

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Put on the Last Adam: The Background of Paul's Ethical Instructions in Romans 13:11-14¹

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Abstract

The background of Paul's ethical instructions in Rom 13:11-14, that, in view of the imminent return of Christ, Christians should eschew sinful behaviour and instead live righteously, have been assumed by several commentators to have derived from a cluster of disparate images. This approach however results in an irregular and unsatisfactory appreciation of the powerful rhetorical effects of the passage. In this paper, by exploring elements of Paul's doctrine of the "Last Adam" and its associations, especially the "Divine Warrior" motif, I propose that the images in the passage are derived from this Last Adam doctrine. Christians must be motivated to live godly lives because they will imminently inherit the incorruptible and glorious nature of the Last Adam by sharing in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

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1. Introduction

One of the crucial features of Paul's strategies in all of his exhortations was to generate very strong and potent imageries in the minds of his hearers and readers. These images were intended to stimulate and invigorate the spiritual imagination of the people and so rouse them to put the exhortations into practice. His use of language, according to Carol Poster, "stirs the movement of the soul" (2001:23) so that readers are driven to adopt the desired worldview, change behaviour and act in certain particular moral ways fitting their faith in Jesus. This strategy certainly agreed with Aristotle's instructions to ancient rhetoricians, that to successfully persuade the hearer, he or she "must be made to see things" (*Rhetoric* 3.11). The moral instructions of Paul must therefore not just be analysed and explained in a cold and calculated manner, but the pastoral and emotional stimulations that they convey(ed) and which are embedded in the metaphors and images that he employed must also be emphasised along with them. Without adequate understanding of the background and associations of the imageries that undergird Paul's exhortations, we, his modern interpreters, may not be sufficiently moved to put the instructions into practice.

The ethical instruction in Romans 13:11-14 is one such example of Paul's stirring of the spiritual imagination of the reader. Interposed between his paranaesis on love as the fulfilment of the law in Romans 13:8-10 and the practical outworking of this love within the community of God's people in Romans 14, Rom 13:11-14 reads,

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on

the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.³

Apart from the questions that are raised about the relationship between this passage and those preceding and following it, Paul also employs images that, on the surface, appear disconnected and disparate. In addition to the clothing and temporal metaphors, the apostle utilises military and dualistic images of day/night, sleep/wake, light/darkness, far/near and honourable/ignoble to convey his ethical instructions. Although "the combined effect is powerful" (Dunn 1988:792),⁴ such a superficially diverse mixture of images raises the possibility that there may have been an underlying plot that held them together; for as argued by MacIntyre, "All moral philosophy depends on a narrative account of reality for its force and intelligibility" (1984:4). If this "core narrative" existed, it should satisfactorily relate the surrounding passages together and fit into Paul's overall theology in Romans. Suggestions that the passage may have been a typical stanza of catechetical instructions that the apostle is quoting here in Romans 13 (e.g. Selwyn 1981:394-35; Bruce 1985:229), while plausible because of its similarity to other Pauline passages such as 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, nevertheless begs the question as to the nature of the relationship between the images.

In what follows, I propose that in Romans 13:11-14, Paul employs his doctrine of the Last Adam, infused with its other first century Jewish apocalyptic associations such as the Divine Warrior motif, to portray the believer as one who will imminently share in the incorruptible nature and identity of the Last Adam. This soon to be obtained glorious image in Christ, which will be the final reversal of the fall of humanity and our restoration to God's originally intended image in the first Adam, should stimulate the imagination that will motivate the Christian to godly behaviour. Such an understanding of the background of the passage has the advantages of not only fitting the cluster of metaphors together, but also provides appropriate links with the surrounding passages and so produces a more coherent explanation of this section of

³ All Bible quotations, except otherwise stated, are from the NRSV.

⁴ It was this passage that finally led to Augustine's conversion.

Romans. It may also have some relevance for interpreting other Pauline passages that have similar cluster of imageries.

