, “in the future”. But the word νῦν occurs with some frequency in the Pauline letters to refer to the present time in which the Christ-event conditions the existence of believers.³¹² The force of the ἀπὸ here must be “from the very beginning of” this salvific period, whether this be the Christ-event in itself or the moment of Paul’s conversion, when it became a reality in his own existence. Since, in v.16b he is speaking in all probability of the change in his own estimate of Christ, it is likely that it his conversion that is chiefly in view.³¹³

conversion in mind, Thrall 1994: 415. Lambrecht in his latest commentary actually seems to ignore the ‘now’ (as *henceforth*) completely, Lambrecht 1999: 95.

³⁰⁸ Hubbard 2002: 174.

³⁰⁹ Here, Harris 2005: 426 references both Moffatt and Plummer.

³¹⁰ Here, Ibid, 426 references Cambier, Tannehill, Martyn.

³¹¹ Ibid, 426 where, for his closing comment, he references Kim and Thrall (also, see Footnote below)..

³¹² Thrall 1994: 414, includes the following in a footnote: Rom 3:21, 26; 5:9, 11; 8:1; 13:11; 2 Cor 6:2, and also cross-references to Furnish 1984: 312, who draws attention to Is 48:6, where the prophet speaks of the Lord as having done ‘new things’ (τὰ καινά·, cf. the καινά of 2 Cor 5:17) ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν.

³¹³ Thrall 1994: 414-415. Moo accepts the individual conversion element in all of this but gives pre-eminence to the cosmological, and (with the support of the Isaiah texts) holds firmly to the old age/new age contrast and references J Louis Martyn in support. Moo’s perception of the relationship between the two perspectives is very telling when he asserts that “...*this individual renewal is a part of a larger picture*”. Moo 2010: 53-55. He then goes on to posit cosmic renovation as an aspect of this new age (based upon Rom 8:19-22, and Col 1:20) on top of the foundation provided by the OT and Apocalyptic Judaism. He does so, however, with the humble admission that “*my argument is not logically fool-proof, it is still a strong one.*” Moo 2010: 55-58.

The above reflection on ‘from now on’ is clearly of particular significance for what Paul would refer to in the following verse as new creation – not least the time period from which such new creation may be considered to have been inaugurated.

In assessing 2 Cor 5:16a we have not yet considered the ‘therefore’ [ὥστε] with which, in the Greek text, the verse opens, and in now doing so, it makes sense to consider the verse in full, ‘From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.’ (2 Cor 5:16).

There are in essence three aspects to be addressed.

First, are the words *we regard* (or *we know*)...according to flesh [κατὰ σάρκα] translated by the NRSV shown here as ‘from a human point of view’ to be read adjectivally, modifying both ‘no one’ and Christ? Alternatively, are they to be read adverbially, modifying the two verbs ‘regard’ [οἶδαμεν] and ‘we once knew’ [γινώσκομεν]. In other words, is the declaration about the individuals and also the person (Christ) being spoken about or is it about Paul himself? This is discussed in the literature in great detail and whereas the former meaning was the one held historically, the latter now is largely agreed to be the correct interpretation.³¹⁴ In essence Paul is admitting that he had misjudged Jesus of Nazareth, and one of the lessons that he had learned from that experience was that he (and he uses ‘we’) must not pass ‘judgement of Jesus or any other person according to fleshly human standards’³¹⁵. Scholars go on to suggest that in speaking out like this Paul is also implying that this is how the Corinthians have been evaluating *him* (this passage is therefore also part of his defence), and Hubbard quotes Murphy-O’Connor’s appraisal of 2 Cor 5:16a in support of this perspective, “*Paul is thinking of those who assessed his performance as a minister by the standards applied to pagan orators.*”³¹⁶ We shall evaluate the significance of this dramatic comparison in more detail in section 3.5

Secondly, the nature of Paul’s previous evaluation of Christ, and even more importantly the nature of Paul’s new evaluation of Christ, need to be understood. I eliminate

³¹⁴ Hubbard 2002: 174-175; Harris 2005: 426.

³¹⁵ Ibid, 175.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 176, quoting Murphy-O’Connor 1991a: 59.

immediately the speculation that what is expressed here is a hypothetical situation.³¹⁷ On the contrary, his previous estimation of Christ had been real, and painfully so when he recalled the degree to which he had persecuted the church of Christ (1 Cor 15:9, Phil 3:6, Gal 1:13, 23) because of his “*completely inverted image of Jesus*”,³¹⁸ an image which, following Hubbard’s line of thought, consisted of a conflict between his Jewish messianic ideas and the reality of Jesus as a condemned and crucified heretic (cf. Dt 21:22-23 and Gal 3:13).³¹⁹ On the other hand, Paul’s changed understanding of Christ must surely have been sharpened by the way in which the Damascus Christophany³²⁰ was underlined by Jesus’ self identification by name as the one whom Paul was *persecuting* (Acts 9:5).

Thirdly, what was the nature of the *knowing Christ* which Paul refers to? In my opinion, the previous knowing was of a depth and nature which did not even come close to the changed knowing³²¹. Two Greek verbs for *knowing* (οἶδα and γινώσκω) occur in this verse, ‘From now on, therefore, we regard [οἶδαμεν] no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew [ἐγνώκαμεν] Christ from a human point of view, we know [γινώσκομεν] him no longer in that way.’ (2 Cor 5:16).

*In Classical Greek, the two verbs used here for knowing are usually distinguishable in meaning, οἶδα signifying the possession of knowledge, ‘know (of/about)’, and γινώσκω denoting the acquisition of knowledge, ‘come to know,’ ‘ascertain’. More generally, οἶδα is pointing to knowledge that comes by insight or intuition without intermediate means, and γινώσκω is conceived as portraying knowledge that is gained by instruction or observation or experience.*³²²

However, as Harris goes on to explain, such distinctions cannot be consistently maintained for Hellenistic Greek or for the NT in particular,³²³ and that is evident to me certainly in that Paul’s previous knowing Christ and his changed knowing of Christ are

³¹⁷ Ibid, 176, mentions this as a proposal from certain scholars, including Furnish 1984, 313 and Bultmann 1985, 156, but does not entertain it.

³¹⁸ Ibid, 176 quoting Hengel 1967, 60-89.

³¹⁹ Hubbard 2002: 176. Cf. Harris 2005: 429.

³²⁰ So Hubbard 2002: 176

³²¹ This is stressed by Lambrecht in language which, quite rightly, emphasises the radical significance of such a radical change, not only with regard to the person *of* Christ but that brought about *by* Christ “...*the ontological change effected by Christ (vv. 16-17)*” – pointing ahead to the change implicit in being (becoming) a new creation. Lambrecht 1999: 103.

³²² Harris 2005: 427.

³²³ Ibid, 427.

expressed by the same verb, γινώσκω. Paradoxically, this repeated usage of γινώσκω still surprises me because they were patently two very different kinds of knowing. Paul's previous knowing of Christ had to be a 'know about' type of knowing; he had never personally met Jesus. In contrast to this, the changed knowing was consequent upon his personal encounter with the risen Christ, who identified himself by name ('I am Jesus') and personally addressed him by name ('Saul, Saul') doing so moreover in Paul's native tongue, Hebrew ('τῆ Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ') a factor which Paul evidently counted as very significant in terms of the relationship which was established from that moment onwards between the risen Christ and himself (Acts 26:14).³²⁴ Perhaps this just bears out the validity of Harris' point about such distinctions not being rigidly maintained in the NT.³²⁵

It is evident from this analysis of verse 16 that one of the main outcomes was a pastoral one for the Corinthian church, '...therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view'. Paul's own self-identity had changed, had been changed radically. With that came a radical new understanding of the identity of others; from 'now on' an identity based upon nationality, heritage, social status, intellectual or physical characteristics, gender, etc, meant nothing. And he collectively incorporated – actually inculcated - this thinking into his Corinthian disciples '...we regard'. External attributes are not only meaningless, they are only external appearances and misleading. Historical attributes count for nothing, all that matters is what has happened and is happening on the inside of people.³²⁶ Paul's encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus had been followed immediately by his encounter with Ananias, and Harris places great weight upon the content and the dynamics of that latter encounter, "*When Ananias addressed Saul as Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ (Acts 9:17; 22:13) 'Brother Saul,' it was not only a case of one Jew greeting another, but also, and more importantly, one Christian welcoming another into the community of the Messiah.*"³²⁷ Accordingly, consequent upon his conversion, Paul, who now recognised and proclaimed Jesus as Messiah and Lord, also viewed Gentile believers as Abraham's offspring, fellow citizens, brothers and sisters in Christ, and regarded fellow Jews who were unbelievers in Jesus equally in need of salvation in Christ.³²⁸

³²⁴ This, of course, was not the only personal encounter and dialogue between the risen Jesus and Paul which is recorded in the NT. Acts 18:9-10, in particular, records the words spoken by Jesus to Paul in a vision during his time in Corinth.

³²⁵ Harris 2005: 427.

³²⁶ Ibid, 427, 429.

³²⁷ Ibid, 429

³²⁸ Ibid, 429

2 Cor 5:17

UBS interlinear:

ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ.

NRSV translation:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!³²⁹

2 Cor 5:17 and the origin of Paul's theology of new creation

Before plunging directly into the fine-grained interpretation of the particular passage itself, we first need to consider the relationship between what we previously identified as the three-fold set of factors most likely to have influenced Paul's originating theology³³⁰ and what we now find ourselves reading in 2 Cor 5:17. In so doing I follow the same order as adopted in Chapter 2 above, and as already noted there (section 2.2.2) the theme (but not the exact terminology) of καινὴ κτίσις has its roots in the OT.³³¹

The OT books previously referenced included Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and very particularly the passages from Isaiah where "*the writer spoke in terms of the new cosmos (οὐρανός καινός and γῆ καινή) which the Lord is creating*"³³², a new heaven and a new earth, with the word *create* occurring three times in Is 65:17-18, (cf. Is 66:22). In section 2.2.2, it was noted that the Isaiah passage which offers the closest parallel to Paul's allusion in 2 Cor 5:17 was Is 43:18-19, 'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?' Here, 'the prophet speaks of the making of a new order contrasted with the old (the terms τὰ ἀρχαῖα, ἰδοὺ, and καινὰ are verbally parallel to 2 Cor 5:17)'.³³³ A healthy characteristic of some scholars

³²⁹ NRSV 1989. Harris 2005: 425, follows the NRSV for 17a but then opts for 'order' terminology for the rest of the verse: 'so if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order has passed away; see, a new order has begun.' Thrall 1994: 400, aligns in her translation more along Hubbard's anthropological lines: 'Consequently, if anyone is in Christ, there is a newly-created being: the old has passed away, behold the new has come.'

³³⁰ Namely, the Old Testament, Apocalyptic Judaism, and Paul's Christ-encountered theology; sections 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4 above refer.

³³¹ On the other hand, the actual wording itself does occur in the literature of Apocalyptic Judaism (cf., section 2.2.3).

³³² Thrall 1994: 421.

³³³ Ibid.

2 Cor 5:17b: τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ.

(Thrall, Owens, Jackson exemplify) is that they raise their periscope on occasion to take cognisance of the broader landscape, and with regard to Is 43, Thrall does exactly that: “*In the third instance [Is 43:18-19] the reference is to the return from exile in Babylon, but since Paul would see the whole of Isaiah as a unity the καινά could include, for him, the new cosmos foretold in the later chapters.*”³³⁴

Possibly because Paul, in this verse, does not directly cite any particular prophetic text, some scholars, while specifically acknowledging the closeness of the language between Is 43 and 2 Cor, reject out of hand the suggestion of cosmological renewal in 2 Cor 5:17 on the basis of OT texts.³³⁵ Others, as mentioned above, looking at the OT at a macro – a ‘broader landscape’ – level, do see this NT new creation text as being ‘contained’ within the envisaged future world view of the prophets and within Paul’s Adam Christology – without denying the validity of the anthropological.³³⁶

With regards to the possible influences upon Paul’s thinking derived from Apocalyptic Judaism, today’s commentators on Paul’s καινή κτίσις do reference the sources that we discussed in section 2.2.3, and more besides (including the Qumran literature).³³⁷ Again, the conclusions drawn by scholars from common sources can be seen to be quite diverse. Thrall is one of the few scholars who quotes the same *Joseph and Aseneth* source as Hubbard, (section 2.2.3 refers) and yet she comes to a more nuanced conclusion than he does. He sees it as demonstrably a portrayal of individual conversion without losing the communal and social dimensions, “*...Paul is (similarly) concerned with the ‘transformation of raw human material into socially responsible persons.’*”³³⁸ Thrall, on the other hand, while recognizing the suggestion of an individual ‘new creation’ in *Joseph and Aseneth*, adds, “*...But it may be interpreted differently, as stressing the bringing to fruition of the one true (original) creation.*”³³⁹ In this way of thinking, the conversion of a proselyte is seen as the

Is 43:18-19: μη μνημονευετε τα πρωτα και **τα αρχαία** μη συλλογιζεσθε **ιδου** ποιω **καινα** α νυν ανατελει και γνωσεσθε αυτα και ποιησω εν τη ερημω οδον και εν τη ανυδρω ποταμουσ (LXX).

Sainaticus reads, μη μνη μονευετε τα πρω τα και **τα’ αρχαα’** μη συλλογιζεσθε: **ιδου** εγω ποιω **κ(αι)να**: α νυν ανατελω και γνωσεσθε αυτα και ποιησω εν τη ερημω οδον και εν τη ανυδρω ποταμουσ.

³³⁴ Thrall 1994: 421.

³³⁵ Hubbard 2002: 181-183 presents a well reasoned argument.

³³⁶ Owens 2012: 149-150; Jackson 2010: 143-145.

³³⁷ Thrall 1994: 421. Note: Harris 2005: 19-20, 502, does reference the Dead Sea Scrolls in a number of places in 2 Cor but not with direct reference to καινή κτίσις. He does so in detail with respect to 2 Cor 6, and the reason I mention it here is that Harris references in turn Murphy-O’Connor who argues that the language and ideas of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 are best paralleled, not from the Dead Sea Scrolls, but in the Hellenistic Judaism represented by Philo, ‘Philo’ 137-140.

³³⁸ Hubbard 2002: 186, where the quotation is from La Fontaine 1985: 115.

³³⁹ Here, Thrall 1994: 422, references Mell.

raising of a person from a lowly, deficient status as a second-class being to the high rank of true humanity within the community of Judaism.³⁴⁰ My own conclusion is what I alluded to previously (section 2.2.3): In the light of the specific mandate entrusted to him very personally by Jesus himself,³⁴¹ including as specifically relayed to Ananias (Acts 9:15) by the Lord with the words, "...he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel...", if Paul (as Saul) had been indeed exposed to *Joseph and Aseneth*,³⁴² a basis in his traditional Judaism might have provided him with hope that what had been chronicled in his own history was now being realised in human-reality in his own life time; and he was the instrument of the Lord to bring this about!³⁴³ That said, I still concur with Thrall's concluding perspective, and here she is tending to realign more with Hubbard than with Owens and Jackson, that

*it seems that the belief in a new act of creation or cosmic renewal at the end of history is adequately attested for the Judaism of Paul's day. But it is rather less certain that, while similes of new birth or new creation are applied to individuals, there is any real idea of present anticipation of this strictly eschatological event of the future.*³⁴⁴

With these observations we have already moved our interpretation on from the possible influence of OT texts and Apocalyptic Judaism's writings upon the notion of *καινή κτίσις* in Paul's application of the concept, to the influence of Paul's Christ-encountered theology within its NT context upon the interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17 (section 2.2.4 refers).³⁴⁵

While the phrase *καινή κτίσις* does not occur anywhere else in the NT other than in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15, a suggestion has been made that *καινή κτίσις* originates from a pre-Pauline formula, derived from the church in Antioch, which Paul assumed and developed further. This reconstruction³⁴⁶ of the Christian background will be revisited in section 4.4 below as it is more closely linked with the unrestricted table-fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Antioch and the emphasis in Galatians on unity across many sociological boundaries (cf. Gal 3:28). Without getting into the issue of such a reconstruction

³⁴⁰ Thrall 1994: 422, where she references Mell and his detailed discussion of *Joseph and Aseneth*.

³⁴¹ Acts 9:5-20

³⁴² One can imagine Saul, the intense student, enjoying his A⁺ rating from Gamaliel for his assignment on *Joseph and Aseneth!*

³⁴³ Cf. Acts 13:47

³⁴⁴ Thrall 1994: 422.

³⁴⁵ Equally, the movement can be perceived as in the opposite direction, from Paul's experience of the risen Christ to a recollection and new understanding of his own religio-cultural heritage.

³⁴⁶ The reconstruction is from Mell, as quoted by Thrall 1994: 423.

suggesting that *καινή κτίσις* refers to a cosmological event, Thrall merely claims that the actual theological development of *καινή κτίσις*, whatever form that takes, can safely be ascribed to Paul himself, also dismissing in the process as unhelpful and of later origin any other NT references to a new or renewed creation or to a new humanity (Mt 19:28; Eph 2:10, 15; 4:24, 2 Pt 3:13; Rev 21:1-25).³⁴⁷ This latter perspective is consistent with the posture I adopted when, in section 2.2.4, we studied more generally the impact of Paul's Christ-encountered theology on his thinking with regard to new creation.

Having looked at the role played by the factors which Paul the person brought in himself to the interpretation of *καινή κτίσις*, we can now turn our attention to the fine-grained interpretation of the particular text itself.

2 Cor 5:17 and the *apodosis* issue

As previously noted,³⁴⁸ apart from the Douay-Rheims translation, all English translations insert implied verbs, and then structure verse 17 with the *protasis* and *apodosis* as follows, (where the NRSV version is typical):

<*protasis*> {*apodosis*}...}...}

So <if anyone is in Christ>, {there is a new creation}: everything old has passed away}; see, everything has become new!}

The bracketing shown here raises the issue as to where the *apodosis* ends. In other words, there are diverse views as to what is included within the *apodosis* (or what is excluded from it) and these views will emerge as the interpretation unfolds, in the course of which the following labels will be deployed where they are helpful to the analysis:

³⁴⁷ Thrall 1994: 423.

³⁴⁸ Cf. section 3.3.

apodosis (i) So <if anyone is in Christ>, {there is a new creation} [17a]

apodosis (ii) So <if anyone is in Christ>, {there is a new creation: everything old has passed away}

apodosis (iii) So <if anyone is in Christ>, {there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!} [17a-17b]³⁴⁹

With respect to the exegesis of verse 17 itself, in its immediately preceding context it is logical to see the two sentences of vs 16 and 17, both of which begin with ὥστε (*so that* or *consequently*), as parallel with each other,³⁵⁰ both drawing out the consequences of vs 14-15. Indeed, in their conclusions, both v.16 and v.17 concretize the universal statements of vv.14-15.³⁵¹ The latter two verses emphatically declared the love of God as manifested in the death and resurrection of Jesus for all, the consequences of which are seeing Christ and fellow believers in a completely new light (v.16) and those risen to new life in Christ constituting a new creation (v.17a): “*In Christ’s death the old form of human life was brought to an end, in order that a new kind of human existence might become possible. As a result, if anyone is ἐν Χριστῷ, this new order becomes a reality. Clearly it is the καινὴ κτίσις which is the significant point.*”³⁵²

But the issue of *which* words from the choices tabled in section 3.3 are to be examined presents itself again!

The English translation which by consensus can probably be excluded from further consideration³⁵³ is that which in various forms originates not from Greek, but from Latin, the Vulgate:³⁵⁴

If [there is] in Christ a new creature, [then] the old [things] have passed away: behold all [things] have been made new.
Translation of the Latin by Lambrecht³⁵⁵

In commenting upon this option, Thrall first points out that, “*It would be possible to see the whole of v.17a as constituting the protasis, with v.17b as the apodosis: ‘If anyone is a*

³⁴⁹ For a fourth structure for this verse, to be labelled *apodosis* (iv), see section 3.5 below.

³⁵⁰ Hubbard 2002: 177; Thrall 1994: 424; Harris 2005: 431.

³⁵¹ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

³⁵² Thrall 1994: 424. Cf., “...*Paul’s mystical understanding of life ‘in-Christ’ touches every aspect of life. ‘In-Christ’ there is one reality (Gal 3:28); one body (Rom 12:5) and new life.*” Kourie 2009: 213.

³⁵³ Note: The translations from the Vulgate will actually need to be referred to just one more time – in section 3.5 – but for purposes of contrast, not of contribution.

³⁵⁴ Section 3.3 refers.

³⁵⁵ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

*new creature*³⁵⁶ in Christ, the old has passed away. Behold, the new has come into being’’. But then, after acknowledging that such a construct is perfectly possible grammatically, she rejects it on stylistic grounds.³⁵⁷ Lambrecht³⁵⁸ and Harris³⁵⁹ concur. Interestingly, in so doing, Harris includes in his criticism the comment, “...*this punctuation converts a pungent aphorism into a trite truism...*”³⁶⁰ The dismissive tone of this observation is justified, and yet, his reference to a truism will be taken up again, in section 3.5, as an (unconsciously?) astute observation reflecting a different, and positive, insight when we come to consider a distinctive and rhetorical-based interpretation of this verse, one which, it needs to be pointed out, does not align with that of the English translations or interpretations from the Vulgate.

What of the other options amongst the twelve listed in section 3.3? Taking a sample of just four of them,³⁶¹ implied verbs could be supplied (*italics*) as follows:³⁶²

- a) γίνεται...ἔστιν, ‘So, if anyone *comes to be* in Christ, *there is* a new creation’ (Martin, 135; similarly Moffatt);
- b) ἔστιν...ἔστω, ‘Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, *let him be* a new creature’ (KJV mg);
- c) ἔστιν... ἔστιν, ‘So, if anyone *is* in Christ, *there is* a new creation’ (Furnish 306)
- d) ἔστιν... ἔστιν, ‘Therefore, if any one *is* in Christ, he *is* a new creation’ (RSV, NIV)

Harris regards the first option as awkward with its two different verbs, and questions option (b) on the grounds that “*an exhortation is out of place in the midst of a series of Christian verities (vv.14-19)*”, an observation which is intriguingly at odds with an independent perspective of Lambrecht’s that v.17a is not in the first place an informative statement; “*it contains a hidden appeal in its protasis, One could paraphrase: ‘If you want to become a new creature, you must be in Christ, since only Christians are a new creation.’ The newness is ultimate and definitive.*”³⁶³

³⁵⁶ Note that here, with Thrall, and in the other examples, the word *κτίσις* (Greek) is (validly) expressed in the Vulgate as *creatura*, and in English as *creature*, instead of *creation*.

³⁵⁷ Thrall 1994: 424.

³⁵⁸ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

³⁵⁹ Harris 2005: 430.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 430

³⁶¹ And in so doing, following for a few moments, the thinking of Harris 2005: 430-431.

³⁶² Harris 2005: 430-431 where the source references are Harris’.

³⁶³ Lambrecht 1999: 96-97, who favours the translation ‘so that, if anyone (is) in Christ, (that one is) a new creation.’ [nonetheless, a translation akin to that of Harris’ number (iv)].

Whatever the actual wording, most interpreters and translators supply ἔστιν... ἔστιν.³⁶⁴

in Christ [ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ]

Before proceeding to the evaluation of the apodosis in this verse (irrespective of which grammatical structure is being considered)³⁶⁵ the condition registered in the protasis, *if anyone in Christ* needs to be appraised.

In this thesis, the important,³⁶⁶ complex,³⁶⁷ and (yet) flexible,³⁶⁸ concept of being ἐν Χριστῷ will feature in two distinctive but interrelated ways. Here, in this present section 3.4, the role which *being in Christ* plays in the interpretation of new creation in 2 Cor will be evaluated.³⁶⁹ Later, in section 3.6, this will be further explored, alongside the complementary consideration – the role which the [a] new creation of 2 Cor 5:17 plays in the extensive³⁷⁰ topic of *being in Christ* – in the context of their mutuality. Extensive the topic is, but an exhaustive assessment of the latter will not be attempted in this limited thesis. Nonetheless, we do need to have some appreciation of its significance.

Accordingly, considering for the moment the role which *being in Christ* plays in the interpretation of new creation, we first of all need to settle upon a fairly broad-based (and overly simplistic) understanding of the term. For the purpose of this present argument we can define it as people who, expressing faith³⁷¹ in Jesus Christ, have entered into personal union with Christ³⁷², or into personal union with the risen Christ³⁷³, or included within Christ conceived as a ‘corporate personality’ so that his death and resurrection become theirs; their earthly existence as members of the σῶμα Χριστοῦ, following from this inclusion.³⁷⁴ Owens holds that Paul’s notion of participation in Christ is also conveyed through a variety of other

³⁶⁴ Harris 2005: 431.

³⁶⁵ Cf. apodosis (i), or (ii), or (iii) above.

³⁶⁶ So emphasised by Hubbard 2002: 178.

³⁶⁷ Thrall 1994: 425.

³⁶⁸ Hubbard 2002: 178.

³⁶⁹ The significance of *being in Christ* will also play a part in our study of new creation in Galatians, but it has nothing like the same local textual significance in the Galatian’s new creation verse (Gal 6:15). While the words *in Christ* do occur in that particular verse according to the most recent Nestle-Aland edition, there are contending variant readings. See chapter 4, sections 4.4.

³⁷⁰ Harris 2005: 431; and see below in section 3.6.

³⁷¹ Lambrecht 1999: 96-97.

³⁷² So Thrall within a four-fold schema of what being in Christ means, Thrall 1994: 424-429.

³⁷³ Harris 2005: 431-432 also within a multi-faceted framework.

³⁷⁴ Thrall 1994: 426.

constructions,³⁷⁵ but whether they all accurately signify what Paul is emphasising in 2 Cor 5:17 would need to be assessed³⁷⁶.

As noted above, most interpreters and commentators, in translating the Greek text of 2 Cor 5:17, supply two verbs into the elliptical wording. If we confine ourselves for the moment to the protasis³⁷⁷, then ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, ... is translated as, ‘so, if anyone *be* in Christ, ...’ Such a personal expression suggests that an anthropological sense is intended here, and given our previously expressed perspective that the main appeal of 2 Corinthians is one of reconciliation, and that the nucleus of that appeal in the letter is to be found here in 2 Cor 5:14-21,³⁷⁸ this does not surprise. But does the text confirm this?

The case for an anthropological interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17³⁷⁹

For this particular assessment, it is sufficient, at least for now, to deploy the *protasis-apodosis* model which we designated as *apodosis* (i)³⁸⁰:

<protasis>	{apodosis}
<i>apodosis</i> (i)	So <if anyone is in Christ>, {there is a new creation} [17a] {he is a new creation ³⁸¹ } [17a]

Starting with the *if anyone* [τις], we note that formulated as a condition, εἴ τις picks up the ἡμεῖς of 16a³⁸² and expresses it gnominically: ‘If anyone...’ Yet granted this gnomic generalization, “*there can be no disputing that the ἡμεῖς-τις interplay leads one to expect a personal referent in the next clause*,³⁸³ and there it is, ‘If *anyone* is in Christ...’ And thinking in terms of our reconciliation motif³⁸⁴, specifically the transformation required of Man if reconciliation between God and Man is to be effected, then, particularly noteworthy in the

³⁷⁵ Namely: ἐν κυρίῳ (e.g., Rom 14.14; 1 Cor 4.17), σὺν Χριστῷ (e.g., Rom 6.8), εἰς Χριστὸν (e.g., Rom 6.3; Gal 3.27), διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (e.g., 2 Cor 1.5; 5.18) and even the simple noun Χριστοῦ (e.g., Rom 8.9; Gal 3.29).

³⁷⁶ Assessed to examine whether they are too broad or not; cf., also the synonym argument in section 3.5.

³⁷⁷ Irrespective of which expression of the apodosis is considered, (i), (ii), or (iii).

³⁷⁸ Section 3.2 refers.

³⁷⁹ Cf., the broader anthropological newness of Second Corinthians in section 3.1.9.

³⁸⁰ Which, accordingly, needs to encompass only 17a.

³⁸¹ Obviously, the alternative wordings, including *he is* instead of *there is*, as listed previously in section 3.3, and in the extract from these as tabled by Harris above, are all equally valid. The NRSV is merely being deployed first as per our default option so defined at the beginning of this thesis.

³⁸² Ὡστε ἡμεῖς... So that we... 2 Cor 5:16...

³⁸³ Hubbard 2002: 177. Hubbard will subsequently go on to complete his line of thinking when he addresses the apodosis. Interestingly, as has been shown here, he identifies the apodosis as (only) consisting of καινή κτίσις, in other words apodosis option (i) as I have previously defined it.

³⁸⁴ Section 3.2 refers.

argument of 2 Corinthians 3–5 is Paul’s portrayal of ἐν Χριστῷ as the sphere of transformation. “*It is ἐν Χριστῷ that the veil is removed from the heart: ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται, (3.14) Paul goes on to explain that this unveiling in Christ is the condition for transformation: ‘And we all, with unveiled faces...are being transformed from glory unto glory as from the Lord, the Spirit’ (3.18)...*”³⁸⁵

Furthermore, anticipating what 2 Cor will spell out shortly after the new creation verse, the idea of such transformation is again reinforced and described as a consequence of being in Christ. This is in 5:21 where the actual text reads, ...ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. ...that we might become the righteousness of God in him [ie. in Christ].³⁸⁶ Reminding ourselves that these pronouncements³⁸⁷ are being received by individual men and women in the church of Corinth, the extraordinary good news which they convey – reconciliation with God, the sharing in the new life – the resurrected life – of Christ the risen one, and thereby the reality of the triumph over death for each of them, must have been astounding. No wonder, we can say with some confidence that the emphasis here in Paul’s thinking is a soteriology one.³⁸⁸

Does the analysis of the apodosis, i.e. of καὶνὴ κτίσις as per apodosis model (i), affect this conclusion in any way? For Hubbard, it is actually reinforced by a number of observations: (i) his argument from grammar with respect to the governing τις is strong and credible, (ii) as is his case for the precedents set by Paul where εἴ (δέ) τις constructions are common in that in every other parallel text of Paul’s the τις of the protasis is picked up in the apodosis,³⁸⁹ (iii) the weight of the conditional construction *if-then* shown to be logically anthropological, and (iv) the theological and literary context being generally accepted being his *death-life* symbolism.³⁹⁰ Accordingly, Hubbard comes down firmly on an anthropological interpretation of new creation, even though he acknowledges that ecclesiology and soteriology cannot be fully separated. Ultimately though, his approach is at heart one of an exclusivity for the anthropological interpretation; certainly, he rules out any hint of

³⁸⁵ Hubbard 2002: 178.

