

**New Creation (from Gal 6:15 to 2 Cor 5:17) as the Cross-Shaped Life:  
Eschatology and Covenant in Pauline Thought**  
Scott Hafemann

QUOTATION ONLY BY PERMISSION

"Some of us might think that Biblical Theology is as dead as the dodo, or that if it still splutters on, then it should be. Others might think there is more to it than a myth, a piously confessional 'retreat', and that it might be salutary for helping to de-fragment the discipline of theology" (Mark Elliot, University of St Andrews).

It is easy to understand the mixed-responses to any project of biblical theology at the beginning of the new millennium, not to mention one that proposes the unity of a whole bible-biblical theology, as Paul and I do. Even strong proponents of biblical theologies that pursue thematic, inter-textual (OT in the OT or OT in the NT), or developmental approaches do not know exactly what to say about the work of trying to do a "whole bible theology" that seeks significant, conceptual unity at the level of the bible's own interpretation of the historical realities it reports.

James Mead, in his recent methodological treatment of the "issues, methods, and themes" of biblical theology, begins with the exciting announcement that "the field of biblical theology has entered a new century with a tremendous surge of interest and vitality," only to take the air out of his own balloon by observing after his survey of the discipline that in the last century there has been a "relative lack of scholarly works devoted to a biblical theology of the entire Christian Scriptures," though "many scholars continue to work from this perspective."<sup>1</sup> Lots of work, little results. Even Charles H. H. Scobie, who in 2003 published a massive compendium of biblical-theological data organized around the basic framework of inaugurated eschatology, must conclude that the development of "a broader framework or structure of some kind for understanding the canonical material as a whole," "some kind of overall structure for understanding the complex and diverse mass of biblical material" is "in fact the greatest single challenge facing biblical scholarship at the present time."<sup>2</sup>

Mead rightly attributes this dearth of results to what I would call the new, reigning dogma of diversity, which Mead details in a key statement by Ebeling (a Lutheran biblical theologian [he began with a major study on Paul's theology], committed by definition to a reigning, dialectical diversity encapsulated in the Law/Gospel contrast as an explanation of universal, human experience), as summarized by Childs (a Reformed biblical theologian committed by definition to embedding this Law/Gospel contrast in the flow of history understood covenantally as a contrast between conditional and unconditional covenants<sup>3</sup>). As Childs summarizes Ebeling,

'The theological unity of the Old and New Testaments has become extremely fragile and it seems now impossible to combine the testaments on the same level in order to produce a unified theology.'

Mead himself continues,

It remains to be seen what, if anything, might happen to change this fact of biblical studies. The rigorous treatment of and sensitivity to the historical contexts of each testament has resulted in Old and New Testament theology remaining distinct from each other.

Perhaps the pendulum of scholarship has swung too far away from the treatment of the whole Bible, or perhaps the burden of proof still lies with those who would bring the two testaments together in one theological analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Mead says this in spite of what many would consider Childs' own large scale attempt to bring the testaments together in his now (in)famous canonical approach to biblical theology. But Mead is right. In the end, the emphasis of Childs' work is indeed not on the unity of the bible, but on its diversity. Childs' entire project is set up as a comparison of the "discreet" witnesses of the Old and New Testaments, which only come together at the end of the process with a Christian reading of the canon, one which itself has as its hallmark a discreet diversity that leads to an experience of God that can be identified with the experience of God encountered through the OT.<sup>5</sup> It is the experience of God, not the biblical text, that creates the unity of the Bible. But as Paul has pointed out, much of the contemporary diversity-emphasizing biblical theologies derive from and reflect a less than unified view of God himself.

What is surprising is that the evangelical enterprise of biblical theology, which has a high, positive view of God and his Word, has also stressed only a dialectical unity of the bible that derives from a law-gospel, covenant of works/covenant of grace, dispensation of Israel/dispensation of the church dichotomy. In these models, the unity of the bible comes about only in so far as the one message or covenant or dispensation presupposes and drives one to the other by virtue of its contrasting way of relating to God. Dichotomy and dialectic are not the same, however, as the diversity and tension that Paul underscored on p. 6 of his paper as essential to a directional, unified, biblical plot.

So the barriers to a unified, whole bible-biblical theology are high. Overcoming it requires work on every aspect of biblical revelation. Here we can give only one example of such an approach by focusing on the biblical understanding of the new creation creatures of the new creation. In this regard, Paul has laid a strong foundation for the unity of the bible by proposing that the eschatology of the OT, proclaimed programmatically in Isaiah, is not a presupposition or mere preparation to the NT, but provides its very message, unpacked by the apostle Paul in Galatians and the Corinthian epistles.

Based on this foundation, I would like to examine a bit closer Paul's House's and Paul the apostle's understanding of the new creation creatures of the new creation. As Paul made clear about Paul, these new creation creatures come into existence through Christ, in fulfillment of the Torah, as anticipated by Isaiah 43, 52:13-53:12 and 65-66, thereby taking Isaiah's eschatological hope of the servant-hood of God's "servants" and the Servant to be a key to the unity of the Law-Gospel revelation (House, p. 13). In Paul's words, Isaiah "envisions Zion as an ultimate home for God's remnant, a multi-national ministering team of servants transformed into his changed people prepared for a new heavens and new earth (65:1-66:24)" (pp. 12-13). The one God, unified, multi-faceted, and free of fissures, speaks one message in his one word.

Beginning with the End: 2 Cor 5:17

Although its appearance at first seems somewhat abrupt, the motif of the "new creation" (καινή κτίσις) in 2 Cor 5:17 does not suddenly appear *ex nihilo*. Though the apostle Paul is the one who most likely introduced this motif from Judaism into Christian vocabulary,<sup>6</sup> Paul House has pointed out that Paul's programmatic statement in 2 Cor 5:17 is the second time he affirmed explicitly that those who belong to the

Messiah are now experiencing the apocalyptic reality of the Isaianic "new creation" in the midst of the old. The first was the equally programmatic declaration of Gal 6:15.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between these two statements is not immediately clear, however. Hence, when students of Paul compare the two, it is often only in general terms.<sup>8</sup>

My thesis is that the conceptual link between Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17 may be forged once 2 Cor 5:17 is recognized to be the final deposit of a threefold development in Paul's thinking from Galatians to 2 Corinthians.<sup>9</sup> Far from "new creation" *ex nihilo*, in 2 Cor 5:17 Paul is applying to a new context the implications of a previous series of eschatological contrasts between the old age and the new brought about by the coming of the Messiah. Together, these mutually interpretive contrasts form a conceptual bridge that spans the gaps between Galatia and Corinth.