2. Traditional interpretation of Romans 13:11-14

Traditional attempts at synthesizing the cluster of imageries in Romans 13:11-14 into one have rightly focused on the clothing metaphor in Romans 13:12 & 14, since Romans 13:14, in its form, is a summary statement concluding the passage. The clothing metaphor symbolises the identity and character of its wearer and it is hence universally understood that believers are being exhorted to adorn themselves with this identity in the world in which they lived. The fashion tip by Epictetus in *The Discourses 3.1* that one should "know, first, who you are; and then adorn yourself accordingly", is both literally and figuratively true, not only for the ancient Mediterranean person, but also in most cultures today. Clothing during those times, as it is now, was a powerful symbol of one's identity. As rightly put by Ronald A Schwarz, "more than any other material product, clothing plays a symbolic role in mediating the relationship between nature, man and his socio-cultural environment" (1979:24-25). It is therefore pertinent that the metaphor of clothing should be used to describe the new identity and character of the Christian. S/he is revealed and distinguished by the nature of the "clothing" of honourable and righteous behaviour, which is the "armour of light", that is, the Lord Jesus Christ (Cranfield 1998:688-89). Notwithstanding the merits of this explanation, it falls short of elucidating all the other images in the passage.

The clothing imagery is sometimes also thought to be derived from Paul's personal observations of the nocturnal behaviour of some contemporary Roman soldiers. John MacArthur hence suggests that "the imagery here pictures a soldier who has been engaged in a night orgy and drinking bout and, still clad in the garments of his sin, has fallen into a drunken sleep. But the dawn is approaching and the battle is at hand. It is time to wake up, throw off the clothes of night, and put on the battle gear" (1995:371). This interesting approach also inadequately accounts for the cluster of imageries, for whereas Paul may well have found the shameful nocturnal activities of certain Roman soldiers as parabolic opposite of those of the believer in Christ, the apocalyptic eschatology of the passage, together with the specific connection Paul makes

between "putting on Christ" and not making "provision for the flesh", would suggest a more profound theological concern of the apostle than of irreverent soldiers.

Other interpreters have seen the theological underpinnings of the clothing imagery as derived from the baptismal ritual of the earliest Christians. Based on the fact that Paul's other use of the "put on Christ" clause in Galatians 3:27 is in relation to "baptism into Christ", some commentators have suggested that "put on Christ" is derived from the usually white clothing that baptismal candidates in the early church wore to signify their newly acquired righteousness in Jesus (e.g., Käsemann 1969:168-82). In his recently published dissertation, Jung Kim has extended this baptismal understanding of Pauline clothing imagery further by linking it with the disrobing/re-clothing of the Levitical priests in their daily cultic functions in the Old Testament tabernacle (2004:185). We will return to this thesis later; however, it is not immediately obvious how baptismal imagery helps clarify the cluster of metaphors, especially the apocalyptic and military images in the passage. Dunn is right when he notes that "the reference back to baptism is less justified exegetically and less helpful than it might be" (1988:793).

Another approach understands the phrase as derived from its Greco-Roman use as a figure of speech for imitating someone else. Albert Barnes, in his commentary on this passage, refers for example to a tradition in which Lucian describes "putting on Pythagoras" as a way of expressing his imitation and discipleship to the ideas of his philosopher master (1999-2001). Similarly, Bruce notes the use of the "put on" clause in Dionysius Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities* 11.5 where "'put on Tarquin' means to 'play the part of Tarquin'" in a drama or performance (1985:229). In the Bible, the "put off" and "put on" clauses are not uniquely Pauline, but are also employed in James 1:21 and 1 Peter 2:1. It is therefore possible that Paul was using a common expression through which believers were exhorted to live righteously. Understood this way, the passage is another means of articulating Christian discipleship as an imitation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians must follow the way Jesus trod and eschew the sinful desires of the flesh, especially since their salvation is nearer than when the earthly Jesus first announced that the kingdom of God had come.

