

The Spirit of God in Creation and New Creation

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Students of the Bible who believe that there is a unifying theme to the Scriptures are often disagreed on what that factor is. Anything that would qualify as a candidate for this factor must be something that permeates the Scriptures from the first to the last and should give some kind of structure to the various pieces that remain to be ordered. Clearly the speech of God is of utmost importance as a candidate for this theme. The Scriptures open with God speaking all things into existence in the beginning (Gen1; Ps 33:9; 148:5) and in Christ He speaks the Word of a new creation (John 1:1-5). Hebrews 1:1-2a seems to be something of an encapsulation of the whole activity of God, which is described as God speaking in times past and in these last days.

Under this expansive arch of God's speech is the concern to address the content or subject matter of God's speaking. Creation is clearly one if not the most obvious subject of God's speaking. The first creation is a product of His voice, and Jesus who embodies the new creation and whose resurrection ushers in the new creation is defined by John in his gospel as the Word ($\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$). God creates the world by means of something that is best described as "Word".

Creation however does not stand alone in this position. The creation was not simply an act of God that has no relation to God, it climaxes in the creation of Adam and Eve who are then set in communion with God. It is creation as embodied in these two people, who are representative of the entire human race and who are created for fellowship with God in the creation that occupy the over arching idea of the Scriptures.

Creation and covenant together form the umbrella subject matter of the Christian Scriptures.

When the first creation covenant goes wrong a narrative of events takes place that is devoted to the recreation of all things, and most prominent in this is the restoration of the broken relationship between God and his image bearers. The various events of the Scripture narrative are attempts to reestablish the covenant or to provide some means by which the covenant between God and Adam¹ can be maintained until such time as the creation is finally renewed in Christ.

In the first creation account (Genesis 1-3) the world is made through the joint agency of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Each of these two agents are related in that they both share a common denominator: Power. The Word of God, which is the creative voice of God is by definition power (Jer 23:29). God's speaking is the unleashing of his power; it is His doing. The word of God effects what it commands. In this sense "Word" is not to be confused simply with sound bytes or verbal utterances in the sense of vocal modulation and the use of verbal symbols purely as a communication tool. The word (דבר) when used of God is the communication of God's mind and purpose. It is action, the power of bringing about this mind and purpose in the reality of the cosmos. God's Word then is His power and can be summarized with the statement "I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it." (Ez 17:24).

¹ The name Adam is used in this paper in reference to the first man, but also as a non-gender specific way of referring to the human race. I am using it in several senses simultaneously, and in many cases all of them apply at once. I mean it as a reference to any particular person in humanity, to humanity as a group and as Adam the first man in his representative capacity. I do not believe that Adam as an individual bears much importance, though I do subscribe to his actual existence. His primary importance is representative.

The Spirit can be called the energizing agent of the Word of God. If the Word is powerful, it is because the Spirit is powerful; the power of the Word is the power of the Spirit. This is no doubt precisely because the Spirit is the Spirit of God and this in both the sense of being the Spirit which belongs to God and the Spirit who is God. The Spirit is the power of God and anything that is understood as being the activity of God must properly be recognized as being the work of the Spirit. Moltmann writes, "all divine activity is pneumatic in its efficacy. It is always the Spirit who first brings the activity of the Father and the Son to its goal."² The resurrection of Jesus is said to be by the Spirit (Rom 8:11) and by God (Acts 5:30; Rom 10:9) and this is the demonstration of God's power (1 Cor 6:14; Col 2:12). Since this is so, the Spirit can be directly tied to the works of God. And if creation is the primary work of God, it is worth investigating how the Spirit is related to it in the original act of creation, in the on going sustenance of creation and in the consumation of the creation.

Something happended in the beginning. Something that the Scriptures explain as the creation of the heavens and the earth. God is revealed as the actor in this drama, however, there is a very strong assumption on the part of the author(s) that the reader already understands who God is. His nature and character are not elaborated except to say that He is the Creator God.

The biblical account of the creation is not a newspaper reporting of events as they were happening. It is a literary work that has itself been created, possibly over a great deal of time, in the life and context of a particular people. It has social and political concerns that form its agenda.

² Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, (London, GB: SCM Press,

The actual provenance and dating of the Genesis creation narrative has no consensus among scholars. Some place the writing very early in the life of Israel, believing it be the product of Moses' reed.³ Others see it as the product of exilic writers and written ca. 540 BC.⁴ Consequently the occasion for writing is not completely understood making the meaning of the text itself somewhat obscure. Whatever the occasion, there is a certain recognition by almost all recognized scholarship that it is not a scientific record. It is not an explanation on how God created the universe, but a literary declaration of the fact that it is God who created the cosmos.

Further to this, it is also recognized that what ever the time of writing, the content of the creation narrative itself enjoys a much older origin. Bernhard Anderson addresses this by his remark that

To assign dates to these chapters in terms of the literary history of the Pentateuch, however, is not necessarily to indicate the age of the traditions that were written down at these particular times. Both chapters [Gen 1 & 2] embody traditions that are much older than the time of their literary composition. In deed belief in divine creation is one of the oldest elements of Israel's faith.⁵

Because the Scriptures are acknowledged here not as scientific journaling or as a prose recounting of events but a literary fabrication generally termed mythopoetic, they cannot be literally followed. The poetic and mythological elements which compose these stories need to be taken seriously. A mythopoetic interpretation does not deny

1985), 8.

³ Bruce K. Waltke, "The Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One," *Crux* XXVII, no 4 (1991): 2.

⁴ John Van Seters, "The Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy," in *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998): 14, 21-27.

⁵ Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation*, (Mineapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994): 2

the factuality of the things recorded as if to say they were fantasy or fairy tale records, but that the truth conveyed through them has been carried along by the use of various literary features that translate the facts of the story into a morally and religiously charged one. The story has particular relevance to the people for whom it was created, in this case the ancient Hebrew people, and ultimately, for the Christian Church.

The origins that the "narrative" concerns itself with, are not as might first seem to be the case, the origins of the cosmos. Certainly the matter of the world's origin cannot be denied consideration as the plain sense of the passage even as a mythopoetic story directly address this matter, but the ultimate reference is to the creation of a people for God. The Israelite nation as this people is given her meaning through the recounting of the creation narrative, the patriarchal story and finally the exodus account. Meaning for the existence of this people, found in the meaning of their history, is bound up with the divine origin of the cosmos.⁶ In the Christian church this has further implications as a typological foreshadow of the Church itself. Creation, consequently, is modeled after the national origins and is expressed through language reminiscent of the national constitution. Jürgen Moltmann underscores this same point when he writes:

The Israelite understanding of the world as creation is molded by the revelation of God's redemption in the exodus, the covenant, and the promise of the land; and, in the same way, the Christian understanding of the world as God's creation is shaped by the revelation of his redemption in the history of Jesus Christ. This Christian understanding does not contradict the statements about creation which were arrived at through Israel's experience of salvation. The

⁶ Anderson, *Creation*, 4. Anderson quotes Ludwig Köhler who says: "The Old Testament story of creation does not answer the question 'How did the world come into being?' with the answer: 'God created it,' but answers the question 'From where does the history of God's people derive its meaning?' with the answer: 'God has given the history of His people its meaning through creation.'