#### Paul's Eschatological Contrasts

Gal 5:6a	οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία
Gal 6:15a	οὔτε περιτομή τί ἐστίν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία
1 Cor 7:19a	ἡ περιτομή οὐδέν ἐστίν καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδέν ἐστίν
Gal 5:6b	ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη
Gal 6:15b	ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις
1 Cor 7:19b	ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ
2 Cor 5:17	ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρήλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ

#### The Eschatological Contrasts

As the precursor to 2 Cor 5:17, the first reference to new creation in Gal 6:15 is actually the second of three structurally parallel contrasts, each of which pivots on a radical negation of the identity-determining significance of the distinction between Jew and non-Jew now that the Messiah has come and has come to be crucified (cf. Gal 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19). Paul House has pointed out how, for Isaiah, the future international gathering of God's new creation servants clearly includes Israelites (Isa 54:1-17; 55:3-5; 63:15-19) and Gentiles (Isa 2:1-4; 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 55:3-5; 56:1-8; 66:18-21), even counting Israel, Egypt, and Assyria as his people in Isa 19:16-25 (House, pp. 12, 15, 20, 23). But as S. Louis Martyn has emphasized,<sup>10</sup> the apocalyptic shock of this contrast in Gal 6:15 is often missed from our distance. For Paul, as *the* Pharisee among his peers (Gal 1:14; cf. Phil 3:5-6; 2 Cor 11:22), the distinction between Jew and Gentile, having been determined by divine election and demarcated in the Abrahamic-Sinai covenant, had been the most fundamental reality of life before God. Maintaining this distinction was worth dying for.<sup>11</sup> Its destruction, now determined by God himself through the crucifixion of the Messiah (Gal 6:14a), could only mean the divine destruction of the present κόσμος, for which the Jew/Gentile contrast had been constitutive. In Paul's words, the world's own crucifixion, and his

crucifixion to it in return (Gal 6:14b; cf. 2:19-20), signaled nothing less than the eschatological dawning of the new creation (Gal 6:15).

From Paul's perspective, then, what *does* "count" or matter now that the crucified Christ has brought about and rules over his people in the new age? In answer to this fundamental question, it is the positive elements of the three contrasts that in each context bear the weight of Paul's argument (see the chart).

Paul's statement concerning the "new creation" of Gal 6:15 is sandwiched between the mutually interpretive parallels of Gal 5:6 on the one hand and 1 Cor 7:19 on the other. For Paul, the "new creation" can thus be characterized by or equated with "faith working out with regard to itself through love" (Gal 5:6),<sup>12</sup> which in turn can be framed in terms of "keeping the commandments of God" (1 Cor 7:19).<sup>13</sup>

### Galatians 5:6: Faith Working Out with Regard to Itself through Love

In its context, the contrast in Gal 5:6 grounds (cf. γάρ in 5:6a) why believers, by means of the power of the Spirit (πνεύματι), wait ἐκ πίστεως for the hope of righteousness (Gal 5:5), that is, why it is that the new eschatological reality of faith and the Spirit, and not the previous epoch of the Law, gives believers firm confidence (ἐλπίς) in their final salvation.<sup>14</sup> Read in this way, the absolute reference in 5:5 to πίστις as the counterpart to νόμος is a metonymy for the reality of the new creation stated in 5:6. Just as Christ came to redeem his people after the period of the Torah (Gal 3:17, 24; 4:4), so too πίστις, personified in its role as a metonymy for the new age, also came at the eschatological turning point in history (Gal 3:23, 25). Given this eschatological reality, summarized in Gal 5:5, those who turn back *from* it by turning back *to* the previous era of the Torah have no hope of final righteousness (Gal 5:4).

The eschatological contrast of Galatians 5:6 thus grounds 5:5 (note the γάρ of 5:6). "For," ἐν Χριστῷ,<sup>15</sup> neither the old covenant identity of circumcision, nor the old covenant identity of being uncircumcised, accomplish anything (τι ἰσχύει) regarding the hope of being found righteous on the day of judgment now that Gentiles, *qua* Gentiles, are being incorporated into the people of God (cf. the case of Titus in Gal 2:3). Rather, Paul insists that the righteousness of the believer has always been established only in relationship to "faith working out with regard to itself through love" (Gal 5:6b; cf. both Abraham and Isaac as of one piece with those of "faith": Gal 3:6-9, 14, 29; 4:28).<sup>16</sup> According to Gal 5:14, it is this love, as the inextricable, organic expression of faith, that fulfills the "entire Law" (ὁ πᾶς νόμος) as encapsulated in Lev 19:18. For this "hearing of faith" (Gal 3:2), manifest in the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-24) and in the commitment to bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2a), fulfills the Law as it now functions under the Messiah's rule, i.e., as the ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 6:2b). For Paul, the apocalyptic realities brought about in and through Christ do not replace, but rather intersect the Torah-covenant and cultic concepts of circumcision and uncircumcision. The "Law of Christ" is not a new, Pauline configuration that down-sizes the Torah into the abstract principle of love; it is short-hand for the way in which the Torah is now being fulfilled by those who, like the Torah itself, now belong to the new age of "faith" that was preached in advance to and modeled by Abraham (Gal 3:6-9).<sup>17</sup> Indeed, it is not too much to say that love is the heart of the servant-hood proclaimed by Isaiah that marks out both the Servant, Yahweh and now Christ, and his servants.

Galatians 6:15: The New Creation ( $\alpha$ )

Paul's move from the contrast of Gal 5:6 to that of 6:15 underscores his apocalyptic argument regarding covenant realities by making it explicit.<sup>18</sup> Now that the Christ has come and has been crucified (Gal 6:14), what "is something" in this new epoch is not the Jew/Gentile distinction established by the Abrahamic-Sinai covenant, but the reality of the new creation. For this reason (cf. the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  of 6:15), Paul boasts only in the cross of the sovereign Lord, Jesus the Messiah, which has also crucified the  $\kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$  (6:14).<sup>19</sup> Again, Paul's contrast between the new, eschatological reality of the new age and the past life of this age under the Abraham-Sinai covenant functions to ground his anthropological "application." As Thrall points out, the new creation in Gal 6:15 does not have a "strictly cosmic sense," since in 6:14 "it is in (Paul's) own personal case ( $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\iota$ ) that the world has been destroyed, and it is his own previous relationship to the cosmos ( $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$ ) that has ceased to exist."<sup>20</sup> The cross is Paul's boast because it is the age-transforming death of Christ, linked as it is to the power of Spirit of Christ in the lives of believers, that brings about the obedience to the Law made possible by the new creation (cf. the  $\delta\iota'\ \omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\iota\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\acute{\rho}\omega\tau\alpha\iota$  of Gal 6:14 with Gal 2:20 and 3:2, 5 and 4:4-6). For Paul, the new creation can thus be identified with the new life that belongs to it.