It is nevertheless likely that while the clause may have been a common metaphorical expression, Paul would also employ it in a theological sense to fit his purposes in Romans 13. Indeed the problem of explaining how such an understanding fits into the overall theology of Romans remains. The attraction of this and the other approaches, therefore, though immensely helpful in grasping the individual images, do not satisfactorily explain how they fit together within Paul's general theology in Romans and the exhortations of Romans 13 in particular. Even though Dunn draws attention to the connection of "put on Christ" with Paul's theology of the Last Adam (1988:790), he does not clarify how this explains the "provision for the flesh" clause that follows it; neither does he extend this understanding to elucidate the cluster of images in the whole passage. I propose that an understanding of the nature of this doctrine in Paul and its associated beliefs in contemporary Jewish apocalyptic circles may help to integrate the various images.

3. The last Adam in Paul's theology & ancient Judaism

The theology of the book of Romans is hinged around the concepts of *creation* and *covenant*. In the words of N. T. Wright, the issues at the heart of Paul's theologising in Romans are related to these two concepts: "First, the covenant is there to solve the problems within creation. God called Abraham to solve the problem of evil, the problem of Adam, the problem of the world.... But, second, creation is invoked to solve the problems within the covenant" (2005:24). The theology of Romans has therefore been correctly summarised using five alliterative titles: creation, covenant, Christ, church and consummation (Reumann, 1964:84). Creation was corrupted by sin and the covenant was a temporary correction to this corruption. Christ came to inaugurate the church through which creation would be restored to God's righteousness, to its intended glorious state in Christ at the final consummation.

3.1 The Last Adam doctrine in Romans

As a result of this theological approach, Paul constructs his thesis in Romans around three principal actors: Adam, Abraham and Christ.⁵ Abraham is invoked to demonstrate the problems with the covenant, but it is the two other actors: Adam and Christ, who throughout Romans take on the centre stage of Paul’s theological discussions. Whereas Adam represented the failure of creation, Christ, in contrast, represented restoration of creation to God’s intended position. While Adam is the type, Christ is his antitype; Christ is the Last Adam who comes to solve the problem of the first Adam.

This Last Adam doctrine is explicitly discussed in Romans 5. In a gist, Paul affirms in one of his contrasts, “Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all” (Rom 5:18). The whole problem of sin, which has infected all creation, started with Adam’s trespass. From this trespass, all his progeny have also fallen short of God’s glory (Rom 3:23). Adam’s sin was both personal and corporate; its result is also personal and corporate, affecting all human beings (Rom 5:12; see also Rapinchuk 1999:427-441). Moreover, Adam’s sin infected all creatures, for they also “groan and travail” as they suffer its consequences (Rom 8:22). The covenant or “the law”, in a way, compounded the problem for humanity, for the “law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied” (Rom 5:20).

Then enters the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Adam, who through his “act of righteousness” provides “the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness” to all those who believe (Rom 5:17). The nature of this righteousness that Christ gives, freely and through the Spirit, is expounded in more details in subsequent chapters of Romans but there is no doubt that this is patterned according to the “image” of Christ (Rom 8:29). This glorious image, to which believers in Christ are being conformed, parallels the image of the pre-fall Adam in Paul’s theology. In the words of Bruce, “The fulfilment of this purpose is involved, for New Testament writers, in the creative words of Genesis 1:26, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our

⁵ CK Barrett (1962) similarly constructs the whole of “salvation-history”, the *Heilsgeschichte*, around five men: Adam, Abraham, Moses, Christ and the Man to Come.

likeness" (1985:167). In Christ, humanity is being restored to the character and image for which God intended it to be.

Scholars have therefore rightly detected the presence of allusions to Adam in other portions of the book of Romans. John Levison, for example, has recognised hints of the fall of Adam and Eve in Romans 1:18-25, when that passage is compared with beliefs in contemporary first century Jewish circles (2004:519-534). Similarly, and as stated earlier, Paul's reference to the "groans and travails" of creation as it waits for the consummation of humanity's restoration is also an allusion to Genesis 3. The "groans" are a backward reference to the curse of creation that followed Adam's sin, while the "travail" is a double allusion to Eve's "pain in childbirth" and the Jewish anticipation of the coming Messiah. Thus Paul stresses that since Adam's fall, the whole creation "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" (Rom 8:19). The final restoration of creation, "the hope in the dawning victory of God and the imminent redemption of the created order", is hence also depicted by Paul in terms of his doctrine of Adam (Beker 1980:ix).