Christian understanding is the messianic interpretation of these earlier statements.⁷

All of this is preliminary to dealing with the role of the Spirit in creation. Genesis 1:2 is translated in the New Revised version as "the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters." Most other translations are not as dynamic in their rendering of וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים and read "the Spirit of God moved on the surface of the waters." Paul K. Jewett argues for the translation "a mighty wind". He does so in an attempt to bring harmony out of the structure of the text while defending a doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, which his exegesis cannot otherwise support. He thus argues that since such a rendering is grammatically possible, and the picture thus presented by rendering וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים as mighty wind is the author's way of illustrating "nonbeing" it gives the author a means of expressing such abstractions that his language could not normally support. "Whereas 'Spirit of God' jars upon the structure of the narrative," he writes, "the rendering 'mighty wind' does not."⁸

Jewett's purpose here may not be as obvious as it appears. The *creatio ex nihilo* that he is so intent on preserving is not directly under fire, but is weakened by a certain two-creation theory of the cosmos. This two creation theory is engendered by

⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London, G.B.: SCM Press, 1985): 94. Cf. Anderson, *Creation*, 5. "This comprehensive history, which extends from creation (Genesis 2-3) to at least the eve of the conquest of Canaan, reviewed the whole past in the light of the exodus faith and the special history whose theme was the saving deeds of Yahweh."

⁸ Paul K. Jewett, *God, Creation, and Revelation: A Neo-Evangelical Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991): 466.

some to square the teachings of the Scriptures with Geological science.⁹ Jewett is correct in my view to challenge this perspective, but the cost of his solution is pretty high, as he has eliminated the Spirit altogether from the picture of the first creation given in Genesis.

However, the Spirit is an essential element in the creation narrative. The Spirit is the power of God in effecting our new birth precisely because He was the power that initiated our life. Life that originates in Adam. Hendrikus Berkhof relates that

the special operation of the Spirit in the New Testament is presented as the restoration and fulfillment of his work in creation, and therefore is described in terms borrowed from his work in creation, like "vivify," "birth," "regeneration," "new-creation."¹⁰

Also, given that רוח can also be translated "breath" or "wind" does not mean that it cannot mean "Spirit." To be sure, "Spirit" may not be the best translation since it has the meaning of ethereal or invisible where as in the Hebrew it carries more concrete dynamic connotations. But in this case it is not a matter of either / or, but both / and. The Spirit at the creation does manifest Himself in the form of a wind, but this does not go all the way in explaining what the word means. The wind which blows is from God and is the power that effects the will of God. It is the same wind that blows over the flood narratives in Genesis 8:1 and over the Red Sea in Exodus 14:21. In both of these instances creation themes are being taken up as we shall see. Thus the wind which is from God in Genesis 1:2 is not simply a "mighty wind" nor is it simply the movement of

⁹ This is made evident by a lengthy discussion in Jewett's work where he deals with the "apologizing motif of harmonizing Genesis and geology" (pg. 466-67). This is not to minimize the antithesis of Genesis 1:1 with what follows, nor the doctrine of creation out of nothing with the imagery of the Spirit hovering over the primordial and chaotic deep. However it does clue us into some of the other dynamics which are informing Jewett's processes as he seeks to bring harmony out of the problem.

air. It is the Spirit bringing the power of the presence of the almighty God into tangible relation with the world in its premordal and chaotic state. The only viable translation that can capture all of these elements is "Spirit of God." "Wind from God" and "mighty wind" while capable of conveying some aspects are not sufficient to convey all the freight that the terms imply. Similarly there is a lack of recognition, when רוח is relegated simply to an impersonal force, of the social dynamic that seems to be communicated through the passage as a whole. God is expressed in plurality throughout, and this only makes sense if we understand that the Spirit was present. Since this is easily accounted for by translating Genesis 1:2 with the "Spirit of God" and nothing of the other translations is denied, it would seem to be the most adequate way to understand the passage.

Ken R. Gnanakan remarks that "whatever we need to remind ourselves about creation today ought to be from our own eschatological perspective."¹¹ This shall be flushed out more fully below, but suffice it to be said here, that texts such as those found in Genesis are to be understood in the unfolding of revelation by the clarity afforded through the latter texts. In particular, the teaching of the coming kingdom gives great insight into the pre-history of the origins of the first creation. Other events which parallel and, no doubt in the chronological order of record, preceded the writing of Genesis also have bearing upon the Genesis text, regardless of what prehistory the Genesis record might have had.

¹⁰ Hendricus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1964), 96.

¹¹ Ken R. Gnanakan, "The Holy Spirit, Creation and New Creation," *Evangelical Review of Theology* vol. 15, no. 2 (1991):102

The elements of Spirit and water are present in all creation narratives. What we see in Genesis 1 with respect to the first creation is repeated in the flood, the exodus, the crossing into the land of Canaan, the restoration from exile and finally with the Baptism of Jesus. In many of these the element of Spirit is not directly articulated, but in some it is. If we permit Genesis 1:2 to stand as it has been traditionally translated, it becomes something of a guiding light for these other re-creative events and is also itself clarified when understood as the precursor to the new creation motif emphasized in the life and baptism of Jesus.

The primordial waters of creation are symbolic of Noachic flood waters, the Red Sea¹² crossed by Israel in the Exodus, the Jordan River crossed over at the beginning of the Conquest of Canaan in the third chapter of Joshua and finally the Baptismal waters of the Jordan at our Lord's Baptism by John. The central aspect of each of these events is that a creation or re-creation of some kind is taking place in each of these, and their following the same pattern as that of the creation narrative helps us to see this. By way of summary, this theme of creation is evident in the following ways in each of these events.

In the Genesis creation account, the theme of creation is explicitly evident. The story is after all about creation. The climax in the creation of a people, represented in Adam and Eve, and the ensuing story of the fall become the paradigm of the remaining stories of creation. The Preacher in Ecclesiastes describes the whole scene for us when he remarks that "That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done" (1:9).

¹² or Sea of Reeds.

