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Community-Edifying 'World-Construction' in Paul and 1 Clement as a Resource for Theological Deliberations about Human Origins

Abstract

Recognizing that the rhetorical context for the cosmological reflections of both Paul and one of his earliest interpreters is the promotion of community-building, this paper proposes that the “world-construction” of these early believers offers a model for the contemporary church’s discourse concerning human origins. The paper, then, is an exercise in theological interpretation of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, read alongside one of the earliest interactions with these texts in the letter known as 1 Clement.

Keywords

Paul the Apostle, community building, human origins, Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Clement

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Comments

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COMMUNITY-EDIFYING “WORLD-CONSTRUCTION” IN PAUL AND *1 CLEMENT*
AS A RESOURCE FOR THEOLOGICAL DELIBERATIONS ABOUT HUMAN ORIGINS

BENJAMIN J. LAPPENGA

Recognizing that the rhetorical context for the cosmological reflections of both Paul and one of his earliest interpreters is the promotion of *community-building*, this paper proposes that the “world-construction” of these early believers offers a model for the contemporary church’s discourse concerning human origins. The paper, then, is an exercise in theological interpretation of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, read alongside one of the earliest interactions with these texts in the letter known as *1 Clement*.

Agreement on a definition of “theological interpretation” has been notoriously difficult to come by.¹ One side effect of the disagreements is that interpreters sometimes resort to a lowest-common-denominator approach, resulting in a definition something like “theological interpretation means interpreting the text of the Bible *as Scripture*, as God’s word.” To this I say “yes,” but also, “there must be more.” Walter Moberly offers a slightly longer definition: “theological interpretation is reading the Bible with a concern for the enduring truth of its witness to the nature of God and humanity, *with a view to enabling the transformation of humanity into the likeness of God.*”² Richard Hays includes among his twelve “identifying marks” of theological interpretation the expectation that when theological readings are instructed by the example of readers from Christian tradition, “theological

¹ The literature on the definition and methodology of theological interpretation is vast; see, e.g., Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays, eds., *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); A. K. M. Adam, Stephen E. Fowl, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Francis Watson, eds., *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); Kevin Vanhoozer, ed., *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); and Joel B. Green, *Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007).

² R. Walter Moberly, “What Is Theological Interpretation of Scripture?” *JTI* 3, no. 2 (2009): 163; italics mine.

interpreters will produce fresh readings.”³ It is the latter part of Moberly’s definition that I am chiefly concerned with in this paper (the shaping of our practice, our formation), though as will become clear, it is the focus on past Christian interpretation that provides the immediate catalyst for my proposals. With *1 Clement* as our guide, we will also be pushed beyond the anthropocentric focus suggested by these definitions.

Before commencing with our study of the relevant texts, I wish briefly to clarify what this paper is *not*. First, I make no attempt here to mine 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 for some loophole that gets us off the hook (“Aha! Paul did not believe in a historical Adam!”). A common approach is to identify the hotspots and then find ways to reconcile what Paul says with a particular view of evolution or the fall.⁴ Instead, my interest is in illuminating a crucial dimension of Paul’s discourses on Adam that is regularly marginalized in our readings of the letters in which they are found. My argument is that we do well to consider the *purposes of* and *process followed by* Paul and *1 Clement*, instead of simply adopting a Pauline “view of Adam” or looking to the tradition only for doctrines about original sin or the fall.⁵

Second, although I will make recommendations about the proper hermeneutical posture for Christian interpreters, I make no attempt here to reduce the status of Scripture as a

³ Richard B. Hays, “Reading the Bible with Eyes of Faith: The Practice of Theological Exegesis,” *JTI* 1, no. 1 (2007): 15.

⁴ This is true on both the “conservative” and “liberal” sides of debates, especially within evangelicalism. For example, Enns writes, “the most pressing interpretative issues are in Romans 5, and so my comments will largely be focused there” (Enns, *Evolution*, 120), while Thomas R. Schreiner supports his position by arguing that “the most plausible reading of Romans 5:12-19, both exegetically and theologically, supports the doctrine of original sin and original death” (“Original Sin and Original Death: Romans 5:12-19,” in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* [ed. Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014], 271).

⁵ As Margaret M. Mitchell has argued in relation to Paul as a reader of Israel’s scriptures, interpreters too often conceive of their task as “an examination of how early Christian interpreters *commented on* a given text, rather than how they *commented with* it.” This paper attempts to take seriously Mitchell’s assertion that, beginning with Paul himself, “[t]he goal of ancient biblical interpretation was utility to the purpose at hand, however contextually defined” (*Paul, the Corinthians, and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics* [Cambridge: CUP, 2010], ix-x).

primary instrument for God’s revelatory and thereby redemptive work. I take it as a given that some insights gained from evolutionary science are among what Karl Barth called the “lesser lights,” which means that they both reflect the light of Jesus Christ, and, importantly for our interests here, can “help awaken Christians to live deeper into the scriptural witness.”⁶

Likewise, the fact that this paper considers *1 Clement* alongside Paul’s writings should not be perceived as an undervaluation of the canonical texts—our consideration of *1 Clement* is helpful precisely in the ways it informs our ability to be attentive readers of Paul.

1. COSMOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL WORLD-CONSTRUCTION

To begin, then, we consider three preliminaries: (1) what is meant by “cosmology,” (2) how and to what purpose ancient authors and the New Testament authors in particular engaged in “world-construction,” and finally, (3) in what sense Paul’s discourses on Adam are appropriately addressed as “world-construction.”