³⁸⁶ Hubbard 2002: 178, who then goes on to further underline the parallelism of the words of 2 Cor 5:21 and 2 Cor 5:17 (following the word order of 2 Cor 5:17).

³⁸⁷ See section 3.5 for the significance of the rhetoric here.

³⁸⁸ Hubbard 2002: 178-179; Thrall 1994: 426; Lambrecht 1999: 96-97; Harris 2005: 431-432.

³⁸⁹ Hubbard 2002: 179, where see his examples, 1 Cor 8:3 and 2 Cor 10:7.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 179-180.

cosmological.³⁹¹ Other scholars, (including Owens, Jackson, Thrall) support an anthropological interpretation but not exclusively so as we shall see.³⁹²

As is evident from what has just been shown above, an anthropological interpretation of new creation can be stated with some confidence³⁹³ as a sound one. However, it is important to stress that an *exclusively* anthropological is not being asserted in this thesis. That may well be the posture of a small number of scholars, (Hubbard in particular) but it is not the view held by a large body of scholars who also do champion the anthropological case. Indeed, we have noted the way in which elements of the other (claimed) characteristics – the cosmological and the ecclesiological – have already been referred to in the perspectives outlined above.

Turning now, to these two elements, we shall address the cosmological next. This order may appear to be counter-intuitive; after all, *theologically*, it would seem obvious to assess the ecclesiological first, building as it were on the anthropological base. But, *scripturally*, the text of 2 Cor 5:17, by its very nature – by its very wording – demands that we start with the cosmological, not least because v.17a explicitly refers to creation.

The case for a cosmological interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17³⁹⁴

For this assessment, and while our focus will still remain upon new creation, we need to deploy a new *protasis-apodosis* model, the one which we designated as *apodosis* (iii):

<i><protasis></i>	<i>{apodosis}</i>
<i>apodosis</i> (iii) So <i><if anyone is in Christ></i> , <i>{there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!}</i> [17a-17b]	

This expanded apodosis incorporates v.17b, which will provide us with the main argument for broader interpretations of *καινή κτίσις*³⁹⁵, those beyond the anthropological, whether they be of the ecclesiological or (as here) the cosmological. Paul does not define either *τὰ ἀρχαῖα* or *[τὰ] καινά*, but these terms can clearly be understood in a comprehensive

³⁹¹ Ibid, 183

³⁹² Owens 2012: 149-154; Jackson 2010: 147; Thrall 1994: 428 – who, quite correctly, envisages ‘this new creation’ as actually realised (anthropologically and corporately) and inaugurated as an anticipation of the eschatological transformation (cosmologically).

³⁹³ Mell being the odd man out. Moo also argues for an alternative. Moo 2010: 52.

³⁹⁴ Cf., the broader cosmological newness of Second Corinthians in section 3.1.9.

³⁹⁵ Thrall 1994: 427.

sense, ‘the old creation is gone, and the new one is here’ (JB). There may be in mind the passages in Isaiah which speak of a new heaven and earth.³⁹⁶ The latter points were highlighted in section 2.2.2 (the origin of new creation in the OT). The words from Isaiah 43 and Isaiah 65 are very close to the wording of 2 Cor 5:17b, particularly given the fact that in 2 Cor 5 they come immediately after the word *creation*, and *a new creation* for that matter:

So, if anyone is in Christ, there is *a new creation: everything old* has passed away; see [ἰδοὺ], *everything* has become *new!* [2 Cor 17a-17b]

For I am about to *create* new heavens and a new earth; the *former things* shall not be remembered or come to mind. [Is 65:17]³⁹⁷

Do not remember the *former things*, or consider the *things of old*. I am about to do a *new thing*; [Is 43:18-19a]³⁹⁸

The similarity of language being highlighted here is given a lot of weight in the literature.³⁹⁹ Lambrecht concurs, noting that, since in 2 Cor 6:2 Paul quotes Is 49:8, Old Testament influence is very likely to be present also in 5:17,⁴⁰⁰ and that this old/new contrast, connected by ἰδοὺ along with creation vocabulary is seemingly only to be found in Paul or in early Christian literature alluding to 2 Cor 5:17 or Is 43:18-19.⁴⁰¹ Why a translation, such as the NRSV above, omits the word ἰδοὺ - such a critical word - from the Isaiah text is difficult to appreciate. Its Hebrew MT source has it, as does the Sainaticus LXX [ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ποιῶ]⁴⁰².

However, this NRSV usage is consistent with its choice also of the word ‘see’ instead of the attention-grabbing word ‘behold’ in its translation of 2 Cor 5:17.

So ‘behold’ is the word of contrast and occurs in both the Isaiah text and that of Second Corinthians. And even though some caveats have been suggested with respect to differences in context⁴⁰³, these should not obscure the correspondence between the Pauline

³⁹⁶ Ibid, who references Windisch, Bultmann, Tasker, and Furnish.

³⁹⁷ ἔσται γὰρ ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ καὶ οὐ μὴ μνησθῶσιν τῶν προτέρων οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ ἐπέλθῃ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν καρδίαν (Isa 65:17 LXT). Cf. Is 66:22, ‘For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord; so shall your descendants and your name remain.’

³⁹⁸ μὴ μνημονεύετε τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τὰ ἀρχαῖα μὴ συλλογίζεσθε (Isa 43:18 LXT).

ἰδοὺ ποιῶ καινὰ ἃ νῦν ἀνατελεῖ καὶ γνώσεσθε αὐτά καὶ ποιήσω ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὁδὸν καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀνύδρῳ ποταμούς (Isa 43:19 LXT).

³⁹⁹ Jackson 2010: 119, including FN 22, wherein Jackson adds “Tertullian believed 2 Cor 5:17 to be a fulfilment of the prophecies of Isaiah (Against Marcion V.12).”

⁴⁰⁰ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

⁴⁰¹ Jackson 2010: 119.

⁴⁰² International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP). (2012). *Codex Sinaiticus: Septuagint and New Testament* (Is 43:17–19). Cambridge, UK: The Codex Sinaiticus Project Board.

⁴⁰³ As quoted by Jackson from a caution by Lambrecht. Jackson 2010: 119-120; Lambrecht 1999: 97.

and the Isaianic material, and for all three of the above mentioned Isaiah texts specific connections are identified.

For Is 43, there is first of all the point that the old/new change has a radical edge to it, and that 2 Cor 5:17 has equally radical language. Is 43:18 claims that the new will be so wondrous that the old will not be remembered, while Paul writes that the old has passed away (παρήλθεν).⁴⁰⁴ Secondly, the prophetic promise marker ἰδοὺ, already referred to with regard to Is 43:18 and 2 Cor 5:17, and its repetition in 2 Cor 6:2 (where Is 49:8 – with its ‘ἰδοὺ’ embedded within the text – is quoted) signals that Paul was aware that he was employing prophetic tradition.⁴⁰⁵ Thirdly, and this is one of the points challenged by Hubbard⁴⁰⁶, both texts contain cosmologically related language: The transformed wilderness and desert of Is 43:19 are part of an Isaianic motif which considers the effects of human sin on the creation and expresses restoration in terms of a renewal of creation.⁴⁰⁷

The Is 65:17 text also looks as if it is a very probable source for Paul when he wrote 2 Cor 5:17. After all, it contains the words *creation* and *new* with regard to the cosmos, and Jackson points out that, although the phrase καινὴ κτίσις does not occur in Is 65:17, the use of the phrase ‘new heaven and new earth’ (ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ) clearly conveys the same idea, since it is a literal Greek translation of the Hebrew merism ‘heavens and earth’, itself a common way of expressing the concept of creation as is the case, for example, in Gen 1:1.⁴⁰⁸

In the context of the previously defined foundation for 2 Cor 5:17 being that of v.14-15, we can claim more broadly that Paul is proclaiming the dramatic recovery of the world...by God who has acted eschatologically in Christ, placing the world now under the rule of Christ⁴⁰⁹; and/or referring to Christ in the Adam-Christ antithesis⁴¹⁰ wherein Christ is conceived as a corporate figure⁴¹¹ whose life affects all of humanity⁴¹²; or, again, with Isaianic echoes in mind, as fulfilling the new exodus and doing so to such an extent that God’s new act of deliverance is impacting upon the created order.⁴¹³ Lambrecht accepts that,

⁴⁰⁴ Jackson 2010: 120. A number of scholars comment upon the contrast between the aorist tense of παρήλθεν (‘passed by’) and the perfect tense of γέγονεν (‘has come’) in 2 Cor 5:17b. Lambrecht 1999: 97.

⁴⁰⁵ Jackson 2010: 120, references Furnish 1984: 315.

⁴⁰⁶ Hubbard 2002: 24. cf., Jackson’s recognition of such contrary perspectives. Jackson 2010: 120.

⁴⁰⁷ Jackson 2010: 120.

⁴⁰⁸ Jackson 2010: 120, incl FN 29.

⁴⁰⁹ Martin, *Reconciliation*, 104, as quoted by Thrall 1994: 426-427.

⁴¹⁰ Lambrecht 1999: 103.

⁴¹¹ The notion of the corporate personality, Christ, is dealt with in more detail below (section 3.6).

⁴¹² Thus Owens 2012: 141. Owens makes it clear that he is not implying that all humankind automatically benefit thereby. Owens 2012: 141, FN 138.

⁴¹³ Owens 2012: 153.

although the sense of v.17a is primarily anthropological, with v.17b comes a cosmological broadening but one in which there is a newness of a different type, “...by omitting the article before *kaina* (new) Paul makes clear that he regards the ‘new’ not as those (or all) new things (i.e., persons); he rather pays attention to the nature of newness.”⁴¹⁴ After which Lambrecht (again) repeats and reinforces his insistence that this too only comes into existence if there is human acceptance in the process.⁴¹⁵ While I would agree with this as far as the individual is concerned, I don’t see how it could apply to the broader cosmological perspective given that, by and in his resurrection, Jesus introduced this ‘new thing’ irrespective of who does or does not accept it. Thrall concurs and then takes it further: “*The reality of the Christ-event, as the origin of this καινή κτίσις, is not conditionally dependent upon the incorporation of individuals ἐν Χριστῷ but the essential presupposition of any such incorporation.*”⁴¹⁶ Likewise, Hubbard, who argues in forceful terms, “*This incongruity becomes an absurdity if, as Martin argues, the*⁴¹⁷ *new creation is an objective reality, not a subjective one, ‘as if it were merely the individual’s viewpoint which had changed.’*”⁴¹⁸

Not all are sympathetic to the cosmological interpretation. Harris is such a one, and in a detailed grammatical analysis of v.17b, together with his assertion that any new cosmos still lies in the future, insists that the *old things/new things* are all referring to individual conversion.⁴¹⁹ In speaking in this way, Harris sometimes varies the tone of his assertions such as saying that the things of the past *cannot* refer to the cosmos,⁴²⁰ but following that with “*If καινά picks up the phrase καινή κτίσις, then εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ may be understood before ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά.*”⁴²¹ That is, *καινά*, as well as *εἴ τις* and *καινή κτίσις*, refers principally to individual experience rather than to corporate of cosmic realities.”⁴²²

⁴¹⁴ Lambrecht 1999: 97.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴¹⁷ Note the use by Martin of the definite article. Moo likewise developed the practice of prefixing the words new creation with the definite article. E.g. Moo 2010: 59, passim.

⁴¹⁸ Hubbard 2002: 180, referencing Martin 1986: 152.

⁴¹⁹ Harris 2005: 433-434.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, 433.

⁴²¹ My own comment: That is perfectly in alignment with the analysis of this passage given previously.

⁴²² Ibid, 434.

The case for an ecclesiological interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17⁴²³

For the assessment of an ecclesiastical dimension, and still with our focus upon new creation, it will be helpful to us if we again deploy the *protasis-apodosis* model which incorporates v.17b into the apodosis, namely *apodosis* (iii):

<i><protasis></i>	<i>{apodosis}</i>
<i>apodosis</i> (iii) So <if anyone is in Christ>, {there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!} [17a-17b]	

The question of course is, will this expanded apodosis, incorporating as it does both v.17a and v.17b, provide us with a sound justification for an ecclesiastical interpretation of what Paul is saying here?

The words which follow καινή κτίσις are also valid consequences of the redemptive action described in vs 14-15: ‘everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!’ (v.17b). Since (as was pointed out in the discussion about a cosmological interpretation) Paul does not define, or explain, what he means by τὰ ἀρχαῖα (the old things) or γέγονεν καινά (has/have become new),⁴²⁴ interpretations beyond individual person(s) are possible – in ever widening domains of scope, including that as the new entity designated the church or the body of Christ, this now envisaged as “*an ontic reality which transcends the new being of individual believers*”.⁴²⁵ It is indeed claimed that several scholars suggest that the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ in 2 Cor 5:17a carries corporate/ecclesiastical connotations, and that this reading should be taken seriously in the light of the πᾶς⁴²⁶ language in vv.14-15.⁴²⁷

The beautiful and mysterious words of v.17b, ‘everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!’ lend themselves to such a variety of meanings – sometimes at odds with one another – that they epitomize for me the sentiment expressed by Martin in the preface to the original (1985) version of his commentary on Second Corinthians, “...it (*Second Corinthians*) is both the paradise and the despair of the commentator.”⁴²⁸ To illustrate: we earlier noted the different perspectives of Harris and Lambrecht on the significance of v.17a (So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation), Harris commenting

⁴²³ Cf., the broader ecclesiastical newness of Second Corinthians in section 3.1.9.

⁴²⁴ Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴²⁵ Here, Thrall 1994: 426, is (favourably) quoting Furnish 1984: 332.

⁴²⁶ v.14 πάντων, πάντες; v.15 πάντων

⁴²⁷ So Owens 2012: 150, where he also looks for support from Jackson 2010: 143-146.

⁴²⁸ Martin 2014: 8.

that any translation which was worded as an exhortation was out of place in the midst of a series of Christian verities,⁴²⁹ while Lambrecht wanted to stress that the wording actually did move from being merely informative to that of urging or evoking conversion.⁴³⁰ With v17b, it is now Furnish who asks us to look at the words *new creation* through a different kind of window, taking them beyond the merely informative, “*The remainder of v.17 does not so much describe the*⁴³¹ *new creation as celebrate its inauguration. Everything old has come to an end; behold new things have come to be.*”⁴³² Furnish then goes on to expand on this image in words paralleled by Thrall,⁴³³ both emphasizing the centrality of the Christ event, and being *in Christ*, marking the inauguration⁴³⁴ of a new age, a new salvation-history.

Interestingly, and apparently independently, both Harris and Lambrecht each also add a richness to the image being presented here to the Corinthians. From Lambrecht, that while it is great news for the individuals in Corinth that each of them can become – have become – new persons, the *nature* of the newness being announced here is something much bigger than any one of them;⁴³⁵ they are being caught up into a new dimension of dramatic change and fulfilment; individually, corporately, and in a previously unconceived ecclesiological being in Christ. Simultaneously, Harris sees 2 Cor 5:17, with its *all new* terminology, as indicative of the theocentric concept of *newness* (καινότητι, Rom 6:4; 7:6) illustrated by the wider NT context of *newness* resulting from the Christ event. This is Scripturally illustrated extensively by Harris in terms of new wine, new age, new covenant, new creature/creation, new man/humanity, new song of redemption, the new name for believers, the new commandment of love, as well as the envisaged newness in the consummated kingdom of new wine (again) of the heavenly banquet, a new heaven and a new earth, as well as a new Jerusalem.⁴³⁶ Therefore, it comes as something as a surprise, that notwithstanding these observations, Harris, as the case in our discussion about the cosmological interpretation, is as unsympathetic to the corporate (ecclesiological) interpretation as he was to the cosmological one – and for the same reasons.⁴³⁷ The reality of this Christ-event, as the origin of this καινή

⁴²⁹ Harris 2005: 431.

⁴³⁰ Lambrecht 1999: 96-97.

⁴³¹ Again, note the (incorrect) use of the definite article.

⁴³² Furnish 1984: 333.

⁴³³ Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴³⁴ Likewise Furnish 1984: 333, “(But), in marked contrast with the views of Jewish apocalypticism, Paul can confirm that the new age has already broken in (see also 2 Cor 6:2) that the new creation is already a reality.”

⁴³⁵ Lambrecht 1999: 97.

⁴³⁶ Harris 2005: 433.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 433-434.

κτίσις, is not (of course) dependent upon incorporation of individuals ἐν Χριστῷ but the essential presupposition of any such incorporation.⁴³⁸

...

Excursus

Allowing ourselves some latitude and going outside our immediate textual context just for a moment, we can remind ourselves that the Corinthians being addressed here had previously in Paul's first letter to them been presented with an Israel/Church linking which had the effect of reading Israel's story not just as an instrumental example but as a prefiguration of the Christian church with its sacraments.⁴³⁹ Yes, there is considerable divergent commentary in the literature on whether Israel/church is presented by Paul as antithesis or as close identity between the two, but Hays, in particular, navigates these waters and demonstrates that the earlier events (such as the Exodus and being 'baptised into Moses') were authentic dispensers of grace in their own time for their own time, as well as being pointers to the (then future) realities of the church, and that the full theological significance of the one revelation⁴⁴⁰ arises from the metaphorical act of grasping together past (Israel) and present (church). But Hays, counterintuitively, shifts the centre of gravity as it were from the past to the present, pointing back to the past from the present, thus (to quote Hays),

...for Paul, the foundational paradigm in the typological correlation is given not by the exodus events but the Christian experience of salvation, and⁴⁴¹ his thought moves back to the OT from the present datum, baptism, and certainly does not vice versa derive baptism from the OT. That is why Paul's hermeneutic must be called ecclesiocentric: he makes the biblical text pass through the filter of his experience of God's action of forming the church.⁴⁴²

Accordingly, "the full meaning of God's eschatological redemptive purpose is now definitively enacted in the Christian community... (and) the phrase 'baptised into Moses' reveals where the centre of gravity lies."⁴⁴³ In other words, it lies with 'in Christ' in the NT. Hays then goes on to emphasize that the constant repetitive use of

⁴³⁸ Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴³⁹ 1 Cor 10: 1f, Hays 1989: 95.

⁴⁴⁰ Hays describes it as the 'whole story'. Ibid, 100.

⁴⁴¹ Hays, in turn quoting Hans Conzelmann on 1 Cor 10:2, Hays 1989: 101.

⁴⁴² Ibid, 101-102.

⁴⁴³ Ibid, 102.

first person plural pronouns (for *us*, *we* provoke, etc) underlines Paul's relating of the Exodus story to the corporate experience of the church, not to the pilgrimage of the individual soul.⁴⁴⁴

...

So, what is the bottom line on this ecclesiological aspect? I find myself agreeing with Thrall that the more logical interpretation of v.17a is still the simpler one which we have already described under the anthropological model⁴⁴⁵; Paul is saying that if anyone exists 'in Christ', that person is a newly-created being. But then, in v.17b the wider background is touched on – that of both the cosmic and the ecclesiological – 'in Christ', and in the person of Christ, the new world and the new age are already objective realities,⁴⁴⁶ but one realised corporately as members of the (corporate) body of Christ.

The contentious debate, is, as we have seen, the tension between the anthropological and the cosmological. And here, after all of the analysis, (and subject to what is still yet to come in the rest of the new creation passage) the most logical interpretation of v.17a is the one which self-selects on a simple⁴⁴⁷ translation of the literal Greek text - that Paul is saying that if anyone exists in Christ that person is a newly-created being. Does this approach exclude the cosmological? Not at all, indeed this new creation of an individual may well be viewed as one awesome facet of what is referred to in v.17b. The old has passed away (human death is no longer the end of existence) and the 'new' which has come, the Christ-event, is all-embracing. In the person of the Christ – the risen and glorified Christ – the new world and the new age are objective realities⁴⁴⁸. Even so, the main emphasis must lie on the domain which immediately affects and can be experienced in the 'now' by humanity: the transformation of the whole cosmos has indeed been inaugurated, but experientially (and, in spite of Paul's personification of 'the creation in waiting',⁴⁴⁹) only the human can *consciously* reflect that experience, and awaits in hope-filled anticipation for its culmination.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid, 102. Cf. also Ibid, 104.

⁴⁴⁵ Thrall 1994: 427. Lambrecht 1999: 97 concurs.

⁴⁴⁶ Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴⁴⁷ The claim to *logical* and *simple* in this interim conclusion is one supported by Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴⁴⁸ So Thrall 1994: 427.

⁴⁴⁹ Rom 8:19-22.

⁴⁵⁰ Cf., Thrall for a slightly less nuanced summary from where nonetheless I have drawn some terminology.

Just as the verses of Second Corinthians immediately preceding the new covenant verse (2 Cor 5:17) played a significant part in the interpretation of Paul's new covenant, it will not surprise that those following also enrich it. Surprisingly, (certainly to me), some scholars⁴⁵¹ terminate their analysis at 2 Cor 5:17. However, for us in our study this is a kind of midpoint in our assessment of the passage in which 2 Cor 5:17 is located and Paul now introduces a verb which is to be found nowhere else in the NT outside of Paul, and which he himself was only to use sparingly⁴⁵² but with enormous significance when he did so. The Corinthians had heard it before, when, in his first letter to them he had been addressing marital problems in the church⁴⁵³; it is the word καταλλάσσω (the verb to reconcile).⁴⁵⁴

2 Cor 5:18-21

We began the current section of this chapter (section 3.2) by proposing that *the* reconciliation which provides the ultimate reference point for healing and restoration for the Corinthian church is the reconciliation whose instigator was God (5:18), which was motivated by Divine love (5:14), effected by God-in-Christ (5:19, 21), and whose beneficiaries are those who are 'in Christ' (5:17). This act of reconciliation was one of such magnanimous and generous merciful love that it cries out for a response (5:20).

The three occurrences in Second Corinthians of the verb καταλλάσσω (as well as its noun derivative, καταλλαγή) occur in verses 18-20 where we read,

¹⁸ All this is from God, who *reconciled* us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of *reconciliation*; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was *reconciling* the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of *reconciliation* to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be *reconciled* to God.

⁴⁵¹ Hubbard is a case in point, Hubbard 2002: 187.

⁴⁵² However, the caution by Lambrecht (and others) is to be noted, in that because 'reconciliation' is used less frequently by Paul than 'justification', (the latter being central in Romans and Galatians), it is not therefore to be considered as a secondary or less important category. Lambrecht 1999: 105-106.

⁴⁵³ 1 Cor 7:11. (see other usages below).

⁴⁵⁴ The other occurrences are 2 Cor 5:18, 19, and 20, and twice in Rom 5:10. The noun derivative, καταλλαγή, appears only in 2 Cor 5:18, 19 and in Rom 5:11, 15. The word ἀποκατάλλάσσω, [which by etymology signifies effect a thorough (-κατα-) change (-αλλάσσω), back (ἀπο-). Cf., Moulton and Howard, 298] occurs in Col 1:20, 22; and Eph 2:16. Harris quotes two scholars, F. Büchsel and Porter, as seeing this verb as coinage by Paul. Harris 2005: 435.

¹⁸ τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ *καταλλάξαντος* ἡμᾶς ἑαυτῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ καὶ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς *καταλλαγῆς*, ¹⁹ ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον *καταλλάσσω* ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ *παραπτώματα* αὐτῶν, καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς *καταλλαγῆς*. ²⁰ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν *πρεσβεύομεν* ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ *παρακαλοῦντος* δι' ἡμῶν· *δεόμεθα* ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, *καταλλάγητε* τῷ θεῷ.

However, the question still presses in: But how does God do this; how *can* God do this?

But how? part one - who is being reconciled to whom?

While the verb to reconcile, *καταλλάσσω*, is to be found in secular Greek⁴⁵⁵, when it comes to the NT, as already explained, it only appears in three Pauline epistles (and there sparsely). However, it does occur in a number of places in the OT book of 2 Maccabees.⁴⁵⁶

Here in 2 Cor 5, Paul (intentionally?⁴⁵⁷) switches the application of the verb from passive (God...be reconciled to you) to active (God...reconciled us to himself) emphasising that the reconciliation rested wholly on the divine initiative.⁴⁵⁸ Importantly, the aorist tense is also significant, indicating that the Christ event (vv.14, 21) in principle effected the reconciliation in an objective fashion, prior to any consequent human response – and irrespective of any anticipated human response! Furthermore, it is an act of God accomplished while humanity was still hostile towards God (Rom 5:8,10), so it is open to all, but, as the imperative *καταλλάγητε* in v.20 shows, only becomes effective upon the individual human free response.⁴⁵⁹

The text in Romans (Rom 5:8,10) emphasises that the divine act of reconciliation is associated with God's love, just as we saw that the text in Second Corinthians does (2 Cor 5:14). Accordingly, in answer, as it were, to the nonverbalised query in the mind of our Corinthian believer ('how does this work for the righteous God?') the initial response is that what has changed is not God's fundamental disposition towards mankind, but rather his means of dealing with the sinfulness which has caused the state of estrangement.⁴⁶⁰ How radical is God's response, and how revolutionary it is in the domain of the meaning of love, is

⁴⁵⁵ Thrall summarises its secular uses in a footnote. Thrall 1994: 429.

⁴⁵⁶ In a greeting from the Jews in Jerusalem to their brethren the Jews in Egypt, 'May he [God] hear your prayers and be reconciled to you, and never forsake you in time of adversity.' 2 Macc 1:5. (NAB). Cf., 2 Macc 8:29, where the wording 'imploring the merciful Lord to be completely reconciled to his servants.' Cf., 2 Macc 7:33. See Thrall 1994: 430.

⁴⁵⁷ Thrall speculates that it might be in conscious contrast to the Jewish outlook of 2 Macc. Thrall 1994: 430.

⁴⁵⁸ Thrall 1994: 430.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, 430-431.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 431

about to be spelled out in verses 19 and 21. There, Paul proclaims the love-gift of God in the person of his Christ; an incarnational and sacrificial expression of love which exceeds anything which had occurred under the Old Covenant but which, nonetheless, had been foretold in it.

The ὡς ὅτι with which v.19 opens is sometimes assigned a causal sense,⁴⁶¹ but if not, then the simple ‘that is...’ which is common in many translations, or ‘similarly’ (so one might put it),⁴⁶² is preferred. And what Paul does in v.19 is firstly to repeat what was told in v.18, namely that God was undertaking a reconciliation. This time, however, Paul identifies the party being reconciled with God as ‘the world’, thereby making ‘the world’ synonymous with the ‘us’ of v.18:

v.18: All this is from God, who reconciled *us* to himself through Christ...

v.19 That is, in Christ God was reconciling *the world* to himself,...

While it is debated, the world [κόσμος] in this context (v.19a) is generally regarded as the human world⁴⁶³, which is confirmed by the wording of (v.19b): that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, (v.19b) not counting *their* [αὐτοῖς] trespasses against *them* [αὐτῶν]...⁴⁶⁴

How the (righteous) God can ‘not hold their sins against them’⁴⁶⁵ without compromising his integrity is not yet, by any means, addressed at this stage, but as it will be in v.21. We defer that issue for the moment because not only do we have to address certain matters within v.20, we also need to come to grips with some key issues in the present verse, including as to how the words ἐν Χριστῷ, here in v.19, are to be understood. The word-order in the Greek is as follows, with some alternative English translations shown below them:

⁴⁶¹ So the Vulgate, ‘quoniam quidem’, ‘since indeed’. Ibid, 432.

⁴⁶² Which Thrall describes as the best exegetical option. Ibid, 432.

⁴⁶³ So Ibid, 434.

⁴⁶⁴ On the basis of Paul’s use of the noun κόσμος here, as well as the identification of the ‘world’ with ‘us’, it is valid to see that reconciliation has an ecclesiological dimension as well as anthropological. However, I would not take it as far as Owens does in positing that it should be understood corporately *rather than* individualistically. Where I do agree with him is that the Jew/Gentile element would have been very much in Paul’s mind with regard to the OT and Second Temple Judaism’s concern with the salvation of the nations, and that, “*Even though κόσμος in 2 Cor 5.19 is to be understood chiefly in an anthropological sense, it must not be overlooked that humanity within a Jewish framework is composed of Jew and Gentile and that for Paul, these two formerly estranged parties have been united in Christ (cf. Gal 3.28; 6.15–16). Paul’s discussion of reconciliation in 2 Cor 5.18–21 may thus constitute an important part of his ecclesiology.*” Owens 2012: 160. Owens then adds a rider which is important for our topic of new creation since in Ephesians he speaks in such terms in the context of reconciliation, “...*the strong association between reconciliation, new creation, and ecclesiology in Eph 2.11–21 indicates that this text remains in strong continuity with the discussion of new creation in the Hauptbriefe.*” Owens 2012: 160. In particular, Eph 2:15-16 is accordingly a remarkable text since it brings all these elements together in a powerful unity: ‘in himself’ ἐν αὐτῷ (which from the context is clearly ἐν Χριστῷ), create κτίση one new man καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, in reconciliation ἀποκαταλλάξῃ.

⁴⁶⁵ See Harris’ exposition of the (secular) ‘accountant’s expression’ which is at the root of this terminology and how it came to have a pejorative meaning. Harris 2005: 444.

ὡς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσειν ἑαυτῷ

that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (NKJV)

that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself (NRSV)

namely, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ (NAB)⁴⁶⁶

I'm not going to dwell upon the (futile?) debate in the literature about the possibility of an incarnational assertion being made here.⁴⁶⁷ In any event, in Pauline usage the state of being in Christ is one that is generally applied to believers, and accordingly an unlikely one to be applied to God.⁴⁶⁸ The best reasoned understanding of being in Christ in the present context is that of Thrall's where she posits that ἐν Χριστῷ could well mean "*in the personal destiny of Christ as representative man.*" The ἐν αὐτῷ at the end of v.21 would support this interpretation.⁴⁶⁹ So also would the fact that ἐν Χριστῷ is immediately followed by κόσμον, and the earlier allusions (vv.14,17) to Christ as the new Adam.⁴⁷⁰

A priority consideration in v.19 is that of sin. Reconciliation is necessary because of the sinful state that man has found himself in. Such sinfulness has led to estrangement, hostility, even enmity (Rom 5:8, 10) between man and God, and the personal relationship between the two has a barrier to be removed if a new relationship is to be established.⁴⁷¹ The intense and indeed urgent manner in which Paul speaks here, and elsewhere, is a reflection of his sense of the responsibility which had been entrusted to him by the Lord Jesus himself.⁴⁷² It is an apostolic⁴⁷³ responsibility of proclamation. Harris emphasises the particular kerygmatic aspect⁴⁷⁴, which is absolutely valid, while Thrall takes it even further when she recognises from Paul's language, that he is probably identifying his own apostolic task with

⁴⁶⁶ I'm not going to dwell upon the debate in the literature about the possibility of an incarnational assertion being made here.