Paul also discusses the condition of humanity between the fall and the final consummation in terms of his doctrine of Adam in Romans 7. Though, as noted by Dockery, "Rom 7 is one of the pivotal passages in Paul's theology" (1981:240), there have been differences in scholarly opinion on who is the "I" in the passage—whether it identifies Paul himself or a hypothetical person, or, if it is Paul, whether it is his pre-conversion or post-conversion experience (see Holland 1999:260-280 for a review of the various scholarly positions). Whether the passage narrates Paul's own experience or refers to a hypothetical person, however, several scholars have nevertheless noted that the language of Paul has allusions to Adam. Garlington, for example, has grounded the whole of Romans 7:14-25 within what he called Paul's "Creation Theology" (1991:202-206). More specifically, Käsemann has argued that since "only Adam can be said to have been alive before the commandment" (1980:198), Paul must have been presenting the difficult struggle that human beings go through in trying to obey the law in their own strength, in terms of an internal struggle within Adam.

Perkins has likewise drawn attention to the emphasis on the lust or passions of the flesh (*epithumia*) in Romans 7:7-8 (the same word is also used in Rom

13:14), suggesting that in accordance with contemporary Jewish apocalyptic beliefs, the emphasis on lust in Romans 7 alluded to Adam’s sin (1986:512-22). Indeed, this aspect of Romans 7 has very close parallels with Romans 13:14. Thus whereas Romans 7:5 points to the “sinful passions” roused while “living in the flesh”, 13:14 warns that no allowance should be made for “the flesh to gratify its desires” (cf. Rom 6:12). Hence, in Perkins’ view, the first Adam’s post-fall nature is closely tied to “the flesh”. Though Paul’s general theology of the “flesh” (*sarx*) in Romans and elsewhere is never straightforward, ranging from neutral (e.g., Rom 1:3, 4:1, 8:3 & 9:5) to thoroughly negative, sometimes as an evil force equated with sin (e.g., Rom 6:12, 7:14, 8:8, 12).⁶ In Romans 7 & 13, *sarx* is both negative and associated with a struggle to fence off its bad tendencies. As we shall shortly see, “lust of the flesh” was a distinctive way of depicting the sin of Adam within first century Jewish apocalyptic circles.

Busch has argued that it is Eve, rather than Adam, who is the focus of the allusions in Romans 7. Since Romans 7:11 is a clear allusion to Eve’s statement in Genesis 3:13 that “the serpent deceived me”, Busch suggests that Paul in Romans 7 is using “the common Greco-Roman rhetorical device of the *prosopopoiia* or *fictio personae* (speech-in-character) and speaking as Eve in the scene of the primeval transgression” (Busch 2004:14; see also Gundry 1980:228-245). The primary thrust of Paul’s theology in Romans, however, focuses more on the fall of *all* creation, without seeking to make distinctions between the two primeval persons. It is for that reason fair to assume that both persons were represented within Paul’s references to the Adam doctrine⁷ in Romans 7. Adam in Romans was corporate representation of Eve and all

⁶ For a recent general discussion of this topic see Marshall (2002: 387-403). Louw and Nida (1988) list up to 8 different semantic meanings of *sarx*: the substance that covers the bones of both animals and humans, the human body itself, all human beings collectively, describing genetic descent from a parent or relationship with another kin, the human nature in opposition to divine nature, physical nature and Jesus’ earthly life. Clearly, these distinctions are sometimes very difficult to make in particular passages and often include more than one semantic meaning.