New creation in Paul's perspective is not an abstraction, but an ontological reality expressed in Spirit-created obedience as the inaugurated, eschatological fulfillment of the Torah, created anew by the cross of the Messiah. The reality of this new creation in the midst of this evil age is proleptic of the age to come, and, for this reason, provides the believer's ground of hope for future righteousness (Gal 5:5) and for the covenant blessing of God's "peace" and "mercy" (6:16), rather than experiencing the covenant curse threatened in 1:8 with which Galatians begins. The covenant realities of curse and blessing thus book-end Paul's letter (so Betz), framing Paul's eschatological arguments. According to Gal 6:16, those who keep to *this* rule of cross-inaugurated, new creation love as the fulfillment of Torah are no longer fundamentally Jew or Gentile, but members of the eschatological people of God made up of faithful Jews *and* Gentiles, the new "third race," "the Israel of God" (6:16).<sup>21</sup>

## 1 Corinthians 7:19: Keeping the Commandments of God

Despite their Spirit-filled lives, in 1 Cor 7:17-24 Paul admonishes the Corinthians not to seek to alter their current circumstance regarding marriage or social status, or even their covenant identities as Jew or Gentile (7:17-18, 20-24). Inasmuch as God called them ( $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ ) in the midst of these divinely "assigned" circumstances (7:15, 17, 24) such this-age-distinctives, though formerly all-important for determining one's identity, are now "nothing" ( $\omicron\upsilon\delta\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ , 7:19a).<sup>22</sup> Rather, what is "everything" when it comes to one's identity and role in the church is "keeping the commandments of God" (7:19b).

Here too Paul does not have in view a new, different set of "Christian" commandments that somehow supersede, relativize, divide, or down-size the Torah into essential and non-essential aspects. The phrase "to keep the commandments of God" was equivalent to keeping the Torah (Ezra 9:4; Sir 32:23; Matt 19:17; Rev 12:17; 14:12; Wis 6:18),<sup>23</sup> and even among the recent converts from Gentile backgrounds in Corinth, Paul often bases his ethics on the Mosaic Law *per se*.<sup>24</sup> As the parallel with Gal 5:6 in view of Gal 6:15 indicates, in 1 Cor 7 Paul is once again giving an eschatological *interpretation* of God's commands *themselves*, including the

Jew/Gentile divide, in terms of their concrete, "new covenant" application in regard to love.<sup>25</sup> From Paul's eschatological perspective, keeping the commands of God refers to the kind of love that meets the needs of one's spouse (1 Cor 7:5), maintains marriage and divorce for the sake of Christian witness and peace (7:10-16), and either forgoes or engages in marriage in a way that serves the Lord in view of the passing away of "the form of this world" (7:25-35 in view of 7:31b: παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου).<sup>26</sup> As Garland points out, "Paul does not argue, 'The end might come tomorrow with its terrible afflictions; therefore do not get married.' He argues instead, 'The end *has* broken into the present, and it requires a reevaluation of all that we do in a world already on its last legs.'"<sup>27</sup> Human distinctives associated with this age, even those instituted by God as part of the "old covenant," may still be kept as of secondary importance since they are no longer "anything" in comparison to their fulfillment in ways that can aptly be described as the exercise of love, which is the reality of the age to come now invading this passing world (cf. again 1 Cor 13 in view of Gal 5:6 and 6:15).

Within the context of its letter, 1 Corinthians 7:19 brings us back to the eschatological contrasts introduced in Gal 5:6 and 6:15. It does so, *not* by adding a new component to these contrasts, but by decoding them for Paul's new situation. Faith's expression in love, as the fulfillment of the Law, is the reality of the new creation, which in turn can be defined as keeping the commandments of God. When Paul re-introduces this theme in 2 Cor 5:17, it is this thematic complex he has in view.

## 2 Corinthians 5:17: The New Creation (β)

The context of Paul's declaration in 2 Cor 5:17, like that of Galatians 5-6 and 1 Corinthians 7, is once again Christ's impending judgment of all believers (cf. 2 Cor 5:10 with 2 Cor 3:18).

Ministering between Christ's eschaton-inaugurating cross in the past and Christ's eschaton-consummating judgment in the future, the consequence in 5:16 (ὥστε) is that, beginning "from the now-time" (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν), Paul no longer "knows" κατὰ σάρκα any person, including Christ, which is an eschatological reference to the end of the identities of this world (cf. Isa 48:6: ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν; 2 Cor 6:2).<sup>28</sup> Rather, the redeeming and reconciling significance of Christ's death, which in 5:14-15 and 18-21 frames Paul's programmatic new-creation statements of 5:16-17, now determines how Paul understands both Christ himself and all those for whom he died (cf. the ὥστε of 5:16, inking 5:14-15 to 5:16, and the resumptive τὰ πάντα in 5:18). In short, as Paul House pointed out, Paul the apostle's radical belief in this regard simply coincides with Isaiah 66:18-21 (House, p. 23).

Within the context of the cross, Isaiah 53 finally fulfilled in Christ, Paul's resultant eschatological understanding of both humanity and Christ (cf. ὥστε in 5:16a) leads to the consequence of 5:17a (again, ὥστε), here too stated as a first class condition: if anyone is ἐν Χριστῷ ("in the sphere of Christ's lordship"?), that person is "a new creation" [καινὴ κτίσις] (cf. *NIV*, *NRSV*) or "a new creature" (cf. *NASB*, *RSV*, *ESV*),<sup>29</sup> which in turn means that the "old things" (τὰ ἀρχαῖα) of this age have passed away and the "new things" (καινά) have come.

The eschatological import of 5:17 leads recent interpreters to stress that here Paul is not thinking anthropologically, but cosmically, arguing that individual readings "seriously distort" the nature of Paul's assertion, limiting its scope to "the personal transformation of the individual through conversion experience."<sup>30</sup> They thus prefer the rendering, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation (*TNIV*; cf.

*NIV*: "the new creation has come;" *NRSV*: "there is a new creation").<sup>31</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:7 thus speaks of a new creation per se, not of a "new creature," as found, for example, in Jewish and rabbinic tradition.<sup>32</sup>

The cosmic view of 5:17 rightly stresses the radically new nature of the new creation.<sup>33</sup> Those in Christ are not being merely renewed or recreated, but made a wholly new creation as part of the new age. Nevertheless, once 2 Cor 5:17 is seen to be the deposit of the line of thought running from Gal 5:6 through Gal 6:15 and 1 Cor 7:19, only the anthropological reading remains, since Paul has already explicitly decoded the "new creation" (Gal 6:15) in terms of the believer's eschatological, ethical life of love (Gal 5:6) in obedience to the commandments of God (1 Cor 7:19). As in Isa 43:18-21 (cf. τὰ ἀρχαῖα . . . καινὰ in Isa 43:18-19), so too in 2 Cor 5:17 the "new things" (καινὰ) that have replaced the "old things" (τὰ ἀρχαῖα) is the redeemed, new way of life made possible by the forgiveness of sins, which in Isa 43 is seen to be the result of a second-exodus act of deliverance paramount to a new creation (see LXX Isa 43:25; 44:21-22 in view of Isa 43:1-3, 16-17). In Isa 43, the focus is *not* on cosmic renewal; rather, the second-exodus deliverance as a new creation is identified as the restoration of God's people from exile. And in Isa 65:17-25, the focus of the new heaven and new earth is on the newly created, Eden-like joy and transformed lives of God's people in which, as new creation creatures of the new creation, they do no wrong in God's presence (65:18-19, 25).<sup>34</sup> The argument in 2 Cor 5:16-17 thus anticipates its restatement in Rom 8:4-5, written from Corinth (!), where no longer thinking κατὰ σάρκα but κατὰ πνεῦμα grounds [γὰρ] the fulfilling of the just requirement of the Law by those who no longer walk κατὰ σάρκα but κατὰ πνεῦμα.