Consequently, the pattern then arises which sees creation followed by distortion resulting in a new creation. In the days of Noah, the wickedness of humanity was great and led to God's decision to destroy the earth by means of a flood. The story as told is not entirely unique to the Scriptures, being represented in other Babylonian literature such as the Epic of Gilgamesh. It certainly is not fable, as the wider attestations seem to indicate that some near cosmic catastrophe must be behind such a story. Whether the flood was local or universal we shall leave for others to debate, suffice it to say, the interpretation of the event given by the early Israelites is that it represented a judgment of God upon sinful humanity and was followed by a new creative act.

In the Scriptural account of the first creation and the new creation after the flood, many parallel elements are used to bring this thought clearly to the fore. The flood waters are symbolic of the primordial waters of chaos, Noah becomes a new head of humanity in that he is given the same mandate as was Adam and Eve before him. The only notable difference in this restatement of the mandate is that a prohibition of murder by way of divine sanction of the death sentence is included. This underscores that this second creation is not the paradise that the original creation was. The prohibition of the original creation amounted to a test of fidelity to God. This new one presumes that violent crimes will be perpetrated against fellow humans. Finally, the immediate collapse of moral fortitude demonstrated by Cain's murder of Abel in the first creation is paralleled here by Ham's violation of his father. This violation, recorded as "seeing the

nakedness of his father"¹³ resulted in the curse upon Canaan, no doubt a play on the name of Cain from the first creation narrative.

The story of the Exodus is also a re-creation story. The rejection of the nations of the earth and the choice of Israel to be the representative son of God, the beneficiaries of God's mercy (Hebrew *hesed*) is the continuation of this story. The representative destruction of the nations in the ten-fold humiliation of Egypt culminating in the annihilation of her Pharaoh and armies in the Red Sea symbolically display this fact. Israel's deliverance and constitution at Mt. Sinai as the covenant people of God is the creation of a new humanity, governed by God's special love as revealed in the Torah. The regulations which were simply outlined in the creation mandate given to Adam and Eve, lightly modified for Noah are more fully elaborated in the Law of Moses.

The emergence of the people of Israel from the waters of the Red Sea parallels the initial creation story and the flood narrative. The Immediate grumblings of the people, even before they arrive at Mt. Sinai is a portent of things to come. This people, like those before is not going to remain faithful to YHWH. Finally, a breach of sorts comes when they refuse to possess the Land and threaten to return to Egypt (Numbers 14:1-4). God promises that these shall die in the wilderness and a new generation shall arise to take over.

Under Joshua's leadership, this second generation Israel crossed over the Jordan into the land. Parallels are with all three previous creation accounts. This

¹³ Isaac M. Kikawada and Arthur Quinn in their book *Before Abraham was: A Provocative Challenge to the Documentary Hypothesis* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 102-103, have speculated that Ham's uncovering of his father's nakedness is his having coitus with his mother when he found his father enebriated and incapacitated in his mother's tent. The curse of Canaan rather than of Ham himself is thought to be because Canaan is the product of this illicit union. This is a plausible understanding of the

signals that the story is not simply a circular story of God's continually reincarnating the earth or the nation, but that a building of themes and ideals is taking place that will find ultimate expression in the final act of re-creation. The pattern is being systematically tuned to what is to come. The first generation Israelites have been destroyed, an new generation representing the new humanity, still under the law, but reiterated afresh in the plains of Moab crossed the Jordan in a reenactment of the Red Sea crossing. The people now settle in the land and begin the process of becoming the nation of Israel, which gains its fullest expression under the reigns of David and Solomon. The period of the Judges and the destruction and exile of the nation underscore the corruption which ultimately leads to their rejection.

Finally, the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan also takes up this theme. A clear allusion is being established by the various symbols: Water, in particular of the Jordan River, and the voice establishing Jesus as the new Israel, the beloved Son of God. His testing during His forty day fast in the wilderness parallels Israel's wilderness testing, one day for each of forty years. Jesus emerges from this temptation as the tested and faithful/obedient Son of God. In each of the previous occasions, the scenario concludes with the son, Adam, Ham-Egypt, Israel, showing themselves to be disobedient. Now in Jesus, the Son proves to be obedient. The new creation is perfected in the one who does what Adam and Israel before Him were unable to do, and this primarily because He possesses the Spirit.

Amidst all of these themes is the work of the Holy Spirit. Earlier we discussed the translation of Genesis 1:2 as to whether it was best translated "a mighty wind blew

passage and helps to give substance to such a harsh judgment in the face of what might appear as a

over the surface of the waters" or as the RSV, "a wind from God" or by the traditional emphasis upon the Spirit of God hovering over the surface of the waters. We settled on the traditional translation because of the connection with the creation theme as it is reiterated in the subsequent "recreation" stories. Now it is time to flesh that out a bit so as to make it more apparent.

In the flood story, the Spirit of God is symbolized by the dove which Noah sent out from the ark. The bird image would take on immediate significance given the brooding picture painted in Genesis, the Spirit being made to resemble an eagle or a hen brooding over her egg, hatching the creation. The emphasis appears to be on the Spirit as an agent of creation. The dove, however, is not the only spirit symbol in the flood story that parallels the first creation narrative. As "spirit" can also be translated "breath" or "wind" in Genesis 8:1 we read that God caused a great wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. The raven sent out in 8:7 seems also to have a spirit function, as it is said to have "flown to and fro until the waters were dried up". Again, this seems to capture something of the imagery of Genesis 1:2 where the Spirit broods like a bird, the wings creating a wind that drives the chaotic waters back.

A further reminder that what is taking place in the flood narrative has particular interest in the Spirit is the mention in 6:3 by YHWH that His Spirit shall not abide in mortals forever. This is a reference to the breath of God which animates the people of the earth. This Spirit belonging to YHWH is certainly identical to the "Spirit of Elohim" that hovered over the surface of the primordial waters. It is not only the agent of

rather incidental and unmeditated happening upon his father while he was "uncovered."

creation, but the source or grounds of life itself. In Genesis it is the "breath of God" which makes the dust form into a living soul.

This raises the question of whether the Spirit in view in the creation and flood narratives is simply a way to speak about God or whether it is a camouflaged way of speaking about the third person of the Triune God, a person distinct from the Father and the Son. Without reading too much back into the Genesis accounts, which were clearly written before the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated in A.D. 325 at the Council of Nicea and refined in debate until A.D. 381, it seems to me to be difficult to avoid acknowledging some kind of social element to the references to the Spirit. And so, while it may be difficult to separate the two ideas, possession and being, from the discussion of the Spirit in these first narratives a recognition of Spirit as God is at harmony with the evidence. The finer trinitarian distinctions are a Christian reflection on the texts in light of further revelation and are not inappropriate, provided they are applied with a recognition that they are part of the Christian interpretation.