⁴⁶⁷ "*Besides which, it is not clear that any commentator of the modern period understands him in this way.*" Thrall 1994: 432-433.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, 433

⁴⁶⁹ Thrall's footnote here is helpful; she is quoting Bieringer, adding further that, "*Bieringer suggests, however, that the ἐν Χριστῷ means both that God acts 'in Christ' and also that it is 'in Christ' as representative man that the reconciliation is effected.*" Thrall 1994: 434 and FN 1705.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, 434.

⁴⁷¹ Harris deals extensively with this, including the relationship between reconciliation and justification, Harris 2005: 439-443. Cf. also Thrall 1994: 435.

⁴⁷² Cf. Acts 20: 24-27, *passim*.

⁴⁷³ Thrall 1994: 435.

⁴⁷⁴ Harris 2005: 445.

that of the commissioning of Moses and Aaron to proclaim to Pharaoh God's message concerning the plagues,⁴⁷⁵ although, here in 2 Cor, it is a message of reconciliation.⁴⁷⁶

In summary then from v.19, the essence of the first part of the answer to the 'But how?' question is that God (the Father) has found an innovative way of addressing the fundamental problem of humanity which is sin (and consequently death). The solution is of God reconciling the world to himself. It applies world-wide, and the instrument of that solution is Christ, the benefits being available to any who accept the solution, and the reliable proclaimer of this extraordinary message being Paul, and any other apostle from among the 'ἐν ἡμῖν' called to τὴν διακονίαν (v.18).⁴⁷⁷

There is, however, an irony here, because in the process of providing the first part of the answer to the original question, the concerns underlying that question are heightened instead of being tempered! We noted above that in v.19 Paul states that, '...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, *not counting their trespasses against them...*'. The fact that God is undertaking such a magnanimous gracious act of reconciliation is wonderful, but the mechanism employed increases rather than diminishes the concerns about God's integrity; are people just going to be allowed to get away with sinning? Can a righteous God do this without compromising his integrity?

Before addressing this question, Paul needs to reiterate the authority under which he is operating in order that what he is going to require of them, and his shocking proclamation, be accepted.

But how? part two – the mouthpiece of God

Those, such as Paul, who have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation are now assigned a designation, a title even – that of *ambassador*:

²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be *reconciled* to God.

²⁰ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.

⁴⁷⁵ Psalm 105:26. Which in LXX Psalm 104:27 reads: εθετο [ἐν] αυτοις τους λογους των σημειων αυτου και των τερατων [εν] γη χαμ.

⁴⁷⁶ "Since in chap 3 he has already compared and contrasted himself with Moses, it is very likely that there is a veiled allusion here to the substance of Ps 104 (LXX):27". Thrall 1994: 435-436.

⁴⁷⁷ Thrall 1994: 436; Harris 2005: 436-439, 445.

The word *πρεσβεύειν* means ‘to be/work as an ambassador,’ or more broadly, ‘to function as a representative of a ruling authority,’ and the literature is agreed upon the political deployment and meaning of the designation *ambassador* in the public life of that era.⁴⁷⁸ It operated at the imperial level and at local levels; it was used of the emperor’s legates and of embassies between towns.⁴⁷⁹ Unsurprisingly, its function and assumed status was similar to that of modern times.⁴⁸⁰ In transferring the designation from the political to the religious sphere, Paul is not out of line with the practice of his age, as illustrated by such usage by the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher and biblical interpreter, Philo.⁴⁸¹ Accordingly, it was to be understood by his listeners/readers that Paul was acting in Christ’s name and place. In other words there is no need here to choose between notions of representation and substitution for *ὕπερ*.⁴⁸² Paul would, of course, have had to have been appointed to that office, and that is quite an issue here in the light of Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians, given what we discussed previously with regards to Paul having to defend himself in his interactions with this somewhat turbulent community.⁴⁸³

However, Paul is more than up to the challenge; God has appointed him. He had opened this letter with the words, ‘Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia...’ (2 Cor 1:1) and as far as credentials are concerned his approach is inspired:

...Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. ...our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Cor 3:1...6)

Inspired, but also ingenious. Paul’s argument is a potent one: the very existence of the church a Corinth is manifest evidence of the efficacy of Paul’s apostleship. They cannot

⁴⁷⁸ Thrall 1994: 436; Harris 2005: 445.

⁴⁷⁹ Harris 2005: 445. Cf., the noun *ambassador* in Luke 14:32; 19:14.

⁴⁸⁰ Harris expands on the various attributes of those times. *Ibid*, 445-446.

⁴⁸¹ Philo Judaeus, c.20BC-c.50AD.

⁴⁸² Harris 2005: 446.

⁴⁸³ Cf. 3.1.7 above.

question the legitimacy of his ministry without simultaneously questioning the legitimacy of their own origins as a community.⁴⁸⁴

The issue of ‘letters of recommendation’ will resurface again in our next section,⁴⁸⁵ because such letters also refer to his skill/reputation as an orator, but for now what is significant is his claim to divine appointment as an apostle of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 1:1) and as considered competent by God who has endorsed his office of minister (2 Cor 3:6).⁴⁸⁶

Harris sees the chosen wording of 2 Cor 5:20 as very significant, and after a detailed grammatical analysis he takes issue with an interpretation which reads ‘God, as it were, appealing to you through us’,⁴⁸⁷ in favour of ‘with the confidence that God himself makes his appeal through us.’⁴⁸⁸ According to Harris, this intimate link between agent and principal is encapsulated in the aphorism of Rabbinic Judaism, ‘the one who is sent is as the one who sent him,’ - a man’s agent is the man himself.⁴⁸⁹ That said, it also needs to be remembered that while Paul⁴⁹⁰ is both a delegated representative of Christ and an actual spokesperson for God...he has not been invested with the full power of independent action, for such a person delivers rather than creates the message and lacks any authority to alter that message.⁴⁹¹ The distinction between the sender and the one being sent, thus being maintained.

What follows now in v.20 makes it clear why Paul first reminded the Corinthians of his authority, because he now entreats and implores them to respond in a very particular way to his appeal, ‘...be reconciled to God! -’ This is an impassioned and urgent entreaty, one in which the mandate and the mediator of the reconciliation is (again) mentioned twice; Paul is entreating ‘on behalf of Christ’: **ὕπερ Χριστοῦ** οὖν πρεσβεύομεν ὡς τοῦ θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι’ ἡμῶν· δεόμεθα **ὕπερ Χριστοῦ**... καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ.⁴⁹² And in which neither verb (*καταλλάγητε* or *δεόμεθα*) denotes a dispassionate and detached request.⁴⁹³

The wording in English as to how the reconciliation to God is to be expressed is much debated. Lambrecht is certainly the odd man out here (which he acknowledges) with respect

⁴⁸⁴ So, Hays 1989: 127.

⁴⁸⁵ Section 3.5

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. also 2 Cor 2:17.

⁴⁸⁷ Harris 2005: 446, where he has quoted from TCNT.

⁴⁸⁸ Where Harris references in support similar tone and wording from Martin, Collange, Wolff, and Thrall (‘conviction’ not assumption). Harris also quotes 1 Thes 2:13, ‘We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word,...’ Ibid 446.

⁴⁸⁹ Harris 2005: 446 incl FN 152 for original sources.

⁴⁹⁰ ...and others like him with identical appointment.

⁴⁹¹ Harris 2005: 447.

⁴⁹² Thrall draws attention to the fact that in this passage the term *Χριστός* occurs four times within three verses. Thrall 1994: 438-439.

⁴⁹³ Harris 2005: 447.

to the community of exegetes, and presses his case for ‘Reconcile yourselves to God’ with grammatical arguments which include references to similar occurrences of the verb καταλλάσσω elsewhere in the NT (1 Cor 7:11 and Mt 5:24) as well as passages from 2 Macc in the OT. This is questioned by others, including Thrall and Harris who point to the significance of the imperative, which accordingly demonstrates that man is not merely a passive participant in a purely automatic process.⁴⁹⁴ Lambrecht is not, of course, proposing the latter; this issue is really one (as so often with the theology as well as the exegesis of passages of this kind) of finding language which recognises both the divine initiative and human freedom. Harris accordingly is happy enough with the NRSV translation ‘be reconciled’ but, in order to bring out the ingressive⁴⁹⁵ sense of this aorist, proposes ‘get reconciled’ - with God as the implied agent.⁴⁹⁶ This latter translation strikes the right tone for me, and in some respects for Lambrecht as well.⁴⁹⁷

Any translation and interpretation of this passage must, however, also address the matter of the intended recipients of this entreaty: to whom is this imperative addressed?

Three answers have been proffered: (i) Unbelievers within the Corinthian community, (ii) Corinthian believers in general, or (iii) Any evangelistic audience.⁴⁹⁸ Lambrecht, while allowing for the presence of opponents⁴⁹⁹ of Paul amongst the church of Corinth [option (i)], tends more towards option (ii), his point being that although the converted Christians of Corinth are already reconciled to God, it is clear from their many very evident imperfections (from inter-factional fighting to the toleration of incest) that a renewed reconciliation with God is warranted.⁵⁰⁰ Option (ii) is favoured by a number of exegetes who include in Paul’s call to reconciliation that of the Corinthians (or at least a faction within them) to be reconciled to Paul himself, even taking it to the point that ‘Reconciliation with himself (Paul) and reconciliation with God are one and the same’.⁵⁰¹ Those who favour such an interpretation do so on the basis of a very strong identification of Paul with the Christ event, a

⁴⁹⁴ So Thrall 1994: 437.

⁴⁹⁵ Ingressive (Inceptive, Inchoative) Aorist [*began to*]: The aorist tense is often used to stress the beginning of an action or the entrance into a state. Unlike the ingressive imperfect, there is no implication that the action continues. This is simply left unstated, Matt 22:7 Now the king *became angry* - ὀργίσθη [ὀργίζω]. <http://www.bcbsr.com/greek/gtense.html>

⁴⁹⁶ Harris 2005: 447.

⁴⁹⁷ While he differs on some aspects of this, Lambrecht confirms the significance of the tense of the verb: “*The aorist tense forbids one to speak here of an action that is to be repeated every day. Paul asks for a concrete decision, as soon as possible*”. Lambrecht 1999: 100.

⁴⁹⁸ Harris 2005: 447-449, Thrall 1994: 437-439, Lambrecht 1999: 100.

⁴⁹⁹ There were people in Corinth referred to as ‘unbelieving outsiders’ by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, 1 Cor 14:22-24. This is now Harris translates ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι. Harris 2005: 447.

⁵⁰⁰ Lambrecht 1999: 100.

⁵⁰¹ Thrall, who cites this from Collange, and also Furnish 1984: 335 rejects such an option. Thrall 1994: 438.

matter we discussed above with regards to the apostolic mandate entrusted to Paul, but taken in this context to mean that, “for Paul, ‘his proclamation is the explication of the event of reconciliation,’ not as a continuation of it but as a making present (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of the action of God in Christ. So the apostle is representative of Christ and God at one and the same time.”⁵⁰² Jackson evidences a similar position.⁵⁰³ However, another reason for questioning such an interpretation is that the urgency and the passion with which Paul entreats for reconciliation would be disproportionate if it was his own relationship with the Corinthians that he was concerned about (quite apart from the fact that he does so with the expressed emphasis of reconciliation with *God*).

The third option, an evangelistic one, is favoured by Harris for a number of reasons which he lays out, including that the call to be reconciled encapsulates the kerygma.⁵⁰⁴ This makes sense given that this is any apostle’s (and particularly Paul’s) primary ministry (v.18). In one of the other justifications given by Harris for favouring option (iii) he claims that 2 Cor 5:11 forms a close parallel to 2 Cor 5:20d.

But how? part three – *the exchange* [2 Cor 5:21]

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The interlinear reads:

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν <i>the one not knowing sin</i>	ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν <i>on behalf of us</i>	ἁμαρτίαν <i>sin</i>	ἐποίησεν <i>he made</i>
ἵνα <i>that</i>			
ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα <i>we might become</i>	δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ <i>[the] righteousness of God</i>	ἐν αὐτῷ <i>in him</i>	

In approaching this verse, and specifically, ‘he [God] made him⁵⁰⁵ [Christ] to be sin,’ Murray Harris pauses in his exegesis in order to say that with respect to these words, “we

⁵⁰² Martin 2014: 316-317.

⁵⁰³ It is intriguing to see the way in which Jackson insists that, for the Corinthians at least, reconciliation with God is synonymous with reconciliation with Paul, “*Repudiation of Paul’s ministry, who stands as God’s ambassador, is the rejection of Christ’s offer of reconciliation. To be reconciled to God is to be reconciled to Paul.*” Jackson 2010: 125.

⁵⁰⁴ Harris 2005: 448-449.

⁵⁰⁵ Harris actually has *himself* here. Ibid, 451.

penetrate to the centre of the atonement and stand in awe before one of the most profound mysteries in the universe”.⁵⁰⁶ This sentiment resonates strongly with me; Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is the classic treatise upon the scandal of the Cross, what follows here in his second letter to the same community is an encapsulation of the scandal of the Cross ‘writ large’!

The chiasmic character of the whole verse is laid out diagrammatically by Harris, the key element being that the focal point is ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν.⁵⁰⁷ Lambrecht refers to v.21b as a purpose clause dependent on v.21a, similarly pointing out that the τὸν μὴ (*the one/he*) at the beginning of v.21a points to him [Christ] chiasmically at the very end of v21b, ἐν αὐτῷ (*in him*).⁵⁰⁸ He likewise points out the chiasmic relationship between ἐποίησεν (*he [God] made*) and ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα (*in order that we might become*), and to the antithesis of ἁμαρτίαν (*sin*) and δικαιοσύνη (*righteousness*), as well as *Christ* and *Christians*.⁵⁰⁹

At the risk of stating the obvious, several statements in the immediate context could well have contributed to the contents of v.21,⁵¹⁰ and there is little doubt that v.21 arises from the context and coheres with it.⁵¹¹ In unpacking this passage, with, as already stated, ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν as its focal point, we address in turn, (i) Christ’s previous relationship with sin; (ii) God made Christ to be sin. (iii) Timing: When did God make Christ to be sin? (iv) Four possible meanings of ἁμαρτίαν in this passage [as meaning *Sin Offering*; as *Sinner*; as *Sin bearer*, as *Sin*.] (v) Righteousness – *The Exchange*....

(i) Christ’s previous relationship with sin

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν
the one not knowing sin

Some scholars⁵¹² explore whether Paul is here referring to the sinless pre-existent Christ, but there is little appetite generally for doing so.⁵¹³ I concur. It was human sin which

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid, 451.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid, 449.

⁵⁰⁸ In his English translation, Lambrecht has *by him* instead of *in him*. Lambrecht 1999: 101.

⁵⁰⁹ Lambrecht 1999: 101.

⁵¹⁰ Such sentences may even have prompted this verse, and Harris recaps on such ‘signposts’. Harris 2005: 450. But, as mentioned previously with regard to the kerygma of Paul generally, his own conversion was so dramatic and life-changing that the sense of the righteous Jesus having exchanged places with the sinful Paul would never have been far from his thoughts. Cf. Gal 1:11-16; 1 Cor 15:8-9; Eph 3:8.

⁵¹¹ Harris 2005: 450.

⁵¹² Windisch is one such, according to Thrall 1994: 439.

⁵¹³ Although (for completeness perhaps?) Harris does not exclude it, alongside the earthly life of Jesus. Harris 2005: 450.

required a remedy. Jesus Christ was (also) fully human⁵¹⁴ but it was Christ's sinless state as man which was significant.⁵¹⁵ So, what does it mean to say that he (Christ) did not 'know sin'?

Martin and Harris both refer to the fact that behind the Greek verb γινώσκω here lies the Hebrew verb יָדָע [yada], 'have personal acquaintance or experience with.' Such knowing is understood to have been acquired by personal participation.⁵¹⁶ In the case of Jesus Christ however, neither outwardly in act nor inwardly in attitude did Christ sin, and at no time was his conscience stained by sin. In its testimony to the sinlessness of Jesus, the NT is uniform.⁵¹⁷

(ii) God made Christ to be sin

All interpretations of this phrase have in common the idea of identification, the understanding that God caused Christ to be identified in some way with what was foreign to his experience, namely human sin.⁵¹⁸ Although ποίειν τι can mean 'make something into something (else),'⁵¹⁹ the meaning here is not 'God made the sinless one into sin' (JB⁵²⁰), but rather, 'God *caused* the sinless one *to be* sin,'⁵²¹ where ποίειν denotes causation or appointment⁵²² and points to the divine initiative.⁵²³ Of course, none of this is to suggest that Jesus was an unwilling participant in this extraordinary covenant. As clearly evidenced throughout the NT; Jesus being handed (delivered) according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23; cf., Rom 8:3) was, in the filial obedience of the Son, in full alignment with the Father's purposes (e.g., Luke 9:51).⁵²⁴

⁵¹⁴ Cf., the *Timing* issue discussed in point (iii) below.

⁵¹⁵ Thrall references Barrett "*who notes the embarrassment caused by the fact of Jesus' baptism (Mt 3:14)*"; see also Furnish 1984: 351 who refers to Heb 4:15; 5:7-9; 1 Pt 1:19; 3:18. Thrall 1994: 439.

⁵¹⁶ As generally in Classical Greek. Harris 2005: 450.

⁵¹⁷ To those referenced above, Harris adds, Jn 7:18; 8:46; Acts 3:14; Heb 7:26; 1 Pt 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5. Harris 2005: 450-451.

⁵¹⁸ Harris goes on to point out that ἐποίησεν is here used with a double accusative, one a direct object (τὸν μὴ γινόντα), the other a predicate (ἁμαρτίαν). Harris 2005: 451.

⁵¹⁹ Such as in Lev 24:5, LXX, '...and you shall make it [fine flour] into twelve loaves', NB. The Hebrew reading of this verse is different, expressed in terms of *baking*, not *making*. Harris 2005: 451.

⁵²⁰ Harris references Young and Ford from Dunn's *Theology*, 222. Harris 2005: 451.

⁵²¹ Owens refers to "...the divine act of making Christ the personification of sin...". Owens 2012: 157.

⁵²² Cf., Homer, *Odyssey* 1.387; and Gen 27:37, LXX, ('if I have made him thy lord...'). Harris 2005: 451.

⁵²³ *Ibid*, 451.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*, 451.

(iii) Timing: when did God make Christ to be sin?

This is a more complex question than may appear at first sight, and an immediate conclusion that it was the moment of crucifixion may well need to be approached with some caution. Indeed, an argument in favour of the moment of the incarnation has been made.⁵²⁵ For scriptural support for such a posture reference is made to a number of verses in Romans, including Rom 7:24 and 8:3. The latter reads,

For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

However, this passage does not say that Christ was sent ‘in sinful flesh’, only ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’, which points to similarity, not to identity, and accordingly, avoids the assumption that by the incarnation Christ assumed ‘sinful flesh’ or a ‘sinful nature.’⁵²⁶ The soundest conclusion is that the ultimate implementation – consummation – of ‘God making (causing) Christ to be sin’, took place at the moment of the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the Cross. This determination is arrived at even though v.21 makes no explicit reference to the crucifixion, but the preceding context does localise the ποιήσεν in the moment of the Cross, the death of Jesus being mentioned three times in vv.14-15.⁵²⁷

The notion of God making Christ to ‘be made sin’ is so shocking and appalling – compounded by the stated unambiguous cause (*on behalf of us* – or even *in our place*) - that significant efforts have been made to go into what exactly is meant by the term ἁμαρτία (sin) where it is deployed for the second time in this passage. Four meanings have been posited.

(iv) Meanings of ἁμαρτίαν

First interpretation of ἁμαρτίαν: as meaning *Sin Offering*.

According to a long and distinguished tradition⁵²⁸ one proposed translation reads,

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν	ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν	ἁμαρτίαν	εἰποίησεν
<i>the one not knowing sin</i>	<i>on behalf of us</i>	<i>a sin offering</i>	<i>he made</i>

⁵²⁵ This is reported by Harris but not supported by him. Harris 2005: 451-452.

⁵²⁶ Ibid, 451-452.

⁵²⁷ Cf. Harris 2005: 452. Similarly, “...*But the culmination of his (Jesus’) human life was death by crucifixion, and it is to his death that Paul’s assertion much primarily refer.*” Thrall 1994: 439, and further in her Excursus VII, 445f. Contra to Martin 2014: 317-318.

⁵²⁸ So, Harris 2005: 452. Thrall, in similar vein, references Latin patristic writers, specifically Ambrosiaster, Pl 17 col. 298 . Thrall 1994: 440 incl FN 1748.

where the first and second ἁμαρτίαν are translated as ‘sin’ and ‘sin offering’ respectively. The linguistic basis for the wording ‘a sin offering’ is that the Hebrew חַטָּאת [châṭâ’] has been used in the OT both for the word sin and for the term sin offering – often in quick succession to one another. Leviticus is typical where in the LXX we read:

²³ ...and his sin [ἁμαρτία] wherein he has sinned be known to him, then he shall offer for his gift a kid of the goats....²⁴ ...it is a sin offering [ἁμαρτία].²⁵ And the priest shall put some of the blood of the sin-offering [ἁμαρτίαν] with his finger on the horns of the altar of whole-burnt-offering... Lev 4:23....25⁵²⁹

Harris elaborates in some detail on the supporting evidence for this interpretation, including both in the OT (Leviticus as already referenced and also the Day of Atonement in Lev 16:5-10, 20-22), Is 53, and in the NT (Heb 10:26; Rom 8:3; Gal 3:13) only to conclude on the basis of other considerations (including that ἁμαρτία does not bear the meaning of ‘sin offering’ anywhere else in Paul or the NT) and (if ἁμαρτία is parallel to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, it is more likely to bear a judicial or forensic sense than a sacrificial or cultic meaning), that ‘sin offering’ is not the preferred translation.⁵³⁰ This negative assessment of ‘sin offering’ will be further reinforced by the *positive* assertion with regard to the choice of ‘sin’ as a justifiable translation, above and beyond the (obvious) grounds that that is how the word ἁμαρτία is generally translated. (cf. The fourth postulated meaning below.)

Second interpretation of ἁμαρτίαν: as meaning *Sinner*.

This interpretation, which has only a limited number of supporters, conceives God treating Christ as if he were a sinner or as a sinner.⁵³¹

Third interpretation of ἁμαρτίαν: as meaning *Sin bearer*.

The sense proposed is that of Christ, on the cross, bearing the penalty of sin or the divine wrath against human sin.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Other examples are Lev 4:32, 4:34, Num 6:14; and again in Lev 4:21, 6:18. Cf. Thrall 1994: 440 incl FN 1747.

⁵³⁰ Harris 2005: 452-453. Lambrecht concurs, in the process also referencing the Leviticus 4 text but with a question mark over the exegesis of it. Lambrecht 1999: 101.

⁵³¹ Garland, 302; Bultmann, 165; Meyer. In Harris 2005: 453.

⁵³² Bernard, 73; Riesenfeld, *TNTD* 8.510. In Harris 2005: 453.

Fourth interpretation of ἀμαρτίαν: as meaning *Sin*.

One of the interpretations given by Zerwick and Grosvenor, ‘that God treated him [Christ] as if he had been sin’s embodiment,’⁵³³ is worded by Harris slightly differently, ‘God treated Christ as if he were sin.’ He goes on to quote the wording of other scholars, ‘Christ was made to be the very personification of sin.’ ‘Christ is made one with the reality of sin and its consequences.’ ‘Christ came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of his wrath.’⁵³⁴ This thesis has noted periodically that the themes of *substitution* and *representation* appear regularly with regard to the atonement of Jesus; being understood by scholars as competing terms or as equally applicable depending upon the context and subject to individual scholarly perspectives. In the present context, Lambrecht opts for ὑπὲρ to mean ‘instead of’ rather than its original ‘on behalf of’. But then, (somewhat confusingly?) immediately encapsulates what he has just said, ‘Christ takes our place and represents us.’⁵³⁵ Owens, accurately in my opinion, does include both elements,⁵³⁶ as also does Harris who employs the stark contrast between v.19b and v.20a to press home the assertion that that substitution as well as representation was involved. *“Because of God’s transference of sinners’ sin on to the sinless one, because sin was reckoned to Christ’s account, it is not now reckoned to the believer’s account.”*⁵³⁷

(v) **Righteousness – the exchange**

It is clear from v.21a that a gift beyond human imagination, let alone comprehension, has been made available to the human species. The terms grace, mercy, and loving-kindness have been redefined, and the meaning and the words, ‘...the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me’⁵³⁸ have now been exposed for what they mean in a manner which had been impossible to previously conceive. In taking the sins of humanity upon himself in Christ Jesus, God has done what he says he has done, he has reconciled the world to himself (v.19) without compromising his integrity. Accordingly, at this juncture one could regard the ‘But how?’ question which was posed at the end of our analysis of 2 Cor 5:17 to have been satisfactorily answered. We can, but we don’t. And why is this? Because

⁵³³ Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 545.

⁵³⁴ Sources in Harris 2005: 453.

⁵³⁵ Lambrecht 1999: 100-101.

⁵³⁶ In discussing alternative interpretations Owens comments, “...there seems to be little need to separate these two approaches to the meaning of this clause since both allow Christ’s death to be understood in substitutionary and representative terms.” Owens 2012: 157 incl FN 204. Likewise Zerwick 1990: 30.

⁵³⁷ And he goes on to employ insights from Gal 3:13; Rom 5:8; 1 Pt 3:18; and Rom 5:10; in filling out his argument. Harris 2005: 453-454.

⁵³⁸ Ps 69:9b; Rom 15:3.

God had even more in mind. In v.21b Paul spells out that God was not satisfied with (only!) taking our sins away, but had also determined to replace our human sinfulness with righteousness. However, this was not just an erasing of the charge sheet⁵³⁹ which had our name on it. On the contrary, what God intended was that, in Christ, we should not only receive but become the righteousness of God:

2 Cor 5:21(b)

ἵνα ἡμεῖς	γενώμεθα	δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ	ἐν αὐτῷ
<i>that we</i>	<i>might become</i>	<i>[the] righteousness of God</i>	<i>in him</i>

This completes the exchange. Jesus became what men had (sin), and we become what Jesus had (the righteousness of God). Scholars have construed the sense of the word γίνομαι in this context in a variety of ways: as signifying *participation* (= share in) the righteousness of God, or *action* (= doing the right thing/living for God⁵⁴⁰), or *change* (= we must become righteous people⁵⁴¹, or = so that in him we might be justified before God.⁵⁴²). If γίνομαι is assigned its most common meaning (*become, be*) a change which takes the form of an exchange is certainly indicated here, one which points to the change of status that accrues to believers who are in Christ and that is the ground of a⁵⁴³ new creation (v.17).⁵⁴⁴

Whilst I cherish this insight, and its expression as an ‘exchange’, I would not deny that in the whole of v.21 there is much more than a simple exchange between God and humankind,⁵⁴⁵ and indeed we also need to choose our terminology carefully. Harris, acknowledging his own confessional stance, issues a caution to Reformed theology where the expression ‘the righteousness of Christ’ is very prevalent. While it expresses a NT truth⁵⁴⁶, it is not a NT phrase. He points out that one cannot say on the basis of v.21 that the righteousness *of Christ* is imputed to believers, for it is here δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (righteousness ‘before God,’ or ‘bestowed by God’) that is imputed on the basis of Christ being the righteousness (= ἐν αὐτῷ) of believers.

⁵³⁹ Cf. Col 2:14.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Rom 6:10-11.

⁵⁴¹ So, Lambrecht 1999: 101.

⁵⁴² So, Harris 2005: 455. Lambrecht adds to his previous assertion, “...*the local, inclusive sense may also be present: we are righteous through Christ and through our being with him.*” Lambrecht 1999: 101.

⁵⁴³ Harris has ‘the’ instead of ‘a’.

⁵⁴⁴ Harris 2005: 455.

⁵⁴⁵ So emphasised by Lambrecht 1999: 101, where he also references Gal 3:13.

⁵⁴⁶ That truth being that through Christ’s ‘act of righteousness’ (δικαίωμα) there comes justification that leads to life (Rom 5:18). Harris 2005: 455.

It must also be noted that the process of exchange needs to go beyond that of imputation. The basis of the exchange is not Christ's death alone, whereby he is identified with human sinfulness, but also, as likewise identified with humanity, his resurrection. Through resurrection Jesus is vindicated as righteous, and this same righteousness is bestowed on those who become identified with him. It is ἐν αὐτῷ, i.e., in Christ that believers are endowed with this status of righteousness,⁵⁴⁷ and to be in Christ is to be united with his personal being.⁵⁴⁸ Along with this 'same righteousness' comes a 'same resurrection'. This required no repeating to the Corinthian church, Paul had spelled it out in detail in his first letter to them.⁵⁴⁹ This important element is absent from other scholars but that may well be accounted for by their addressing resurrection elsewhere in their commentaries on Second Corinthians. Lambrecht, for example, does so masterly in his exegesis of, and theological reflection on, 2 Cor 4:16-5:10⁵⁵⁰.

The mystery of the atonement

We may not be able to penetrate the mystery of the mind of God, nor of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ, in all that the unfolding of v.21 has revealed to us, but is it possible that we can posit what was in the mind⁵⁵¹ of Paul when he dictated these words? I have suggested previously⁵⁵² that his Damascus road encounter with the risen Jesus was probably the most determining of all of the influences on Paul. Lambrecht references such a perspective without committing himself,⁵⁵³ and with equal caution, when it comes to whether the Servant Song of Isaiah 53 directly influenced Paul in composing the reconciliation passage of vv.18-21, he admits to being uncertain but that it was 'not to be excluded'.⁵⁵⁴ I personally have no

⁵⁴⁷ It is good to see the pivotal role which 'in Christ' plays in Second Corinthians being emphasised at this juncture by Owens who tackles what he refers to as,

...the troublesome question of the meaning of the clause ἡμεῖς γενόμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. in 2 Cor 5:21. Several scholars closely link this statement with Paul's discussion of new creation in v.17 and some go so far as to equate καινὴ κτίσις in v.17 with the clause γενόμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in v.21. While directly associating these two theological concepts is problematic, the presence of the "in Christ" formulation in v.17 and v.21 does suggest that they are nonetheless related. Owens 2012: 157.