1.1 The Terms “Cosmology” and “World-Construction”

“Cosmology” is of course simply discourse (λόγια) about the world (κόσμος). Since the Enlightenment, at least in popular discourse about the origins of the universe, “cosmology” has been co-opted by a closed-universe thinking that limits cosmology to structure and

⁶ J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 83; cf. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV:3.1, 123-28, and George Hunsinger’s summary (*How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1991], 234-80). Many others assert the same point relating specifically to science; e.g., Hans Madueme writes, “God may use science providentially to bring to light genuine realities about our world, which then alert us to faulty readings of Scripture” (“‘The Most Vulnerable Part of the Whole Christian Account’: Original Sin and Modern Science,” in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* [ed. Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014], 238), and John H. Walton claims that his reading of Genesis 2-3 “has not been imposed on it by the demands of science, but science has prompted a more careful examination of precisely what the text is claiming” (*The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate* [Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015], 103). See especially Francis Watson, “Genesis before Darwin: Why Scripture Needed Liberating from Science,” in *Reading Genesis after Darwin* (ed. Stephen C. Barton and David Wilkinson; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23-37.

mechanics.⁷ But even a cursory look at “writing” about the “world” throughout history reveals that cosmology refers to discourse not only about the structure and mechanics of the the physical universe, but also of its *origin* and *purpose*.⁸ The Greeks, for example, first employed the term *κόσμος* to designate the *order* exhibited by the universe, and only later by extension the universe itself.⁹ The earliest reflections on the universe are found embedded in the epic poems of Homer, where the famous image of a circular, flat disc surrounded by water carries forward Homer’s narrative portrayal of human life—not in a textbook on the mechanics of the universe.¹⁰ For the Stoics, observations about the structure of the universe led them to conclusions about the existence and activity of the gods (natural theology), but they also formulated their observations about the universe to promote right living (ethics).¹¹

In the Ancient Near East, a longstanding interest in cosmology (mostly manifested in mythology) influenced Israel’s formulations, which have widely been seen to reflect correlations with the temple cult (Ps 78.69: “He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever”).¹² By all accounts, in Israel’s scriptures “cosmological reflection serves a theological purpose.”¹³ We will see that this is equally true

⁷ Cf. Wolfgang Gantke, “Welt/Weltanschauung/Weltbild IV.I Religionsgeschichtlich,” *TRE* 35 (2003): 562; cited in Joel White, “Paul’s Cosmology: The Witness of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 90.

⁸ See further Joel White, “Paul’s Cosmology: The Witness of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 90.

⁹ See especially Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 3-12; “Graeco-Roman and Ancient Jewish Cosmology,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 5-27.

¹⁰ *Iliad*, 18.607.

¹¹ Cf. Adams, “Graeco-Roman,” 18.

¹² See, e.g., Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (San Francisco: Harper & Row 1988), 84.

¹³ Adams, “Graeco-Roman,” 21.

in the New Testament. Cosmological language in the NT, as Sean M. McDonough and Jonathan T. Pennington put it, “is always for the purpose of making important theological, polemical and exhortational points. *Weltbild* and *Weltanschauung* are inextricably and substantially intertwined.”¹⁴

The point, of course, is that although writers write about cosmology for variety of reasons, not least philosophical and theological, it always matters *that* they write. It is to state the obvious that Paul does not compose Romans nor 1 Corinthians to relate his understanding of the material world, but it is equally true that Paul’s reflections about Adam are not a neatly packaged “theology of Adam.” Paul Meyer and others use the term “theologizing”¹⁵ to respect the fact that what we call “Paul’s theology” is sometimes *worked out in the course of writing*, and not simply a fixed pre-existing set of assumptions that we can extract from his occasional writings.

1.2 World Construction in the New Testament

Edward Adams’ 2000 monograph on Paul’s cosmological language provides an example of what this “theologizing” looks like.¹⁶ Adams convincingly argues that Paul “constructs” the cosmos in different ways according to the rhetorical aims of individual letters. As we will see below, while addressing the Corinthians, Paul is concerned to maintain the boundary between

¹⁴ “Introduction,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* (ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough; London: T&T Clark, 2008), 4. McDonough and Pennington use 1 Corinthians as an example: “even within the same letter to the Corinthians, Paul can stress the meaningful connection of the now-body and the new-body (1 Cor. 6.9-20), and then emphasize the radical differences between the two (1 Cor. 15.35-58)” (“Conclusion,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology* [ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough; London: T&T Clark, 2008], 191-92).

¹⁵ Cf. Paul W. Meyer, “Pauline Theology: A Proposal for a Pause in Its Pursuit,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 4: *Looking Back, Pressing On* (ed. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 140-60.

¹⁶ Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul’s Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

believers and outsiders, whereas the very different circumstances in Rome led Paul to promote solidarity with the wider society (cf. Rom 13:10). One way this is clearly seen is in the way Paul utilizes the word *κόσμος*. Adams shows that in 1 Corinthians, *κόσμος* represents a hostile world under God's judgment, rather than a well-ordered and praiseworthy world, and the social ordering suggested by the *κόσμος* has been "overthrown in the apocalyptic event of the cross."¹⁷ By contrast, in Romans, the word *κόσμος* is never used to draw a contrast between believers and the outside "world," and it is even used to speak of the future redeemed world (Rom 4:13).¹⁸ For each circumstance, Paul pulls in various cosmological formulations that serve and reinforce the exhortations appropriate to each.

1.3 Paul's Adamic Discourses as World-Construction

I believe Paul's deliberations about Adam fit in with this pattern. But is talk about Adam properly called "cosmology"? And how exactly does our contemporary interest in questions of human origins connect with this larger question of cosmology? As for the first question, among the features of Hellenistic cosmology that would have enjoyed widespread cultural dissemination was certainly that "human beings are related to the cosmos as microcosm to macrocosm."¹⁹ Paul's Jewish apocalyptic worldview would lead to important modifications of this, of course, but Adam as part of the larger creation was hardly a shocking notion. The introduction of sin into the world "through one man" (Rom 5:12) is all Paul says about the

¹⁷ "Paul challenges the world-view linked with *κόσμος* (= world/universe). The *κόσμος* is no longer the well-ordered, beautiful, praiseworthy and ever-enduring world, to which human beings are microcosmically linked. It is now the anti-godly, hostile world which is under God's judgement and doomed to destruction. Paul also subverts the ideology of *κόσμος* (= world/universe). The value-system and social ordering which *κόσμος* (= world/universe) had come to encode is seen to have been overthrown in the apocalyptic event of the cross. God's new creation community operates with completely different values and structures" (*Constructing*, 148).