Unlike the continuation of Paul's argument in Rom 8:18-25, the point of the motif of "new creation" from Galatians to 2 Corinthians is not the restoration of non-human creation per se or as a whole. For Paul, the restoration of the rest of creation, like the final removal of human suffering and strife, is *yet to come* at the Parousia (2 Cor 4:13-18; cf. Rom 8:18-25). Though Paul has affirmed to the Corinthians that the transformation of God's people is an apocalyptic defeat of "the god of this world" (cf. 2 Cor 3:18 in view of 4:4-6), he has emphasized that the dawning of the resurrection power of the new creation is *not yet* seen in *cosmic renewal*, but in their ability to endure faithfully in the midst of the continuing adversity of the old age of the old covenant (cf. 2 Cor 3:18 with 2 Cor 1:8-11, 2:14-17, 4:7-12; 6:3-13, in view of 1 Cor 4:8-13). To read 5:17 as a reference to cosmic renewal is therefore to over-realize Paul's eschatology.

That Paul has in view the new creation of individuals in 5:17 is confirmed by an analysis of its surrounding context, in which Paul's statement concerning the significance of the cross in 5:14-15 for those in Christ parallels its restatement in 5:20-21. By means of these parallels, Paul has re-applied his previous eschatological contrasts in Gal 5-6 and 1 Cor 7, which likewise focused on the new-age transformation of those in Christ, to his present argument.<sup>35</sup>

## The Parallels within 2 Cor 5:14-21

14a	the love of Christ compels us,	20a	we are being ambassadors in Christ's place (ὕπερ Χριστοῦ),
		20b	<u>just as</u> (ὡς) God is appealing through us.
		20c	<u>Hence</u> , we are begging in Christ's place, "Be reconciled to God.
14b	<u>because</u> (adv. ptcp.) we judge this, that one died in the place of all, (ὕπερ πάντων)	21a	<u>For</u> he made the one who knew not sin to be sin
14c	<u>therefore</u> (ἄρα) all died,		
15a	<u>and</u> (καὶ) he died in the place of all (ὕπερ πάντων)		in our place (ὕπερ ἡμῶν),
15b	<u>in order that</u> (ἵνα + subj.) those who are living	21b	<u>in order that</u> (ἵνα + subj.) we
15c	might no longer live for themselves, <u>but</u> (ἀλλὰ) [they might live] for him		might become the righteousness of God
	who died and was raised in their place (ὕπερ αὐτῶν)		by means of him (ἐν αὐτῷ).

The key parallel for our purposes is between 5:15bc and 21b, where both verses indicate the purpose to be accomplished by Christ's death (cf. ἵνα + subj.). Though a matter of current debate, the parallels between 5:11-14a and 5:18-20 confirm those who argue that the first person plurals in 5:18-20 are best construed as "apostolic" plurals referring to Paul's own ministry, not as references to the calling of the church. However, the parallel between 5:14b-15c and 21ab indicates that in 5:21 Paul now includes his readers (as exemplars of all believers) as the beneficiaries of Christ's death and as those who are to "become the righteousness of God in him." The threefold reference to πᾶς in 5:14b-15a and the switch to the third person in 5:15c clearly refer to referents including and outside of Paul, which signals this reading of 5:21 as well. That Paul can move abruptly from talking about his own ministry in the first person plural to including his readers in that same pronoun is clearly evidenced by the same move in 2 Cor 3:18, again indicated by the use of πᾶς.<sup>36</sup>

The purpose of Christ's atoning death is that "those who are living" as new creations ἐν Χριστῷ (5:15b, 17) might become ἐν αὐτῷ (i.e., here most likely as a parallel to 5:15: "by means of his death") the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (5:21b). Though also a matter of much debate, the parallels between 5:15, 17, and 21 support those who argue that "the righteousness of God" is a possessive or objective genitive, depending on the degree to which δικαιοσύνη is rendered a verbal noun in relationship to the transitive uses of δικαιόω. As such, it refers to the forensic estimation of God's own character as his actions are measured against his faithfulness to his own covenant commitments. Those actions vary from context to context. Here they focus on the establishment of the new creation by means of the reconciling cross of Christ as it

accomplishes the transformation of God's people in accord with the promises of the new covenant (cf. τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ in 5:18a against the backdrop of Isa 43:18-19; 65:17-23; 66:22-23; Isa 52:6-10; 53:5; and 2 Cor 3:3, 6 against the backdrop of Ezek 36:26 and Jer 31:31-34).<sup>37</sup> Concretely, and as a development of the eschatological contrasts begun in Gal 5:6 and 6:15, this transformation is framed in terms of no longer living for themselves but for the Christ who gave his life for them (5:15c). Once again, the new creation of the new covenant is unpacked by a typical Pauline description of love for others as love for Christ, since love for others embodies God's righteousness as revealed apocalyptically in Christ's death (cf. Rom 5:8; 8:35, 38; 14:15; 1 Cor 13:4-7; Phil 2:3-5; 1 Thess 1:3; cf. Eph 5:2, 25; Phil 2:1-4 in view of 3:10-11; 2 Tim 1:13; Tit 2:11-14).<sup>38</sup> As we may say it from Isaiah's perspective, this is the reality of "Yahweh's servants living with Yahweh" and therefore of "Yahweh's servants living for Yahweh," by living as servants to others, all embodied in and modeled by the incarnate Messiah (see House, pp. 16, 18).

This servant-love is also embodied in and modeled by Paul. In the immediate context of 2 Cor 5:17, God's righteousness is seen in the fact that Christ's love for all compels Paul to live for Christ by loving the Corinthians as Christ has done (2 Cor 5:14). Paul is now ruled, eschatologically, by the rule of love (2 Cor 5:14).<sup>39</sup> As applied to the majority of the Corinthians (cf. 2:6), this same rule of love will mean reinforcing their recent repentance and return to Paul through the completion of the collection for others (2 Cor 7 8:7-10, 24; 9:13; see esp. 9:9: as an expression of God's provisions, the righteousness of the saints is seen in their giving to the poor). For the minority of the Corinthians, who are still in rebellion against Paul (chs 10-13), God's righteousness entails giving them yet one more chance to repent before Paul must return a third time to judge them as the "proof" that Christ is indeed speaking powerfully through Paul (cf. 2 Cor 13:1-5 with 5:19-20).