The Spirit hovering over the primordial waters seems to be introduced in a way that draws a distinction between Him and God (understood in trinitarian terms as the Father). The talk of the Spirit as the Spirit of God underscores that there is some relationship between them. It is not just any spirit, but it is the Spirit which belongs to God or is in some way related to God. The Christian trinitarian formulation helps to bring clarity to this and provide a legitimate way to speak about the Spirit in this context.

Furthermore, in the unfolding of the biblical drama of the work of the Spirit in the world culminating in the life of Jesus is illustrated by the descent of the dove at Jesus Baptism. The descension of the Spirit as a dove at the Jordon immediately recalls the

two places in the Old Testament where the dove imagery is used, Genesis 1:2 and Genesis 8:8ff. The most plausible explanation of the dove-symbolism is that of a new creation. The Holy Spirit "assumes the form of a dove in order to convey picturesquely the idea that Jesus, from the baptism onward, will engage in a work of making all things new."¹⁴ In Mark's gospel we are told that the heavens were opened so that the Spirit could descend. The use of *σχίζω* in Mark appears also in the rending of the temple veil at the crucifixion. Mark is apparently suggesting the the opening of the heavens at Jesus baptism, which are certainly a fulfillment of the plea of Isaiah 64:1, is the initial stage of the new exodus that reaches its climax on the cross, where the old covenant is terminated by the death of Jesus.¹⁵ Garlington further remarks:

We see in the rending of the heavens and the Spirit assuming the form of a dove a merger of new exodus and new creation motifs, which are carried over from the OT. This comes as no surprise since the original exodus is looked upon in the OT as a new creation.¹⁶

The declaration that He is the Son of God places Jesus in a role parallel to that of Adam in the original creation. This sonship is not here understood ontologically from His birth, but serves to mark out Jesus as the one who fulfils the various Old Testament prophecies of the messianic son of David. It is decidedly messianic and has references to kinship (Ps 2:7) and is a reference to his induction into the office of the messianic king. It has further reference to Jesus as being another Adam. Adam is designated the Son of God in Luke's genealogy of Christ in 3:38. Consequently, Jesus is a head to the

¹⁴ Don B. Garlington, "Toronto Baptist Seminary New Testament Theology Class Notes" (Photocopied and distributed by Don Garlington, Spring 1993), 44.

¹⁵ Cf. H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, reprinted 1964), 44.

¹⁶ Garlington, "Notes", 45.

new humanity, he takes on the mandate of the first Adam. All of this is tied directly into the theme of creation and the subsequent new creations brought about by the working of the Spirit.

The symbol of wind becomes a very strong figure for the Spirit. In explaining how the waters of the Red Sea were parted, it is by the blowing of a strong wind. Surely this is a reference to the Spirit of God and the picture of the dry ground between the chaotic waters of the Red Sea are intended to draw the mind back to the original creation story where the waters are separated and dry ground appears. The Spirit of God is the one who takes control over the chaos of the waters and pushes them aside. Bernhard Anderson in his book *From Creation to New Creation* reminds us that

In the mythopoeic portrayal, chaos is not destroyed but only placed within bounds — if God so determines, these bounds may be removed, allowing the earth to return to chaos.¹⁷

This theme of chaos shows up in later apocalyptic with reference to the nations around about Israel, nations that are used by God to bring judgment against her for her unfaithfulness. God has promised not to destroy the earth again with a flood of water, but floods of armies will come down against Israel. What holds these armies back is the Spirit of God (Cf. Dan. 9:26).¹⁸

The creation of Israel at the Exodus is a work of the Spirit. Anderson outlines that in "The Mosaic tradition mythopoeic creation language speaks of the creation of a people who are given identity and vocation."¹⁹ The language of creation comes to

¹⁷ (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994) pg. 90.

¹⁸ 2 Kings 6:19 may also be an instance where this is demonstrated.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 89

embody the idea of origination and substantiates Anderson's contention that creation is the beginning of history.²⁰ The creation narratives of Genesis are really a prologue to the creation of Israel, and so the work of the Spirit in these earlier events is anticipatory or typical of His work in Israel and finally of his eschatological work in the new Israel, the Church.²¹ These creation narrative are a pre-history to the recorded history, which goes a long way to explaining why it is that they are not to be understood as historical documents in the modern sense. They are creations by Israel that have as part of their purpose the justification of Israel's own existence. For this reason they are written in such a way as to record the foundations of the universe in language reminiscent of the foundation of the nation. The two are of a piece and one bring the other to its determined goal. This is all the work of God's Spirit, who both establishes the cosmos and who also creates Israel from the enslaved Hebrews of the Ancient Egyptian empire.

What we have seen so far is that the Spirit is clearly portrayed as having a role in the creation of the world. The Spirit is also active in the various events following creation that are intended to bring order out of the debris of the original creation when it is cursed in consequence of the breach of covenant between Adam and God. The subsequent recreation narratives all have an implicit recognition of the Spirit's on going work in the renewal of the creation.

In the creation account, the Spirit is particularly associated with the creation of Adam. According to Gen 2:7, God breathed in Adam's nostrils the breath of life. "Breath of life" is used of other life forms in the creation account (1:30) but there are

²⁰ Ibid., 25

²¹ Cf. E. Earle Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.) pp26-27.

indications elsewhere that as applied to Adam it has reference to the communication of the Spirit of God to him. Job reads, "The Spirit of God has made me, and th breath the Almighty gives me life" (33:4). In John 3 the Spirit is the wind of God that imparts the birth from above, the new creation life. Adam was created to be the temple of the Holy Spirit and his ability bear accurately the image of God depends upon his possession of the Spirit. When Adam sinned, the Spirit departed his temple, and returns only in the case of those who have been recreated in the image of Christ (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

The creation of Adam and Eve in the image of God and as receptacles for the breath of God underscores the intimacy of the relationship that was desired by God to exist between humanity and the Divine. In particular the concept of the *imago dei*, but no less the in-breathing of God's Spirit into Adam indicate that some kind of compatability on a social level was possible. The Spirit is what makes this possible. The image of God, simply understood, is the reflection visibly in Adam of the invisible God and is what makes his reception of the Spirit possible. This image continues following the fall and is the grounds for the death sentence as articulated in Gen 9:6. The Spirit of God however is what effects the relationship between Adam and God. The possession of the Spirit means that Adam relates with God *ipso facto*.

Adam's sin disqualifies him to possess the Spirit of God. Consequently his relationship with God is dissolved. The flood narrative illustrates Adam's plight in the wider context of the whole of humanity. However, on account of God's graciousness, Noah is found to be righteous (Gen 6:9) and is established as the vehicle through which God purposes to re-create Adam. Thus Noah becomes another Adam in that he takes

on the responsibilities of the first Adam. All the nations are now traced to Noah in the table of nations (Gen 10) in the same way as all humanity is traced back to Adam.