¹⁸ See further Adams, *Constructing*, 190-92.

¹⁹ Adams, *Constructing*, 66; cited in White, "Paul's Cosmology," 97 n. 29.

origin of sin, but the disruption of the relationship between God, humanity, and the rest of creation is both universally “cosmological” and a major Pauline (and biblical) theme.²⁰ In addition, Paul was far from the only Jewish writer to make use of Adam to address a host of theological and practical concerns. For example, Sirach refers to Adam to stress the need humans have for wisdom (Sir 17:1-14; 33:10).²¹

As for my wider proposal that we find in Paul a resource for deliberations about human origins, I admit that I simply assume that Paul’s handling of cosmology shares more in common with theological interpreters from antiquity until today than it shares with the aims of most modern thinkers. But here it is also important to clarify what I mean when I speak of Paul as engaged in the task of “world-construction.” To this point, I have followed Edward Adams quite closely, who, following Peter Berger, makes sense of Paul’s use of *cosmos* in terms of social anthropology and group identity.²² Adams summarizes:

World-construction, then, was an *ongoing* enterprise in Pauline Christianity. Paul’s letter-writing ministry was part of this continuing process. He did not write to provide protective canopies for social worlds that had already been built. He did not write to maintain structures that were already in place. He wrote to communities in the course of construction, and he wrote to shape and direct the development.²³

To this I say *yes*, but if we limit our understanding and appropriation of “world-construction” in Paul to the category of *social* phenomenon (the process by which human beings produce society), we may miss an opportunity to learn from Paul as we address broader scientific and

²⁰ See further White, “Paul’s Cosmology,” 98-99.

²¹ After a helpful survey of additional texts, Enns writes, “Paul’s Adam is one example of this rich interpretive activity, where Adam was called upon to address various theological concerns” (*Evolution*, 102).

²² Cf. Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), 3-28.

²³ Adams, *Constructing*, 245.

theological questions.²⁴ I propose that we use the term to describe the process of *articulating cosmology along with and for the service of biblical, theological, and ethical discourse*.²⁵ In other words, we should resist the urge to “do science” and then, using that data, “do theology.” Rather, as Christian interpreters of past centuries teach us, the answers to questions about the nature of the universe are often far less important than the *ways we are shaped* as we pursue these questions.²⁶

In the readings that follow, we will see that Paul’s discourse about human origins is inextricably bound to (1) an apocalyptic understanding of the gospel that radically redefines human beings,²⁷ and (2) a clear ethical vision that flows out of that understanding of personhood and community.²⁸ In other words, we learn from Paul (and Clement) that the combination of cosmology and a theological imagination stimulates a specific behavior—community-building.

2. THE NARRATIVE OF ADAM AND JEW/GENTILE RELATIONS IN ROMANS

²⁴ White notes that White, “[e]ven today, cosmological language is seldom used merely for drawing up blueprints of what moderns call ‘the natural world’. More often, it serves metaphysical ends. Tenacious talk of the sun rising and setting, for instance, betrays the need, even in our post-Copernican world, to comprehend the universe as a meaningful context for human life. It is, however, quite useless as an indicator of modern Western conceptions of the physical universe” (“Paul’s Cosmology,” 91).

²⁵ Cf. Peter Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), 3-28.

²⁶ As Paul M. Blowers writes in the prologue to his masterful treatment of the doctrine of creation in early Christian theology, “some of the most formidable contributions [to a theology of creation] have been made by theologians who realized that, at the end of the day, the integrity of the Christian doctrine of creation and its function in the church do not hinge on a perfectly contoured cosmology, nor on an air-tight response to the metaphysicians and physicists, nor on the perfect engrafting of creation into an overall system of Christian theology. Determinative for the doctrine of creation is the church’s patient discernment of, and ongoing participation in, the drama of that Creator’s economy” (*Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], vii).

²⁷ On Paul’s apocalyptic perspective in Romans, see especially Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “Neither Height nor Depth: Discerning the Cosmology of Romans,” *SJT* 64 (2011): 265-78; and J. Ross Wagner, “‘Not from the Jews Only, But Also from the Gentiles’: Mercy to the Nations in Romans 9-11,” in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9-11* (ed. Florian J. Wilk, Ross Wagner, and Frank Schleritt; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 417-31.

²⁸ It is beyond the scope of this essay, but the texts we will consider below suggest that theologically-oriented cosmological reflections point in the direction of seeing “world-construction” as not only about *social* phenomena, but about the deep connections between human life and the non-human creation.

Given this rather focused set of interests in this paper, the following is less about engaging in a close reading Romans 5:12-21 than about situating Paul's "world-construction" within the wider aims and occasion of the letter. With the vast majority of contemporary interpreters, I am convinced that far from being a compendium of Christian doctrine, Romans reflects Paul's concerns to unite a church of deeply divided Jewish and Gentile believers.²⁹ It is often noted in this respect that the opening chapters of the letter stress the equal footing that all have before the wrath of God.³⁰ On this reading, talk of "Adam" has a universalizing effect. But given that Jews first and foremost understood the Genesis narrative to be *Israel's* story, it is difficult to support the thesis that in Romans Adam is an "everyman" in an Enlightenment, universalizing sense. I argue, rather, that Paul mentions Adam in Romans not only to stress equality under the grace of God, but to serve Paul's practical efforts to address the tensions that existed in the church in Rome.³¹ This is seen more clearly if we zoom out of our myopic readings of Romans 5 and ask briefly about the way Paul makes use of the "narrative of Adam" in the letter as a whole.

For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
(Rom 3:22-23).³²

In Romans 3, Paul alludes to Adam's fall to imply that "each of us has become our own

²⁹ See, e.g., Johan Christiaan Beker (*Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980], 69-74) and the survey by Carl N. Toney (*Paul's Inclusive Ethic: Resolving Community Conflicts and Promoting Mission in Romans 14-15* [WUNT 252; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 1-39). Robert Jewett summarizes the historical and textual data: "[I]t is clear that Christianity in Rome began with Jewish converts and that problematic relations between a Gentile majority and Jewish minority are in view throughout the entire letter" (*Romans: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 71). Formulas involving Jew and Gentile are found in 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:9, 29-30; 9:24; and 10:12.