The 'equating' mentioned here by Owens is taken further in my analysis when I propose an alternative rhetorical-based interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17 in section 3.5 below.

⁵⁴⁸ Thrall 1994: 444.

⁵⁴⁹ 1 Cor 15:1-58.

⁵⁵⁰ Lambrecht 1999: 80-90.

⁵⁵¹ Paul's 'mind': Harris, quoting Barnett, speaks in terms of Paul's "major intellectual quarry for this verse". Harris 2005: 456 incl FN 208.

⁵⁵² Section 2.2.4 and elsewhere in this thesis.

⁵⁵³ Lambrecht references Seyoon Kim's similar perspective on this. Lambrecht 1999: 106.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid, 106.

hesitation in aligning myself with Harris' perspective that Isaiah 53 was in Paul's mind when he penned (at least) 5:21 as indicated by the three elements of v.21 which reflect statements made in that chapter concerning Yahweh's servant⁵⁵⁵:

- (a) Christ as sinless (v.21a) – '...he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth'(Is 53:9)
- (b) Christ was 'made sin'(v.21a) – 'When you [Yahweh] make his life an offering for sin...' (Is 53:10).⁵⁵⁶
- (c) The resulting benefit (v.21b) – 'The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous' (Is 53:11, NRSV).⁵⁵⁷

I opened the analysis of this signal verse (2 Cor 5:21) with a very personal quotation from Murray Harris,⁵⁵⁸ and I close it with another one of his, because it just expresses so completely the respect and honour which the words of Paul in this verse evoke from within me, as well as sensitising us to the element of *mystery* so necessary with regard to this subject:

In a manner unparalleled in the NT, this verse invites us to tread on sacred ground. We should never overlook the wonder and mystery of the fact that it was the all-holy God himself who caused Christ, his spotless Son, to become sin and therefore the object of his wrath. Paul had had no hesitation to say "God was in Christ" (5:19). Could it have been his acute awareness of this awe-inspiring mystery that prevented his saying boldly, "God caused Christ, the sinless one, to be sin," and prompted him to avoid actually naming God and Christ although the referents are unambiguous?⁵⁵⁹

Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, who maintain a clipped and highly abbreviated style throughout their Grammatical Analysis, deviate at this point, being likewise moved to express a very personal comment and describe the various analyses of this verse as: "a

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. The sources referenced, Hoad, Barnett, and Hofius, in Harris 2005: 456 incl FN 208. Lambrecht acknowledges the same sources. Lambrecht 1999: 106.

⁵⁵⁶ I would have added, Is 53:10a here.

⁵⁵⁷ Harris 2005: 456.

⁵⁵⁸ See above: But how? Part Three – *The Exchange* [2 Cor 5:21]

⁵⁵⁹ At this point Harris adds a footnote to the effect that in Gal 3:13 (the closest parallel to 2 Cor 5:21) in quoting from Deut 21:23 (LXX) Paul omits the word θεος [God]. Harris 2005: 456 incl FN 209.

*desperate attempt to put into words the inexpressible mystery whose inner principle transcends all human understanding.*⁵⁶⁰

A further interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17

We have now completed much of the interpretation of the new creation passage of 2 Cor. However, as was evident from the title of this section the interpretations which have been undertaken came with a qualification (*prevailing translations*) which hints that, before we can consider addressing Galatians, there may be more to come with regard to the interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17.

⁵⁶⁰ Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 545.

3.5 The assumption of ‘implied verbs’ in 2 Cor 5:17 interrogated and an alternative rhetorical-based interpretation proposed

We now return to an issue first mooted at the beginning of section 3.3. It was when I began to tabulate the various English language translations of v.17 in my initial research⁵⁶¹ that I experienced a singular sense of disquiet. The highly respected and much deployed NRSV translation contributed further to this sense of unease, a sense that there was something fundamentally skewed with the approaches being taken to interpreting and (consequently) translating this verse. Starting just with v17a, I began to wonder what interpretation could possibly give rise to a translation which reads as follows:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation

for the Greek wording:

ὥστε	εἴ τις	ἐν Χριστῷ,	καινὴ κτίσις
so that	if anyone	in Christ	a new creation

Just looking at the English sentence in itself irrespective of its source, it is so awkward that it jars; it distorts the English language.

As we have seen in section 3.4 the interpretations of 2 Cor 5:17 do vary considerably, mainly along anthropological, cosmological, and ecclesiological lines, and the variety of translations resulting from this do vary accordingly. The NRSV example being discussed here reflects the (impossible) attempt to inclusively represent the variety of diverse interpretations, and given the limitations of language it has done the best it could in trying to pacify the proponents from the competing interpretation camps. The question being raised here is actually a more generic and more principled one namely, in the process of interpretation are factors from secondary sources (e.g., Apocalyptic Judaism), or the desire to ‘square the circle’ of conflicting interpretations, being given more weight than grappling with the difficulty of the native Greek text, the content and structure of 2 Cor 5:17 itself?

In order to express its chosen interpretation, the corresponding English language wording of the NRSV has had to assume that there are actually two implied verbs absent from the Greek text, both of them for the verb ‘to be’. In the case of the NRSV version this assumption is reflected as follows, where the implied verbs are bracketed:

⁵⁶¹ Section 3.3 refers.

ὥστε	εἴ τις		ἐν Χριστῷ,		καινὴ κτίσις
so that	if anyone	[is]	in Christ	[there is]	a new creation

The second insertion is where the difficulty lies. The diverse interpretation and translation exercises tabled in section 3.3 reflect the way in which the implied verb is inserted so as to reflect the different interpretation-determined positions adopted. Accordingly we end up with apodoses which read as follows (where the implied verb is shown in *italics*): *there is* a new creation; the new creation *has come*; *he is* a new creation; *he is* a new creature; *that one is* a new creation; *there is* a newly-created being.⁵⁶²

The key to unlocking this conundrum came when I began to focus my attention upon the second research sub-question posed for this thesis, which reads as follows:

Paul speaks in the language of new creation (καινὴ κτίσις) in only two of the thirteen⁵⁶³ letters bearing his name (Galatians and Second Corinthians) and he does so without explaining the concept. He also introduces the concept very abruptly, even curtly in both Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17. Why was he in a position to do so?

In terms of our present focus, (Second Corinthians), and failing any evidence to the contrary, the fact that Paul introduces the words καινὴ κτίσις without any need to explain them suggests that the Corinthians were already familiar with the terminology, and in particular with Paul's use of those words. (It is evident anyway from the earlier letter to the Galatians that it was a term previously used by Paul.)⁵⁶⁴

So much for the content. What of the manner of delivery?

Firstly, as the profile of Paul and his theology (Chapter 2) make clear, Paul was first and foremost a *proclaimer* of the Gospel. To pagan listeners the gospel has, in the first place, to be announced. Later on, when pastoring new believers, the time for discourse comes. The

⁵⁶² Section 3.3 refers.

⁵⁶³ Thirteen. At this stage, no distinction is being made here between those seven NT letters which are reliably regarded as personally authored by Paul himself (Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon) and those which are not attributed to him or only attributed with critical objections.

⁵⁶⁴ For somewhat similar questions posed by two scholars with respect to the occurrence of καινὴ κτίσις in Gal 6:15, see section 4.3.

same even applied to Jews (1 Cor 1:23-24). If the kerygma was rejected by them he would then try and persuade (2 Cor 5:11).

Secondly, in the present context, we have demonstrated (Chapter 2 and also section 3.1) that Paul was highly defensive and angry in his posture towards the Corinthian church which, as he reminded them, *he* had brought to birth and which *he* passionately loved. As we saw, they had repaid his love with criticism and with comparing him unfavourably with other speakers/teachers/‘apostles’. His impatience comes out quick and fast in his frustration with this local church and in great measure accounts for his abruptness and curtness.

A rhetorical-based interpretation

Various scholars have made reference to the nature and tone of Paul’s rhetoric when he is speaking to the Corinthians in this and other passages of the letter. His manner of delivery (and therefore writing) is even identified (labelled) by Thrall as ‘Paul’s elliptical style.’⁵⁶⁵ Owens introduces v.13 as terse⁵⁶⁶, and in closing as a cryptic statement⁵⁶⁷ and, as with Thrall, comments upon the elliptical character of the whole verse.⁵⁶⁸ Hubbard claims that stylistically, 2 Cor 5:15 is compact, lacking a main verb in 17a, and resembles that kind of elevated prose which borders on the poetic. He repeats the stated need to insert the first implied verb, and then adds a most intriguing comment with regard to the second implied verb, “*The verb ‘to be’ should be supplied in the first clause⁵⁶⁹ and perhaps in the second as well, although this would diminish its rhetorically intended starkness.*”⁵⁷⁰ To which, I can only add, that indeed it did, it does, and as expected it depletes somewhat the kerygmatic tone when so inserted. Hubbard is accordingly to be commended in that in his English text he still leaves the starkness in place in his subheading by not inserting any such verb: ‘So, if anyone be in Christ – new creation; (17a).’⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁵ Thrall 1994: 424 incl FN 1634 in the context of the so called ‘short reading’ of the closing καινά of the verse [ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά]. Cf., the discussion on this in section 3.3, paragraph (b) where reference is made to the UBS apparatus. See also the Thrall comment and footnote there on this matter.

⁵⁶⁶ Owens 2012: 137. Owens comments elsewhere with respect to the structural relationship between v.20 and v.21 as a function of the *declarative* form of καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ in the former and the absence of a linking particle between the two verses. (Italics are mine). Ibid, 157.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, 139.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, 139.

⁵⁶⁹ At which point he references BAGD. Hubbard 2002: 177 FN 248.

⁵⁷⁰ Hubbard 2002: 177 FN 248.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid, 177. NB. I am not implying that he is presenting this wording as his ‘official’ translation. That may be his thinking but he does not say so.

It is important to remember that this issue around the wording of 2 Cor 5:17 and its (supposedly) implied verbs is centred within a context, and within an epistle, in which the whole issue of speaking (not of writing) is at the heart of Paul's defense of himself when he was being compared unfavourably with the money-earning philosophy-speakers. Hubbard thoroughly deals with this in his section (appropriately) entitled, 'Paul's *spoken*⁵⁷² message in 2 Corinthians 3-4', where he shows how after its introduction in 2:17, the theme of Paul's spoken proclamation threads its way through chapters 3-4.⁵⁷³ My argument also finds encouragement from seeing Lambrecht draw particular attention to the kerygmatic character of 2 Cor 5:17, specifically v.17b, while also recognising the poetic characteristics of the text, "*Verse 17b, however, is also a proclamatory celebration. This is clear from 'behold,' the chiasmic form, the antithetical style and the cosmological broadening.*"⁵⁷⁴ For Harris, such stylistic elements are also evident elsewhere in the new creation passage, such as 'the evangelistic watch cry' of v.20, and with regard to v.21, the intentional deployment of asyndetons such that "*the absence of a connecting particle adds solemnity to the words of v.21 and draws attention to their significance.*"⁵⁷⁵

In the light of these observations from the literature, it is intriguing that the scholars concerned did not proceed further in order to relate these perspectives to how the Corinthians are *hearing* what Paul is saying. And this is the point. Paul is saying - speaking - more than writing.⁵⁷⁶ And here, I am not only alluding to the fact that he deploys a scribe; we have to trust that the scribe is faithfully expressing the words of Paul. Accordingly, based upon the rhetorical considerations above, in approaching the *translation* of this verse directly from the Greek, I propose an alternative structure to what was laid out originally. Only three structures were outlined previously:

- | | <i><protasis></i> | <i>{apodosis}</i> |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| <i>apodosis</i> (i) | So <i><if anyone is in Christ></i> , | <i>{there is a new creation}</i> [17a] |
| <i>apodosis</i> (ii) | So <i><if anyone is in Christ></i> , | <i>{there is a new creation: everything old
has passed away}</i> |
| <i>apodosis</i> (iii) | So <i><if anyone is in Christ></i> , | <i>{there is a new creation: everything old
has passed away; see, everything has
become new!}</i> [17a-17b] |

⁵⁷² The italics are my emphasis.

⁵⁷³ Hubbard 2002: 148-149.

⁵⁷⁴ Lambrecht 1999: 97.

⁵⁷⁵ Harris 2005: 450.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. 'Analysis by Rhetorical Form' in Harris 2005: 105-110, particularly 108-110.

The new alternative structure being proposed takes the form of an emphatic synonym for v.17a (note the punctuation change of the added explanation mark), and for good measure, the wording of v.17b also follows the more literal translation of Margaret Thrall⁵⁷⁷:

<i><protasis></i>	<i>{apodosis}</i>
<i>apodosis</i> (iv) So < if anyone [is] in Christ, a new creation! >	{ the old has passed away, behold the new has come into existence! }

ὥστε < εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις > { τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρήλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά. }

The two things to notice are (a) that the second occurrence of the ‘implied’ verb [‘there is’] is not present in v.17a, and (b) the words καινὴ κτίσις have moved from the apodosis to the protasis where ‘a new creation’ thereby becomes an emphatic synonym of ‘anyone [being] in Christ’.

Since this is the message which I envisage Paul *saying* (exclaiming), the message that I envisage the Corinthians *hearing* from Paul would be something along these lines:

<i><protasis></i>	<i>{apodosis}</i>
So < if anyone is in Christ, a new creation! You’ve forgotten! >	{ the old has passed away, behold the new has come into existence }

Not the Vulgate

It is very important to immediately point out that the translation being proposed here is not to be confused with that suggested by the Vulgate. The latter, included amongst the tabulated translations listed in section 3.3 above, is now reproduced here:

Si qua ergo in Christo nova creatura, vetera transierunt: ecce facta sunt omnia nova.⁵⁷⁸

If then any be in Christ a new creature, the old things are passed away. Behold all things are made new.
The Douay-Rheims translation

If [there is] in Christ a new creature, [then] the old [things] have passed away: behold all [things] have been made new.
Translation of the Latin by Lambrecht⁵⁷⁹

So, if any new creature is in Christ, old things have passed away: look! Everything has become new.⁵⁸⁰
Translation from the Vulgate by Harris⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ Thrall 1994: 400.

⁵⁷⁸ Lambrecht 1999: 96.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

These English translations from the Vulgate have been ruled out, with ease, by scholars across the spectrum. Lambrecht noting that such punctuation can hardly be accepted because of the rather ‘strange reasoning’ it supposes, adding moreover that ‘in Christ’ is no longer the predicate and the parallelism in v.17b is broken.⁵⁸²

The ‘strange reasoning’ is that of the protasis. It is problematic for all English translations, ‘If [there is] in Christ a new creature, [then] the old [things] have passed away’⁵⁸³, or, ‘so, if any new creature is in Christ, old things have passed away’⁵⁸⁴. Such wording implies that there can be some in Christ who are not new creatures, or that there can be some new creatures who are not in Christ!

Harris goes on to refer to a translation by Héring (which bears in part some resemblance to the English translations from the Vulgate) noting that Héring would place a comma after κτίσις⁵⁸⁵ and a period after παρήλθεν. ‘If anyone is a new creature in Christ, then – for him – the old order has passed and a new world has arisen.’⁵⁸⁶ Harris raises three objections with regards to the punctuation deployed: (1) it converts a pungent aphorism into a trite truism; (2) destroys the symmetry of the four balanced elements; and (3) ill accords with the position of ἐν Χριστῷ⁵⁸⁷. Objections (2) and (3) are valid and mirror those of Lambrecht already mentioned. However, while objection (1) is equally valid, it is also of particular interest to me. It seems to restate the ‘strange reasoning’ concern using different wording [a trite truism] but in deploying the word ‘truism’ Harris (albeit unconsciously) is hinting at what I am proposing, that ‘being in Christ’ and ‘a new creation’ are deployed by Paul as synonyms.

⁵⁸⁰ Interestingly, and without any reference to the Vulgate, Thrall briefly explores a not dissimilar translation which she describes as grammatically perfectly possible (If anyone is a new creature in Christ, the old has passed away. Behold, the new has come into being), but quickly discards it on stylistic and structural grounds. Thrall 1994: 424.

⁵⁸¹ Harris 2005: 430.

⁵⁸² Lambrecht 1999: 96.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Harris 2005: 430.

⁵⁸⁵ What is the significance of this? Every single one of the translations tabled in section 3.3 have some kind of punctuation mark (comma, semi-colon, colon) after κτίσις and the original UBS 1983: 631 has the dot after the word [κτίσις] which denotes an ellipsis. UBS 1983: xlii) refers.

⁵⁸⁶ Harris 2005: 430.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. To which Harris footnotes that καὶνὴ κτίσις in Gal 6:15 also stands independently. FN 46. Cf. Chapter 4 below.

Paul's kerygmatic synonym

As we noted in our analysis, it is generally agreed by commentators that this letter is polemical and that Paul is angry at having to spell out fundamental things to the Corinthians yet again.⁵⁸⁸ The wording and the tone used by Paul in 2 Cor 5:17 is not discursive, it is a proclamation, an exasperated proclamation. He is reminding them of something that he had proclaimed and then explained to them previously. The most likely reason that he introduces the term *new creation* (καινή κτίσις) now without explaining the term and doing so in such a terse manner, is that they are already perfectly familiar with it! As I have posited above, Paul must have used it previously when he had been with them! (We know from Galatians that he had previously used the words καινή κτίσις.) Sadly, the Corinthians have forgotten the momentousness of what it means to be *in Christ*.

Paul is not writing this, he is dictating it, and he is using the term *new creation* as an emphatic synonym for [*being*] *in Christ*. An alternative term, 'kerygmatic synonym', actually expresses the structure of this rhetorical-based interpretation more comprehensively than 'emphatic synonym' since it contains both the sense of being emphatic as well as the very particular origin of that emphasis, namely the kerygma. It also suggests that there is a clear limit to the application of the synonym to within its appropriate context.

Does this mean that there is no place for discourse? Of course not, his letters are full of explanations which enlighten the *mind*; however, his point is that such pastoral discourse can only bear fruit within a *heart* that has been pierced by the gospel of the Cross, the kerygma [κήρυγμα].

Paul's kerygmatic synonym and the interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17

The question which arises from this alternatively proposed approach to 2 Cor 5:17, is, of course, does it affect the interpretation undertaken thus far of the new creation text here in Second Corinthians in any way?

My answer to that is in two parts.

In the first instance, from amongst the interpretations covered in section 3.4, I think that this translation does reinforce the anthropological dimension. I say this based upon what

⁵⁸⁸ The same will apply to the Galatian Christians, but for different reasons. (Chapter 4 refers).

I envisaged there as how the Corinthians would have *heard* and received Paul’s curt and forceful proclamation of a new creation. When I summarised the outcome from the interpretation of the 2 Cor 5:17 verse itself (above) I aligned myself with Margaret Thrall’s conclusion that while the wider dimension was important, priority of meaning still rested with the anthropological.⁵⁸⁹ The subsequent analysis of 2 Cor 5:18-21 then further reinforced that emphasis. At the end of the day one cannot ignore the presence of the ‘one’ in the ‘anyone’ of τῆς⁵⁹⁰ – and each one who hears and receives this proclamation receives it *first* into themselves as individuals.⁵⁹¹ Accordingly, if I were to write a ‘targum’ version of 2 Cor 5:17 it would read something along the following lines (where the ‘targum’ elements are in *italics*)⁵⁹²:

So if anyone is in Christ - *how could you possibly have forgotten already?- from God in Christ came your very existence*⁵⁹³ *along with, in Christ, a new existence in a resurrected life*⁵⁹⁴, a new creation! The old has passed away, *our previous helplessness in our lives and hopelessness for any kind of new life*⁵⁹⁵ *are a thing of the past; everything has now changed for the better*, behold the new has come into existence – a ‘new’ which includes each of us while being bigger than all of us and of all creatures put together, a transformed creation in the making!⁵⁹⁶

The second part of my answer recognizes that Paul’s kerygmatic synonym does have implications for interpretation which, by definition, will not (cannot) arise from any of the previous translations if only because for all of the standard translations the relationship between ‘being in Christ’ and ‘a new creation’ is one of cause-and-effect in which the conclusion ‘a new creation’ is a consequence of being ‘in Christ’.

As already stated, there are limits to the application of the synonym, and rightly so. Many statements could not, and should not, fall into this category. Examples abound; ‘...that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself’ (2 Cor 5:19), and even the sentence,

⁵⁸⁹ Thrall 1994: 427-428 and the conclusion of the 2 Cor 5:17 analysis above.

⁵⁹⁰ And it is worth noting that, apart from the Vulgate translations, all of the translations tabulated in section 3.3 translate εἴ τις as ‘if anyone’.

⁵⁹¹ In spite of his strong position on all three attributes being included in the interpretation of the καινὴ κτίσις text, Owens concurs that “it is (therefore) difficult to avoid the conclusion that the pronoun τῆς in 2 Cor 5:17a should be understood individualistically.” Owens 2012: 149.

⁵⁹² For fellow scholars of a curious nature we could catalogue this hypothetical ‘targum’ as 8M_{ig}2Cor^a.

⁵⁹³ 1 Cor 1:30. Cf. 1 Cor 8:6. Collins 1999: 112.

⁵⁹⁴ 1 Cor 15:22.

⁵⁹⁵ 1 Cor 15:19.

⁵⁹⁶ Thrall’s conclusion for v.17 reads, in part: “...this new creation...is a genuine anticipation of the eschatological transformation.” Thrall 1994: 428.

‘He [God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption...’ (1 Cor 1:30) would not lend itself to being synonymous with a new creation – it would lose the very personal appellation of the name of Jesus. The domain of the kerygmatic synonym is thus that of the ‘being in Christ’ which characterizes believers.⁵⁹⁷

The relationship between being ἐν Χριστῷ and καινή κτίσις is however a bigger picture than what has been stated so far. And that we now take up in section 3.6.

⁵⁹⁷ The classification by Andrie du Toit of the various ἐν Χριστῷ passages in Paul’s letters into different groups (referred to in section 3.6) makes this point self-evident. du Toit 2000: 288-293.

3.6 Paul's being in Christ and a new creation: a bigger picture?

We have spent quite some time examining the meaning of *καὴνὴ κτίσις*, but in order to examine its relationship with *ἐν Χριστῷ* a little closer, we need to first review what the latter term means.

In what is recognised as being beset with problems and a notoriously complex problem,⁵⁹⁸ the meaning of being 'in Christ' has been understood in a variety of ways, some of which (unsurprisingly) are not totally unrelated to one another. In the following five-point framework for the study of 'in Christ' I will populate the framework with the various insights.⁵⁹⁹

- (a) What does 'in Christ' tell us about Jesus Christ himself and his destiny?
- (b) The main interpretations of being in Christ.
- (c) The most meaningful interpretation.
- (d) Being in Christ and the envisaged destiny of believers, (including Paul himself).
- (e) Being *ἐν Χριστῷ* and *καὴνὴ κτίσις* in 2 Cor: a bigger picture?

(a) What does 'in Christ' tell us about Jesus Christ himself and his destiny?

In his first letter to the Corinthians, in the great chapter about the resurrected Jesus, Paul declares that, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.'⁶⁰⁰ A man who will never die again, and over whom death has no more dominion.⁶⁰¹

So, for the first time in all of creation, a human being (born of a woman) has now being resurrected into a new form of existence.⁶⁰² To put it rather crudely and inadequately, Jesus of Nazareth, born of Mary, was the God-Man; the resurrected Jesus is now the Man-God, something completely new. No wonder it can be said, "*that in Christ's death the old form of human life was brought to an end, in order that a new kind of human existence might become possible...*"⁶⁰³

⁵⁹⁸ du Toit 2000: 289; Thrall 1994: 425.

⁵⁹⁹ The framework is derived in part from Thrall's comprehensive and succinct summary. Thrall 1994: 424-429.

⁶⁰⁰ 1 Cor 15:45.

⁶⁰¹ Cf. Rom 6:9.

⁶⁰² Cf. 2 Cor 5:15b.

⁶⁰³ Thrall 1994: 424.

However, this last quotation is incomplete. The full sentence takes us into our next consideration: “...As a result, if anyone is ἐν Χριστῷ, this new order becomes a reality.”⁶⁰⁴

(b) The main interpretations of being in Christ.

There are in essence four interpretations:

(b1) ἐν Χριστῷ means belonging to Christ by faith.⁶⁰⁵ In this understanding, the ‘being in Christ’ is accompanied by an understanding of Christ being in the believer.⁶⁰⁶

(b2) ἐν Χριστῷ means being in Christ’s sphere⁶⁰⁷ of power on the basis that to be in Christ and to be in the Spirit are the same, the latter having the nature of divine power (Rom 8:1,9).⁶⁰⁸

(b3) ἐν Χριστῷ expresses the personal unity of the believer with Christ. This is a concept which depends upon the idea of Christ as a ‘corporate personality’ who ‘includes’ his adherents ‘within himself’ and with whom they are identified.⁶⁰⁹

(b4) ἐν Χριστῷ is ‘to have become incorporated through baptism into the community which is the body of Christ...’ To be baptised εἰς Χριστόν, is then to exist ἐν Χριστῷ (Gal 3:27-28). Furthermore, baptism ‘into Christ’ is baptism into the one σῶμα (1 Cor 12:13), which is in some way identified with Christ (1 Cor 12:12, 27).⁶¹⁰

(c) The most meaningful interpretation

In a well-reasoned argument, from these four options Thrall ‘short lists’ (b3) and (b4), and, noting that, since (b4) may be derived from (b3), it is (b3) which is the best option.⁶¹¹ The ‘corporate personality’ which this is predicated upon can be derived from a study of how Paul arrived at this understanding.⁶¹² In the long-standing debate about the subjective and (sometime vs) the objective understanding of the expression ‘in Christ’, it would seem that

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, 425.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. The helpful and very detailed systematic classification of all of the interrelated Christ-denoted, Lord-denoted, and Spirit-denoted terms in Paul’s letters as tabulated by du Toit: ἐν-phrases followed by datives referring to Christ/the Lord or the Spirit; (pages 288-292); ἐν-phrases implying the presence of Christ in the believer (pages 292-293); and ἐν-phrases indicating the presence of the Spirit in the believer (293). du Toit 2000: 288-293.

⁶⁰⁷ du Toit 2000: 289.

⁶⁰⁸ Thrall 1994: 425.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Thrall 1994: 425-426.

⁶¹¹ Ibid, 426.

⁶¹² Ibid, who then goes on to undertake precisely such a study. Ibid, 428-429.

both aspects actually apply.⁶¹³ And as with many other elements and tensions in this thesis, and conscious of our caution of the ‘binary trap’⁶¹⁴, as well as the significant place which Paul’s conversion plays in this study, I must agree with the (albeit generalization) that here also with the topic of ‘in Christ’, *“The subjective without the objective is an illusion but the objective without the subjective is dead”*⁶¹⁵. In practical terms, (meaning in the pastoral living out of the Christian life), what this translates into is that ‘being in Christ’ and ‘Christ being in the believer’ define what it means to be a Christian. They *“give to Christian spirituality a permanent mystical quality which, in turn, manifests itself through a life of obedience and service, because the believer is governed by Christ/the Lord/the Spirit – evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit”* (which we shall encounter later in Galatians).⁶¹⁶

(d) Being in Christ and the envisaged destiny of believers (including Paul himself)

Most of these interpretations have an anthropological emphasis. *“This Christ ‘in whom’ the believer lives is the last Adam, the inaugurator of the new eschatological humanity. Hence, believers themselves become newly-created: the most obvious explanation of καινή κτίσις is that it means ‘newly-created being’, in whom the lost divine likeness is regained.”*⁶¹⁷

To this eschatological is added the here and now: *“Believers are accordingly included within Christ’s being such that his death becomes their death (cf., Gal 2:20); their earthly existence as members of the σῶμα Χριστοῦ follows from this inclusion.”*⁶¹⁸ This, intrinsically, also brings an ecclesiological dimension into the interpretation, one which includes, in the present – in the *now* - not only participation in the peace and joy of Christ but, as Paul personally attested to, also a partaking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of Christ’s σῶμα.⁶¹⁹

Furthermore, death is no longer the last word for humanity, this new life in Christ, with faithful sowing to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal 6:8), including that of bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15). And, such an eschatological dimension has been inaugurated

⁶¹³ du Toit 2000: 290.

⁶¹⁴ In the Deissmann, Neugebauer, Ridderbos, debates of the twentieth century the thoughts and the arguments are in either-or terms (objective/subjective, ontological/experimental, corporate/individual) which obstruct arriving at a consensus, or accepting that a healthy tension is not only tolerable but desirable and preferable; Paul’s window was inclusive. du Toit 2000: 294.

⁶¹⁵ du Toit 2000: 297.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

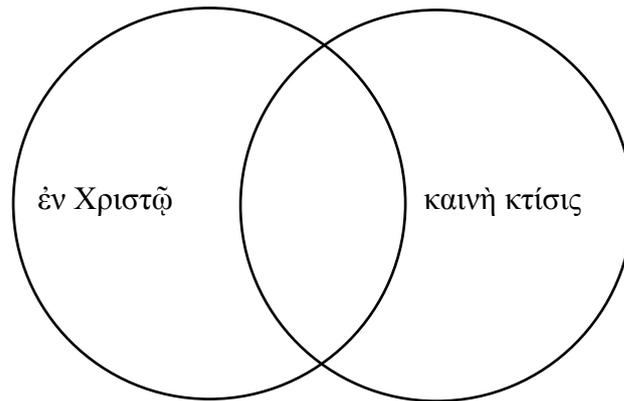
⁶¹⁷ Thrall 1994: 426.

⁶¹⁸ Thrall 1994: 426.

⁶¹⁹ I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church [... τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία]. (Col 1:24).

already in that the fellowship to be experienced *then* is anticipated *now* in individual and corporate fellowship with Christ: ‘He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.’ (1 Cor 1:8-9).

(e) Being ἐν Χριστῷ and καινὴ κτίσις in 2 Cor: a bigger picture?



Although the kerygmatic synonym has its limits, are there other domains of mutuality or of complementariness between these two terms?