Adam as the climax of the creative act of God gives purpose to whole of the creation. The creation was made habitable by God so that Adam could dwell in it. But not Adam as an animate object, Adam as the possessor of the divine Spirit, the receptical of the breath of God. In keeping with the thought of Jürgen Moltmann, the creation is the place where God in the Spirit dwells. On this he remarks,

God is not merely the Creator of the world. He is also the Spirit of the universe. Through the powers and potentialities of the Spirit, the Creator indwells the creatures he has made, animates them, holds them in life, and leads them into the future of his kingdom. In this sense history of creation is the history of the efficacy of the divine spirit.²²

Since this is the case it is not adequate to view the creation as something that is antithetical to the divine or as something that is opposed to the Spirit. Such thinking is a reflection of Gnosticism with its prejudice against anything material. However the material of the world is not to be seen as evil, but as good. The creation was pronounced good by God, and Adam was set over it to perfect it by the work of his hands. Adam's failure to perfect the world does not invalidate its having been created as a good place. It is designed to be something of a temple, a dwelling place for the divine Spirit and so is not antithetical to the Spirit in its basic constitution. The creation takes on an antagonistic role only in consequence of the fall and by the presence of sin.

Because of the fall the creation has been subject to futility. This is an unnatural condition that is to be rectified with the consummation of the kingdom of God. Creation groans as it awaits its release from bondage (Rom 8). Adam's loss of the Spirit through

his disobedience has some parallel in the diminishing presence of the Spirit in the world. It means that he is no longer able to fulfill his mandate, and the world, now a place that yields thorns and thistles now reflects a cosmos that is being ever encroached upon by the chaotic elements of the pre-creation state. The presence of the Spirit in creation in this period between the fall and the restoration of all things at the end of time is limited. It is however present. The world does not exist in a deistic way with no regular intervention or support from God. Pinnock summarizes well when he writes:

The Spirit animates and interpenetrates the world, which is not a mechanistic order. Spirit broods over the waters and sustains the world. Divine creativity is everywhere active, forming new possibilities and patterns. It fosters interaction and presides over the systems of life.

The universe is not closed but open to God and to the future. Creation is not finished until it has reached its goal. God transcends the world as its Creator but is also immanent in the world as its perfecter through long developments. Theology can understand the natural order in a new context: Spirit is the creative ground of all new possibilities. It is God that gives the world a future and the Spirit that brings it to pass.²³

The creation remains the sphere in which the activity of God, and consequently the activity of the Spirit is carried out. The Spirit is present in the creation as the force that continues to sustain the cosmos. In the ancient Hebrew perspective, He is present in the creation as the force which holds back the chaos of non-being and sustains life.

In Genesis the earth depicted in chaotic terms: unformed and uninhabited. It is called the deep, a reference to the waters of chaos in the mythology of the day. The

²² Moltmann, *Creation*, 14.

whole of the precreation state is characterized by darkness, another symbol that the creative forces of the Spirit had not yet brought about the order of the cosmos. However, through the Spirit's initial peripatry work, God is able to say "let there be light" and "there was light." The Spirit is the agent by which this light comes to exist, and the light then comes to signal the presence of an ordered creation. A great deal of new creation literature then draws on this theme of the return of light into the darkness (John 1:5; 2 Cor 4:4-6).

Because God is continually working to hold back the chaos, he can be said to be ever working in the creation in a creative way. Anderson reflects on this saying "God engages in a continuous creation, as Psalm 104 attests. In contrast to the Genesis creation story, to which it is related, the magnificent poem stresses the continuing creation, not creation in the beginning."²⁴ The Spirit that effected the state of cosmos out of the chaos continues to work creatively in sustaining the creative order. This is not precisely Pinnock's point, who affirms with Moltmann that the Spirit is the principle of evolution. It is not that Moltmann and Pinnock affirm too much, they simply address the matter from a different vantage point. Moltmann however does appear to overstate his case somewhat, failing to distinguish between the ongoing creative work of the Spirit, the new creation work of the spirit in these last days and finally in the last day. For instance draws the conclusion that because in the covenant with Noah "all flesh" has reference to all the living and not just human life, means that the outpouring of the

²³ Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 70.

²⁴ Anderson, *Creation*, 242.

Spirit in Joel must also refer to all animate living things.²⁵ The context affirms that an unrestricted rather than a nationalistic outpouring is to be effected. To apply the principle of the outpouring of the spirit to all life when it is obviously constricted to humanity by the passage is a gross extension unsupported by the biblical text. However, Moltmann's thought that all flesh shall benefit from the outpouring of the Spirit in the last days is not entirely wrong. Paul emphasizes that present is still marked by the creation being in bondage to the curse. Moltmann is simply over stretching the present impact of the Spirit in creation. He wants to see the full effects of the eschatological kingdom present in the here and now. Such must however await a future day, it is part of the hope, not part of the present reality of life in the Spirit.

Pinnock is more reasoned, since he tends to maintain a focus on the Spirit's activity in sustaining the life of the present creation, and more than simply sustaining it, by affirming it as the serendipitous creativity that is at work in creation. He perceives that the creation is proceeding in a positive direction, that it is full of life and is life supporting. This he considers to be the work of the Spirit. This is what motivates a Christian theology that takes a serious account of the ecological aspects of creation and gives rise to the development of a system of spirituality that is not simply inward and other worldly. Pinnock thus perceives of the whole of creation in sacramental terms, since in our experience of the creation we are experience the Spirit that indwells the creation.

The Spirit of God, understood as the third person of the triune God, is the agent of creation (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13). Furthermore, the consistent use of the imagery of

²⁵ Moltmann, *Spirit*, 57.

breath (רוּחַ) for the animating or living part of life for both human and animal life (Gen 7:15, 22-23; Isa 42:5) implies a similarity between them. This similarity is that this animating principle or life-force is from the Spirit (Psalm 33:6; 104:30). God's breath or spirit has been breathed into Adam, and so filled with God's breath he lives (Gen 2:7).

The constituent elements of the human being, according to the creation account is dust and breath. Death of the body is interpreted as being the moment when the spirit is returned to God, the dead body then begins a process of decay, which results finally in its being returned to dust (Psalm 104:29; Ecc 12:7). The realization that the loss of spirit immediately brings about a process of decay signals that the Spirit is the Spirit of life.