As Paul House summarized Isaiah, now summarized in different words by Paul the Apostle,

"since the persons the servants bring to Yahweh become servants themselves, they share their predecessors' obedient nature. The earlier servants serve Yahweh and receive his covenant blessings (65:1-6; 66:1-14), and so will these new servants (66:19-23). In short, they have an ethical excellence God's enemies simply cannot display. Paul's own endurance in service (*diakonia*) described in 2 Corinthians 6:3-13 embodies this persevering faithfulness (pp. 23-24).

## Eschatology and Covenant

The development of the contrasts from Galatians 5-6 and 1 Corinthians 7 in 2 Cor 5:17 is therefore consistently apocalyptic. And it is cataclysmic in its impact, even in its proleptic inauguration: "the old things have passed away" (5:17b). Contextually, however, the "new things" that have come (5:17c) should not be interpreted abstractly as an expression of an "apocalyptic reality," but concretely in terms of the life-pattern established by Christ's love on the cross as outlined in 2 Cor 5:14-15. Against the background of the theme of new creation in Galatians and 1 Corinthians, the "new creation" life spoken of in 2 Cor 5:17 can be understood in terms of a faith expressed in love that fulfills the Law, since such cross-shaped love entails the eschatological keeping of God's commandments (cf. too Rom 13:8-10).

At the same time, the references to atonement in 2 Cor 5:21 and the allusions to Paul's previous application of the prophetic "new covenant" texts to his own ministry in 3:3, 6, and 18 indicate that for Paul the new creation in 2 Cor 5:17 is also inherently covenantal. If the new creation is apocalyptic, it is covenantally so.<sup>40</sup> Paul's reference to the "old things" in 2 Cor 5:17 does not refer to human distinctives in the narrow sense of "ethnic identity" as defined by race, culture, and geography, but in the cosmic sense of human identity as determined by the *old covenant* under the *old age*. In contrast, the "new things" refer to the cosmic, eschatological, ontological identity of a transformed humanity as determined by the new covenant of the new age of the new creation.

In view of Gal 5 and 6<sup>41</sup> and against the backdrop of Paul's self-understanding as a "servant of the new covenant" in 2 Cor 3:4-6, 2 Corinthians 5:17 signals that the Pauline polarity is not between covenant and apocalyptic, but between the old age of the creation subjected to futility, but longing for its redemption (Rom 8:19-21), and the new age of the new creation, which is proleptically characterized by the embodiment of God's own righteousness in the gradually transformed lives of his people (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Eph 4:24; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 3:12; 21:1-2, 5).

<sup>1</sup>James K. Mead, *Biblical Theology, Issues, Methods, and Themes* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), pp. 1, 63.

<sup>2</sup>*The Ways of Our God, An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup>For all of Child's emphasis on the fact that the OT has received "a unifying theological redaction in characterizing Israel's relationship to God under the categories of a Deuteronomic formulation," in the end it is diversity of covenants that wins out. For Childs, at times the emphasis on "divine initiative" and "the unity of law and covenant" lead to covenant conceived of as "a unilateral act of divine grace, a complete act of divine mercy (Gen 17.1ff.); at other times, the covenant is "conceived of as conditional and its maintenance dependent upon Israel's obedient response (Ex. 24.3-8);" see Brevard S. Childs', *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments, Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 420. Indeed, in concluding his work, Childs warns that the first of the "threats of mis-hearing" the Bible is "to turn gospel into law . . ." (p. 726).

<sup>4</sup>Mead, *Biblical Theology*, p. 29, quoting Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>See the structure of his *Biblical Theology*, pp. vi-xiv, and p. 74: ". . . the simple juxtaposition of the two testaments at the two parts of the one Bible continued to allow for a rich theological diversity.

<sup>6</sup>So Peter Stuhlmacher, "Erwägungen zum ontologischen Charakter der καινή κτίσις bei Paulus," *EvT* 27 (1967) 1-35. See now H. D. Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), pp. 319-320n79, for the extensive studies in support of this view. For its OT roots, see primarily Isa 65:17-25 (cf. 42:9; 43:18-19; 48:6-7; 54:10; 66:22); for its various uses in apocalyptic Judaism, see *1 En* 72:1 (cf. 45:4-5; 90.28-29; 91:15-16); *2 Apoc. Bar.* 32:6 (cf. 44:12; 57:2); *Jub.* 1:29; 4:26; *Lib. Ant.* 3:10; 16:3; 32:17; *4 Ezra* 7.75; 1QS iv.23b-26; 1QH iii.19-23b; xi.9-14; xiii.11-12; xv.13-17a; 11QTemple 29.7b-10; and *Jos. As.* 8.10-11. The apocalyptic nature of 2 Cor 5:17 is underscored by Paul's use of ἰδοῦ, which Victor Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB 32A (Garden City: New York, 1984), p. 315, points out is used with solemn pronouncements, divine promises, and descriptions of visions in apocalyptic contexts, appearing also in the Isaianic backdrop to 5:17 (cf. Matt 24:23; Luke 23:29; Rev 4:1-

2; 21:5 and 1 Cor 15:51; 2 Cor 6:2). For the extensive current debate over whether "new creation" in Paul, against its OT/Jewish backdrop, is fundamentally cosmic, anthropological (individual and/or corporate) or a fusion of both, see Ulrich Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, BZNW 56 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989) for the cosmic view; Moyer Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS 119 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for the anthropological view; and T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, WUNT 2 Reihe 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) for the view that it incorporates both cosmic and anthropological dimensions as "an encapsulated expression – a kind of theological shorthand – for (Paul's "eschatologically infused") soteriology" (p. 6). As a significant addition, Jackson, pp. 60-80, also surveys the concept of new creation in the Roman imperial ideology as a clue to the ways in which Paul's message would have been heard in its context.

<sup>7</sup>For internal evidence tipping the scales in the debate over the relative dating of Galatians and the Corinthian correspondence in favor of Galatian priority, see J. Louis Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), p. 161n.1, and now his *Galatians*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1997), pp. 19-20, 222ff., who points to a comparison of Gal 2:10 with 1 Cor 16:1-2 as determinative. For a thorough presentation of the arguments pro and con Galatian priority in support of it, see D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Rapid City: Zondervan, 2nd. ed., 2005), pp. 458-465.

<sup>8</sup>E.g. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 314, references "new creation" in Gal 6:15 grammatically to support rightly reading καινή κτίσις in 2 Cor 5:17 as its own clause ("there is a new creation"), but makes no material connection to it; on pp. 332-333 Furnish mentions in passing that Gal 6:15 also occurs in a context in which boasting in externals (Gal 6:12-13) is contrasted with boasting in the cross (Gal 6:14). Conversely, Betz, *Galatians*, p. 320n.82, makes only a passing reference to 2 Cor 5:17 as a parallel to Gal 6:15.