With regards to being ἐν Χριστῷ, there is no shortage of cosmic and/or creation allusions – indeed forthright assertions – in the NT to the Son of God. The letter to the Hebrews⁶²⁰ and Paul’s letter to the Colossians feature significantly in this regard.⁶²¹ Accordingly, such characteristics support the cosmological elements in the interpretation of καινὴ κτίσις, as well as consolidating the element of resurrection hope and eternal life for the anthropological (as well as the ecclesiological) interpretations of καινὴ κτίσις. However, the movement is not all in the one direction, and those interpretations of καινὴ κτίσις in Second Corinthians which have championed the cosmological characteristics of new creation can extend the domain of the existing cosmic and creation assertions of ἐν Χριστῷ further, particularly out into the future – into a *new* creation in its fully envisioned realization. And we must not forget that the fullness which is envisioned goes beyond the human realm. It includes the angelic world and, more immediately to our senses, the material world. What Paul has referred to as ‘all things’ are part of a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), and “*world of material beings will be changed by the power of Christ*”.⁶²²

⁶²⁰ Such as Hebrews Chap 1.

⁶²¹ Col 1:13-18.

⁶²² Wright 1958: 290.

Chapter 4. Paul's Letter to the Galatians

4.1 Galatians in the context of the corpus of Paul's letters with regard to the theme of creation/new creation

4.1.1 Broad context

While it is true to say that in Galatians the issue of how Gentile men were to enter the church is addressed by Paul head on, what is probably not stressed sufficiently is that Galatians actually addresses the issue of how *anyone* and *everyone* enters the church. Paul's goal in this letter was clearly to address the Gentile issue; and there is considerable irony in the fact that in making his case for Gentiles he, of necessity, ends up making the case for Jews as well.⁶²³ This commonality is strongly affirmed elsewhere in the Pauline corpus.⁶²⁴

With regard to the context of the corpus of Paul's letters, Galatians has a unique affinity with Second Corinthians in its common use of the *καινή κτίσις* terminology, as it does with the polemical language and tone that we have seen characterised chapters 10-13 of 2 Cor.⁶²⁵ In Philippians, (Phil 3:4-6), in addition to the echo of Paul's Galatian autobiographical testimony (Gal 1:11-2:9), the polemical language of Galatians also finds its (vulgar) counterpart and personal insults of opponents in Phil 3:1-3. First Corinthians must also not be ignored for its normalising (if I may so term it) as equally irrelevant, circumcision and uncircumcision.⁶²⁶

Arguably, the most shocking of the themes in Galatians which aligns with other Pauline letters is that of his assertions about the Law of Moses. In Galatians, Paul denigrates the Law of Moses which, he says, though once valuable, is not only obsolete in the light of the Christ event, is now an obstacle to salvation and a source of bondage both to Jew and

⁶²³ This aspect is recognised by some scholars: "E. P. Sanders is perfectly correct to argue that 'the subject of Galatians...is the condition on which Gentiles (or anyone) enter the people of God,' and that 'the topic is in effect soteriology.'" Cousar's judgment is similar: "The issue under debate, raised by the agitators, demand for circumcision, was basically soteriological, how God saves people." FN 64 Sanders 1983: 18 and 46, respectively, and FN 65 Cousar 1982: 61, in Hubbard 2002: 200. Later in his analysis of Galatians, Hubbard will remind us of the indistinguishable character of the plight which Jews and Gentiles find themselves in prior to Christ: "Whatever root idea underlies τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4.3) Paul harnesses it to his soteriology and uses it to illustrate the common plight of both Jew and Gentile before the coming of πίστις (3.26-29)." Hubbard 2002: 205, (where he has a typo in his reference: 3:29 instead of 3:26-29).

⁶²⁴ Such as in Romans: '...since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.' Rom 3:30.

⁶²⁵ Cf. Bruce 1982: 2.

⁶²⁶ 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything.' 1 Cor 7:19

Gentile.⁶²⁷ These assertions find ready echoes elsewhere in the Pauline corpus; of course, in Romans,⁶²⁸ but also in Ephesians, ‘He [Christ] has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances...’⁶²⁹. Likewise, in Colossians.⁶³⁰

When it comes to Philippians, to hear Paul designate as loss and even as dung⁶³¹ the ‘righteousness under the law’, which the previous Pharisee Saul had experienced as gain, continues to jar when one reads the text.⁶³²

Although not universally acknowledged,⁶³³ the creation aspects of Galatians do also relate to those passages of Romans in which creation itself is personified.⁶³⁴ Finally, it has long been recognised that Galatians and Romans express many other common themes and in similar ways.⁶³⁵ The *newness* echoes evoked previously⁶³⁶ from Ephesians (Eph 2:15, 4:24) and Colossians (Col 3:10) are also of particular interest with regard to the significance of self-awareness and the sense of personal identity in the letter to the Galatians, as we shall see in section 4.1.4 below.

To what extent are Paul’s theological roots (as laid out in section 2.2) reflected in his comments about new creation in Galatians?

We shall see that OT influences such as from Jeremiah on circumcision (Jer 9:22-25)⁶³⁷ do feature in Paul’s thinking in Galatians, but also other OT texts, not ones particularly focussed upon creation topics but on the authenticity of the (perceived true) descendants of Abraham. Paul covers the latter in his two-covenants exposition in this letter, while heritage and inheritance, both obviously identity issues, also emerge as significant elements from the letter.

When it comes to the apocalyptic writings (section 2.2.3) some could well have contributed to the assurance with which Paul makes his case in Galatians, not least the story

⁶²⁷ Gal 2:16; 3:11-13; 5:1-4.

⁶²⁸ ‘For no human being will be justified in his sight by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets...’ Rom 3:20-21.

⁶²⁹ Eph 2:15.

⁶³⁰ Col 2:13-14.

⁶³¹ Σκύβαλον refuse, rubbish, esp. dung, Abbott-Smith 1991: 410; Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 599.

⁶³² Phil 3:5-8. Cf., the parallel attitudes towards the Law demonstrated by Jesus and Paul, as postulated in Murphy-O’Connor 2007: 81-114.

⁶³³ Hubbard disagrees in a well-argued case, Hubbard 2002: 224-225.

⁶³⁴ Rom 8:18-22.

⁶³⁵ Hubbard’s principle is one of ‘allowing Paul to interpret Paul wherever possible’ and he regards Romans as the best commentary on Galatians. Hubbard 2002: 221. Bruce, however, disagrees with such an approach, Bruce 1982: 2 incl FN 8.

⁶³⁶ Cf., section 3.1.1.

⁶³⁷ Hubbard 2002: 215, 219-221. [Note: the verse numbering here of the ninth chapter of Jeremiah 22-25 or 23-26) can be affected by whether the first verse of that chapter has been relocated (as seems valid given the context) to the end of the eighth chapter (as per the NAB for example)].

of *Joseph and Aseneth*.⁶³⁸ For Paul to equate the paganism of Gentiles (Gal 4:3, 9), epitomised in this apocalyptic story, with life under the Law of Moses (Gal 4:6) sounds shocking, but the text from Jeremiah referred to above points in this same direction:

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will attend to all those who are circumcised only in the foreskin: Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all those with shaven temples who live in the desert. For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.⁶³⁹

Wherein it is to be noticed that Judah is placed by the prophet Jeremiah second in the list of pagan nations!⁶⁴⁰

4.1.2 The Galatian churches

Paul's opening verse of his letter to the Galatians makes it very clear that he is addressing a number of churches in this letter, and not just one single local church, and I follow the Northern Galatia theory for reasons given in section 4.1.4, and, as it happens, the *ethnic* profile of this people-group will contribute to the reason why circumcision/non-circumcision came to be a such critical issue for these particular Gentiles when Paul took to addressing the issue.⁶⁴¹

4.1.3 A window into Galatians

The polemical character of Galatians has been mentioned already (section 4.1.1) where Paul feels personally betrayed by communities who in their initial interactions with him had been exceptionally kind and had regarded him as an angel of God (Gal 4:13-15) only to subsequently turn and regard him as their enemy (Gal 4:16). Extraordinary!

As with the Corinthians, it is tragic that Galatians is often remembered for its polemics, including remarks made by Paul which are even more personally offensive and strident in the latter than in the former. And what is sometimes forgotten is the deep love

⁶³⁸ With respect to the death-life motif discussed below (section 4.1.6) the conversion of Aseneth is depicted as a movement from death to life, and to emphasise Aseneth's complete and irrevocable break with her pagan past. Hubbard 2002: 237.

⁶³⁹ Jer 9:25-26.

⁶⁴⁰ Hubbard 2002: 220.

⁶⁴¹ Cf. section 4.1.7.

which drove Paul to endeavor to regain the trust of his ‘...little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you’.⁶⁴²

4.1.4 Historical and contextual

Paul’s letter to the Galatians is not addressed to any particular city, but to a people-group spread throughout a certain geographic area: ‘Paul, an apostle...to the churches of *Galatia*...’⁶⁴³.

Who were these people?

The fact that the Galatians were intensely persecuted communities has long been recognised, but in the latter half of the last century Raymond Brown and others, in part on the basis of 1 Peter, identified the persecutors not as the imperial Romans (the previous view) but rather as the pagan neighbours of the Galatians. The latter, in adopting Christian practices and such ‘anti-social behaviour’ as closed meals and meetings, experienced alienation and ostracism.⁶⁴⁴ On the face of it, these Gentile Christians seem to be in danger of being ‘stuck between a rock and a hard place. By their conversion, they have forfeited whatever identity which they might have known previously in pagan society, without, at the same time, having acquired any recognisable new status – such as the Jews had, for example.

It seems, therefore, that personal and communal identity became a key issue for these Galatian communities such that in later years, the author of 1 Peter was able to demonstrate to them that the well known claim of the Jews – to be the chosen *People of God* – now applied to them, and even that whereas Israel ultimately stumbled in her journey, they, the Gentile Christians of Galatia, by recognising and believing in Jesus the Messiah, had attained to becoming the Lord’s ‘own special people’.⁶⁴⁵

4.1.5 Literary aspects and structure

Galatians, as a letter of its day, is immediately recognizable as one which deviates in one respect from the customary norms. True, there are four parts: and the Opening Formula follows the established conventions of sender, addressee, and greeting (Gal 1:1-5). However the second part, conventionally a Thanksgiving, is omitted entirely, while the third segment,

⁶⁴² Gal 4:19.

⁶⁴³ Gal 1:1-3

⁶⁴⁴ Brown 1984: 75-83. Cf. Also Fitzmyer *First Peter* 1968: 362-363.

⁶⁴⁵ Brown 1984: 75-83.

the Body of the letter commences with a highly emotional explosion of shock and admonition along with angry pronouncements of repeated anathemas by Paul (the self-designated non-people-pleaser) upon unspecified perverters of the Gospel, all of this tightly packed into five verses (Gal 1: 6-10). Structurally, this surprising outburst could be considered as a replacement for the conventional Thanksgiving, with the Body of the letter then effectively being taken up in Gal 1:11-6:10. The Concluding Formula, Gal 6:11-18, terminates the letter, but even the latter contains a barb wherein Paul warns trouble-makers to back off (Gal 6:17).

Galatians is demarcated according to Content (and Rhetorical Analysis⁶⁴⁶) by Brown into an Introduction; then four segments; a defense of his gospel, contrasting his gospel with that of his opponents in terms of faith vs law, six arguments from the Galatian's own lives and from Scripture in support of his position, and an Ethical exhortation in the context of freedom in the Spirit. The Conclusion includes a recapitulation of Paul's attitude towards circumcision.⁶⁴⁷

Matera's⁶⁴⁸ demarcation maps approximately onto Brown's but (as would be expected) is more fine-grained with twenty-one subsections: The Greeting, A Statement of Astonishment, The Truth of the Gospel (seven subsections), Abraham's True Descendants (seven subsections), Rebuke and Appeal (four subsections), Living by the Spirit (three subsections) and The Conclusion.⁶⁴⁹

Traditionally, chapters 5-6 played a minor role in the analysis of the letter, since it was understood (assumed even) that Paul's theological arguments were confined to chapters 1-4, while chapters 5-6 dealt with ethical and exhortative aspects. In Matera's earlier paper (1988) he deals specifically and comprehensively with this issue, and demonstrates that these latter chapters intentionally reinforce Paul's theological arguments in the letter and bring it to its culmination.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁶ So designated by Brown. Brown 2009: 468.

⁶⁴⁷ Brown 2009: 468.

⁶⁴⁸ In his commentary Matera summarizes the manner in which the binary-choice conflicts of the sixteenth century have, in time, been transcended by cooperative exegesis among scholars across church divides, which include the introduction of new perspectives which focus upon Jewish and Christian identity; 'identity' is my term, Matera speaks of '*a person's status within the covenant people of God*'. Matera also suggests reading Galatians anew through a five-point thesis encompassing the social and individual characteristics of justification, the close equation of justification with that of being 'in Christ,' justification's relationship with the life in the Spirit and the concomitant law of the (redefined) law of love, and a reminder of who the real contenders were in the Galatian debate, namely Christians from diverse backgrounds (and not Jewish adherents to the religion of Moses). Matera 1992: 6-7.

⁶⁴⁹ Matera 1992: 12.

⁶⁵⁰ Matera 1988: 80-90.

Matera convincingly emphasizes that in Galatians⁶⁵¹ the way in which Paul presented his material is the single most important factor in the rhetoric of argumentation,⁶⁵² and that in Galatians Paul is intent upon showing his Gentile converts the utter folly of accepting circumcision. Paul's arguments are structured such that by the end of the letter the Galatians find themselves "*in a rhetorical maze with only one exit: they must refuse to be circumcised because Gentiles who accept circumcision are cut off from Christ; circumcision will relegate them to the realm of the Law.*"⁶⁵³

4.1.6 Theological frameworks

Galatians is a radical letter. Its defining theology, with its death/life⁶⁵⁴ motif, is not unique amongst the letters of Paul, but in terms of content, form, and tone, it is an 'in your face' assertion of Gospel truth which permits of no sitting on the fence to its Gentile recipients while simultaneously throwing down the gauntlet to the Christian missionaries of Jewish background⁶⁵⁵ with whom he is contending for the 'soul' of the Galatian churches.

Paul's death/life motif is intensely personal, and presented with an autobiographical stance which, as stressed repeatedly in this thesis, originates first and foremost from his conversion-encounter on the road to Damascus; definitively *intra nos*, not *extra nos*. The theological motifs flowing in turn from this encounter included a recognition that the person – the being - who identified himself to the Pharisee Saul as *Jesus of Nazareth*⁶⁵⁶ (in the process honouring his persecutor Saul by addressing him in his native Hebrew tongue⁶⁵⁷) was a whole new class of being – a new creation even? – such that the language of *being in Christ* and *Christ being in Paul/Christ being in a Galatian*, means something. That encounter radically redefined Paul's life, and his ensuing theology is expressed in the binary language that permeates Galatians:

⁶⁵¹ As in Romans. Matera 1992: 12.

⁶⁵² Matera 1992: 12.

⁶⁵³ Matera 1992: 12.

⁶⁵⁴ Hubbard devotes five chapters to this topic in the broad context of Paul's thought. Hubbard 2002: 77-130; also 233-234. With respect to its central place in Galatians, see Hubbard 2002: 123-128, 191, 208, 227-229.

⁶⁵⁵ Section 4.1.7 below.

⁶⁵⁶ Acts 22:8

⁶⁵⁷ Acts 26:14

formerly vs now⁶⁵⁸

law vs faith⁶⁵⁹

flesh vs Spirit⁶⁶⁰

slave vs free⁶⁶¹

outer vs inner⁶⁶²

circumcision or uncircumcision vs 'in Christ'⁶⁶³

circumcision or uncircumcision vs new creation.⁶⁶⁴

Ultimately, Paul's theology as expressed in Galatians lays down a radically new definition of what constituted 'The People of God'.⁶⁶⁵

For Jews becoming Christians this would include painful *discontinuity* with everything that they had held dear, including *the* defining element of identity; circumcision. In Galatians, Paul forcefully asserts to his Gentile readers that the Law of Moses could no longer be considered a viable platform upon which this new revelation of the Messiah could be further developed, on the contrary it would merely replace pagan bondage by bondage under the Mosaic law. All this is asserted in spite of the paradoxical *continuity* attested to by the same Saul-turned-Paul, namely, that the newly defined people of God – those *in Christ* - were clearly identifiable as the Messianic people whom God had foretold centuries previously through the words of the Hebrew prophets, particularly Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The people, in other words, having the expected profile of what had been foretold, characterized by interiority, circumcised in heart, people of faith, and of the Spirit.

4.1.7 Paul's defence and his opponents

It is recognised by most scholars that under James the ethos of *Jerusalem-Christianity* had, unsurprisingly, remained firmly Jewish, Peter and Cornelius notwithstanding.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁵⁸ Gal 1-2.

⁶⁵⁹ Gal 2:16-21; 3:2-14, 22-25; 4:4-6.

⁶⁶⁰ Gal 3:3; 4:29; 5:16-17, 19-25. More broadly, Gal 5:13-6:10.

⁶⁶¹ Gal 3:26-4:31, with its associates: sonship, the Abrahamic promise, and the Spirit. (I will include: identity, heredity, and inheritance.)

⁶⁶² Gal 1,2,4,6.

⁶⁶³ Gal 5:6.

⁶⁶⁴ Gal 6:15. Cf. section 4.1.1 above.

⁶⁶⁵ Under the notion of *identity* this aspect features in section 4.1.4 above, and also in sections 4.4.

⁶⁶⁶ "By the end of the century, James...had become the hero of the Jewish Christians who remained observant of most Jewish customs". Brown 1984: 105 incl FN148; cf. Cwiekowski 1988: 73-74.

Accordingly, when missionaries from the churches of Jerusalem and Palestine went on mission, they brought their *Christianity-within-the-Mosaic-Law* with them, but Paul was uncompromising in his resistance to them, and in his letter to the Galatians refers to such missionaries as men who *distort (pervert) the gospel, false brethren, certain men from James, people who bewitch, who are divisive, who hinder the truth, and who are trouble (confusion)-makers.*⁶⁶⁷

4.1.8 Newness and creation

This has been addressed thoroughly in Chapter 3. All that needs to be affirmed here is that the three characteristics around Paul's deployment of *new creation* (καινή κτίσις) in Second Corinthians constitute the same framework for its interpretation in Galatians, namely the anthropological, cosmological, or ecclesiological, newness of that new creation (or combinations of some or all of these elements). The features of this framework which emerge from Galatians are dealt with in section 4.4 when the interpretation of the text is undertaken.

⁶⁶⁷ Gal 1:7; 2:4,12; 3:1; 4:17; 5:7,12.

4.2 The main message of Galatians and how it relates to the new creation passage of the letter

While commentators may differ about various aspects of the letter and argue over which are ethical issues (and sections) and which are theological issues (and sections)⁶⁶⁸ all agree⁶⁶⁹ that the purpose of the letter was to address a major crisis, namely to settle the issue of the basis upon which Gentiles can enter the church. This notwithstanding, the response given by Paul to this (complex) crisis is interpreted somewhat differently by scholars. Matera's perspective is captured in a few simple sentences:

*The Galatians need not be circumcised because they are in Christ. Because they are in Christ they are already Abraham's offspring. In Christ they share the gift of the Spirit which allows them to overcome the desires of the flesh. In Christ, they are a new creation so that the distinction between circumcision and the lack of it is abolished.*⁶⁷⁰

This sounds like a reasonable encapsulation of the main message of Galatians but there are problems with it which render it initially incomplete and then ultimately incorrect.

The first concern arises because, while I welcome Matera's perspective on the social dimension in the interpretation of Galatians (the issue of personal and communal identity being so critical for the people of Galatia), it cannot be the dominant interpretation as he claims. Secondly, the statement Matera makes, '*... Galatians is not primarily a letter about individual salvation*', is juxtaposed by him against his assertion that '*Galatians is about the condition on which Gentiles enter the people of God*'.⁶⁷¹

Irrespective of the correctness or otherwise of these statements, why would individual salvation, and being part of the people of God, be considered as being at odds with one another? Indeed as already posited,⁶⁷² Galatians is actually about the individual and ecclesiological salvation of people irrespective of their cultural background, Jew as well as Gentile, and (also) rich or poor, slave or free, and not least, given the centrality of circumcision in this letter, male or female.⁶⁷³ Matera's argument that 'The legalism against which Paul argues is a legalism that would force Gentiles to adopt the cultural patterns and

⁶⁶⁸ Matera 1988: 79.

⁶⁶⁹ Matera 1992: 1.

⁶⁷⁰ Matera 1992: 18. Cf. also pp 31-32.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid, 29.

⁶⁷² Section 4.1.1 above.

⁶⁷³ Gal 3:28. Cf. Col 3:11. Also, see Cutler-related references below.

practices of Jewish Christian believers⁶⁷⁴ while valid in itself⁶⁷⁵ seems to me to miss the key theological point. The ‘patterns and practices’ which Matera refers to are not merely cultural; they are soteriological. Circumcision and the Law of Moses were not primarily cultural; on the contrary, they were defining elements of what it meant to be Jewish in the sense of what it meant to be a member of the people of God.⁶⁷⁶ Paul’s argument is that if Gentile Christians were to adopt such ‘patterns and practices’ it would invalidate any benefit of Christ for them (Gal 5:2). Clearly, for *any* Christian, including those with a Jewish background, to continue to adhere to these ‘patterns and practices’ would have the same consequences. As already stated, I am not denying the cultural dimension. Indeed ‘identity’ is crucial in this whole matter, probably more so in Galatians than in any other Pauline letter⁶⁷⁷, but that too is a consequence of what it means to be a new person belonging to a new people as a result of the atonement of Jesus on the Cross.⁶⁷⁸

Being in Christ is very much to the fore in Galatians and is (albeit indirectly) equated with a new creation. This is reflected in a number of ways in the letter; such as when a new creation is contrasted directly with the issue of circumcision-uncircumcision (Gal 5:6) in exactly the same way as being in Christ is contrasted with circumcision-uncircumcision (Gal 6:15); and again when the notion of inheritance and of being an heir is closely linked with that of new creation,⁶⁷⁹ coupled with that of a redefinition of personal identity (as Christian identity). As we noted in section 4.1.4, the issue of identity emerged as a key marker in this thesis.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁴ Matera 1992: 31

⁶⁷⁵ Hubbard indeed designates the place of Torah in the believing community as the central issue in Galatians. Hubbard 2002: 209.

⁶⁷⁶ Furthermore, “*It can be reasonably postulated that those within the Jewish wing of the early church, wishing to maintain diplomatic relations with their fellow-Jews, would have recommended circumcision for Christian converts, and this to avoid the charge of apostasy.*” Hubbard 2002: 212, adding in two footnotes support for his postulation: FN 112 which details apocalyptic sources for and against a rigid posture, and FN 113: *See Rowland 1985: 26: “It is essential to grasp the central importance of this rite (circumcision) as a sign of membership of the covenant people to understand the strength of feeling generated by Paul’s decision not to insist on circumcision for his Gentile converts to Christianity.*” Hubbard 2002: 209.

⁶⁷⁷ Section 4.1.4 refers.

⁶⁷⁸ Gal 2:21 *passim*.

⁶⁷⁹ Cutler addresses this in quite some detail where the inheritance in question is experienced as participation in a new creation encompassing salvation, socially (table fellowship), ecclesiological, and (even) cosmological. Cutler 2016. See section 4.4.4 above.

⁶⁸⁰ It must never be forgotten that this identity element had been a major consideration, but the other way around, for the ‘old’ Paul, (Saul of Tarsus): “*...the threat posed to Israelite identity by these Christians with their new freedoms further aggravated the threat already posed to that identity (in personal, social, cultural and religious terms) by the prevailing Hellenistic culture.*” Cf. Benedict XVI 2009: 79-82.

In the light of all of the foregoing remarks, I postulate that the main message of Galatians is that, arising from the Christ event (Gal 1:1-5)⁶⁸¹, the basis upon which a person, Jew or Gentile, now becomes a member of the people of God – defined as becoming a child of God (Gal 3:26) - is through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26). All of the Mosaic Law, and especially circumcision or uncircumcision, is accordingly completely impotent and irrelevant in this regard (Gal 5:6; 6:15). Being ‘in Christ’ means that the carnality of the old life has been incorporated into the crucifixion and death of Christ (Gal 2:19-21; Gal 5:24), and for those who belong to Christ (Gal 5:24) constitutes being a new creation (Gal 6:15). Each such person is now designated as an heir of Abraham and of the Abrahamic promise (Gal 3:29). This brings with it the gift of the Spirit (Gal 3:2), resulting in a life of faith which expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6), and which empowers those who belong to Christ (Gal 5:24) to live an ethically good life (Gal 5:16-26).

⁶⁸¹ Note the ‘Amen’ which terminates verse 5.

4.3 The prevailing translations of the Greek text of Gal 6:15 on the assumption of ‘implied verbs’⁶⁸²

Preliminary comments (including two Editorial Notes) made about implied verbs when the exegesis of 2 Cor 5:17 was being introduced, are also applicable to the analysis of Gal 6:15.⁶⁸³

In what follows, (a) the new creation text is first quoted within its immediate context of Gal 6:14-15, using the NRSV translation. (b) Then the Greek text from the UBS version is shown (with the literal wording in English underneath it). (c) This is followed by the Greek-English interlinear as given by the UBS interlinear. (d) Then, eleven interpreted and translated versions of Gal 6:15 are given, all of which are in English. These are followed by the Latin Vulgate version accompanied by an English translation of that Latin text.

(a) **Gal 6:15** (in its immediate context, Gal 6:14-15):

¹⁴ May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ **For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!**

(b) **Gal 6:15** (The original Greek text with the literal English wording underneath it)

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.
neither for circumcision anything is nor uncircumcision but [a] new creation

(c) **Gal 6:15** (The Greek-English UBS Interlinear):

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.
for~neither⁶⁸⁴ circumcision is~anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation.

This UBS Interlinear translation does not insert any verbs; in terms of punctuation, the terminating full stop is in both the Greek and the English.

(d) **Various English translations are given - grouped according to similar characteristics:**

(d1) **English translations which follows the NT Greek text precisely or closely:**

For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. NASB

Neither⁶⁸⁵ circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation Matera⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸² Sources referenced include Brown 2009: 469-470, Matera 1988, Hubbard 2002, Moo 2010, Owens 2012, and Jackson 2010.

⁶⁸³ Section 3.3 refers.

⁶⁸⁴ The symbol ~ shows an inversion of the Greek order into English. The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament, 1993, p viii.

⁶⁸⁵ Matera excludes the translation of γὰρ (for). Matera 1992: 224.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid. Note: While Matera has ‘a new creation’ here, in his analysis he repeatedly speaks in terms of ‘the new creation’ or ‘this new creation’. Ibid, 226.

(d2) Translations which do not insert any new additional verbs but replace the first ἐστίν (15a) by alternative words (either avails, mean, or counts) including one translation which adds the adjective only (15b) where the Greek text does not have such:

For in Christ Jesus⁶⁸⁷ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

NKJV

For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation.

NAB

For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

ESB

(d3) Translations which insert a verb (a second ἐστίν) (15b) which is not in the Greek text and also supplementary adjectives (everything, means, counts). One translation replaces the anarthrous [a] new creation with the definite article, the new creation:

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! NRSV

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. NIV 2011

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. NIV 1984

(d4) A translation which replaces the first ἐστίν (15a) with alternative wording (count for), replaces the ἀλλὰ of 15b with alternative wording (what matters) and drops the indefinite article before the words new creation:

For neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision count for anything: What matters is new creation!

Hubbard⁶⁸⁸

(d5) Translations of κτίσις which opt for creature instead of creation and which also include the words in Christ Jesus at the beginning of the sentence based upon the different source texts being read:

For in Christ Jesus⁶⁸⁹ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but a new creature.

D-R

For in Christ Jesus⁶⁹⁰ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

KJV

(e) The Latin Vulgate:

In Christo enim Jesu neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque præputium, sed nova creatura. Vulgate

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but a new creature.

Vulgate translation

⁶⁸⁷ The words 'in Christ Jesus' here are not in the UBS Greek text and in hardly any other versions. It is most likely a scribal addition on the basis of Gal 5:6. Matera 1992: 226; similarly Bruce who asserts that this verse has been largely contaminated by the text of Gal 5:6. Bruce 1982: 273.

⁶⁸⁸ Hubbard 2002: 218, 222.

⁶⁸⁹ The words 'in Christ Jesus' here are not in the UBS Greek text. See previous foot note on this.

⁶⁹⁰ The words 'in Christ Jesus' here are not in the UBS Greek text. See previous foot note on this.

4.4 Interpretations of Gal 6:15 as reflected in the prevailing translations

UBS Interlinear:

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.
for~neither circumcision is~anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation.

This UBS Interlinear translation does not insert any verbs; in terms of punctuation, the terminating full stop is in both the Greek and the English.

NRSV:

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! NRSV.

Unlike its companion text in Second Corinthians, the Galatians καινὴ κτίσις passage is not embedded somewhere in the middle of the letter but comes at the very end,⁶⁹¹ providing in the process, as we have been saying, an encapsulation of the letter's main message. The seven binary pairings tabulated in the Theological frameworks (section 4.1.6) are accordingly to be found in the five preceding chapters which weave these themes into a 'container' for the concluding death-life 'equation' of the final chapter: death (crucifixion) - life (new creation). The word 'weave' is intentional because, while there is a sense in which these themes are introduced in sequence as we progress through the letter, they also continuously reappear as their relationships with one another emerge.

formerly vs now

Paul commences his letter with an autobiographical-based defence of his apostleship, plunging in the very first verse into the basis for the Gospel that he is being forced to remind them of: the resurrection by God the Father of Jesus Christ from the dead (Gal 1:1) and the personal revelation of this truth which the same God chose to personally reveal *in* Paul (Gal 1:15-16) – the latter moment being the irreversible crossing over by Paul from his former life to the new life, the 'now' life. The preposition *in* Paul (not *to* Paul) is extremely significant,⁶⁹² as it will also act as a challenging echo to what he will remind the Galatians of

⁶⁹¹ Prior to the standard Concluding Formula of such letters. In the case of the Letter to the Galatians, this Concluding Formula is a mere two verses, Gal 6:16-17.