³⁰ E.g., Enns writes, "Paul's Adam as first human, who introduced universal sin and death, supports his contention that Jew and gentile are on the same footing and in need of the same Savior" (*Evolution*, 134).

³¹ As Wagner writes of the response evoked from Paul about God's plan of salvation for Israel, "This same attitude of humility, this posture of grateful dependence on God, is to characterize relationships between Jew and Gentile within the community as well (Rom 12:3, 16; cf. 14:1-15:6)" ("Mercy," 431).

³² All translations adapted from NRSV, except where the Greek is indicated the translations are mine.

Adam” (2 *Apoc. Bar.* 54:19), as the writer of the Apocolypse of Baruch puts it.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man’s trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 5:12-21).

At the beginning of ch. 5, Paul twice stresses the language of “peace” and “reconciliation” (5:1, 11) before presenting Adam and Christ as figures whose actions have consequences for all.³³ Obviously much more could be said here, but for the sake of time I will assume some familiarity with the basic lines of Paul’s argument that Sin’s dominion (that is, Sin with a capital S) is supplanted and undone by Christ, whose grace abounds “all the more” (5:20).

What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure (Rom 7:7-13).

Romans 7 is also widely viewed to participate in the “narrative of Adam” in some way or

³³ Adams notes that 5:12-21 “could be said to provide the ‘programmatic text’ for the whole letter” (“Paul’s Story of God and Creation: The Story of How God Fulfills His Purposes in Creation,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* [ed. Bruce W. Longenecker; Louisville: WJK, 2002], 27).

another. Without opening the can of worms about Paul's "I," we can at least point out that the passage makes allusions to Genesis 1-2, and that the ambiguities involved (Paul? Israel? etc.) may in fact be deliberate, and participate in Paul's rhetorical fusion of the story of Adam and the story of Israel.³⁴

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 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. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now (Rom 8:19-22).

Paul then alludes to Gen 3:17-19 in Rom 8:19-22, and actually widens the scope of the cursing of the ground to the cursing of the entire universe. All creation will benefit from the "glory" that "Adam," or here "God's children," will demonstrate as they are reestablished in their vocation to exercise faithful stewardship of the earth.³⁵

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified (Rom 8:28-30).

Then in 8:28-30 Paul specifies that the "image" of God from Gen 1:26-27 is fully realized in Christ the "firstborn."

From the opening chapters all the way through ch. 8, then, the story of Adam represents the "sin story" of humanity, "over against which God's action in the Christ-event

³⁴ See further N. T. Wright (*The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 197-98) and A. J. M. Wedderburn ("Adam in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *Studia Biblica 1978* [JSNTSup 3; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980], 413-30).

³⁵ Much more might be said about the relationship between "world-construction" and the connections between humans and the rest of creation. Adams speaks for most scholars in thinking that *κτίσις* in Romans 8 refers to the nonhuman creation ("Paul's Story," 28), but Gaventa has recently argued that *κτίσις* in this context is "an all-encompassing term, one which refers to everything God has created, including humanity" ("Neither Height," 276).

has counterpoised a (much more powerful) ‘grace story.’”³⁶ What is noteworthy here is that Paul does much more than simply comment on Genesis 1-3—he reshapes and amplifies this story to advance his concerns in the letter.³⁷ Stories, of course, contribute mightily to community identity. As Adams notes:

The narrative creates for its addressees a sense of community belonging, but the community to which they belong (the church) is itself seen to ‘belong’ to a larger world, a world to which God remains committed and in which God is providentially involved, a world that, though presently fallen, is still God’s creation, manifesting a cosmic, social, and moral order, a world that God will bring to its originally intended glory.³⁸

That this narrative is aimed at mending the tensions in Rome becomes clearest in the later chapters of the letter, where Paul famously addresses the “strong” and “weak” believers.³⁹

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.... Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.... The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding (Rom 14:1-18).

Here Paul draws on the grand vision of hope that has emerged in the narrative of Adam that was set out in the earlier chapters to combat the community’s inward focus, which has led to bickering over differences.

3. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND 1 CORINTHIANS 15

In 1 Corinthians, Paul also appeals to Adam, and again, the tendency has been for us to focus on the isolated passages in ch. 15 instead of on the way these reflections fit within the letter as a whole. It is well-known that the church in Corinth struggled mightily with idolatry and

³⁶ Brendan Byrne, “An Ecological Reading of Rom. 8.19-22: Possibilities and Hesitations,” in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives* (ed. David G. Horrell; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 91. Byrne wants to show that even though it is Christ that saves, in this overlap of ages it is the *bodily life of humans*, empowered by the Spirit, that is a part of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17) that is being brought into being.

³⁷ See further Adams, “Paul’s Story,” 33.

³⁸ “Paul’s Story,” 39.

³⁹ See further Toney, *Paul’s Inclusive Ethic*, 39-46.

ungodliness of all kinds, but perhaps the most central problem Paul combats is that of rivalries between believers. One way to trace this through the letter is to give attention to the way Paul shapes the language of “zeal” or “jealousy,” ζήλος, throughout the letter. The language of ζήλος appropriately recalls the passionate reaction of God against idolatry, but Paul cleverly shapes the term to address community building as well. Beginning in ch. 3, Paul addresses the quarreling and disputes that persist among the Corinthians:

ὅπου γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζήλος καὶ ἔρις, οὐχὶ σαρκικοί ἐστε καὶ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε;
For in so far as there is ζήλος and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and living according to human inclinations? (1 Cor 3:3)

In these early chapters, Paul is dealing with the claims and interests of the self, and the term ζήλος participates in Paul’s indictment of the Corinthians’ behavior.