<sup>9</sup>With Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), p. 423, that the formal structure and correspondence between Gal 5:6, 6:15 and 1 Cor 7:19 represents Paul's "own favourite speech-structures," contra Mell, who takes them to indicate a pre-Pauline tradition from Antioch.

<sup>10</sup>Though being a Jew or Gentile no longer determines one identity "in Christ," this does not mean, for Paul, that one's new identity is no longer expressed in regard to being Jewish or Gentile, any more than being male and female, married or single disappears into an androgynous "person" (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 7:1-40), even in worship (1 Cor 11:2-16!); indeed, being a slave or free, though abolished at a fundamental level, can still be significant in expressing one's new identity (cf. Philemon). Eschatological realities, though real, are still only inaugurated.

<sup>11</sup>One thinks of the martyrs recounted in 1 Macc 1:41-64; 2:15-38, 49-64; 2 Macc 6:10-31; 7:1-42.

<sup>12</sup>The force of ἐνεργέω in the middle is difficult to render in English, since the faith which works is also impacted by its activity, being "directly and personally involved in the process," so for the force of the middle, Bernard A. Taylor, "Deponency and Greek Lexicography," in *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography*, FS Frederick W. Danker, ed. Bernard A. Taylor, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 167-176, p. 174. Betz, *Galatians*, p. 263n.97, suggests, "become effective," "come to expression," pointing to the "fruit of the Spirit" in 5:22-23 as its referent; Douglas A.

Campbell, *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 887, renders it as faith being "active in relation to itself – putting itself into effect" – by means of "love." On the necessary embodiment of dispositions such as "faith" in one's way of life, individually and communally, see now Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 19-61, and its application to the Pauline "justification by faith," pp. 347-354. For the working out of other Christian dispositions, see 2 Cor 1:6 (comfort in endurance), 1 Thess 2:13 (the word of God in believers), Col 1:29 (Christ's ἐνέργεια in Paul's life), Eph 3:20 (God's power in believers); Rom 7:5 for its counter-point in terms of the "passions of sins" (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν) working out (ἐνηργεῖτο) in one's life in the "flesh" (σάρξ); 2 Cor 4:12 for both death and life working out (ἐνεργεῖται) in one's life. As Betz, p. 264, thus rightly concludes, it is thus impossible for Paul to separate faith and love into "theory" and "practice" (cf. Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 205, who sees faith here, as in James, as "a principle of practical energy, as opposed to a barren, inactive theory").

<sup>13</sup>For the conviction that "a comparison of the second members in the three passages is instructive," see already Ernest De Witt Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1977 [1920]), p. 356. Burton, p. 356, sees πίστις and ἀγάπη in Gal 5:6 as "purely ethical terms, descriptive of the fundamental moral attitude of the Christian," while "keeping the commandments" in 1 Cor 7:19 is "a more external characterization of the Christian life and more formal." Over against both, "new creation" in Gal 6:15 is "less definite as to the moral character of the new life than either of the other expressions," though it "directs attention to the radical change involved rather than to the external expression or the moral quality of the life thus produced." The deposit of these contrasts in 2 Cor 5:7 will demonstrate that such contrasts are only apparent.

<sup>14</sup>Contra Betz, *Galatians*, p. 262, who takes 5:6 to be the consequence of 5:5.

<sup>15</sup>I.e., by means of what God has accomplished eschatologically through the coming of the Messiah. For an eschatological interpretation of "in Christ" here as a reference to "a transference by faith in Christ . . . from the present age into the age to come" as an act of new creation, "since the only conceivable analogy to God's act of inaugurating the new age is his creation of the world at the beginning . . .," see C. K. Barrett, XXX, p. 173. Cf. Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, Biblical Languages Greek: 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2nd. ed., 1994), p. 159, who suggests that ἐν + dative as applied to Christ is best taken in Paul in a spherical use ("one is in the sphere of Christ's control;" cf. 1 Cor 15:52); though justified in certain contexts, here an instrumental reading, as the other predominant use, seems more contextually appropriate; in either case it is not a reference to mystical, corporate union. For a helpful rejection of an individual, "experiential-mystical understanding" of the phrase in favor of Schweitzer's "*sharing the eschatological status of Christ through participation in Christ's death and resurrection . . . 'assuming the resurrection mode of existence before the general resurrection of the dead takes place'*" as applied to 2 Cor 5:17, see Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, pp. 347-351, p. 348, quoting Schweitzer (emphasis his). Thiselton, however, still takes it representationally in terms of a "union" with Christ. The impulses of the programmatic work of A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases 'In Christ' and 'With Christ,'" *JSNT* 25 (1985) 83-97, still need to be developed.

<sup>16</sup>Contra Campbell, *Deliverance*, p. 888, who translates the text, "rather, only '(are we capable) in Christ Jesus . . . faith putting itself into effect through love'." Not only the more natural word order of the sentence (only in extreme syntactical-contextual cases should one violate the clause-break created by ἀλλά), but also the parallel to the consequence of Christ's death in 6:14 and the role of God's call as the ground for the parallel in 1 Cor 7:19 support taking "in Christ" in 5:6 as the means by which the circumcision/uncircumcision distinction is destroyed, not as the motive for faith. However, Campbell, p. 887, sees the implication of Paul's use of the middle voice in 5:6 clearly: in contrast to the traditional justification paradigm, "it is not necessary or possible for the state of faith to be a more effective or powerful *ethical* state than circumcision or uncircumcision, since it makes little contribution to the Christian's capacity but is rather a decision of faith that escapes the *consequences* of the ethical incapacity of the individual." The traditional reading cannot account for "Paul's unavoidably ethical use of language here – in terms of capacity and generation, here most specifically of love" (pp. 887-888). Thus, this text conveys the sense in which Christians access the new eschatological reality created by Christ's resurrection: "by indwelling Christ's own journey" (p. 890). The Christian indwells "the fidelity of Christ's passion . . . Christ's story figures forth in their lives in terms of love (or it ought to)" (p. 890).

<sup>17</sup>Contra, e.g., Betz, *Galatians*, pp. 263, 320, who sees Paul's development of the new creation motif in relationship to "Gentile Christianity" to be the implicit, "*de facto*," "establishment of a new religion."

<sup>18</sup>The link between 5:6 and 6:15 is reflected in the secondary, but strongly attested textual tradition (see Ɱ, A, C, D, 1881, Ɱ, etc.) that seeks to harmonize 6:15 with 5:6 by reading, ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὕτε . . .

<sup>19</sup>With e.g., Burton, *Galatians*, p. 355; again, contra Betz, *Galatians*, p. 319, 319n.76, who argues that the γὰρ of 5:15 is ambiguous, indicating that v. 15 is the reason for v. 14, but at the same time also the consequence of v. 14. Materially this is true, but rhetorically, it is doubtful that Paul intends a double *entendre* here. Burton, p. 356, takes κτίσις to convey a verbal sense here in view of the parallels in 5:6 and 1 Cor 7:19, where the second member of the contrast is a term of action; he thus rightly stresses that the emphasis of the expression, "new creation," is on "the radical transformation of character," "the divine activity in the production of a new moral life (cf. Col 3:10)" (p. 355).

<sup>20</sup>*Second Corinthians*, p. 423.

<sup>21</sup>Taking the final καί in 6:16b epexegetically (as in e.g., the RSV; now rejected in the NRSV); see already Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 225, and contra Burton, *Galatians*, pp. 357-358. For the development of this reading against the backdrop of the new creational, "peace and mercy" motif from Isa 54:10 (where it concerns the restoration of Israel!), together with the corresponding development of this rare formula in Jer 16:5; Ps 84:11(LXX); 1QH 13,5; 11-12; Jub 22:9, see G. K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy Upon the Israel of God, The Old Testament Background of Galatians 6:16b," *Biblica* 80 (1999) 204-223, who shows that it is a development of the explicit use of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 (pp. 208-210). As a continuation of 6:15, Paul finds it "natural to allude to Isaiah's 'peace and mercy' in Gal 6:16 as a part of the 'new creation' he has just explicitly mentioned in v. 15" (p. 216). Beale also relates Gal 6:15-16 to 2 Cor 5:17 and Rev 21:18-19, 21 (cf. Rev 3:14), where Isa 43 and 65-66 also play a role (pp. 216, 218). Of special interest is Beale's demonstration that the "fruit of the Spirit" from Gal 5:22-26 also reflect new creation themes from Isa 32-66.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation, An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 123-124, who sees Paul's argument that Christians are not to seek to alter their social status in 7:17-24 to be "distinctively conservative political advice" in service of his "appeal for concord" in accordance with the principle of 7:24 (also in 7:17, 20). To that end, Paul goes on to redefine their "proper ultimate goal from seeking to alter earthly status (7:8, 17-24, 27, 40) into realizing one's Christian κλησις (7:15, 17:24)" (p. 124, following Wimbush, who argued that remaining in one's calling "was not intended to support the *status quo*; it was designed only to *relativize* the importance of all worldly conditions and relationships" (pp. 124-125n.362). For Mitchell, κλησις is "the language of unification despite differentiation . . . despite their various statuses in the outside world" (p. 125). Mitchell recognizes that the social statuses in the "outside world" in view are Jews and Gentiles, and that Paul has "separated the κλητοί from those *old* names" (p. 125n.364, emphasis mine). Mitchell's social-political reading, though accurate in terms of the community-unifying goal of Paul's admonitions, must be linked to the apocalyptic, covenant contrasts of 7:19 as Paul's explicit, rhetorical ground for the theological principle of 7:24 supporting these admonitions and for Paul's understanding of what is "old." For these distinctively theological reasons Paul's advice ends up in part "closer on these issues to that of more radical thinkers such as some of the Stoics and Cynics," since "his eschatology stands behind a good deal of what he says here (cf. vv. 29, 31)," Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 174, 175-176.

<sup>23</sup>So Thielman, followed by Garland, *1 Corinthians*, p. 306. Garland, however, thinks that Paul distinguishes between parts of the Law that now "count" and parts that do not.

<sup>24</sup>Contrast, e.g., the allegorical interpretation of the Mosaic law (Lev 11:3; Deut 14:6) in *Barn.* 10:11. See still the programmatic work of Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics, A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7*, AGAJU 22 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) and his conclusions regarding 1 Cor 7, pp. 173-175, that Paul's dictum that circumcision is nothing in 1 Cor 7:19 and Gal 6:16 may be determined by Apostolic, Jewish-Christian tradition as an "amplification" of, e.g., Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4 (to which add Jer 9:25) and the figurative uses of "circumcision" in Exod 6:30; Jer 6:10; 9:26; Lev 19:23 (to which add Deut 30:6), as well as reflecting the teaching of Gen 2:24; Exod 19:15; 21:10; Deut 20:5-7; 24:1-4 (cf. the parallels with 1 Cor 7 in *m. Gittin* 1:4-6; 4:4-6; 5:8-9; 9:2-3 to Deut 24). Thus, though no Torah text is quoted in 1 Cor 7, it "turns out to be 'the exception which proves the rule'" (p. 176).

<sup>25</sup>For a theological interpretation of Paul's ethics as an expression of his apocalyptic, inaugurated eschatology, which takes 2 Cor 5:14b-18 as its starting point, see the programmatic statement of Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament, Community, Cross, New Creation* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), 19-59; regarding 1 Cor 7, Hays points to the determining role of Paul's perspective that the old age is passing away as declared in 1 Cor 7:31b (p. 20), so that Hays labels 1 Cor 7, "Sex at the Turn of the Ages" (p. 47); cf. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p. 551, who also reads 1 Cor 7:19 in view of Gal 6:15 as a statement presupposing "an eschatological status" that makes such distinctions obsolete.

<sup>26</sup>On the determinative role of the eschatologically-determinative indicative of the Christ-event for Primitive Christianity, see the fundamental insight of Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, rev. ed., 1964), p. 226:

"No new commandment is set up, but the old and long-known commandment is to be fulfilled, that is, radically observed on the basis of that indicative . . . The law known of old is to be applied to every concrete situation, not in literal fashion, but *radically*, so as to fulfill God's will of love which is embodied in every commandment. Thus it is not possible to regard this or that Old Testament commandment as done away because it does not foresee the present situation. The Old Testament deals throughout with a situation different from that of the New, and the ethical task, according to the New Testament, is precisely this, that in every new situation one is to fulfill the Old Testament in the light of the New . . . The New Testament ethic is *an ethic of redemptive history* in the sense also that it applies to the Old Testament commandments the idea of the 'fulfillment' of the times" (emphasis his).

<sup>27</sup>Garland, *I Corinthians*, p. 327. So on 7:29, "the time has been compressed" (ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν), Paul is concerned not about the duration of time left but about its character: "not about how little time is left but about how Christ's death and resurrection have changed how Christians should look at the time that is left" (pp. 328-329).

<sup>28</sup>See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 312, for the reference to Isa 48:6; he renders κατὰ σάρκα "according to worldly standards," so that Paul's point, p. 321, is that believers now operate "within a creation which has been totally refashioned (v. 17);" and Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 414-415, 420, who takes it to refer to the present time as conditioned by the Christ-event (following Soucek, who points to Rom 3:21, 26; 5:9, 11; 8:1; 13:11; 2 Cor 6:2), and of the seven possibilities for understanding 5:16b (!) convincingly takes the statement to even knowing Christ κατὰ σάρκα as a reference to Paul's pre-conversion estimate of Christ.