⁶⁹² For Paul, this 'former way of life' was brought to an abrupt end by the revelation of Christ in him (ἐν ἐμοὶ 1.16). "While never depreciating the objective nature of the Damascus Christophany (cf. 1 Cor. 9.1; 15.8), here, as in 2 Corinthians 4.6, Paul consciously underscores the subjective element involved in this apocalypse. His purpose is to accentuate 'the personal transformation effected by the revelation from heaven.'" Hubbard 2002: 194.

later (Gal 3:2), namely their personal receiving of the Spirit.⁶⁹³ Scholars repeatedly stress that Paul expected his readers to draw from his personal testimony, including that of Christ in him, that what had become true for him (Paul) had become (or should have become!) true for them (in this case, the Galatians, as expressed in Gal 4:19).⁶⁹⁴ At the risk of stating a truism to them, Paul is reminding them that they, like him, also had a ‘former’ life; he is just appalled, as they also should be, that they are considering taking a path which will negate the ‘now’ life which they have experienced.

This Pauline *formerly vs now* symbolism is not unique to Galatians, sometimes being found elsewhere when Paul refers to his conversion. One of the closest parallels to the Galatians text is to be found in the passage in Philippians⁶⁹⁵ where, in also addressing the circumcision issue, he intensely – and again crudely⁶⁹⁶ – denigrates his former life at the expense of the ‘now’ life where he expects to gain Christ and be found *in him*.⁶⁹⁷

law vs faith

This issue has been *the* defining issue for many students of Galatians, as indeed it has in the long journey of the church. Of course, Paul and his Jewish-Christian opponents have the law of Moses in mind in their disputing, but do we know what concept of ‘law’ the Galatians had? That question has been posed,⁶⁹⁸ without being fully answered; perhaps that of the law of the Roman Province in which they lived?

Paul first raises the matter in the second chapter of his letter when he presents the basis of justification for Jews who have become Christians, using as his platform the way in which he had confronted Peter when the latter had come to Antioch, and quoting his own words to Peter on that occasion here in this letter.⁶⁹⁹ He further illustrates the principle by applying it personally to himself in the passage rightly termed the *propositio* of Galatians, Gal 2:15-21.

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.⁷⁰⁰ And we have

⁶⁹³ I have also always understood Peter’s formerly/now transition in the same way. After the resurrection of Jesus, Peter knew that Jesus was alive; after Pentecost, Peter knew that Jesus was alive *in* Peter. Huge difference.

⁶⁹⁴ Cf., Hubbard himself, and also Dunn whom he quotes. Hubbard 2002: 194-195.

⁶⁹⁵ Phil 3:2-11.

⁶⁹⁶ Phil 3:8.

⁶⁹⁷ Phil 3:9.

⁶⁹⁸ Brown 2009: 470 incl FN 9.

⁶⁹⁹ Gal 2:11-16.

⁷⁰⁰ Here I follow the NRSV version which translates ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as *but through faith in Jesus Christ*, as against others who favour *but through (the)faith of Jesus Christ*. See Matera for a thorough

come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.

¹⁷ But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!⁷⁰¹ ¹⁸ But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ;²⁰ and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

Paul then launches into the critical importance of the law/faith issue, but now with limited focus upon himself.⁷⁰² In what follows, views differ as to where the emphasis lies in Paul's argument. Given that the context is still the Paul/Peter confrontation, is his focus primarily on faith or on the social dynamics between Christians within the church? Alert, as always, to the caution of being dogmatically binary,⁷⁰³ we would expect elements of both given the context. But in this particular instance that is not the case, and the opportunity presented by the confrontation at Antioch to further address Jew-Gentile relationships is intentionally eschewed by Paul. Instead he adopts an extremely binary posture with regard to the soteriological consequences of choosing between faith and nomistic observance, during which the words 'works of the law' occur three times within a single verse (Gal 2:16) in order to discredit them!⁷⁰⁴ The basis of salvation thus defined, it leads inevitably into the question as to what now demarcates the people of God - νόμος or πίστις?⁷⁰⁵ To address this question, Paul now introduces for the first time in his letter, the significance of the person and role of Abraham – the archetypal man of faith.

analysis of the debate over the text being rendered either as a objective genitive (as the NRSV) or as a subjective genitive. Matera himself favours the subjective while noting that the majority of commentators and translators render the phrase as an objective genitive. This question repeats twice through the remaining verses of Chapter 2. Matera 1992: 93-96.

⁷⁰¹ Translated also as 'let it not be!' The phrase is frequently used in Romans (3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:13; 9:14; 11:1, 11) after a question which Paul things absurd. Matera 1992: 95.

⁷⁰² Hubbard claims here that Paul switches focus entirely away from himself. Hubbard 2002: 199.

⁷⁰³ Section 1.3.2 refers.

⁷⁰⁴

Even Peter's withdrawal from community meals at Antioch, which afforded Paul a splendid opportunity to channel the ensuing discussion in the direction of Jew-Gentile unity, is taken in an entirely different direction and used to illustrate the soteriological principle of nomistic observance (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, 2.16 [3x!]) versus faith/faithfulness (2.15-18).

Hubbard 2002: 200.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, 201.

flesh vs Spirit

As a preliminary, in order to further magnify the chasm between law and faith, Paul (positively) equates the domain of faith with the Spirit of God, and (negatively) equates the established Jewish law, and of living under that law, with the ‘flesh’ – with paganism! What a scandalous assertion! He challenges the Galatians that, having received the Spirit through the revelation of Jesus Christ crucified (Gal 3:1), for them to now take on the works of the law would be tantamount to returning to where they had come from before, pagans living under the bondage of the flesh.⁷⁰⁶

Their present experience of the Spirit, including that of miracles, is one of faith (Gal 3:5), and the determining model of their faith is Abraham who, the ancient Scriptures revealed, was the one in whom all the nations of the earth (including the Galatians) would be justified (Gal 3:8) and blessed (Gal 3:8-9). Abraham’s righteousness was attributed to his faith in God (Gal 3:6) and the promise of inheritance was made to Abraham and to his seed. This divine promise was given to the pre-circumcised Abraham⁷⁰⁷, and the ‘seed’ in question is identified by Paul as Christ (Gal 3:16). Only those in turn who are of faith can be regarded as sons of Abraham (Gal 3:7), the expression of that faith being faith in Christ, which – by the very nature of Christ, and of baptism (Gal 3:27) – attributes to the Galatians the character of, not only ‘sons of Abraham’, but of ‘sons of God’ (Gal 3:26). This, in spite of the ‘inheritance’ gender designation (‘son’), definitively incorporates female as well as well as male (Gal 3:28).⁷⁰⁸ As the designation ‘sons of God’ was (previously) the prerogative of Israel⁷⁰⁹, this latter conclusion is a major consideration with regard to identity as to what *now* demarcates the people of God.⁷¹⁰ Sociologically, the importance of personal identification (who am I? what defines my personhood? where, or to whom, do I belong?) is, for any human being, a fundamental matter, and, as it happens, it was particularly acute in the case of the Galatians communities.⁷¹¹ This confirmation of sonship for a Galatian comes from the Spirit because

⁷⁰⁶ Gal 3:3. “Paul warns the Galatians that turning to the law is actually reverting to the unaided realm of the flesh (3.3). This parity of law and flesh (cf. 5.17–18; 6.12–13; Rom. 7.5–6) was implicit in his autobiographical comments (1.10–16), and constitutes a further assault on the position of ‘the troublemakers’” (1.7; 5.10). Hubbard 2002: 199.

⁷⁰⁷ Gen 12-13.

⁷⁰⁸ Plus slave as well as free, and (of course) both Jew and Gentile. Gal 3:28.

⁷⁰⁹ Ex: 4:22-23; Dt 14:1-2; Hos 11:1; as well as in Sir; 3 Macc; 4 Ezra; Pss Sol; Jub). Matera 1992: 141, Note 26.

⁷¹⁰ Hubbard 2002: 200.

⁷¹¹ Section 4.1.4 refers.

God has sent forth the very Spirit of his own Son into his or her heart, evoking the response of ‘Abba, Father!’ (Gal 4:6).⁷¹²

Ethically, the gap (supposedly) left by the law is (apparently) regarded by Paul as no gap at all since the law was ineffectual in the first place, its role, prior to Christ was one of ‘tutor’, one of preparation for Christ. Gal 4:23-25, where this is stated, accordingly reflects its own *formerly/now* character. Historical time⁷¹³ is the issue. Paul had already suggested that the work of the Spirit *now* makes superfluous the works of the law, that it renders the law obsolete (Gal 3:1-5),⁷¹⁴ with the life resulting from ‘walking in the Spirit’ bearing the positive fruit which are totally contrary to the results of the works of the flesh,⁷¹⁵ which comes as no surprise since the Spirit and the flesh are intrinsically opposed to one another.⁷¹⁶ No surprise, but actually the shock remains since Paul has equated law with flesh! The counterpoint to this (negative) identification is, of course, the (positive) identification of faith with the Spirit, the faith, as already mentioned, being that of Abraham, and of the Galatians as sons (and daughters) of Abraham. That brings with it a new dimension of liberty, one which stands in stark contrast to the bondage of the law/flesh, a contrast which Paul will repeat towards the end of his letter as ultimately one between corruption and eternal life (Gal 6:8)⁷¹⁷.

slave vs free

The cultural context within which Paul is speaking regarded children as little more than slaves, a situation which would only change when the child (νήπιος) became a son (υἱός) and with that an heir (κληρονόμος).⁷¹⁸ We need not go into the detail here, but in the fourth chapter of Galatians, Paul traces two diverging lineages from Abraham. The one, originating with Hagar, who Paul designates as the bondwoman and from whom came Ishmael, born according to the flesh, the other originating with Sarah, the freewoman from whom came

⁷¹² “This line of reasoning (the Spirit proves ‘sonship’) crucial in Romans 8 (‘all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God,’ 8.14; ‘the Spirit bears witness...that we are children of God,’ 8.16), and is especially evident in the phrase ‘the Spirit of ‘sonship’” (Rom. 8.15). Hubbard 2002: 204.

⁷¹³ Cf. Gal 4:4 – ‘when the fullness of time had come’.

⁷¹⁴ Hubbard 2002: 206, 207, 209. “In 3.1–5 Paul’s rejection of the law is substantiated on the basis of the Spirit’s work within (3.2–3; cf. 4.6) and among the Galatians (3.5), and this pattern of thought (Spirit obviates law) is replicated in every allusion to the Spirit in 3.1–5.12.” Hubbard 2002: 201.

⁷¹⁵ Gal 5:19-25. Cf. Hubbard 2002: 207-209.

⁷¹⁶ Gal 5:17. Cf. Hubbard 2002: 208.

⁷¹⁷ Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. (Gal 6:7-8).

⁷¹⁸ Gal 4:1-2. The precise legal situation of the time is discussed in detail in Matera 1992: 148, Note 2.

Isaac, born through [the]⁷¹⁹ promise. From this perspective Paul then poses an allegory of two covenants⁷²⁰. There are various views as to which two covenants Paul had in mind, and I concur with the conclusion that they are the Sinaitic/Mosaic covenant personified in Hagar-Esau (natural descendants) and the Abrahamic/Isaac covenant (spiritual descendants⁷²¹).

Paul's purpose in all of this is to (once again) associate the Mosaic covenant with the notion of slavery,⁷²² while, in contrast, linking the motifs of freedom, sonship, the promise, and the Spirit, to believers (such as the Galatians) as true descendants of Abraham.⁷²³ This sonship aspect has already been emphasised under our *flesh/Spirit* contrast above, and the inheritance dimension intrinsic to being a 'son' is a critical one for Galatians – and not only for the males involved but for the females as well. Not a small matter! And one which is addressed further along in our study.⁷²⁴

outer vs inner

Previously,⁷²⁵ the OT influences, including the roles played by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, on the formation of Paul's theology were discussed, including the distinction between external observance and interior life, likewise between hardness of heart and the inner heart. Therein we noted the elimination by Jeremiah, of any distinction between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, because what was lacking was circumcision of the heart.⁷²⁶

While these various binary pairings provide different windows into Galatians they also constitute a fabric that, as mentioned at the start of this section, is being woven together by Paul. One such representation captures some of the inter-connectedness between the *formally/law* aspects with those which are *now/inner* succinctly:⁷²⁷

⁷¹⁹ Gal 4:23. The noun is anarthrous, δι' ἐπαγγελίας.

⁷²⁰ Gal 4:24-31.

⁷²¹ 'born of the Spirit' (Gal 4:29).

⁷²² Cf. Gal 3:21-4:11, as per Hubbard 2002: 206.

⁷²³ Hubbard 2002: 206.

⁷²⁴ Within the section labelled: 'Gal 6:15 – Looking forwards'.

⁷²⁵ Section 2.2.2.

⁷²⁶ Jer 9:25-26. Cf. Section 4.1.1.

⁷²⁷ The *italics* are Hubbard's. Arising from his own encounter-conversion, Paul regularly emphasises the *inner* dimension of conversion, and we can see that in this table. In each case it is the convert's relationship to *outer* (*external*) nomistic observance that is at issue. Hubbard 2002: 194.

	<i>Formerly</i>	<i>Now</i>
Galatians 1.13–16	ancestral traditions	‘his son <i>in me</i> ’
Galatians 2.18–20	the law	‘Christ lives <i>in me</i> ’
Galatians 4.4– 6	under law	‘the Spirit of his son <i>in our hearts</i> ’
Galatians 4. 8–10	observance of ‘days, months, seasons and years’	‘until Christ is formed <i>in you</i> ’
(Galatians 6.15	circumcision/ uncircumcision	‘new creation,’)

The present topic of *outer vs inner* is alternatively expressed in Paul’s thought as *appearance vs reality*.⁷²⁸ (Today in the political sphere we speak of ‘reality checks’ as we juxtapose *fake news vs reality*!). Paul accordingly chronicles a number of symptoms of what he means by outer (= appearance - πρόσωπον) and early in his letter he disparages even the leadership of the church in Jerusalem by suggesting that (at least some of them) had only the semblance of status, that *appearance* was valueless:

And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me. (Gal 2:6).

The NT Greek here is very revealing:

ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι τι—	ὅποιοί ποτε ἦσαν	οὐδέν μοι
but ~ from the ones seeming	to be something — of what kind they were ~ once	nothing to me
διαφέρει·	πρόσωπον [ὁ] θεὸς ἀνθρώπου οὐ λαμβάνει—	ἐμοὶ γὰρ
matters;	[the] face God of a person does not accept —	for ~ to me
οἱ	δοκοῦντες	οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο
the ones	seeming [to be something]	nothing added ⁷²⁹

Paul is saying two things here. The word translated as ‘face’, πρόσωπον, is understood here in Gal 2:6 in the sense of outward appearance, and Paul is discounting this as

⁷²⁸ In Paul’s letters the πρόσωπον motif is closely associated with his internal–external antithesis – an unavoidable connection given the terminology involved (cf. 2 Cor. 10.7). Hubbard 2002: 197. πρόσωπον, (G4383) from G4314 and ὄψις ὄψις (the *visage*; from G3700); the *front* (as being *towards view*), that is, the *countenance, aspect, appearance, surface*; by implication *presence, person*.

⁷²⁹ UBS Interlinear 1990.

having no value at all, to which he adds insult to injury, such status is anyway now a thing of the past!⁷³⁰

Eugene Peterson's translation captures the tone well:

As for those who were considered important in the church, their reputation doesn't concern me. God isn't impressed with mere appearances, and neither am I.⁷³¹

Paul's wording here, which can also be translated 'God does not receive a face', represents one of several OT idioms relating to favouritism and impartiality⁷³². In addition, it is considered to be an intentional reference to God's injunction to Samuel in his approach to choosing David: 'But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance, or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him"'. 1 Sm 16:7.⁷³³ Implicit in Galatians 2:6 is the assertion by Paul that he is following this divine principle in contrast to those who admire the 'pillars'.

Gal 2:6 is the only occurrence of the word *appearance* (πρόσωπον) in Galatians in this particular sense, but together with *boasting* (καυχάομαι)⁷³⁴ is used by Paul as a word with which to play on positively when comparing inner (hidden) qualities with outward (public) ones (e.g., Gal 6:13,14; 2 Cor 10:17; 11:12, 18, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9).⁷³⁵

circumcision or uncircumcision vs 'in Christ'

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. (Gal 5:6)

ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.

⁷³⁰ Hubbard 2002: 196.

⁷³¹ Peterson, *The Message*.

⁷³² For which see Hubbard 2002: 197.

⁷³³ Hubbard regards this as so significant he has subtitled his whole chapter on Gal 6:15 with the text of 1 Sm 16:7(a). His comment on Gal 2:6 itself reads:

Given Paul's elaboration of the πρόσωπον motif elsewhere, exegetes are correct in emphasizing the notion of externality/internality in relation to Galatians 2.6. The specific 'external' Paul has in mind relates to the status and position of the 'pillar' apostles. He implicitly contrasts this with 'intrinsic character' and its concomitant adherence to the 'truth of the Gospel' (see 2.11–21). Often cited in relation to 2 Corinthians 5.12, and occasionally in reference to Galatians 2.6, the most likely antecedent for this crucial, but largely ignored antithesis in Paul is 1 Samuel 16.7.'

Hubbard 2002: 197-198. Hubbard's own footnotes for this passage have not been included.

⁷³⁴ Καυχάομαι (G2744). Boast. Occurs frequently in the Pauline corpus in its various meaning of boast, glory, rejoice. Of the 36 occurrences, 21 are in 2 Cor and 2 in Galatians, (Gal 6:13; 6:14).

⁷³⁵ See the analysis below, 'Gal 6:15 – Looking backwards'.

The fifth chapter of Galatians opens on the positive note of liberty (Gal 5:1) which then declines into serious admonitions with threatening undertones. First into a warning that circumcision brings no benefits from Christ (Gal 5:2), secondly that circumcision places a man in considerable debt – debt to the whole law (Gal 5:3), and thirdly that circumcision estranges (*cuts one off*) from Christ, and results in a falling away from grace (Gal 5:4). Here, for the verb *estranges*, *κατηργηθητε*, the aorist is used in a proleptic sense.⁷³⁶

One has to wonder what a Galatian believer, having recently undergone circumcision was to make of all this, particularly the estrangement. Was it heard or read as final, an apostasy with no way back? There is no evident commentary on this.⁷³⁷ Even undergoing a form of un-circumcision⁷³⁸ would not meet the Pauline stipulated requirements since ‘neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything’ (Gal 5:6 below). The remaining words of 5.4 compound rather than offer any relief. Such Galatians will lose God’s favour.⁷³⁹

This notwithstanding, there was hope, the hope of righteousness on the basis of faith (Gal 5:5). Indeed, if the luckless Galatian man were to read on further in Paul’s letter he could, particularly with good pastoral teaching, find relief in the verse already referenced (Gal 5:6), as well as in Gal 6:15, both verses confirming that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision play any part in righteousness.

What does matter is the issue of being *in Christ*.⁷⁴⁰ Once that has been established, believers fulfill the law through faith which expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6b).⁷⁴¹ This is one of the broad spectrum (if one can so refer to it) of the manifold benefits of being in Christ, one which will surface again.⁷⁴²

Having thus dealt with the contrast, *circumcision or uncircumcision vs being in Christ*, We can finally address the one which was so important to the Apostle that he relieves his secretary of his stylus and concludes the letter in his own hand:⁷⁴³

⁷³⁶ Matera 1992: 182; Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 574. cf. Jn 15:6.

⁷³⁷ Matera has the opportunity to do so in his expansion and interpretation of Gal 5:2-6, but his closing line repeats the sentiment of 5:4, ‘...they will cut themselves off from Christ’, thereby leaving the one who went the circumcision route stuck in the maze which Matera introduced us to at the very beginning of his commentary (section 4.1.5 refers). Matera 1992: 187-190, 12.

⁷³⁸ Labeled *epispasm* [CIRP Note: *επισπασμος*]. The NT (as in Gal 5:4) is *ἀκροβυστία*.

<http://www.cirp.org/library/restoration/hall1/> .

⁷³⁹ So, Matera 1992: 182.

⁷⁴⁰ Of the 160+ uses of *in Christ* (including *in him, in whom*, etc. but excluding *Christ in me/you/ them*, etc) in Paul’s writings, seven occur here in Galatians: Gal 1:22; 2:16; 3:17, 26, 28; 5:6, and 6:15. For the number 162 see Harris 2005: 431.

⁷⁴¹ So expressed by Matera 1992: 189.

⁷⁴² See the parallels drawn between 1 Cor 7:19, Gal 5:6, and Gal 6:15 in our next and last contrast.

⁷⁴³ Gal 6:11.

circumcision or uncircumcision

VS

new creation

circumcision or uncircumcision vs new creation⁷⁴⁴

(i) Gal 6:11-15

¹¹ See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. ¹⁴ May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!

It has previously been noted that this carefully constructed letter⁷⁴⁵ captures the essentials of the body of the letter in its closing passage,⁷⁴⁶ and, to start with, certain aspects stand out from the verses immediately preceding our *καινή κτίσις* text.

(ii) Outer/Inner reemphasized

Herein (Gal 6:12-13) Paul is recapping upon his outer/inner, flesh/Spirit contrasts, and for the first time in this thesis attention is drawn to some common elements in the manner in which the *καινή κτίσις* statements are introduced in Galatians and in Second Corinthians. The former speaks of those ‘who want to to make a good appearance [*εὐπροσωπῆσαι*] in the flesh [*ἐν σαρκί*]’ (Gal 6:12), the latter of ‘boasting in outward appearance [*ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους*]’ (2 Cor 5:12).⁷⁴⁷

(iii) Dual crucifixions

In verse Gal 6:14, Paul echoes his earlier declaration (of Gal 2:19b), ‘...I have been crucified with Christ...’, and, using the ‘boasting’ appellation to place himself in dramatic antithesis⁷⁴⁸ to ‘they’,⁷⁴⁹ of the preceding verses, reinforces the contrast by means of a forceful

⁷⁴⁴ Cf. section 4.1.1, where this was first mooted.

⁷⁴⁵ Cf., Matera’s comments as quoted in section 4.1.5 above.

⁷⁴⁶ Galatians 6:12-18 being designated as “*the epistolary postscript/recapitulatio, which ‘epitomizes the heart of the letter.’*” Hubbard 2002: 210 quoting Cousar 1982: 149.

⁷⁴⁷ Hubbard 2002: 211. Who adds: “...*both new-creation statements are introduced by means of an internal–external antithesis, and this may not be coincidental. The πρόσωπον–καρδία contrast of 2 Corinthians 5.12 suggests a σάρξ–πνεῦμα contrast here, which is explicit in the parallel text, Philippians 3.3, as well as Galatians 3.3, 5.16, and 5.24–25.*” Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ So, Ibid, 214.

ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο [‘but~ to me may it not be’]⁷⁵⁰ to boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...’.⁷⁵¹ It is on this basis that Paul then proceeds to proclaim a dual crucifixion: ‘...by which [alt through whom]⁷⁵² the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.’ Gal 6:14(b).

The understanding of the word ‘world’ (κόσμος) in this verse is variously interpreted, with many respected scholars expressing concern, even bewilderment⁷⁵³, at the notion of the κόσμος being crucified. Obviously, this boils down the meaning, in the present context, of the word in question, κόσμος. In a comprehensive survey, Hubbard identifies five distinctive interpretations spread amongst twenty-nine scholars (excluding himself!): one interpretation has κόσμος as soterio-cosmology, another κόσμος as ecclesiology, and three different flavours of κόσμος as soterio-anthropology. Hubbard (consistent with his position in general) makes a case for one of the anthropological ones: *The world as a system of values: its sarkic standards and perspectives, particularly in reference to Paul’s former way of life in Judaism and his previous orientation as a Pharisee.*⁷⁵⁴ Others (who also hold their positions more generally) opt for inclusion of, or at least due consideration of, ecclesiological and/or cosmological/eschatological aspects as well as or instead of.⁷⁵⁵

Wherever an element of ‘being in Christ’ is significantly present (either in the immediate locality of the καινή κτίσις passage or within the letter as being connected with that passage) I accept that some dimension of ecclesiological and cosmological applies

⁷⁴⁹ It is *those* who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that *they* may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even the circumcised do not *themselves* obey the law, but *they* want you to be circumcised so that *they* may boast about your flesh. Gal 6:12-13.

⁷⁵⁰ The NKJV has ‘God forbid’. Not even Mathew Henry’s commentary nor the ten-volume Anglican Bible Commentary of the late nineteenth century explain the origin of the wording chosen here to express the text ‘but~ to me may it not be’ [ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο]. If one can get through the following article, excusing its dismissive and arrogant tone, the case for such a very forceful expression is nonetheless explained: <https://forwhatsaiththescriptures.org/2017/11/23/god-forbid/>

⁷⁵¹ In all of its fourteen occurrences in Paul’s letters μὴ γένοιτο rejects a possible, but incorrect, inference from Paul’s teaching. Cf. Rom. 3.4, 6, 31; 6.2, 15; 7.7, 13; 9.14; 11.1, 11; 1 Cor. 6.15; Gal. 2.17; 3.21.

⁷⁵² The NRSV, as Hubbard 2002: 215, has ‘through which’, while the UBS interlinear has ‘through whom’. (The UBS has δὲ ὃν), the ‘which’ translation referring to the Cross of Jesus, the ‘whom’ translation referring to Jesus the person himself.

⁷⁵³ “To assert that the world has been crucified,” writes Paul Minear, “is surely an enigma.” C. F. D. Moule makes a similar comment in his discussion of Paul’s “death to” expressions, remarking that in Galatians 6.14b Paul is “stretching this curious phrase to the breaking point.” Minear 1979: 395 and Moule 1970: 373, in Hubbard 2002: 215.

⁷⁵⁴ Hubbard 2002: 216-218.

⁷⁵⁵ Jackson 2010: 88 incl FN 34 where he references Dunn, 1993, 341. Owens is strongly cosmological on this point of the meaning of κόσμος here in Galatians and is very critical of Hubbard’s posture. Owens builds his case starting from Apocalyptic Judaism up to this point where he claims that Hubbard’s interpretation of κόσμος “assumes an unwarranted divorce between anthropology and cosmology within Paul’s thought.” Owens 2012: 124-125.

because of the very nature of Christ and (consequently) of being in Christ.⁷⁵⁶ That said, for me, these debates tend to come down to which is the *dominant* interpretation based upon the specific and local context in which Paul is speaking, as against more generic and often implied rather than deduced interpretations. Accordingly, and providing that the local context interpretation does not contradict established positions adopted by Paul elsewhere in his letters, I would accordingly trust the local context to weigh more heavily in determining *the most likely* interpretation.

In the present case, Hubbard makes a convincing case⁷⁵⁷ for the particular anthropological interpretation in *italics* above, concluding with,

We have good reason then, for seeing Paul's severance from law, along with the rejection of his privileged religious position as a Pharisee, crystallized in the phrase 'the world has been crucified to me,' in that Paul viewed his former Jewish world of 'circumcision and uncircumcision' as a world of 'making a good appearance outwardly' (12a). In other words, the 'world' which ended for Paul was the only 'world' he had ever known: his 'former way of life in Judaism' (1.13).⁷⁵⁸

But let us also not forget the other crucifixion in the dual, Paul's 'I': 'May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.' Both crucifixions actually manifest anthropological characteristics. With 'I [crucified] to the world', and his emphatic personal pronoun, Paul is echoing Gal 2:19-20, but also, with shrewd insight, Barclay notes: "*Paul's statement that the cosmos was crucified to me (ἐμοὶ 6.14) demonstrates that this event is primarily conceived in anthropological rather than physical terms.*"⁷⁵⁹ Thrall agrees, presenting her Galatian case succinctly.⁷⁶⁰ So, both crucifixions in the dual have anthropological characteristics, and Hubbard's final observation provides an appropriate bridge into our *καινή κτίσις* verse: "*This*

⁷⁵⁶ Cf., section 3.6.

⁷⁵⁷ Hubbard 2002: 217-218. Such interpretation includes the pattern of autobiographical presentations which Paul has given in the letter, as we have alluded to in this present section 4.4.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 218

⁷⁵⁹ Barclay 1987: 102. Quoted by Hubbard 2002: 218.

⁷⁶⁰ In her commentary on Second Corinthians, when specifically discussing *καινή κτίσις* elsewhere in the NT, Thrall relates the case made by other scholars for a cosmological interpretation in Galatians before presenting her own, anthropological, interpretation of Gal 6:14-15: "...one might question whether in Gal 6:14-15 he really has in mind new creation in the strictly cosmic sense. It is in his own personal case (ἐμοὶ) that the world has been destroyed, and it his own previous relationship to the cosmos (κατὰ τὸν κόσμον) that has ceased to exist. And the fact remains that what is at issue in Galatia is the specifically human question of whether uncircumcised Christian men should be circumcised." Thrall 1994: 423.

language of dual crucifixion highlights the idea of a complete and irrevocable severance, and is particularly important if, as Dunn believes, the main thought of verse 14 is ‘rephrased’ in the verse that follows.”⁷⁶¹

(iv) Gal 6:15

UBS Interlinear:

οὔτε γὰρ⁷⁶² περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.
 for~neither⁷⁶³ circumcision is~anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation.

NRSV translation:

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!

It may come as something of a surprise, but the sense in which the words circumcision and uncircumcision are understood here is debated. Some understand them as identifying distinctive groups, Jews and Gentiles, the same meaning as (correctly) deployed by Paul in Gal 2:7-9. In the latter context, however, Paul deploys articular nouns – *the* circumcision and *the* uncircumcised. Here, both are anarthrous and, consistent with every other use of these words in Galatians, the sense is unquestionably Paul referring to either the rite of circumcision or to the state of being circumcised (or uncircumcised). Indeed in the immediately preceding context of Gal 6:15, (verses 12 and 13), Paul speaks in very angry tones about the rite of circumcision which his opponents have been attempting to impose upon the Galatians.⁷⁶⁴

Given this understanding, the circumcision-nor-uncircumcision expression used in Gal 6:15 looks backwards and forwards. We will study both aspects but also a non-trivial bridge within the two parts of the verse – between Gal 6:15a and Gal 6:15b.

⁷⁶¹ Hubbard 2002: 218, citing Dunn 1993a: 342. Similarly G. Schneider 1992: 360. The ‘irrevocable severance’ has support from the grammarians: “ἔ-σταύρωται pf pass, once for all, a metaphor for complete separation. Having (in baptism) been made a partaker in Christ’s death, Paul is separated from the world as the dead are from the living, and to him the world is ‘crucified’ (i.e. accursed 3:13) and conversely he to the world. Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 577.