Importantly, then, the famous passage about ἀγάπη in ch. 13 is “bookended” by references to having ζήλος for πνευματικά/χαρίσματα, and in between lies a seemingly contradictory warning:

12:31: ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα καὶ ἔτι καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι.
Have ζήλος for the greater gifts, and I show you a still more excellent way.

13:4: ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται.
Love is patient, love is kind, it does not have ζήλος, it does not boast, it does not show arrogance.

14:1: διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε.
Pursue love, have ζήλος for the spiritual things, and especially that you might prophesy.

Twice more in chapter 14, Paul uses the language of ζήλος:

14:12: οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ἐπεὶ ζηλωταί ἐστε πνευμάτων, πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ζητεῖτε ἵνα περισσεύητε.

Thus also you, since you are ζηλωταί for the spirits, strive to excel in them for building up the church.

14:39: Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεύειν.

So, my brothers, have ζῆλος for speaking prophecy.

It is often noticed that a *change* happens in the way Paul speaks to the Corinthians after ch. 13, and it is demonstrable that the language of ζῆλος is one of the rhetorical tools Paul uses to enact this transformation.⁴⁰ If we take into account the pattern of occurrences of the language of ζῆλος (especially the “bookending” of the discourse on love), we see that Paul uses these occurrences as sign-posts to illustrate properly-directed ζῆλος. To have ζῆλος for the “greater” gifts is to pursue ἀγάπη and the edification of the community, rather than to cause rivalry and strife (ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις in 1 Cor 3:3; cf. 13:4; 2 Cor 12:20).

So far, so good—1 Corinthians is about building up the community. But isn’t there an abrupt change of topic in chapter 15, where Paul’s focus turns to resurrection? At least two observations strongly caution us against isolating ch. 15 from the rest of the letter. First, if we back up just a bit to ch. 6, we notice that Paul has already spoken of resurrection as the major motive for caring for our bodies:

I say this to your shame [πρὸς ἐντροπήν].... But you yourselves wrong and defraud.... And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! (1 Cor 6:5-15).

Second, the two sections where Paul supports his point about the resurrection of the dead with reference to Adam and Christ as representatives (15:21-22 and 15:45-49) both culminate in a call to address right behavior in the community (15:33-34 and 15:58).

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ (1 Cor 15:20-23).

⁴⁰ José Enrique Aguilar Chiu, after detailed study of the structure of chs. 12-14, attributes the change in terminology from *χαρίσματα* (12:31) to *πνευματικά* (14:1) to its location “precisely after the treatment of ἀγάπη in chap. 13” (*1 Cor 12-14: Literary Structure and Theology* [Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2007], 279).

Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame [πρὸς ἐντροπήν] (1 Cor 15:33-34).

Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 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 of the man of heaven (1 Cor 15:45-49).

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58).

As Gordon D. Fee says of 15:33, “it is not difficult to see in these words a direct connection between much of the behavior being corrected by this letter and this denial [of the resurrection].”⁴¹

The upshot is that 1 Corinthians 15 is not some tangent only meant to address the Corinthians’ mistaken views about the resurrection. Rather, it participates in the community-building concerns of the entire letter by emphasizing the corporate identity of the people in Christ, and by keeping together the theological convictions about Christ’s resurrection with the ethical corollaries that follow naturally from Paul’s apocalyptic understanding of the gospel.

4. THE ORIGIN OF DEATH AND RIGHTLY-DIRECTED ΖΗΛΟΣ IN *1 CLEMENT*

Finally, then, we consider one of the earliest interactions with 1 Corinthians and Romans, a letter known as *1 Clement*. Sent by “the church in Rome” to the church in Corinth⁴² sometime in the last two decades of the first century C.E.,⁴³ the letter reveals a situation in Corinth not

⁴¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 773.

⁴² Ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ παροικούσα Ῥώμην τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ παροικούσῃ Κόρινθον; prescript.

⁴³ See H. E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief: Übersetzt und erklärt* (KAV 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 75-78; A. Lindemann, *Die Clemensbriefe* (HNT 17; Die Apostolischen Väter I; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 11-20.

far removed from that addressed by Paul a generation earlier. Just as Paul writes of “jealousy and quarreling” among the Corinthians (1 Cor 3:3), Clement writes because of “jealousy and envy, strife and sedition” leading to a church that is “stirred up: those without honor against the honored, those of no repute against the highly reputed, the foolish against the wise, the young against the old” (3.2-3).⁴⁴ The aim of the letter is made explicit in its conclusion: “For you will give us great joy and gladness if you obey what we have written through the Holy Spirit and root out the unlawful anger of your jealousy, in accordance with the appeal for peace and harmony that we have made in this letter” (63.2).

These similarities suggest the likelihood of continuity between the communities in Rome and Corinth that Clement addresses and those to which Paul first wrote, and indeed there is much evidence to suggest that Clement is indeed directly interacting with Paul’s letters. Telling the Corinthians to “take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle,” Clement directly cites 1 Cor 1:10 (1 Clem. 47.1-3). The vice list in 1 Clem. 35.5-6 almost certainly relies on Rom 1:29-32, and Paul’s signature language of “justification by faith” from Rom 5:21-6:2 is mirrored and developed in 1 Clem. 32.4-33.