⁷ This, of course, is not true of 1 Tim 2:14 where the distinctions between the sexes were necessary for Paul’s particular teaching in that passage.

creation (Rom 5:12); they both shared the same image before their sin, and fell from God's glory together.⁸

In a summary, Paul in Romans presents his doctrine describing God's originally intended glory for all humanity by paralleling it with the image of the primordial Adam; humankind's internal struggle to obey God's law, "without the Spirit" is also elaborated by alluding to Adam; and the future image to which Christ will restore humanity is also detailed in analogous terms to the same Adam doctrine. It is therefore unsurprising that Paul would also express the character of redeemed humanity as it approaches the great day of consummation also in terms of his doctrine of Adam. Before we explore this doctrine in Romans 13, however, a brief examination of 1 Corinthians 15 is in order; since it is the other passage in the Pauline corpus⁹ with explicit reference to Adam and is of relevance to our study. This is followed by a discussion of some of the speculations on Adam and Eve within ancient Jewish circles.

3.2 The Adam doctrine in 1 Corinthians 15

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul explicitly employs beliefs about the nature of the first Adam as a type or model to teach the Corinthians about the nature of the resurrection body that believers will inherit. 1 Corinthians 15:22 is a duplication of his teaching in Romans 5, in which he affirms that "as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ". He goes further in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 to elaborate the nature of the resurrected body by comparing and contrasting the first Adam with Christ, the Last Adam: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor 15:49). In other words, "the body that rots in the grave is emphatically not the body of the future resurrection" (Thiselton 2000:1267). This resurrection body is therefore a glorious "heavenly body" (1 Cor 15:40-41); the transformation that believers will experience at the resurrection is

⁸ For a discussion of questions related to the sexes in the pre-fall state, see Meeks (1974: 193-95).

⁹ The other passage is 1 Tim 2:13-14. Scholars have suggested Adam allusions also in Gal 3:27, 2 Cor 3:18, 4:7-5:21 & Phil 3:20-21.

indeed "out of this world". In the words of Daniel 12:3, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (see Martin, 1995:270-74 for a discussion on various interpretations of this aspect of 1 Cor 15).

Despite this heavenly dimension of the resurrected body, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 nevertheless uses references to the first Adam as the means to convey his teaching. Hence he quotes and emphasises that "'the first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a *life-giving spirit*" (1 Cor 15:45, emphasis added). The first Adam, humankind in the corporate sense, received life from the breath of God; the Last Adam, on the other hand, *gives* life through his indwelling and transformation of humanity. What Paul is doing in this passage therefore is not to speculate about the anatomical and the atomic contents of resurrected bodies but rather to indicate their transformed nature; his emphasis is on "the new body animated by the Spirit of God" (Barrett 1971:372). As pointed out by Bruce, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 always has in mind the Last Adam Christology which serves as his model for comparisons and contrasts (1971:152). In citing Genesis 2:7 in this passage, Paul is demonstrating his use of the creation account as the scheme to teach the final reversal of humanity back to God's intended glorious state.

Both in Romans and this section of 1 Corinthians, and other Pauline passages, Adam served as a useful model for Paul to teach Christology, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology. This practice of Paul's should be expected, considering the presence of speculations and beliefs about the primordial Adam that existed in apocalyptic Jewish circles of his time. Whereas Paul avoided the far-fetched speculations and often sought to negate them through his Christological emphases, he certainly found the Adam doctrine as a useful model for his pastoral and exhortational purposes, as the following examination of some of these apocalyptic teachings demonstrate.

3.3 Beliefs about Adam in ancient Judaism

Stephen Hultgren (2003:343-370) has carefully investigated the possible sources¹⁰ of Paul’s teaching on the Last Adam by comparing it with parallels in Philo, Gnosticism and Rabbinic literature. He concluded that the closest parallels are within the Jewish inter-testamental apocalyptic literature, those of Qumran and later Rabbinic Midrashim. Among these writings there are several references that elaborate on the nature and glory of God’s image in the first Adam and speculations on the significance of the apparent emphases on nakedness and clothing in Genesis 3.