⁷⁶² The NKJV has ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ here. While there are some very ancient mss. to support this, including Ⲙ, A, ... cop^{bo}, arm, Bruce, like most elegits today, regards such as a contamination by the text of Gal 5:6. Likewise, the UBS, in spite of this ms. Support, does not even reference it as a (lesser) consideration. Bruce 1982: 267, 273. UBS 1983: 662.

⁷⁶³ The symbol ~ shows an inversion of the Greek order into English. The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament, 1993, p viii.

⁷⁶⁴ Hubbard 2002: 218.

Gal 6:15 – looking backwards

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! (NRSV)

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation. (Matera)

For neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision count for anything: What matters is new creation!

(Hubbard)

Looking backwards, the word γὰρ [for] defines the dual crucifixion of 6:14 as Paul's culminating in a (legal even) repudiation (abrogation) of circumcision-nor-uncircumcision.⁷⁶⁵ As already mentioned, this pattern of thought has its clearest theological antecedent in the prophecies of Jeremiah, and it is at this point that Hubbard has his *Excursus: boasting in Paul and Jeremiah*, in which the parallels between Romans 2:23-29 and Galatians 6:13-15 Galatians are presented as follows:

The line of thought in Jeremiah 9:22–25 (improper confidence → proper confidence → spiritual circumcision) is replicated in Paul (e.g., Rom 2:17–29; Gal 6:12–15; Phil 3:2–11), and as the textual apparatus of Nestle–Aland 26 and UBS⁴ indicates, Romans 2 even echoes the phraseology of Jeremiah 9:25 at crucial points.⁷⁶⁶ It can be inferred that Paul perceived an effect–cause relationship between Jeremiah 9:22–23 and Jeremiah 9:24–25 such that, *improper boasting was the result of an uncircumcised heart*. A comparison of Romans 2:23–29 and Galatians 6:13–15 makes this chain of reasoning apparent:

⁷⁶⁵ “The context of the Galatian postscript, with its accusations of ‘making a good appearance outwardly’ (v. 12), and ‘boasting in the flesh/circumcision’ (v. 13), suggests that the ‘appearance versus reality’ motif is receiving one final airing in verse 15, and that Paul’s dismissal of ‘circumcision’ and ‘uncircumcision’ as irrelevant relates to his insistence on the priority of internal versus external considerations. These same themes (proper/improper boasting, circumcision/uncircumcision, internal over external) converge elsewhere in Paul’s letters (Rom 2:17–29; Phil 3:2–11).” Hubbard 2002: 219.

⁷⁶⁶ Compare Rom 2:25 and 29 with Jer 9:25 LXX. Ibid, 221.

	Romans 2.23–29	Galatians 6.13–15
Improper confidence	boasting in the law, while breaking it (23–25)	boasting in ‘circumcision’ while breaking the law (13)
↓		
Proper confidence	keeping the [true] requirements of the law (26–27)	the cross of Christ (14)
↓		
	οὐ γὰρ...	οὔτε γὰρ...
Outer	for ‘Jewishness’ is not about an outer mark οὐδὲ...	for neither circumcision οὔτε...
	nor is circumcision something external, in the flesh (28)	nor uncircumcision
versus	ἀλλ’	ἀλλὰ —
Inner	true Jewishness is an inner reality and circumcision is done by Spirit on the heart (29) ⁷⁶⁷	new creation (15)

One very important theological truth which is reflected in this table is the equivalence implied between ‘keeping the [true] requirements of the law’ (Rom 26-27) and ‘the cross of Christ’ (Gal 6:14), analogous, in turn, to the equivalence between ‘...obeying the commandments of God is everything...’ (1 Cor 7:19b) and ‘...the only thing that counts is faith working through love.’ (Gal 5:6b). All of which is a consequence of being in Christ, that being the locus where, in a sense, the two alternative translations of Gal 2:16-21 (as we saw are much debated), converge and (in my opinion at least⁷⁶⁸) can, in the mystery of being in Christ, express both the faith *of* Christ (which led him to the Cross) and faith *in* Christ (which leads believers to the Cross).⁷⁶⁹

On the basis of these texts let us accordingly note the parallel journeys of the two communities which we are studying, the church in Corinth and the churches of Galatia. In

⁷⁶⁷ Hubbard 2002: 220-221.

⁷⁶⁸ Cf. my caution about being aware of ‘binary choices/traps’, (section 1.3.2 refers).

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. the analysis of this passage under *law vs faith* above, noting the difference in use between *the faith of Christ* (arthrous) and *faith in Christ* (anarthrous).

both cases the origin of their journey to a new creation was not confined to, but definitely included, the issue of circumcision/uncircumcision:

Corinth:

1 Cor 7:19
Circumcision is nothing, and
uncircumcision is nothing;

1 Cor 7:19
but obeying the
commandments of God...

2 Cor 5:17
So, if anyone be in Christ – new creation;⁷⁷⁰

2 Cor 5:17
So, if anyone be in Christ – new creation;⁷⁷⁰

Galatia:

Gal 5:6
For in Christ Jesus neither
circumcision nor uncircumcision
counts for anything;

Gal 5:6
but faith working through love

Gal 6:15
For neither circumcision,
nor uncircumcision
count for anything:

Gal 6:15
What matters is new creation!

A non-trivial bridge between Gal 6:15a and Gal 6:15b

A reminder once again of the UBS Interlinear:

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστιν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.
for~neither⁷⁷¹ circumcision is~anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation.

What is extraordinary to note is how many scholars⁷⁷² continue even today to translate this sentence using the verb **ισχύω** of the Byzantine text form, and not the verb **ἐστιν** of more ancient origin⁷⁷³:

οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή **τι ισχύει** οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.

As is self evident, the verb **ισχύω** does not actually appear anywhere in Gal 6:15, and for a very good reason as we now discuss.

The word means: be strong, be able; hence be valid/effective⁷⁷⁴; to avail, be serviceable;⁷⁷⁵. It is used only twice in the Pauline corpus, once in Philippians (Phil 4:13),

⁷⁷⁰ Hubbard’s translation. Hubbard 2002: 218, 222.

⁷⁷¹ The symbol ~ shows an inversion of the Greek order into English. The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament, 1993, p viii.

⁷⁷² See the table of translations above in section 4.3, where expressions such as **avails** anything, **means** anything, and **counts for** anything, are used.

⁷⁷³ UBS 1990: 662.

and only once in Galatians (Gal 5:6). [The adjective derived from it, ἰσχυρός, only occurs four times in Paul⁷⁷⁶.]

Paul's deployment of ἰσχύω is accordingly very selective and highly focused as his two occurrences demonstrate:

‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision *counts for anything* [*is of any force* - τι ἰσχύει]; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.’ (Gal 5:6);

‘*I can do* [ἰσχύω] all things through him who strengthens me.’ (Phil 4:13).

Paul has spent five chapters explaining to, pleading with, and admonishing, his much loved Galatian communities with regard to the Law and in particular about any of them being circumcised or even considering being circumcised. On top of that he also had to spell out the fact that uncircumcision had equally lost any semblance of meaning. Eventually he had glued the two of them together and in Gal 5:6 declared that neither of them could avail [ἰσχύω] anything – no power, no ability, no effectiveness, with regards to bringing about righteous with God. Completely valueless in fact in the light of the Christ event. Being in Christ with the associated faith in Christ which expresses itself in love, is all that matters now, is all that counts of any value.

Accordingly, now in the culmination of his letter, Paul dismisses circumcision or uncircumcision with one final disdainful comment, ‘neither is anything’, τί ἐστίν, not τι ἰσχύει. He does not want to linger any longer, not even for a moment, with ἰσχύει. He is done with that topic, fed up with them raising it⁷⁷⁷, and will waste no more time on argumentation. Instead he intentionally shifts the focus onto that which is really important, the Cross of Jesus Christ, and what that has achieved, namely a new creation.

Gal 6:15 – looking forwards

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! (NRSV)

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation. (Matera)

For neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision count for anything: What matters is new creation!

(Hubbard)

⁷⁷⁴ Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 574 (Gal 5:6).

⁷⁷⁵ Abbott-Smith, 220, (Gal 5:6). Examples from elsewhere in the NT: For a will takes effect only at death, since it *is not in force* [*is never valid*] as long as the one who made it is alive. (Heb 9:17); *good for nothing* (negatively in Mt 5:13).

⁷⁷⁶ 1 Cor 4:10; 1:25, 27; and 2 Cor 10:10. (cf., Heb 5:7)

⁷⁷⁷ Gal 6:17.

It has not been unreasonable to challenge the ἐστίν/ἰσχύει issue above, and perhaps the second part of this verse may provide a clue as to how it came about.

Ignoring, as we must at least for now, similarities between Paul's two καινή κτίσις passages (2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15), it is impossible to avoid inserting a verb into the latter part of Gal 6:15 if the English translation is to read anything like meaningful English. (Matera's translation as shown above clearly demonstrates this.) Having done so, some scholars have felt the need – or have used the opportunity – to balance the whole verse by slipping the (inserted) verb of v.15b, or one with an equivalent meaning, into 15a as well. Thus Hubbard has *matters* (15b) and *counts* (15a), while the NIV has *counts* (15b) and *matters* (15a). Some NIV versions go even further by generously (!) assigning the definite article in 15b, ... what counts is *the* new creation⁷⁷⁸. Others, such as the NRSV above, add the words *is everything* to the end of 15b, but actually leaves 15a unchanged. The variety of interpretation-translation approaches is evident from the tabulation in section 4.3 above.

When it comes to the actual interpretation of καινή κτίσις in Gal 6:15, the (by now) familiar three-camp profile is evident amongst scholars, the anthropological, ecclesiological and the cosmological, and the integrity of interpreters in treating the Corinthian and Galatian texts independently is evidenced by several studies which interpret the phrase anthropologically in 2 Cor 5, while cosmologically in Galatians 6.⁷⁷⁹

Ecclesiological

Hubbard willingly acknowledges that there is an ecclesiological dimension in Galatians,⁷⁸⁰ but he too hastily dismisses the ecclesiological aspect here, and peremptorily so, when he claims that Paul's purposes in Gal 6:14-15/Gal 3:18 are completely at odds with one another.⁷⁸¹ His motivation is to protect the pre-eminence of the anthropological application of καινή κτίσις but his concerns are unnecessarily exaggerated.

The question of identity, including its relationship with what defines 'the people of God', is a major issue for the Galatians, one which has made its presence felt in the course of this letter.⁷⁸² In that sense it self-selects as an ecclesiological characteristic of this letter as a

⁷⁷⁸ NIV2011.

⁷⁷⁹ The scholars in question are referenced in Hubbard 2002: 222, FN 151.

⁷⁸⁰ See following, including Hubbard on initiatory rites and on the 'Israel τοῦ θεοῦ'.

⁷⁸¹ The logic and aim of Galatians 6:14–15 is death → life → newness, whereas the logic and aim of Galatians 3.28 is baptism → re-clothing → oneness. These two texts are making entirely different points, and whatever similarities may exist between them are more superficial than substantive. Hubbard 2002: 223.

⁷⁸² Section 4.1.4 again refers.

whole and of its closing verses, wherein the Gal 3:26 definition of identity, ‘...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,’⁷⁸³ is now reconfirmed in that those who follow the canon (rule), that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (Gal 6:15) counts for anything, are designated as the Israel of God⁷⁸⁴ (Gal 6:16), wherein, we (again) take note of the constantly repeated mantra, ‘in Christ’.⁷⁸⁵ The Blessing in Gal 6:16 originates from the 19th Blessing of the (original 18) Blessings in the Amidah prayer of the Jewish liturgy.⁷⁸⁶

Anthropological and Ecclesiological

The reality that sociological domains (such as initiation rites for example) can manifest both anthropological and social dimensions, suggests that the three-fold categorisation of interpretations of new creation, while helpful, may in the process of interpretation blind us to insights that do not fit neatly into any one specific category. The dominance of the circumcision issue in Galatians raises the question⁷⁸⁷ of where women stand in this whole argument, and so we address this matter before moving onto the cosmological. Our analysis will show that the anthropological and ecclesiological are closely intertwined when it comes to what Paul addresses in Galatians with regard to women. It will also sharpen our focus on the matter of identity – and, ironically, in the process, not only for women.

In her studies of the place of women in some of Paul’s letters, Caroline Cutler evaluates the status of women under the Old Covenant,⁷⁸⁸ and notes that, without any initiation process or even the consideration thereof, women in Israel were (automatically?)

The study of initiation rites provides a helpful window for an appreciation of identity issues generally in sociology, and while Hubbard is clearly adamant that for both Second Corinthians and Galatians, an anthropological interpretation is the dominant one by far, he nonetheless insists that there is an inherent strong link between the anthropological and the social, which, in our case, translates into the ecclesiological. Cf. Hubbard 2002: 129

⁷⁸³ Which Paul goes on to expand upon in very specific terms so as to ensure that there is possibility of ambiguity on this point: ‘for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.’ Gal 3 26-29.

⁷⁸⁴ The phrase ‘the Israel of God’ is variously interpreted and understood.

⁷⁸⁵ Such an ‘Israel of God’ stands in contrast to an ‘Israel after the flesh’: “An important corollary to the main point that faith and the Spirit now demarcate the people of God, not the law and circumcision, is that it is possible to speak of an ‘Israel τοῦ θεοῦ’ as well as an ‘Israel κατὰ σάρκα’ (1 Cor. 10.18; cf. Rom. 2.28–29; 9.3, 6). In the former, labels such as ‘Jew and Gentile,’ ‘male and female,’ or ‘slave and free’ count for little, ‘for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal 3:26–29).” Hubbard 2002: 228.

⁷⁸⁶ Paul would have been familiar with it. Bruce 1982: 274-275.

⁷⁸⁷ For me at least.

⁷⁸⁸ Cutler 2016 and Cutler 2014.

considered part of the covenant community.⁷⁸⁹ Ironically, however, they (as for slaves and, of course, for Gentiles) did not participate in the study of Torah, the masculine consciousness of these being enshrined as it were in the prayer in which male Jews gave thanks to God for not being born into any of these categories.⁷⁹⁰ The initiation process for males (whether adults or new-born) which marked them as belonging to the people of God had no counterpart for females, and, as reflected in ‘the prayer’, constituted a significant sense of identity and belonging for men.

In contrast to such exclusivity, the assertion of inclusiveness by Paul in Galatians is revolutionary on a number of fronts:

...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-29).

The inspiration for this declaration of Paul’s had clearly come from God, but it had been forged in the painful journey which the nascent *Jewish* church in Jerusalem had already been undertaking quite apart from Paul. Peter had already been obliged to step in when even Greek speaking widows were being excluded (or at least overlooked) in the daily distribution of food.⁷⁹¹ The luckless Peter then went to Antioch where his painful journey continued when he was publically challenged by Paul over table-fellowship between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians because Peter⁷⁹² had initially shared meals with everyone only to separate himself when others from Jerusalem arrived in Antioch.

This was a pivotal moment for Paul, and it is in his letter to the Galatians that he recounts the episode forcefully, step by step.⁷⁹³ And what was true for Greek and Jew, applied universally, ‘... There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female’ (Gal 3:28a), all having a common initiation process that encompasses everyone, namely baptism: ‘... As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.’ (Gal 3:27-

⁷⁸⁹ Cutler 2016: 23.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid, 26. Cutler does not reference a Rabbinical source. There are a variety of references – such as that of Kiddushin 29b (The William Davidson Talmud). <https://www.sefaria.org/Kiddushin.29b?lang=bi>

⁷⁹¹ Acts 6:1.

⁷⁹² Peter had previously gone through the whole Cornelius experience Acts 10:1-11:18.

⁷⁹³ Gal 2:11-21.

28). But Paul is not yet finished, he adds, ‘And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.’ (Gal 3:29). Of this declaration by Paul, one scholar has said, “*the open incorporation of believers of all races, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds into full and equal partnership in the traditional contract of God to Abraham and the Jewish people was an act of outrageous inclusivity.*”⁷⁹⁴

In Israel, to be an heir had not, in theory at least, been an entirely exclusive male prerogative⁷⁹⁵, but in practice very much so.⁷⁹⁶ But for inheritance (and that is a huge topic) to apply not only to women, but to Gentiles and also to slaves, was (understandably!) not easily understood by Jewish Christians who were still clinging to their identity as people of The (new) Way in Judaism.

Finally, from the opening line of this verse, ‘...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith’ (Gal 3:26), we have once again that overarching designation, ἐν Χριστῷ, which, if our postulation in this thesis is correct, is existentially synonymous with καινὴ κτίσις, then the anthropological and the social/ecclesiological implications of a new creation are very evident in Galatians. Through faith in Jesus Christ as publically proclaimed in the waters of baptism, each individual woman and man, slave or free, Gentile or Jew, dies to whom they were⁷⁹⁷, including their long-cherished identity (in the case of the male Jew) or to their nobody-identity (in the case of the backwoods Gentiles of Galatia)⁷⁹⁸, and become a new creation belonging to a new people, participating in a very new domain of table fellowship, and as new disciples of Jesus exercising ministry in the church, many of whom are mentioned by name in Acts.⁷⁹⁹ This new creation motif does, of course, find support in the fact that the ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ of Gal 3:28 echoes the first creation of Genesis; ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς [Gen 1:27 (LXX)]⁸⁰⁰.

⁷⁹⁴ Mary Ann Tolbert, “A New Teaching with Authority: A Re-evaluation of the Authority of the Bible,” *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, eds. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Talbot (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 184-185. Quoted in Cutler 2016: 27.

⁷⁹⁵ The very ancient story of Job’s three daughters after his restoration is well known but Cutler draws attention to a particular aspect of it as far their brothers were concerned, “*In the book of Job we seem to have a unique instance where three daughters - Jemimah, Keziah and Keren-happuch - inherited with their brothers (Job 42:13-15). It should be mentioned that in contrast to the otherwise universal custom in Hebrew birth narrative, none of the sons are named; whereas, remarkably, all three daughters are named and commented on.*” Ibid, 28.

⁷⁹⁶ Cutler deals extensively with this in Ibid, 10-44.

⁷⁹⁷ As per Paul’s personal example, Gal 2:19-21.

⁷⁹⁸ Section 4.1.4 above, refers.

⁷⁹⁹ Including the first convert to Christ in Europe, Lydia (Acts 16:14). “*Rom 16 gives a helpful snapshot of such ministering women, with Phoebe the deacon and benefactor (16:1-2), Junia the apostle* (16:7), and Prisca (16:3), Mary (16:6), Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis (16:12) who are all described as co-workers in Paul’s mission.*” Cutler 2016: 29 EN 88. * The gender of Junia is disputed. Cutler adds a claim (from Payne, *Man and Woman*, 97) that Gal 2:11-14 suggests that Paul would not have tolerated anyone “*using ‘role distinctions’ to exclude Gentiles of slaves from leadership roles in the church.*” Ibid 26, incl FN 89.

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. Mt 19:4, Gen 5:2.

These latter points have all covered the *content* of Paul’s message of inclusiveness in Galatians with respect to identity, inheritance, and participation. In addition, there is the aspect of *process* to be considered briefly here, (just as was mentioned previously where the *content* of the good news falls flat on the ears of unbelievers if the process of *teaching* it instead of *proclaiming* it [κήρυγμα] is deployed.⁸⁰¹) . Process is accordingly important. God reveals himself in his Word both in what he says (content) and in how he goes about saying it (process). In the case of the place of women in the new creation, a number of such process pointers are identifiable.

Firstly, in v. 26 ‘...for in Christ Jesus you are all *sons*⁸⁰² of God through faith’, Cutler has identified a real paradox here, “—one that Paul seems to put forward intentionally. The very fact that he is using exclusive terminology and then describing inclusivity, the removal of barriers to inheritance in Gal 3:28, makes the inclusive statement all the more impactful.”⁸⁰³

A second process which Paul uses in Galatians, also with inheritance issues in mind, is the deployment of mother images.⁸⁰⁴ ‘In Gal 4:19, the apostle addresses the Galatians as ‘my little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you’. That the process aspect is intentional is recognisable here in that it is proposed “*that Paul uses the maternal metaphor, as he does other metaphors, to persuade his readers to consider things in a new way so that they will change their minds about something.*”⁸⁰⁵

Cosmological

Building upon their previous analysis, not least upon their understanding of Paul’s use of the word κόσμος, along with selected Apocalyptic Jewish thinking and OT ‘new heavens and new earth’ references, those scholars (such as Owens, Jackson and Moo) who favour the

⁸⁰¹ Cf. The critically valuable experience of Paul’s failure in Athens (Areopagus) undergirded the preeminence given by Paul in Corinth and elsewhere to the proclamation [κήρυγμα] of the Gospel over that of rational discourse. The latter, of course, retained its rightful place in discipleship and pastoral ministry. (Section 2.1) and also section 3.1.2.

⁸⁰² The NRSV translation unfortunately has *children* instead of *sons*. Ironically, the impact of Paul’s use of *sons* is thereby lost by the translators changing it to *children*!

⁸⁰³ “As Sandra Polaski notes, ‘The grammar may be gender-exclusive, but the image it invites us to imagine reaches beyond generic sameness to a celebration of diverse mutuality.’ Paul thus uses the exclusive terminology of the sonship metaphor to show how women and slaves are also given the privileged status of sons and heirs.” Sandra Hack Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* (St Louis: Chalice, 2005) in Cutler 2016: 21.

⁸⁰⁴ “Mother and birth terms stand out as dominant in Gal 4, including a maternal metaphor that Paul uses of himself. This metaphor identifies Paul with women and would therefore have been a humbling image for him to use of himself. It is therefore quite an unexpected and noteworthy occurrence. Such is evident in Romans as well, e.g., Rom 8:22.” Ibid, 23.

⁸⁰⁵ So Gavanta, ‘Our Mother St. Paul’, 93 as referenced in Ibid, 23.

inclusion of a cosmological interpretation of καινή κτίσις in Galatians present their case along the following lines:

As we saw earlier, the noun κόσμος in Galatians is closely identified with Paul's old age/new age antithesis (cf. Gal 4:3, 9). The correspondence between κόσμος and καινή κτίσις in vv. 14–15 suggests that there is a strong sense in which new creation in Gal 6:15 must be understood cosmologically. The degree to which the noun κόσμος is associated with Paul's Torah-critique, both in Gal 4:3–10 and Gal 6:15, also points to a close correlation between καινή κτίσις in Gal 6:15 and his portrait of the new age that has dawned with the resurrection of Christ.⁸⁰⁶

Jackson strongly concurs and does so with supporting arguments from other scholars.⁸⁰⁷

An approach for *preferring* a cosmological interpretation for καινή κτίσις is one in which even the ecclesiological aspect is expressed in ecological terms.⁸⁰⁸ In so doing, Moo makes the now familiar case (apocalyptic and Isaiah based) for a cosmological interpretation but then, having done so, assigns to it a term which (in my opinion) sells the concept far short. He states that the phrase καινή κτίσις as used in both Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17 'is best understood as a broad description of the 'new state of affairs' inaugurated through Christ's first coming and to be consummated as his second coming.'⁸⁰⁹ I would argue that to even assign the designation of 'a new state of affairs' to events such as the Exodus from Egypt and the return from the Babylonian exile, would be to totally understate their reality. The connotations of new land, new freedoms (both individual and corporate), new or renewed law, new or renewed identity, etc, in these events were seismic in their impact. Yet they pale

⁸⁰⁶ Owens adds: "...there is no need to conclude that καινή κτίσις in Gal 6.15—despite the absence of an allusion to Isaiah's 'new heavens and new earth'—has no future cosmological implications (cf. 1 Cor 7.31b; 15.23–28, 51–55; Rom 8.18–25). This reading of Paul's use of the phrase καινή κτίσις in v. 15 thus allows one to conclude that while 'the cross has not brought about the expected cosmic transformation or re-creation...it has in some way started the ball rolling toward that end.'" (This last being a quote from Adams, *Constructing the World*, 227. Owens 2012: 126.

⁸⁰⁷ Jackson 2010: 90-95. For an Orthodox theology perspective see Ó hAodha 2016.

⁸⁰⁸ Moo 2010: 42.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid. The words 'new state of affairs' and synonyms of this expression, run like a mantra through his whole paper, and in the process he slips into the habit of introducing the definite article into the καινή κτίσις terminology. Moo states, 'New Creation' is the state of affairs brought about by the ministry of the new covenant. It is this new situation which should govern the Corinthians' attitude towards Paul". Ibid, 55. How the poor and the slaves, the 'foolish and the weak', people of Corinth were meant to grasp this is not in the least self-evident.

into insignificance compared with that of Paul's *new creation* of eternal dimensions – in which individual and corporate transformation takes place which is both realised in the *now*, and together with the new heavens and the new earth, is assured for *eternity*.

The contrary position (held by scholars such as Thrall and Hubbard) argues that the point made previously⁸¹⁰ with respect to the invalidity of giving a cosmological meaning to the use of κόσμος alongside Paul's emphatic use of personal pronouns in Gal 6:14, applies here also⁸¹¹. Furthermore, the scholars who equate καινή κτίσις with 'the new age' of the apocalyptic thinking (section 2.2.3) – e.g., 'the old world passes away as the new creation comes'⁸¹² – tend to also add the definite article before καινή κτίσις and read it as *the* new creation.⁸¹³ Hubbard poses a challenging question to his fellow scholars: "*Did Paul really believe that 'the new age' had dawned extra nos in the way in which these interpreters insist?*"⁸¹⁴ A question which is convincingly justified by a whole series of Pauline texts in which the apostle paints a damning picture of the 'present age'[αἰῶνος τούτου]⁸¹⁵, a present evil age for us to be rescued from – 'τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ'⁸¹⁶

I have argued previously that it was not the external observation of an event which had brought about such a radical change in Paul's life.⁸¹⁷ It was the Damascus road encounter with the risen Jesus. For Peter, it was neither the empty tomb nor the visible sightings of the post-resurrection Jesus, but his personal experience of the risen Jesus alive within himself (Pentecost). So, it is the work of the Holy Spirit within⁸¹⁸ which constitutes what amounts to newness in Christian experience⁸¹⁹, and Hubbard catches this truth in a characteristically pithy comment: "*so it is less accurate to speak of the believer entering the new age than it is to speak of the new age entering the believer.*"⁸²⁰ Once this had occurred in the life of Paul (and of Peter, and of the two Emmaus disciples, and others...) the resurrection of Jesus – the

⁸¹⁰ Under *dual crucifixions* above.

⁸¹¹ Thrall 1994: 423; Hubbard 2002: 223.

⁸¹² Tannehill, 65, as quoted by Hubbard 2002: 223.

⁸¹³ As noted with respect to one of the NIV translations above. However, in addition to Tannehill, 65, this insertion of the definite article is widespread including, Bruce 1982: 273; Matera 1992: 226; Wright 1958: 290; Furnish on occasion, Furnish 1984: 333, Emerson, even in the title of his paper: Christ and *the* New Creation... Emerson 2013.

⁸¹⁴ Hubbard 2002: 223.

⁸¹⁵ 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6; 3:18; 1 Cor 2:9; Rom 12:2. Hubbard 2002: 224.

⁸¹⁶ Gal 1:4.

⁸¹⁷ In *formally vs now* above, section 2.2.4.

⁸¹⁸ Cf. Rom 8:9-11.

⁸¹⁹ So, Hubbard 2002: 224, where he references: Rom 5:5; 7:6; 8:1-17; 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:22; 3:6, 18; 5:5; Gal 3:2-4; 4:6, 29; 5:25.

⁸²⁰ Hubbard 2002: 224. The emphasis is Hubbard's. What I regard as an excellent encapsulation, others see as an actual reverse of Paul's conceptualisation. Moo 2010: 51.

defining *extra nos* event – began to be realised for what it was, namely the basis for their participation in that new existence of Christ.

Much is also made by some interpreters of the apocalyptic and OT influences in Paul's (Saul's) background⁸²¹ as well as by appealing to Rom 8:18-22. The former does not carry the same weight in Galatians as it does in Second Corinthians, while the latter actually contrasts the present time of human suffering (8:18) and the futility of creation (8:20) with the redemption to come (8:18, 21).⁸²²

Anthropological

I start this subsection with a quotation from Hubbard which is his encapsulation of the anthropological interpretation of *καινή κτίσις* in Gal 6:15. I include his footnote because it shows that his statement is, in turn, a conflation of quotations from Hans Dieter Betz, and because it includes a list of scholars who are supportive⁸²³ of Betz in this regard:

Καινή κτίσις as soterio-anthropology:

*The concept is not merely exaggerated imagery, but it interprets Paul's anthropology... Through the Christ-event the Christian is enabled to participate in the new human existence 'in Christ' which in Galatians is described as 'the fruit of the Spirit' in all its manifestations.*⁸²⁴

A significant number of scholars emphasize the point that Gal 6:11-18 is not to be viewed as something quite apart from the rest of the letter but actually serves as a conclusion which intentionally incorporates the main themes of the letter.⁸²⁵ And focusing even more

⁸²¹ Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

⁸²² Cf. Hubbard 2002: 224-225.

⁸²³ As noted in the introduction to this thesis, scholars are perfectly capable of referencing the exact same passage from another source (secondary or primary) in support of positions which are contrary to one another; e.g. Sejong Chun, in support of a cosmological position writes, quoting Betz, "*Entering into God's new world inevitably causes an existential change. The world that those who are participating in the self-sacrificing life and death of Christ can experience is not a world of fantasy made of totally exotic ingredients but a world of new existence. As Betz clarifies, those who are in Christ can 'participate in the new human existence.'*" Chun 2012: 174.

⁸²⁴ Betz 1979: 319–20. Though variously nuanced, see also Sieffert 1899: 359, Lightfoot 1890: 223–24, Burton 1921: 355, Lagrange 1926: 165–66, Bonnard 1972: 130–31, Reumann 1973: 97, Mussner 1974: 414, Chilton 1977/78: 312, Weder 1981: 207, Borse 1984: 222, Rohde 1989: 277, Longenecker 1990: 296, Segal 1990: 147, 263, Friederich 1996: 2732, etc. Hubbard 2002: 222, FN 150.