Picking up on Clement’s reading of Romans 5-6 in 1 Clem. 32-33, in a recent article David Downs compares the *cosmological* reflections at work in each author.⁴⁵ His thesis is that

...although the author of *1 Clement* 32-33 adopts from Romans the language of justification by faith and the conviction that those who are justified must perform good works, the ethical exhortation in *1 Clement* 33 is rooted in a cosmology that differs significantly from that found in Romans. Whereas Paul in Romans 5-8 depicts human and non-human creation as existing in bondage to decay and groaning under

⁴⁴ Clement opens his letter with attention to a “detestable and unholy schism, so alien and strange to those chosen by God” (1.1). Unless otherwise noted, translations of *1 Clement* are adapted from M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

⁴⁵ David J. Downs, “Justification, Good Works, and Creation in Clement of Rome’s Appropriation of Romans 5-6,” *NTS* 59, no. 3 (2013): 415-32.

subjugation to hostile powers (Rom 8.18-23), the author of *1 Clement* images all creation living in harmony and peace in obedience to God (esp. *1 Clem.* 20), an idyllic representation that serves Clement's goal of promoting concord among his divisive Corinthian audience. Yet while the material presentation of the *κόσμος* in *1 Clement* may differ substantially from Paul's in Romans, the author of *1 Clement* follows Paul rhetorically in using cosmology as an instrument of community critique and reorientation.⁴⁶

Downs makes a compelling case that although he is faithful to Genesis and to the portrait of God as faithful creator that permeates all of Scripture, Clement offers a distinctly different account of the cosmos than does Paul. Unless we are prepared to cast aside the pastoral exhortations by one author or the other, the liberties taken by both illustrate that for Paul and Clement, "world-construction" is *never a neutral task, separate from the larger concerns of the community of faith*. Rather, Christians articulate their understanding of the world because "All these things the great Creator and Master of the universe ordered to exist in peace and harmony, thus doing good to all things, but especially abundantly to us who have taken refuge in his compassionate mercies through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the majesty for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Clem. 20.11-12). World-construction is a deeply theological task.

It is clear, then, that although Clement's cosmology differs from Paul, the framework within and the purpose for which each writes is the same: building up the community.⁴⁷ Much in the same way, I suggest, *1 Clement* is a resource for how the church today might adopt and recontextualize Paul's deliberations about Adam for our own time.

Clement says little about Adam (cf. 1 Clem. 6.3, 29.2, 50.3), but as we have seen,

⁴⁶ Downs, "Justification," 416.

⁴⁷ See especially 1 Clem. 19.2-3: "Seeing, then, that we have a share in many great and glorious deeds, let us hasten on to the goal of peace, which has been handed down to us from the beginning; let us fix our eyes upon the Father and Maker of the whole world and hold fast to his magnificent and excellent gifts and benefits of peace. Let us observe him with our mind, and let us look with the eyes of the soul on his patient will. Let us note how free from anger he is toward all his creation."

statements about human origins are a subset within a larger discourse about the genesis, nature, and *purpose* of the physical universe (“cosmology”). The references to the formation of humankind in God’s image in 1 Clem. 33.4-6 show the deep connections between Clement’s use of Adam and his larger project of “world-construction”:

What then shall we do, brothers? Shall we idly abstain from doing good, and forsake love? May the Master never allow this to happen, at least to us; but let us hasten with earnestness and zeal to accomplish every good work. For the Creator and Master of the universe himself rejoices in his works. For by his infinitely great might he established the heavens, and in his incomprehensible wisdom he set them in order. Likewise he separated the earth from the water surrounding it, and set it firmly upon the sure foundation of his own will; and the living creatures that walk upon it he called into existence by his decree. Having already created the sea and the living creatures in it, he fixed its boundaries by his own power. *Above all, as the most excellent and by far the greatest work of his intelligence, with his holy and faultless hands he formed humankind as a representation of his own image.* For thus spoke God: “Let us make humankind in our image and likeness. And God created humankind; male and female he created them.” So, having finished all these things, he praised them and blessed them and said, “Increase and multiply.” We have seen that all the righteous have been adorned with good works. Indeed, the Lord himself, having adorned himself with good works, rejoiced. So, since we have this pattern, let us unhesitatingly conform ourselves to his will; let us with all our strength do the work of righteousness (1 Clem. 33.1-8).

But we can press even further. The passage most relevant to our present concerns is 1 Clem. 3.4, where the author initiates an exploration of “jealousy” (ζήλος) as the source of discord in the world: “[A]ll follow the lusts of their evil heart, inasmuch as they have assumed that attitude of unrighteous and ungodly jealousy through which, in fact, death entered into the world [δι’ οὗ καὶ θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον].” Although the phrase is a direct citation from Wis 2.24 (φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον),⁴⁸ Clement’s usage finds a parallel in Rom 5:12: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world [εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν] through one man, and death [θάνατος] came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned.” As we saw above, with these words Paul begins his most developed discourse

⁴⁸ “Because God created human beings for incorruption and made them the image of his own nature, but through the envy of the devil death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it” (Wis 2:23-24 NETS). Downs, making his point that for Clement Death is not a personified anti-God power as in Romans, minimizes the link with Romans 5: “Although this sentiment [1 Clem. 3.4] is loosely paralleled in Rom 5.12... it is likely that the author of *1 Clement* has borrowed the phrase from Wisdom and associated ζήλος with the divisive activity of the opponents in Corinth” (“Justification,” 430).

on Adam as a figure whose moral actions have had consequences for all, allowing the cosmic powers (Sin and Death) to enter God's creation and reign over it (cf. Rom 5:17, 21).

Clement, on the other hand, is much more interested in developing *jealousy* (ζήλος) rather than Adam as the instrument of Death's entrance into the world, and yet Clement, too, roots jealousy in the opening chapters of Genesis. In fact, the approaches of Paul and Clement are much closer together than has been appreciated by interpreters. The opening chapters of *1 Clement*, upon close reading, offer a figural reading of the biblical story, where Clement's audience in Corinth is projected on top of the narrative pattern from Genesis on into the early church, so that the story of the Corinthian church acquires the resonances of the story of Israel and the apostles. The middle term between these two stories is "jealousy" (ζήλος), which links the behavior of the Corinthian believers with the story of God's purposes for the world in the "song of Moses" in Deuteronomy 32.

After unqualified commendation of the Corinthians as living virtuous, honorable, and order-filled lives in chs. 1-2, Clement cites Deut 32:15 to indicate the origin of disorder in the world:

All glory and growth were given to you, and then that which is written was fulfilled: "My beloved ate and drank and was enlarged and grew fat and kicked." From this came jealousy and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and anarchy, war and captivity. So people were stirred up: those without honor against the honored, those of no repute against the highly reputed, the foolish against the wise, the young against the old (1 Clem 3.1-3).