<sup>29</sup>With Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, KeK 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 9th. ed., 1924), p. 189, who sees v. 17 to be the positive counterpart in new terminology to the negative of v. 16, so that being "in Christ" equates with "knowing Christ κατὰ πνεῦμα, and J. F. Collange, *Enigmes de la Deuxieme Epitre de Paul aux Corinthiens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 263-264, who alternatively points to the mutually interpretive correspondence between not knowing Christ κατὰ σάρκα in 5:16 and being ἐν Χριστῷ in 5:17, which has both an eschatological, ecclesial, and individual meaning. Contra Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 314, following Plummer, Bultmann (wrongly taken to support this reading; Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Zweite Brief an die Korinther*, KeK 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), p. 158, argues that since v. 17 develops the thought of v. 14 or v. 16, it does not matter whether one takes v. 17 as parallel to v. 16, derived from v. 14, or from v. 16), Allo, Barrett, and Hahn, who takes 5:17 to be parallel to v. 16, drawing a consequence from 5:14-15; and Thrall, *Second Corinthians*, pp. 419-420, 424. The most natural reading, however, is to take ὥστε with the immediately preceding clause.

<sup>30</sup>Hays, *Moral Vision*, p. 20, pointing to Rom 8:18-25 and 1 Cor 10:11. Hays is right, however, to stress that Paul's point is not an "individual's *subjective experience* of renewal through conversion" (p. 20, emphasis mine), since Paul's point is the concrete, ethical transformation into Christ-like behavior.

<sup>31</sup>See, e.g., Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 314, 332-333. See now Douglas J. Moo, "Nature in the New Creation: New Testament Eschatology and the Environment," *JETS* 49 (2006) 449-488, pp. 474-475, who acknowledges that the context of both Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17 appears to support an anthropological reading (cf. the emphasis on the reconciliation of the world of human beings in 2 Cor 5:19), but yet argues that

"there are also indications that, while *applied* to the new state of believers, the "new creation" language *refers to* the entire new state of affairs that Christ's coming has inaugurated" (p. 475, emphasis his). But what of the new creation apart from the transformation of God's people has been inaugurated by Christ's first coming? Moo himself concludes that, "In this age, the focus of God's new creation work is the transformation of human beings—in their relationship to God, first of all, and then also in their relationship to each other" (p. 476).

<sup>32</sup>See already Windisch, *zweite Korintherbrief*, p. 190, who points to Gen Rabba 39 (to Gen 12:2), where God is said to make Abraham a "new creature" (ברִיאָה הַרְשָׁה), so that the parallel to being "in Christ" is being "in Abraham" (cf. Jub 5:12).

<sup>33</sup>As too with Gal 6:15; see Betz, *Galatians*, p. 320: it refers not to "recreation" or "rebirth" (as preferred in the mystery cults, p. 319n.79), but to "a replacement of the old world." The key to Paul's point is not the recreation of mankind, but the decisive sending of the Son into the midst of the old creation (p. 320).

<sup>34</sup>Though he stresses cosmic renewal, the anthropological consequence of God's act of new creation seems to be the import of G. K. Beale's own programmatic essay, "The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5–7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1," *NTS* 35 (1989) 551–57. Beale argues persuasively that in view of Isa 43:18-19 (cf. 65:17) "it is plausible to suggest that 'reconciliation' in Christ is Paul's way of explaining that Isaiah's promises of 'restoration' from the alienation of exile have begun to be fulfilled by the atonement and forgiveness of sins in Christ" (p. 556). See too, Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor. 5:11-21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of 'Reconciliation,'" *NovT* 39 (1997) 360-384, p. 380.

<sup>35</sup>It is beyond the scope of this essay to explicate how the introduction of 5:11-13 is also picked up in 5:18-19 as Paul explicates how the Corinthians should understand his ministry in order to answer the critique of his opponents. The overall structure of the passage thus exhibits the following pattern:

- A: 5:11-13 (Paul's Ministry)
- B: 5:14-15 (Significance of the Cross)
- C: 5:16-17 (Reality of the New Creation)
- A': 5:18-19 (Paul's Ministry)
- B': 5:20-21 (Significance of the Cross).

<sup>36</sup>See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, p. 326, following Dinkler: though 5:14 refers to Paul and his colleagues, "it is almost inevitable . . . that the *us* in this initial affirmation of v. 14 should begin to expand under the sheer weight of the affirmation itself, so that what Paul has applied in the first instance to apostles is seen immediately to be applicable to all believers." For 5:21 as a continuing reference to Paul in his apostolic ministry, see N. T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God, 2 Cor 5:21," in *Pauline Theology, Vol. II*, ed. D. M. Hay (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1993) 200-208. For corollary support of the view that the first person plurals in this passage, except for the general statement in v. 21, refer to Paul in his apostolic office, see Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor. 5:11-21," pp. 368-371.

<sup>37</sup>For the development of Paul's self-understanding as a "servant of the new covenant" against its OT backdrop, see my *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*.

<sup>38</sup>Hays, *Moral Vision*, p. 31, in regard to Phil 3:10-11: "The twin themes of conformity to Christ's death and the imitation of Christ are foundational elements of Paul's vision of the moral life . . . Obedience to God is defined paradigmatically . . . by Jesus' death on the cross" (pointing to Rom 6:1-14; 8:17, 29-30; 15:1-7; 1 Cor 10:23-11:1; 2 Cor 4:7-15; 12:9-10; Gal 2:19-20; 5:24; 6:14).

---

<sup>39</sup>Following Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 325-326, 328-329, who uses the image of the "rule of love" to describe the point of 5:14, and emphasizes that, for Paul, to live for Christ means, concretely, to live for others, pointing to 1 Cor 8:12 (for the point put negatively) and to Rom 15:1-3 in view of Rom 14:18. Here too Furnish turns to Gal 5:6 as a parallel (p. 328), though without a reference to new creation in Galatians as the link between the texts.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. the parallels to Gal 6:15-16 in Isa 54:10, 1QH 13,12, and Jub 22:9-24 pointed out by Beale, "Peace and Mercy," pp. 212-213, 216, in which "covenant" appears in these eschatological texts in the context of referring to the annulment or renewal of the old covenant in the establishment of the new. Contra, therefore, Campbell's continuation of the divorce of apocalyptic from covenant, *Deliverance*, pp. 701-702, in which he contrasts covenantal thinking as "rooted in the past and in a certain conception of history" with "a liberative and eschatological act of God in Christ" as a "fundamentally present and future event rooted in the resurrecting God (which therefore arguably introduces a reconceptualization of history)." The parallels established here, however, reflect that for Paul both the inauguration and fulfillment of the covenant are eschatological, apocalyptic acts in history.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. the purpose clause of Gal 1:4ab, with its covenant-cult and second-exodus imagery.