If the human spirit belongs to God then the breathing into the dust formed human body at creation is not simply an artificial respiration with a supernatural or generative effect. It is the imparting of divine life into the human form, a life distinct even from the breath which the other animals enjoy. While it is possible to speak of breath in purely literal terms, as the air inhaled and expelled from the lungs, it is used metaphorically for life itself. This life, in both the divine image bearer and in the animal creation is the life from God, the Spirit of God at work animating and preserving the creation.²⁶

Clark H. Pinnock admits in his *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* that "the Bible says less about creative functions of the Spirit than it does about redemptive functions surrounding the new creation."²⁷ The presence of the Spirit in creation and

²⁶ Moltmann, *Spirit*, 35.

²⁷ Pinnock, *Flame*, 50-51.

His work as an agent in the creation process is not by this statement denied. What Pinnock suggests has especial reference in terms of the salvific and redemptive role the Spirit plays in the drama of God in the world; the new creation functions as he calls them. Care must be exercised so as not to divorce the nature of the new creation from the present one. The issue of the new creation is not that Spirit is there in contrast to His absence in this present creation and life becomes a future and not a present reality, but that what the Spirit is doing in the world through Jesus is very different, though anticipated than previously. Furthermore, the difference in terms of His presence in creation would seem to be the degree to which His presence is made evident now that Jesus has come. The new life enjoyed by the redeemed in this present life is said to be pledge or down payment of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13), which implies a portion of what is to come has already been received.

The primary work of the Spirit in redemption is regeneration. In the Christian life this often referred to as a new birth. The implication of both of these expressions is that there is an old life or a previous life which is to be regenerated or reborn. Jürgen Moltmann speaks of this new birth as an experiencing of the resurrection of Jesus.²⁸ In the Apostle Paul's parlance it is the faith union of the believer with Christ in His death and resurrection, so that life is now lived according to different criteria (Rom 6; Gal 2:19-20). Simplified, this is life lived in accordance with the Spirit. David in Psalm 119 associates life with the Torah and pleads that he might be made to live according to the commandments, statutes and words of God. The emphasis seems to be on a revival of life for David, which would imply a new creation theme, though somewhat spiritually

applied. However, since life in the covenant was only possible when confined within the sphere of the Law, clearly to be in possession of the Law and conformed to it was to enjoy life. The Law according to Paul is spiritual, which means it has reference to the coming age of the Spirit (Rom 7:12; 14). In reference to this Garlington remarks:

In calling the law "spiritual," Paul identifies it with the Spirit and therefore with the age of his manifestation and working, i.e., the new creation as foretold by the prophets. In more specific terms, the law is derived from the Spirit and is the expression of his will.²⁹

The life that the Spirit regenerates is the life which the Spirit originally initiated in creation, but which has become oppressed and burdened with the weight of sin. The Bible sometimes speaks of people as dead before they are regenerated by the Spirit to give emphasis to the radical change that the Spirit brings (Eph 2:1-3), and to be sure this is a fair portrayal of the condition of unredeemed humanity. However, this dead state does not mean that there is no life implying no working of the Spirit. The unregenerated life is understood as dead, since it lacks any recognition of the presence of the Spirit and lives inconsistently with the Spirit. It has been overcome by death and will ultimately issue in death. It is a "living" that pursues things that destroy life rather than those things which nurture and strengthen life. Consequently it is a dead life!

The redeemed life is one that will issue in eternal life. The Spirit then, as the Spirit of life is the agent of this life also, but more than being the agent, He is Himself this life. The presence of the Spirit is the presence of resurrection life in the living of the redeemed in the same way that Adam's possession of the Spirit in Eden meant that

²⁸ *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 152-153; *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997) 28-32.

he also enjoyed the abundant life. Paul in Galatians 3:1ff questions the Galatians on their reception of the Spirit. The Spirit in this passage stands in direct contrast with the flesh which is Paul's language for the old creation, the former way of life in Adam. The Spirit in this context is the one who initiates the new creation and the life which is necessary to live in the new creation. Once one receives the Spirit, it is necessary to be in continual supply of the Spirit. And so Paul continues with the question about God's continuing to supply the Spirit and work miracles in their midst (Gal 3:5).

The Spirit as the creator and the giver of life then *is* the life which is to come. If this is so, then it is the possession of the Spirit which is the *sine qua non* of the possession of life, and in terms of God's redemptive program, it is the presence of the Spirit that designates one as being in possession of resurrection or new life made possible through the redemptive work of Jesus. The presence of the Spirit will inevitably be manifest as power to live the life of godliness, which according to Paul can be recognized by the Spirit's fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (Gal 5:22-23). It will further be displayed by its failure to produce or participate in immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing and "things like these" (Gal 5:19-21). In other words, the primary evidence of the Spirit will be the power of a new life lived in conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The presence of the Spirit reveals that the eschatological program of God has come to fruition in the person of Jesus Christ. These two things, Christ and

²⁹ Don B. Garlington, "Romans 7:14-25 and the Creation Theology of Paul," *Trinity Journal*, vol. 11 (NS,

eschatology, must be kept together. The Spirit is the agent of Christ and as the agent of Christ ushers in the Kingdom over which Christ the Spirit filled king shall rule. But in this construct, the important factor is to recognize that the present, because of Christ, has become the eschatological now of the prophecies of Old Testament Israel. The Spirit is the manifested power of that fact. All things must take into consideration that we have moved out of the age of the flesh, that time dominated by sin and rebellion and governed by a Law which was spiritual but had application primarily to the flesh into an age when the things of the flesh no longer dominate. The Spirit and the things of the Spirit are the substance of the eschatological now.

The presence of the Spirit may also be manifest by the presence of the charismata or the so called "gifts of the Spirit." The primary identification of these gifts is by many in contemporary charismatic practice thought to be the ability to speak in tongues, though other things such as having a spirit of prophecy, the ability to perform various signs that display the supernatural power of the Spirit is also attested . The question of whether these things are simply signs of confirmation for the Apostle's ministry at the founding of the Church seems to miss an essential point: these things were done so that it would be evident that the Spirit had indeed come. And if the Spirit has come, the life which is to come has also arrived with Him. To now speak of these things as having passed off the scene is to say that whole Church has fallen under the condemnation of Hebrews 6:4-6 where the participation of the Holy Spirit is compared with tasting the heavenly gift and the powers of the age to come (6:4-5). The Church, which is the final community of God marked out by its possession of the Spirit, cannot

now be denied the Spirit and still be the Church. It is in the Church that the experience of the Spirit is to take place since the presence of the Spirit in any particular gathering is what constitutes that gathering as the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church is the eschatological community of God not because its members are filled with the Spirit, though that is true, but because her meetings are characterized by the power and presence of the Spirit.