⁸²⁵ Matera treats this aspect as so important that he even mentions it in the preface to his very thorough commentary. Matera 1992: ix-x. Cf., his separate research paper which intentionally expounds on this specific topic: Matera 1988: 79-80. In the latter, we discover that, provided we go back far enough (like to M. J.

narrowly upon the *καινή κτίσις* expression itself, Hubbard claims that “*Gal:6.14–15, Paul’s final death–life statement (cf. 2.19–20; 5.24–25), is particularly crucial, such that in functioning as the ‘life’ side of this death–life equation, καινή κτίσις resonates back through the entire epistle and may well epitomize the major thesis of the letter.*”⁸²⁶ I fully concur therefore with the assertion that the primary basis for an anthropological interpretation of *καινή κτίσις* here in Gal 6:15 is its coherence within the argument of Galatians itself. Even recalling the significance of the Galatian letter closing as a *recapitulatio*, it is nonetheless remarkable how every phrase of Gal 6:12–16 dovetails with major themes of the body of the letter.⁸²⁷

I have deliberately refrained from drawing upon, or comparing *καινή κτίσις* here in Galatians with, its occurrence in Second Corinthians, but as we get closer to the end of our study we need to start linking the two where such is apposite and helpful. One aspect which proved to be very significant for the Corinthian text was the close affinity between *being in Christ* and *a new creation* – I even postulated that the expressions were synonymous.⁸²⁸ A graphical representation of the relationship of these expressions in the letter to the Galatians (Fig 4.1 below) may accordingly prove to be enlightening:

Lagrange in 1942) the idea is actually not all that new!. Matera 1988: 80, 89 EN 7. Jackson 2010: 84 concurs. Likewise Hubbard 2002: 210 incl FN 103.

⁸²⁶ Hubbard 2002: 191.

⁸²⁷ Ibid, 225.

⁸²⁸ Section 3.5.

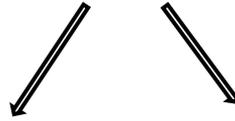
Fig 4.1

A. {formerly, law, flesh, slave, outer}

=

B. circumcision or uncircumcision

vs



C. in Christ

D. καινή κτίσις

=

E. {now, faith, Spirit, free, inner}

Whereas such an identification was explicated in the case of the καινή κτίσις text in Second Corinthians, not least because the two terms appear one after the other: εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινή κτίσις (2 Cor 5:17a), here in Galatians the two terms appear in two separate chapters (Gal 5:6 and Gal 6:15) but the connecting link, albeit an implied one, is their common explicit contrast with the whole circumcision or uncircumcision pressure. In Fig 4.1, **B.** (circumcision or uncircumcision) is a public⁸²⁹ issue which encapsulates the aspects which concerned Paul – **A.** {formerly, law, flesh, slave, outer} and, of course, circumcision itself. Independently of one another, Paul contrasts **B.** (circumcision or uncircumcision) first against **C.** being in Christ and now in his culmination, against **D.** καινή κτίσις (new creation). The conclusion deduced is, accordingly, that the characteristics of the transformation⁸³⁰ which apply to anyone who is in Christ, **E.** {now, faith, Spirit, free, inner} apply equally to each person who is a new creation.

⁸²⁹ In talking about the law as a whole, Matera designates the *outward* mark of circumcision as the most dramatic expression of the Law's observance. (My italics). Matera 1988: 83.

⁸³⁰ Hubbard recapitulates (with some expansion) each characteristic again with a transformation motif. Hubbard 2002: 229.

4.5 The assumption of ‘implied verbs’ in Gal 6:15 interrogated and an alternative rhetorical-based interpretation proposed

This turns out to be not as serious an issue as was the case with the *καινή κτίσις* text in Second Corinthians.⁸³¹ Nonetheless, because of the limited, indeed exclusive, use by Paul of *καινή κτίσις* in only Galatians and Second Corinthians, it is of value to subject them both to the same analytical process, lest the critical interpretation of the Galatian text is invalidated or compromised (with respect to the three contending alternatives – anthropological, ecclesiological, or cosmological) by a scholar choosing an interpretation which allows insufficient weight to the Galatian verse itself compared with other (secondary) sources.

The case for respecting the ‘native text’ of Gal 6:15 (and with 2 Cor 5:17) is a strong one since it appears, on face value anyway, that Paul was quite intentional in how he had constructed the *καινή κτίσις* sentences in both letters: “...*the two new-creation statements are syntactically identical, being formulated absolutely without subject, verb, or article: new creation!*”⁸³² Does this mean that the *καινή κτίσις* passage of Galatians justifiably lends itself to an understanding along the same lines as we arrived at with respect to Second Corinthians? I suggest that it does, and, in a sense, it has an even stronger case.

A rhetorical-based interpretation

Firstly, it responds satisfactorily to the same scrutiny which was applied to 2 Cor 5:17 on the basis of the second research sub-question for this thesis. The question in full reads as follows:

Paul speaks in the language of new creation (*καινή κτίσις*) in only two of the thirteen⁸³³ letters bearing his name (Galatians and Second Corinthians) and he does so without explaining the concept. He also introduces the concept very abruptly, even curtly in both Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17. Why was he in a position to do so?

Before answering this question, it is worth noting that, even though such a question does not seem to be posed generally by previous researchers, there are two scholars (Douglas Moo

⁸³¹ Section 3.5 refers.

⁸³² So Hubbard 2002: 222.

⁸³³ Thirteen. At this stage, no distinction is being made here between those seven NT letters which are reliably regarded as personally authored by Paul himself (Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon) and those which are not attributed to him or only attributed with critical objections.

and Moyer Hubbard) who during their studies of Galatians have at least speculated as to why the *καινή κτίσις* phrase appears ‘out of the blue’ as it were.

Douglas Moo, traces its origins to Apocalyptic Judaism, explaining it as part of his case for a cosmological interpretation of Gal 6:15:

*...Paul does not use ‘new creation’ in Gal 6:15 as a metaphor referring to the renewed person or the renewed community. He uses it to denote a concept: the radically new state of affairs that Christ’s death has inaugurated. The introduction of the phrase without explanation, along with the apocalyptic-oriented argument of Galatians, makes it particularly likely that Paul has drawn the phrase from apocalyptic Judaism—where, as we have seen, the only pre-Christian occurrences of the phrase are found.*⁸³⁴

Moo’s explanation is unsatisfactory because it is a statement only about Paul, he says nothing about the intended recipients of the expression *καινή κτίσις*. It might well be that apocalyptic Judaism provided the original source for Paul to be thinking in *καινή κτίσις* terms, but that does not provide the basis as to why his Galatian readers would be expected to also understand it without any further explanation.

Hubbard’s question is not so much why the *καινή κτίσις* phrase suddenly appears without explanation, but why it only occurs in the climax of the letter (Gal 6:12-18). He couples his question with a second one because both questions are actually symbiotically related and can only be answered by one single answer. He asks,

*(1) in a letter which lacks any reference to καινή κτίσις, why does this phrase suddenly appear in Paul’s summation of the central themes of the letter?; (2) having dealt extensively and painstakingly with life in the Spirit, why does Paul fail to mention the Spirit as the crucial points of the letter are reiterated? The two questions are inextricably connected.*⁸³⁵

Hubbard’s answer occurs within his defence of an anthropological reading of Gal 6:15, wherein he posits that *καινή κτίσις* occurs in the summary section of Galatians as a proxy (my term) for the place of the Spirit:

⁸³⁴ Moo 2010: 51.

⁸³⁵ Hubbard 2002: 210.

*In defence of this [anthropological] interpretation, it should be noted that the preceding verses (6.12–15a) virtually itemize the Spirit-contrasted ideas of the law, the flesh, and circumcision, to which καινή κτίσις is antithetically juxtaposed. The prominence of σάρξ in this reiteration is redolent of 2 Corinthians 5:16–17 and suggests that here, as there, καινή κτίσις occupies a position typically reserved for πνεῦμα. Moreover, given the importance of the Spirit in the argument of Galatians **it is utterly inconceivable that Paul could summarize this letter’s central themes and entirely omit any reference to the Spirit.**⁸³⁶*

Such a perspective aligns with my **Fig 4.1** at the end of section 4.4. And while appreciating Hubbard’s answer, my own answer also remains the same as it was when posed with regard to Second Corinthians, namely, that the Galatians were already familiar with the καινή κτίσις terminology, and in particular with Paul’s use of those words and what they meant, namely that, in that kerygmatic context, they were synonymous with the expression being ἐν Χριστῷ.

Secondly, the manner of delivery of this Galatians καινή κτίσις may not reflect quite the same manner of asyndetic coordination deployed in Second Corinthians, but nonetheless it has the same kerygmatic manner of proclamation – abrupt and brusque, impatient and intolerant (as verse 17 will clearly demonstrate).

Thirdly, two rhetorical-based translations are already included amongst the eleven prevailing translations tabled in section 4.3, so there is no radical step in proposing such:

(d1) English translations which follow the NT Greek text precisely or closely:

For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.	NASB
Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation	Matera ⁸³⁷

In these two translations, no change has been made to the verb ἐστιν in Gal 6:15a, and no ‘implied’ verb is assumed to be required in Gal 6:15b.

⁸³⁶ The *emphases* are Hubbard’s. Hubbard 2002: 226, excluding his footnote.

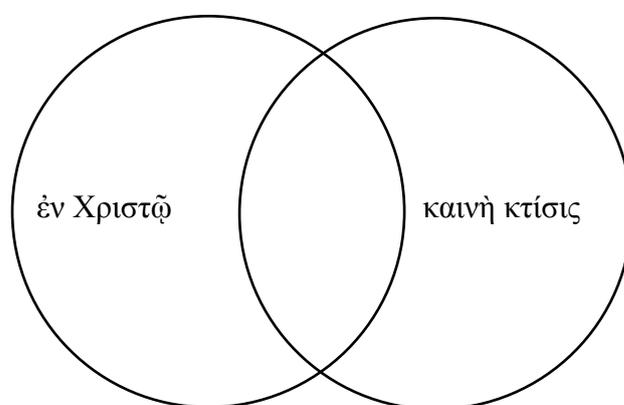
⁸³⁷ Matera 1992: 224.

Paul's kerygmatic synonym and the interpretation of Gal 6:15

Is the interpretation of Gal 6:15 affected in any way if one were to limit oneself to one or other of the two rhetorical-based translations referred to above **(d1)**?

On the face of it, this would appear to be unlikely. Certainly, Matera, whose translation is one of the rhetorical-based ones, in his interpretation of Gal 6:16a equates a⁸³⁸ new creation with 'a⁸³⁹ rule (κανών) of conduct by which the Galatians must lead their lives.'⁸⁴⁰ This incorporates both anthropological as well as ecclesiological understandings, the latter being in consonance anyway with the social emphasis in Matera's interpretation of Galatians, and is surely hardly affected either way by the starkness of the closing part of v.15, - *a new creation*. On the other hand, such a translation may give less weight to cosmological interpretations to which terminology other translations, such as 'but a new creation is everything!', lend themselves.

At the end of Chapter 3, a question was posed about possible further relationships between Paul's 'in Christ' and a new creation in Second Corinthians, illustrated as follows,.



In approaching the Letter to the Galatians, the original idea had been to pose the same question here at its conclusion, namely, *Paul's being in Christ and a new creation in Galatians: a bigger picture?* However, no new such insights emerged with respect to the latter letter which were not already dealt with in Chapter 3.

⁸³⁸ He speaks in terms of *this* new creation. Matera 1992: 232. Cf. also his extensive deployment of the definite article in his exegetical notes. Matera 1992: 226.

⁸³⁹ 'a rule' – the Greek text has 'with *this* rule' (τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ).

⁸⁴⁰ Matera 1992: 232.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and the basis for further research

5.1 Conclusions arising from Paul's new creation and aspects for further research

καινή κτίσις: *a new humanity*

Of all of the translations, designations, and interpretations of Paul's new creation texts, the one which captures the very essence of what he intended to convey by the words *καινή κτίσις* is that of 'a new humanity'. I say this for a number of reasons.

By incorporating the word 'human' it is giving prominence to what stood out for me as the primary interpretative domain of *καινή κτίσις*, the anthropological. As we shall note, it does so without excluding the other two elements.

The first 'new human' was and is the resurrected Jesus Christ. Indeed, his resurrection from the dead not only defined a new creation but effected it. So the expression immediately brings him and his pre-eminence to mind.

The term 'a new humanity' is not speaking only of one person, Jesus of Nazareth. The anthropological interpretations which have stressed the incorporation of individual women and men into Christ are included within this new humanity.⁸⁴¹ In addition, the ecclesiological interpretations of *καινή κτίσις* also have a place in this new humanity, taking us way beyond the implications for the individual, for it is into a collective – the (mystical) body of this Christ – that constitutes our incorporation into a new humanity.

The expression 'a new humanity' does not, in itself, contain explicit cosmological wording, but as our analysis showed, together with other considerations, the relationship between *καινή κτίσις* and being *ἐν Χριστῷ* brings with it the cosmological characteristics of *καινή κτίσις*, including (but not confined to) the understanding of the resurrected Christ as a corporate personality.⁸⁴²

Taking all three domains into consideration (anthropological, ecclesiological, cosmological) the expression 'a new humanity' therefore portrays a glorified Christ, Lord of this present creation and Lord of an eschatological creation in which humanity is included, an existence devoid of death. Furthermore, Paul's new creation straddles both the 'now' and the envisaged creation because for those in Christ, death is no longer a consideration.

⁸⁴¹ "...a new ontological reshaping of man's existence, not through a mere extrinsic norm of conduct, but through a life-giving principle that is the Spirit of Christ. This is accomplished through the doxa of the Risen Christ (2 Cor 3:18-4:6). Man thus transformed in Christ becomes a new 'Creature.'" Fitzmyer 1968 *Galatians*: 246.

⁸⁴² Cf. 'The case for a cosmological interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17' in section 3.4.

Even though the expression ‘a new humanity’ has been used sparingly in the body of this thesis, a number of scholars deploy it very intentionally, including Douglas Moo⁸⁴³, Mark Owens⁸⁴⁴, Moyer Hubbard⁸⁴⁵, and Thrall.⁸⁴⁶ And, in approaching the end of our thesis, it is fitting that we allow ourselves to note what Thrall does in recognising that Paul’s *καινή κτίσις* has associated with it a selected number of other NT references which speak, in her terms, of “*a new or renewed creation or to the new humanity, Mt 19:28; Eph 2:10, 15; 4:24; 2 Pt 3:13; and Rev 21:1-5.*”⁸⁴⁷

It is interesting that, as he nears the end of his commentary on Galatians, F. F. Bruce also introduces the expression *new humanity*, taking up the suggestion⁸⁴⁸ that, ‘after the analogy of *b^eriyyáh* in rabbinical Hebrew⁸⁴⁹, *κτίσις* here may mean *humanity*: “‘*God has set aside the polarity of Jew and Gentile (cf. 3:28) in favour of an altogether ‘new humanity’. There is available for ‘anyone in Christ’ (2 Cor 5:17) a status before God which frees him from the constraints which he once suffered.*”⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴³ Cf. section 1.2.1.

⁸⁴⁴ In his extended analysis of new creation themes in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, where Owens speaks in terms of “*the description of the new creation of humanity in Eph 2:1-10 and the union of Jew and Gentile into one new humanity/new temple in Eph 2:11-22.*” Owens 2012: 191, 228 FN 175.

⁸⁴⁵ Jeremiah’s 31:31-34 as a new humanity; Paul’s Adam-Christ typology; And the ‘crucified cosmos’ (meaning the values of this present world) contrasted with that of “*a new humanity living in a crucified and dying κόσμος (cf. 1 Cor 7:31).*” Hubbard 2002: 20, 185, 230.

⁸⁴⁶ Cf. *The case for a cosmological interpretation of 2 Cor 5:17* in section 3.4, where Thrall’s analysis 420-429 is referenced. The specific allusion to ‘a new humanity’ is on page 423.

⁸⁴⁷ Thrall 1994: 423-424. The Mt 19:28 reference particularly intrigues. In response to a question from Peter (‘What then will we have?’), Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, at the renewal [*παλιγγενεσία*] of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ (Mt 19:28). David Sim in his treatise on *παλιγγενεσία* in Matthew 19:28 argues that “*it refers (as well) to a literal renewal or re-creation of the cosmos after the existing order has been destroyed at the eschaton.*” Sim 1993: 5. Jesus then goes on in Mt 19:29 to promise that all followers of his will inherit eternal life [*ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσει*] where note the Pauline marker of inheritance; this, as we saw in the analysis, is linked with another Pauline marker, that of personal identity. The translation of *παλιγγενεσία* as re-generation or re-birth is to be preferred, ‘being an eschatological term used in various connections; in the NT both individual (Tit 3:5) and cosmic, viz. the reign of Messiah at the end of time, especially the resurrection of the dead.’ Zerwick and Grosvenor 1981: 63.

⁸⁴⁸ By Chilton (see below).

⁸⁴⁹ (cf. m. Ab. 1:12; 4:1; 6:1) Bruce 1982: 273.

⁸⁵⁰ Chilton, Galatians 6:15, A Call to Freedom before God, *Exp Tim* 89 [1977-78], 311-313, quoted by Bruce 1982: 273. [One wonders if this relates to Num 16:30a: ‘But if the Lord creates something new...’ H1278. *בְּרִיאָה* *b^erîy’âh* beriah (135c); from 1254a; *a creation, thing created*:—entirely new thing? Although the context is shockingly different!]

καινή κρίσις: *gaps and aspects for further research*

Before commenting on some of the conclusions which are peculiar to each letter, a brief word is in order on aspects or insights which, in the opinion of this student, have not been given sufficient attention by scholars of Paul's new creation.

Raymond E. Brown, in his book on the early churches, previously referenced, painstakingly pointed out in each chapter that for each author of a book or epistle of the NT a particular insight always came at the expense of omitting other equally valid insights. He called such characteristics, *strengths* and *weaknesses*, and up front issued the following caution: "*I forewarn readers that ...All answers to a theological problem, of necessity being partial and time-conditioned, involve paying a price. One emphasis, no matter how necessary at a particular time, will inevitably lead to a neglect of truth found in another answer or emphasis.*"⁸⁵¹

I dare say that scholars (as distinct from authors) of biblical texts may be less prone to such tendencies given the nature of the craft, but I expect that it may always be possible. So, herewith a brief comment on three aspects which I have singled out: *mystery*, *love*, and *identity*, which could allow for more nuanced interpretations of new creation texts and more generous interplay between them. Unfortunately, space within a Masters thesis did not allow for a fuller incorporation of all of these elements into the present study.

Mystery

The inter-scholar debates over the three-fold characteristics highlighted in studies of Paul's καινή κρίσις reflected, on occasion, positions being adopted which were then defended as sacrosanct. But can one really imagine the slaves of Corinth or the peasants of Galatia, after reading Paul's letter to them, getting into binary (more correctly ternary) discussions over the cosmic verses the communal versus the anthropological implications of what they have just read? At the end of the day these things, helpful and all as they are to *us*, have to be held also by *us* within a whole which has an element of the indivisible about it. Paul spoke to the Christians of Corinth about the wisdom of God in a mystery [μυστήριον] (1 Cor 2:7), coupling it here, and elsewhere, with the notion of something secret, or hidden, often with associations of time which are outside of the ages, etc. Paul uses the word in Romans, First

⁸⁵¹ Brown 1984: 37.

Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians. It is to be found also in 2 Thes and 1 Tim in somewhat different applications, once (a phrase common to each) in the Synoptics, and in Revelation. A greater incorporation of these concepts could lead to a more humble tone in some interpretations.

Love

It was somewhat surprising to discover, in the midst of debates about the polemical nature of both Second Corinthians and Galatians, and the identity and motivations of Paul's opponents, how little attention was paid in the literature to the domain of love in the two letters: the love of God, Paul's love for the Corinthians and for the Galatians, as well as the deep love which these communities felt for Paul.⁸⁵² Much of this seems to have become smothered out by the noise generated by the polemics. More could be explored here with regard to a new creation.

Identity

This gap in the existing literature proved to be so important for my thesis that (unlike for *mystery* and *love*) it required incorporation of the topic into the body of the thesis. There was no way in which the significance of *καινή κτίσις* could be regarded as analysed in any sense of completeness without doing so. And yet much more remains to be explored here in the wider Pauline corpus which could be relevant to a new creation.

...

⁸⁵² Cf., 2 Cor 2:4; 5:14; 6:6; 8:7-8,24; 11:11; 12:15; 13:11,14; (also 1 Cor 16:24). And Chapter 5 of Galatians.

καινή κτίσις: the individual letters

While καινή κτίσις as ‘a new humanity’ is an overarching valid designation for the whole, the two letters involved each had their own particular emphasis but without such distinctiveness ever eclipsing the one shared unifying truth: The Cross.

The exchange

While there is a variety of topics and themes in Second Corinthians⁸⁵³, in this thesis the main message of Second Corinthians was posited as being that of reconciliation, in all of its many levels and dimensions.⁸⁵⁴ And the climax of that assertion, as demonstrated, is to be found (2 Cor 5:19,21) in the Cross of Jesus Christ. This is where the holy exchange took place, earning for anyone who is ἐν Χριστῷ reconciliation with God involving both forgiveness of sins and the promise of resurrection⁸⁵⁵ - incorporation into a new creation.

At the risk of stating a truism, we can accordingly say that Paul’s main objective in writing this particular letter (reconciliation) finds its very locus in the new creation passage in the middle of the letter. There, καινή κτίσις was seen to be synonymous with being ἐν Χριστῷ when men and women have appropriated the personal exchange which Jesus undertook for them on the Cross; their sins for his righteousness (2 Cor 5:21).



⁸⁵³ Unsurprising given the accepted theories about the letter being a composite of a number of different original letters since lost. Sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5 refer.

⁸⁵⁴ Section 3.2 refers.

⁸⁵⁵ Cf. Section 3.4, where the theme of reconciliation is taken up from the exegesis of 2 Cor 5:18-21 onwards.

Paul's letter to the Galatians might have been expected to be a more straightforward matter than Second Corinthians, dealing as it does with a single readily defined pastoral matter: the fuss over circumcision. The reality turned out to be somewhat more complex than that.

Our identity ἐν Χριστῷ

Paul's letter to the Galatians starts with both guns blazing, skipping the normal courtesies of a letter to deliver instead an opening severe rebuke (Gal 1:6) which is trumped by an even more scathing rebuke as the letter closes (Gal 6:17). It is a singularly focussed letter! Its goal is (apparently) simple; to convince the pagans of Galatia that they do not need to be circumcised in order to become Christians.

To achieve this (apparently) straightforward goal Paul finds it necessary to go well beyond the boundaries of the Gentile world to that of his own previous Judaism, and mounts a blistering attack upon those of his fellow Jews who are now his fellow Christians but from whom he is estranged theologically and relationally.

The letter is not, despite appearances to the contrary, a kneejerk reaction to the crisis in Galatia but, in a carefully chosen rhetoric, has been skilfully crafted to achieve a shocking impact, and in the thesis I proposed that the main message of Galatians was that, arising from the Christ event (Gal 1:1-5), the basis upon which any person, Jew or Gentile, now becomes a member of the people of God – defined as becoming a child of God (Gal 3:26) - is through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26). All of the Mosaic Law, and especially circumcision or uncircumcision, is accordingly regarded as impotent and irrelevant in this regard (Gal 5:6; 6:15).

This Pauline stance struck right at the heart of personal identity⁸⁵⁶, and amounted to a redefinition of who owns the designation *The People of God*, as being only those who are ἐν Χριστῷ. This assertion had, of course, major benefits for women as well as men, for slaves as well as free, and for Gentiles en masse. Paul's stance was truly revolutionary. Revolutionary to Jewish ears as well!

To categorize the conflicting views merely as Discontinuity (Paul) vs Continuity (James and Jerusalem) is however, too simplistic; the revolution was intentional. So, one has to ask why Paul had to become so antagonistic, and so offensive? When one considers what the

⁸⁵⁶ As we noted in section 4.1.4, the issue of identity emerged as a key marker in this thesis, including for Paul himself.

Hebrew Scriptures (Psalm 19, Psalm 119, and numerous other places) themselves say about the Law of Moses (and what we quite rightly still say about the OT Scriptures today) Paul's approach is very difficult to understand. One senses that he could have explained, as indeed he does later in Romans, that what had been wonderful and necessary prior to Christ had actually been a 'tutor' preparing the people for the Messiah, and now, with the revelation of the Messiah, a completely new phase of how people were to relate to God had been inaugurated. One can only speculate, but if Paul had just been dealing with Gentiles without also having to contend with adverse and dogmatic interference from some fellow Christian missionaries (the so-called Judaizers) perhaps that might well have been his chosen line⁸⁵⁷; it would have been, after all, an honest one. The reality was that there was opposition and of a very forceful nature.

With hindsight such opposition turned out to be a blessing since it drove Paul into communicating to the Galatians the radical uniqueness and absoluteness of the Christ event. Paul captures that uniqueness in a fragment of a verse in his letter to them:

'...if righteousness⁸⁵⁸ comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.' (Gal 2:21c).

Here, Paul is saying that if the death of Jesus was just one of two alternative ways of being considered righteous by God then his sacrificial death had been pointless; it had not been necessary; there was an alternative. His opponents were saying that circumcision and obedience to the Law were prerequisites for salvation. Paul was adamant that this was not the case. In context his assertion reads:

...I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing. (Gal 2:19b-21).

Paul would subsequently, in the climax of his letter, restate the place which the death of Jesus on the cross had played in his own 'double crucifixion' as described in this thesis:

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal 6:14)

⁸⁵⁷ Or maybe not! Cf. Section 4.1.1 and Murphy-O'Connor 2007: 81-114.

⁸⁵⁸ The word is δικαιοσύνη and can also be translated (as the NRSV does) as justification.

and with an ellipsis identical to that deployed in Second Corinthians, Paul contrasted circumcision-or-uncircumcision as diametrically opposed to *καινή κτίσις*, the latter bringing with it a new identity-marker:

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! ... From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. (Gal 6: 15,17)

Clearly, the *necessity* of the atonement of Jesus was such a critical truth for Paul that he had even been willing to be alienated from his Christian brethren to defend it.

That truth is, of course, not just of historical interest to us. The issue facing the church of the present age is just the same, indeed of even broader impact. And in the course of considering how the church – in particular the Catholic Church - of the twentieth century received Paul's word of *καινή κτίσις* we shall be posing Paul's question again, and in a manner which befits the contemporary milieu: If the freely accepted death of Jesus Christ on the Cross for our sins is just one of a number of different ways of living in right relationship with God, it must surely rank as one of the most misguided and pointless actions of a human being in the entire history of humanity.

5.2 Afterword: *καινή κτίσις* today

This thesis has confined itself to what was designated as *the small picture* (section 1.1.2) as opposed to *the big picture* (section 1.1.1) of the relevance of *καινή κτίσις* to our present Secular Age. The envisaged further research on the latter will undoubtedly include the manner in which new creation and its associated topics are reflected in the documents of the ecumenical council termed Vatican II (1962-1965).

As an afterword to this thesis, a brief comment is accordingly made on one of the great aspirations which emerged from Vatican II, the urgent need for the Catholic Church to engage upon a renewal of its missionary calling - The New Evangelization.⁸⁵⁹ However, as argued below, that great endeavor is failing – not least because it is not following the God-given strategy of Paul's *καινή κτίσις* Gospel proclamation.

⁸⁵⁹ The Constitution on the Church: *Lumen Gentium* (*The Light of the Nations*) refers to the two new creation texts (2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15) and the opening words of its first chapter is marked by the proclamatory emphasis of the kerygma [κήρυγμα] which, as we have repeatedly seen, has been right at the centre of Paul's theology of new creation [*καινή κτίσις*]. *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter I, Article 7.

It is extraordinary that Paul's letter to the Galatians, which, at first sight, had a very localized concern (did Gentiles have to be circumcised in order to become Christians) with a definitive sell-by date (the issue of circumcision/non-circumcision cannot have lasted more than a few decades after Paul's time) can trigger a question applicable to the twenty-first century.

The issue of circumcision/non-circumcision for Christian identity is of course incapable of arising today in any contemporary context or culture anywhere on the world. So, how is it possible and meaningful for the text of this first century epistle to engage in a 'dialogue' with our contemporary context? The instrument which enables such interaction is the present-day receiving community and reader of the text, who conscious also of the appropriation of the text in history, can direct the dialogue referred to.⁸⁶⁰ In the course of undertaking this mediation, the reader does so, not as a detached or neutral observer, but brings his/her ideological position to the process.⁸⁶¹

If we visualize Fr Raniero Cantalamessa taking on as it were the role of mediator in the Tripolar Approach referred to above, he enunciates the great irony that this present secular age is in many respects a pagan age, one indeed very akin to the age of the early church, and accordingly ripe for the proclamation of the Gospel. In saying this, Cantalamessa emphasizes the need to distinguish between the *proclamation* of the Gospel, which evokes faith from the hearer, and that which follows afterwards:

*The preaching, or **kerygma**, is called the 'gospel' (cf. Mark 1:1; Rom 15:19; Gal 1:7, etc.); the teaching, or **didaché**, on the other hand is called the 'law,' or the commandment, of Christ, which is generally summed up in love (cf. Gal 6:2; John 15:12; 1John 4:21). Of these two, the first – the **kerygma** or gospel – is what gives the Church her origin; the second – the law of love – which flows from the first, traces an ideal of moral life for the Church, 'forms' the faith of the Church.⁸⁶² ...The faith as such therefore flows only in the presence of the **kerygma** or proclamation...⁸⁶³*

In contrast to this, today's New Evangelization strategy is that of *didaché* or catechesis (formative - directed at the head) rather than that of *kerygma* (assertive - which touches the heart).⁸⁶⁴ So, instead of proclaiming the foolishness of the Cross, the Church is aiming to educate people in the truths of the Faith. The attempt is to define the rules and conditions for

⁸⁶⁰ So, the so called *Tripolar Approach* of Draper and West in Decock 2016: 205.

⁸⁶¹ Decock 2016: 205.

⁸⁶² At this point Cantalamessa references C. H. Dodd, *History and the Gospel*, London 1964, chap.2.

⁸⁶³ Cantalamessa 1994: 42.

⁸⁶⁴ Cantalamessa 1994: 45.

entering the Church (a modern equivalent to the circumcision/Mosaic law issue) instead of allowing the Gospel of the Cross to touch people in the power of the Holy Spirit. For the past few decades Cantalamessa has been bemoaning the demise of the *kerygma* and what has to be done to reclaim it.⁸⁶⁵ If we can achieve what Fr Cantalamessa is pleading for, we will indeed see the primary message of Galatians being realised in the fruit of new births ἐν Χριστῷ, because our analysis of Galatians revealed that beneath the transient and localized circumcised-uncircumcised controversy was the overarching and timeless issue of being ‘in Christ’, a consequence of personal faith in Jesus Christ.

...

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid, 38-50.

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