And Jacob ate and was filled, and the beloved one kicked. He grew fat; he became heavy, he became broad. And he abandoned God who made him, and he departed from God his savior. They provoked [LXX *παρώξυναν*; MT *קִרְוּ*] me with foreign things, by their abominations they embittered me.... They made me jealous [LXX *παρεζήλωσάν*] with what is no god, provoked me with their idols (Deut 32:15-16, 21).

Just as in Deuteronomy 32, where verse 15 marks a shift from the celebration of Yhwh's "mighty acts" to an indictment of the people of Israel for their disloyalty, so the quotation of

Deut 32:15 in 1 Clem. 3.1-2 marks the shift from humans living in peace and harmony with God's ordered creation to a state in which "righteousness and peace stand at a distance" and all people "have assumed that attitude of unrighteous and ungodly jealousy through which, in fact, death entered into the world" (3.4). For Clement, then, what we might call the "fall" is identified with the disobedience and idolatry of Israel (Jacob/Jeshurun; Deut 32:15) so vividly portrayed in in Deuteronomy 32.

Since for Clement the tragic ripple effects of this disobedience is most visibly expressed throughout human history (including first century Corinth) as "ungodly ζῆλος," it is useful to briefly compare Clement's usage of ζῆλος with Paul's use in Romans and especially in 1 Corinthians.⁴⁹ Interpreters regularly view the vice ζῆλος (often with the collocate ἔρις; cf. *1 Clem.* 3.2; 5.5; 6.4; 9.1) as the organizing motif of chs. 4-12.⁵⁰ In ch. 4 Clement presents seven instances of the negative effects of ζῆλος from OT history (4.7-13), followed by seven further statements involving the apostles in chs. 5-6 (5.2-6.4).⁵¹ Therefore Clement's use of the term ζῆλος (in chs. 4-6 and beyond; cf. 9.1; 14.1; 39.7; 43.2; 45.5; 63.2) might be read as part of the rhetoric against negative vices, but perhaps more so as a description of those who

⁴⁹ There are 23 occurrences of the ζῆλ- word group in *1 Clement*.

⁵⁰ Cf. Adolf W. Ziegler, *Neue Studien zum ersten Klemensbrief* (Munich: Manz, 1958), 77. Timothy Gaden writes, "The chief sin Clement believes he has to combat is that of jealousy or rivalry... and the false claims to knowledge that this engenders" ("Chosen as a Peculiar People": Christian Traditions and Hellenistic Philosophy in 1 Clement," *Colloquium* 34 [2002]: 43). Writing on Plutarch, Hubert Martin Jr. writes, "In ECL, [ζῆλος and ἔρις] are rather common vices.... They are emphatically coordinated by 1 Clement at 3:2 and 4:7" ("Amatorius [Moralia 748E-771E]," in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* [ed. Hans Dieter Betz; Leiden: Brill, 1978], 529); and Jackson P. Hershbell notes that catalogues of vices are "developed with homiletical breadth according to ethical catch-words, e.g., the warning against vices and the exhortation to exercise virtues in 1 Clem is organized about terms such as ζῆλος (chs. 3-6)" ("De virtute morali [Moralia 440D-452D]," in *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* [ed. Hans Dieter Betz; Leiden: Brill, 1978], 143).

⁵¹ See further the summary in Grant and Graham, *First and Second*, 22-3.

oppose God’s righteous ones: Cain against Abel (4.6-7),⁵² Esau against Jacob (4.8), the brothers against Joseph (4.9), the people against Moses (4.10) and Aaron and Miriam (4.11), Dathan and Abiram against Moses (4.12), Saul against David (4.13), the people against Peter (5.4), the people against Paul (5.5-7), and the persecutors against Christian women (6.2).

It is somewhat shocking, then, that Clement implores his readers to be “zealots” in 45.1: Φιλόνεικοί ἐστε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ ζηλωταὶ περὶ τῶν ἀνηκόντων εἰς σωτηρίαν. The Loeb edition translates, “You should strive hard, brothers, and be zealous in matters that pertain to salvation.”⁵³ However, recognizing that *ζηλωτής* is a *noun* and not an adjective (the adjective form is *ζηλωτός*),⁵⁴ the sentence in 45.1 is better translated, “Be desirous, brothers, and *zealots* for the things that relate to salvation.” What is clear is that in 45.1 there is a *positive* assessment of one who has *ζῆλος*, which stands in direct contrast with the presentation of “zealots” in Clement’s earlier chapters.

⁵² Clement’s focus on Cain in ch. 4 is also intriguing given that Cain is sometimes etymologically analyzed as *καῖν*; cf. Pseudo-Clementine, *Hom.* 3.42.7.

⁵³ Ehrman, LCL; cf. Holmes: “Be competitive and zealous, brothers, but about the things that relate to salvation.” The imperative is the preferred reading of J. B. Lightfoot (“Be ye contentious, brethren, and jealous...”; *The Apostolic Fathers Part 1: S. Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, Pt. 1, Vol. 2* [London: Macmillan, 1890], 294), Grant and Graham (“Be emulous, brethren, and in eager rivalry...”; *First and Second*, 74), and Michael W. Holmes (“Be competitive and zealous, brothers, but about the things that relate to salvation”; *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* [3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 105). Ehrman includes the alternative translation of *ἐστε* as an indicative (“*You are contentious, brothers, and envious*” [LCL]), and Holmes includes the footnote “Or *You are competitive*” (*Apostolic*, 105), but Lightfoot rightly points out that the indicative should be ruled out without an emendation (*Apostolic*, 137; see further below).

⁵⁴ Cf. BDAG, 427; LSJ, 755. Most translators incorrectly translate this noun as an adjective in Gal 1:14 (e.g., NRSV, NIV, CEB, KJV, Lutherbibel), probably due to the use of *ζηλωτής* to translate the adjective form of *καῖν* in Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Nah 1:2 (better “God the zealot,” or “God the jealous one”). Ortlund uses “zealous” to avoid the impression that Paul identifies himself with the Zealotic party of 66-70 C.E. (*Zeal Without Knowledge*, 140).