Hebrews speaking of those 'once enlightened', who have "tasted of the heavenly gift" and who have been "partakers of the Holy Spirit" and have "tasted the good word and powers of the age to come" is without a doubt speaking about the charismatic experience of the people of God. Hebrews as a book is decidedly corporate in its emphasis, and so it is not necessary to understand this passage in a purely individualistic sense. It has application to the Church as a corporate entity. The falling away seems to be a return to life outside of the Spirit. It is perhaps a denial of the Spirit's power and a refusal to be governed by the Spirit. The cessationist perspective on life in the Spirit amounts to an academic kind of falling away that denies the presence of the Spirit in the church now. But now is supposed to be the age where in the Spirit is working and the Spirit is manifesting Himself in these precise ways. The Church that refuses these manifestations may be doing so out of a concern to avoid excess and ensure that false spirits are not allowed to arise, but more accurately it probably amounts to a lack of faith that these things can happen. To so explain them away as simply the products of an inaugural activity of the Spirit in the life of the Church relegates these manifestations to a period of time that can no longer suffer the criticism of verification and examination. Further more to limit them and the recording of them to

a select group of Apostles fails to account for the presence of the Spirit in the Church at all. The Spirit was always present in Israel in some form, either in the leadership of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel and in the anointing of the kings or the numerous prophets who served to draw the nation back. The on going presence of the Spirit, albeit in a very limited way in comparison to the New Testament people of God, is what provided the assurance to the people of God in the Old Testament that they had not been forsaken. In Ezekiel, even when judgment comes upon them and they are driven from their land into exile, the Spirit of God in the form the Shekinah cloud went with them. So too in the Church today the Spirit must be manifest, and to deny the primary and distinguishing works out of fear or a lack of faith is unacceptable.

The coming of the Spirit at the Baptism of Jesus ushers in this new age with its powers. The essentially dualistic perspective of the apocalyptic with his two ages is of great significance for understanding what is taking place. The present age which is often characterized as "this present evil age" is yielding to the age which is to come. And the event in Jewish apocalyptic which signalled the break between this present age and the age to come is the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is a day when the righteous of Israel shall be vindicated, the oppressors and the unrighteous shall be judged and a whole new order of things is to be established by the Spirit of God. Often messianic elements are associated with this day of YHWH.

Christ arrives on the scene and initiates this day of the Lord. However, it does not unfold exactly as the Jewish apocalypticist conceived it because there is only a partial fulfillment of the promise. Jesus in reading His inaugural address from Isaiah 61 stops short mid-thought leaving out the phrase "and the day of vengeance of our God (Isaiah

61:2; Luke 4:19). The vindication of God's people shall await a future day. However, for our purposes, what this does is establish the period between the Lord's anointing by the Spirit and His second advent as one which is characterized by elements of both the present age and the age to come. This is the period in which the flesh still coincides along side of the spirit. But the real emphasis here is not that two coincide, but that the Spirit has come. In the context of the Church, the Spirit is to dominate, whereas in the context of the world the flesh will dominate.

This is the new creation, the new beginning initiated in the first advent of Jesus, though more specifically at his baptism and anointing. With Jesus' resurrection, the life of the age to come has been established in this present age and the believer who is joined to Jesus in faith shares in this life and so participates in the new creation.

Two of the Gospel accounts give record of the birth of Jesus. Matthew focuses upon the fulfillment of promises made and so sets Jesus within the whole story of God's salvation. The genealogy underscores that there is a continuity with the past. Jesus is an Israelite in the truest sense of the word. He derives from the most prominent tribe and is in direct lineage to the Davidic monarchy. Beyond that, his lineage is traced back to Abraham himself, the father of Israel, the one to whom the promise had been made, the promise of a seed and the promise of great blessing.

Jesus arrives on the scene through an act of the Spirit of God. His conception is a divine initiative in much the same way that Isaac's was, except that His, to infuse a concept from the Epistle to the Hebrews, is a better and more perfect one. Jesus is being set up by Matthew as the one promised to Abraham and ultimately He will replace Israel as God's Son.

Joseph may be seen as a type of Abraham, since he is a righteous man like Abraham and the supposed father of Jesus. And, as in the case of Isaac where conception was beyond Abraham's control so was the conception of Jesus beyond the power of Joseph. It was a work of the Spirit of God in both instances that resulted in the conception of these two children of promise.

Mary and Sarah are not hard to parallel, though the problem of conception is different for each of them and dealt with differently by each of them. Sarah is beyond child bearing years, not a virgin, and scoffs at the idea. Mary is a virgin, clearly "ripe" for childbearing and accepts the idea questioningly, but in faith.

Jesus is promised as a saviour to his people, Isaac is promised as an heir and as the means to the creation of a people of great number. Jesus is identified with this people by a recapitulation of their life in His own. His birth is symbolic of their creation as a work of God rather than of simply human origin. His connection with the patriarchs established geneologically and through a repetition of a pattern of origin unique to them. He is situated as the father of Israel in the same way as was Isaac.

Herod becomes something of a Pharaoh figure. His edict to destroy the infants for the preservation his own power parallels that of the Pharaoh of Israel's Egyptian exodus. The effect is the opposite in that this new Israel embodied in this tiny child is driven out of the promised land into Egypt rather than the reverse. However, his return is seen as a reenactment and the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

The Red Sea and our Lord's baptism parallel each other. What Israel was on one side of the Red Sea is qualitatively different from what she is on the other. She passed through the sea as a people who were slaves in Egypt bound and controlled by

all that that means and emerged as a people bound and controlled by God. Her immediate conference with YHWH at Sinai established the covenant which came to define her as the people of God until Jesus came and redefined the people after Himself.

Christ entered into the waters of the Jordan as a man and emerged as the embodiment of a new Israel, and beyond that a new Adam heading up a new humanity. The descent of the Spirit accompanied by the voice of God declaring Him to be the Son of God with whom God is pleased underscores that what is now taking place is a new thing. In short, at the Baptism of Christ, time is divided into the before and after. The heavens are rent and the Spirit of God has descended (Is. 64:1; Mk. 1:10) and the promised new creation is established.

The dove, a symbol of both the original creation (Gen 1:2) and the new creation following the flood demonstrates that a new creation is taking place. This one who has emerged from the waters is the embodiment of that New Creation. Christ Jesus is the New Creation.

The realization that Jesus comes to embody the new creation and in particular the messianic parts of it are demonstrated when John the Baptist, while in prison, sends his disciples to determine whether or not Jesus was the one who was to come or whether another should be expected. Jesus does not answer these disciples directly, but through a display of miraculous power bringing healing to many and by the preaching of the gospel he demonstrate that the kingdom has come. He then sends them back with the instruction to tell John what they have seen and heard. This is an obvious display of the promises made in Isaiah about the coming of the kingdom that

includes the healing of the people and the proclamation of God's favour upon His people (Isaiah 35:5; 61:1).