The textual tradition suggests that interpreters have sometimes struggled to accept this positive assessment,⁵⁵ but nevertheless it is clear that Clement does indeed speak positively of zeal. Upon closer inspection, Clement’s plea for his readers to be “zealots” (ζηλωταί) is perhaps not as abrupt as some readers have surmised. Just a few lines later, Clement explicitly *qualifies* ζῆλος as “vile and unrighteous”:

ἐδιώχθησαν δίκαιοι, ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ ἀνόμων· ἐφυλακίσθησαν, ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ ἀνοσίων· ἐλιθάσθησαν ὑπὸ παρανόμων· ἀπεκτάνθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν μιαρὸν καὶ ἄδικον ζῆλον ἀνειληφότων.
 The righteous were persecuted, but by the lawless; they were imprisoned, but by the unholy; they were stoned by transgressors; they were killed by those who had undertaken a vile and unrighteous ζῆλος (*1 Clem.* 45.4).

In fact, many of the other 22 occurrences in *1 Clement* have a similar qualification (ζῆλον ἄδικον καὶ ἀσεβῆ [3.4]; ζῆλον ἄδικον [5.4]; τὸ εἰς θάνατον ἄγον ζῆλος [9.1]; μυσεροῦ ζήλους [14.1]; τὴν ἀθέμιτον τοῦ ζήλους ὑμῶν ὄργην [63.2]); in the other instances, the object and collocates (ἔρις, φθόνος, etc.) are what provide the evaluation.

So although the occurrence in 45.1 is unique, it is not accurate to suggest that for Clement ζῆλος is “a grudging, mean-spirited condition of mind.”⁵⁶ As we saw in our brief look at ζῆλος in 1 Corinthians above, it is not surprising that *it is the object of ζῆλος that determines*

⁵⁵ Editors who examined Codex Alexandrinus (5th century) before Lightfoot’s time supplied the negative μή (rather than τῶν) in the lacuna before the word ἀνηκόντων. This emendation would then suggest taking ἔστε as an *indicative*, yielding the translation, “You are contentious and are zealots, brothers, for the things that do *not* pertain to salvation.” The Syriac version (preserved only in a 12th-century manuscript) likewise takes ἔστε as an *indicative* and is forced to supply the negative in the latter part of the sentence. See further R. H. Kennet and R. L. Bensly, *The Epistles of S. Clement to the Corinthians in Syriac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899); cited in Lightfoot, *Apostolic*, 137. Nevertheless, scholars now widely agree on the reading τῶν ἀνηκόντων, particularly since this is the reading that appears in the well-respected Codex Hierosolymitanus (11th century); see also the similar phrase in *Barn.* 17.1: τῶν ἀνηκόντων εἰς σωτηρίαν. The imperative understanding of ἔστε also coheres with the series of imperatives that follow (e.g., 46.4; 47.1; 48.1; 49.1).

⁵⁶ “Envy,” *ABD* 2.529. Though his translation differs, Lightfoot posits a paraphrase in his commentary that captures the way the text has shaped the reader’s perceptions about ζῆλος: “Contend zealously, if you will, but let your zeal be directed to things pertaining to salvation” (*Apostolic*, 137); cf. Lightfoot’s additional summary of ch. 45: “Your zeal is misplaced, my brethren...” (*Apostolic*, 136).

its evaluation, and even more, that Clement uses the question of what rightly-directed ζῆλος looks like to further his rhetorical aims (much as Paul does with Adam).⁵⁷

5. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The concerns addressed in this paper are an opportunity for us to think deeply about the communal and collaborative aspect not only of our research on questions about evolution, the fall, and Christian faith, but also the way we carry ourselves within the Christian community. My own context, a small Christian college with growing diversity among faculty and students, has some unique challenges but in some ways represents the experience of most local Christian communities today. Reading Paul’s letters in this context invests our interpretation with heightened awareness of dynamics at work in the text.

Specifically, just as efforts to think through the biblical text and the ways it shapes us and our understanding of God’s purposes for creation can be a cause for suspicion and anger, so Paul’s cosmological reflections are embedded in a wider conversation about community-building in the church. This is not coincidental or a clever conflation of purposes—the way the Bible shapes our theological imagination is bound up with the way we carry ourselves in the Spirit-led community of Christ.

My hope is that this paper has done a bit more than simply affirm the obvious—that Christians should practice generosity (Gal 5:22), should love our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27), should look not to our own interests, but to the interests of others (Phil 2:4), etc.—but

⁵⁷ In this sense it is not surprising that the other word coordinated by ἐστε in 45.1 must also be evaluated by its object. Although φιλόνηκος has a negative connotation in 1 Cor 11:16 (εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν; cf. Philo, *Legat.* 198 et al.), the concept can also be viewed favorably (cf. BDAG, 1058). Tellingly, Josephus uses the word positively and negatively in close proximity (*Ant.* 15.156: φιλόνηκος ὦν ἐκδικῆσαι τὰς παρανομίας [“being desirous to revenge the wrongdoing”]; *Ant.* 15.166: Ὑρκανὸς ἐπιεικέα τρόπου...φιλόνηκος δ’ ἦν Ἀλεξάνδρα [“Hyrcanus was of a mild temper, but Alexandra was contentious”]).

in our efforts to read Paul as we engage questions of science and theology I certainly don't want to do *less* than that.

We have seen that Clement diverges from Paul's specific cosmology, while at the same time offering a faithful reading of Paul that addresses his own context. With the obvious caveat that Paul's letters are a part of God's inspired word to us, and that those who have gone before us in the faith are to be approached with both caution and deep respect, I propose that at this moment in history, we do the same. Let us not be shy about setting our theological concerns on the canvas of the cosmos, a cosmos constructed with both full-throttled engagement with the knowledge gained through genetics and biology (among other disciplines) and a wholehearted *telos* of understanding God and our place. And as we embark on that task, let us follow Paul and Clement "in using cosmology as an instrument of community critique and reorientation."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Downs, "Justification," 432.