In His inaugural address in the Nazarene Synagogue immediately following His recapitulation of Israel's wilderness wandering and testing, Jesus applies Isaiah 61:1 to Himself. The Spirit having descended in the visible symbol of the dove, then, according to Matthew, led Him into the wilderness for the purpose of being tempted by the Devil (4:1). Luke also emphasizes that Jesus *being full of the Holy Spirit* was led into the wilderness where he was tempted (4:1-2). The reenactment is a conflation of both the Eden temptation scene and the Israelite wilderness testing period. Jesus however emerges obedient, and consequently comes to represent the people of God tested and faithful. Both Israel and Adam before failed to keep the faith, Adam in the perfect conditions of the garden, and Israel in the wilderness following the most wonderful display of God's deliverance and salvation from Egypt. Jesus is presented as the obedient Son of God and eventually in the course of the unfolding story as the Messiah who ushers in the Kingdom of God.

He is called the Christ in Matthew and Luke previous to the Baptismal experience, but usually in a context which suggests an historical reflection, prophetic announcement or as a heading outlining who is the subject of the work. Mark for instance refers to Jesus as the Christ in the first verse of the book, but this is an encapsulation of what he intends to write, namely "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." His next reference to Jesus as the Christ is in his account of Peter's confession in 8:29. Likewise Matthew speaks in the introductory genealogy and the birth narratives as the Christ only by way of editorial comment, such as "this is the

genealogy of Jesus Christ" (1:1), and "the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows" (1:18). The dialogue between the wise men and Herod also involves the use of this title, not in specific reference to Jesus but in a discussion about where it was that the Christ was to be born (2:4). The next reference is in 11:2 where John sends his disciples to question Him and He is emphatically stated to be the Christ: John has heard of the works that the Messiah was doing.

The same kind of pattern emerges in Luke's gospel. The messiahship of Jesus is not simply assumed but proved. And this generally through the working of the Spirit of God in Him. The people don't recognize Him to be the Messiah and a realization that this is what He is comes slowly. Only the demons recognize Him immediately, and yet they are not permitted to speak to this (Luke 4:41).

The presence of the Spirit is what reveals him as the Christ, and the presence of the Christ working the miracles of the Spirit is the sign that the kingdom of God has come. Matthew 12:22-32 which records the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees centres around the power which enables Jesus to cast out the demons. The Pharisees believed that Jesus' power was demonic, but Jesus refutes the claim and establishes that He does so by the Spirit of God. And if so, then the Kingdom of God has arrived.

With the advent of Christ with all that His first appearing involved, comes the Kingdom of God. It is manifest gradually at the beginning of His ministry and comes to full realization at Pentecost with the pouring out of the Spirit onto all flesh. In this context the Spirit dominates even to a greater degree than He did in ministry of Christ.

The record of miracles performed by the Apostle's even seem to supercede those performed by Jesus Himself. The age of the Spirit has come.

The arrival of the Spirit is manifest in the present through the defeat of Satan. He is overcome in the temptations, but more specifically he is bound so that Jesus is able to plunder his house. In particular, he is able to release those who have been in bondage. This becomes even more apparent in the spread of the gospel beyond the confines of the Jewish people into the whole world. Nations previously believed to be outside the interest of God are now brought near and become beneficiaries of the Spirit. The thing that signals that they have been accepted is precisely the fact that they have received the Spirit. An experiential measure, but one which was apparent to those who were present. Peter in defending his baptism of Cornelius and his household apart from a commitment to the Jewish way of life is summarized as "the Spirit falling on them as it had on us." The same Spirit therefore unites them. This becomes the primary element of Paul's argument with the Galatian church against the judeaizing tendencies in their midst. That the Jews and Gentiles are made into a single community by their faith in Christ, signaled by their reception of the same Spirit.

The new creation has dawned in Christ, but what is also very clear is that it has not yet been fully manifest. The Spirit which now works in the world is only a deposit or an earnest of what is to come. The full measure has not yet been poured out. Consequently this is because the present evil age with its emphasis upon the flesh has not been fully eradicated. We live as Christians in the period between the introduction and the consumation of the kingdom of God, and so live with one foot in the present and one in the future world. This dualism is what constitutes the problem elaborated in

Paul's frustration of living in the flesh and living by the law in Romans 7. The Spirit works in us the desire to do good, and sin works in us resulting in the doing of evil. However, the desire to do what is good is a signal that the Spirit does dwell within.

However, the struggle of the Christian life need not be simply confined to our struggle with sin. The struggle continues on a cosmic level and includes the various aspects of creation, that are themselves being released into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:21). Garlington aptly summarizes:

But until then [our redemption and glorification being made complete], though tension and frustration are far from being the whole of what it means to be a Christian, they are integral to the life of faith this side of the resurrection. This is the 'normal Christian life". Admittedly, Rom 7:14-25 is singular in its detailed witness to Paul's conflict with sin. Nevertheless it does not stand on its own: it forms part and parcel of the overall Pauline schema of the new creation as commenced but not consummated. Therefore we should not think that our struggle is confined to sin; it embraces as well the Christian's total experience of simultaneous peril and deliverance, weakness and strength, life and death, themes which permeate particularly 2 Corinthians. Our strife with indwelling sin is but one aspect of the eschatological/cosmic conflict inaugurated with the coming of Christ.³⁰

The Spirit is the Spirit of creation. He is also the Spirit of the new creation. His continual working in the creation to uphold it and sustain it are evident as the on going creative work of God. The Spirit is the Spirit of life. He sustains and creates life anew through His on going movement in and through the whole of the creation. He is in the creation in a dynamic and life giving way, though He is not to be confused with the creation. A balance is needed between the immanence and the transcendence of God that keeps these two in a healthy tension. He is present in a more full and immediate

way in the life of the people of God, and in particular He is present in the new covenant people of God.

The Spirit continues His work in creation, particularly in the lives of the people of God, whom He is in the process of making what Adam, his image bearer, ought to have been. What has not been perfected in the creation by Adam, is being perfected in Christ, and the Spirit is a big part of that.

Finally, the consumation of the new creation begun in principle in Christ and manifest in principle in His people shall be perfected by the Spirit. With the coming of Jesus in judgment, the remainder of the work promised in Isaiah 64:1 shall be completed. Then shall the kingdom be renovated and the regenerated people of God released from the present struggle of Spirit and flesh. The old age that is presently yielding to the age to come will have fully yielded. This is the work of the Spirit of God.

³⁰ Garlington, "Romans 7:14+25", 234.

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