Within the Dead Sea Scrolls,¹¹ the phrase “all the glory of Adam” occurs on three occasions in *1QS IV 23*, *CD III 20*, and *1QH IV 15* in which connections are made between the future glorious nature of “the righteous” and “the glory” of the primordial Adam. This glory was sometimes described as a clothing to be worn by the righteous, so that in *1QS IV 7-8*, for example, the righteous will be given “a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light”. In the *Damascus Document (CD)*,¹² the “glory of Adam” is speculated as being a vestment worn by righteous priests in their ministry in the sanctuary as predicted in Ezekiel 44:15 (*CD III 20*). There is a possible suggestion here also of the tradition that regarded Adam’s work as steward of God’s creation as a priestly function in the Garden of Eden, the primitive form of God’s temple (hence Kim’s thesis noted earlier). Similarly, in the *Manual of Discipline*, *1QS IV 23*, the righteous are described as “those God has chosen for an everlasting covenant, and to them shall belong *all the Glory of Adam*”.

¹⁰ Though certain scholars may view extra-canonical material as “sources” for biblical thoughts and concepts, my approach is rather to regard the presence of parallel concepts outside the Bible as only helping to provide background information that enhances our understanding of inspired Scripture. The ancient Jewish “sources” that are cited here, some of which post-date Paul, do not serve as the “sources” of Paul’s theology but rather demonstrate associated and parallel beliefs against many of which Paul was actually polemicising rather than endorsing in his epistles.

¹¹ The quotations are all from Vermes (2004).

¹² Francis Watson has drawn extensive parallels between this document and Rom 9 - 11, in an internet article at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/kevin.bywater/Watson%20Outline.pdf> accessed on 20th April 2007. Geza Vermes dates the *Damascus Document* around 100 BC (2004: 127).

Likewise in the *Hodayot*, the Hymn of Praise, God is described by his righteous people as “casting away all their iniquities” and “giving them as a legacy, *all the glory of Adam*” (*QH IV 15*).

This “glory of Adam” was sometimes equated to that of the angels, so that it was believed that the righteous would share the same glory and interact with the angels in God’s paradise just as Adam did.¹³ Indeed, according to Fletcher-Louis, an “angelomorphic anthropology” seemed to have been pervasive in Qumran and that “the theology of ancient Judaism took for granted the belief that in its original, true, redeemed state humanity is divine (and or angelic)” (2002:xii). Even though Fletcher-Louis slightly overstates his case, there is no doubt that some rabbinic writings speculated about Adam’s interactions with angels, with some angels said to have even attempted to abominably worship him (e.g. *Gen Rab 8-10*). Thus a number of these teachings emphasised that the future glory of believers would be as, if not greater than, those of the angels.

Ancient rabbinic literature, much of which is post-biblical, also speculated about the significance of the references to nakedness, clothing made of fig leaves and “the garments of skins” which God made for Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Some espoused that before the fall, Adam was clothed in a vestment of bright light of glory (*Gen Rab 20*), even “like those of the stars” (Schechter 1997:91). Similarly, David Aaron has drawn attention to the general Midrashic tradition, which taught that before the fall Adam had a luminous body that reflected the brightness of the image of God (1997:304; see also Gottstein 1994:171-95). Indeed Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15:40-41, in which, in the middle of discussing the nature of the resurrected body, he insists that “there are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.... There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory”, seems to suggest that

¹³ See 3 Apoc of Baruch 6:16, 2 Enoch 22:8, 30:12; *Gen Rab 20:12*; 1 Enoch 45:4-5; 51, 58 & 61-62

at least he knew of beliefs that compared redeemed “heavenly bodies” to those of the sun, moon and stars.¹⁴

Resulting from this association of Adam’s glorious state with the sun, moon and stars, his pre-fall “garment” was speculated to be related to the day/night and sleep/wake rhythm so that Adam’s glory shined during the day while he was awake but was covered during the night. *Genesis Rabbah 11* reads: “Adam’s glory did not abide the night with him. What is the proof? But Adam passeth not the night in glory (Ps. XLIX, 13). The rabbis maintain: His glory abode with him, but at the termination of the Sabbath he deprived him of his splendour and expelled him from the Garden of Eden, as it is written, Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away (Job XIV, 20)”. Rubin & Kosman have also identified that in some of these rabbinic writings, “Adam’s clothing” was regarded as symbolic of “Jewish Apocalyptic time” (1997:160). Believers, who would soon be adorned with Adam’s glory, were therefore described in several of these writings as “children of light” who do battle against the “sons of darkness” (*1QM*, the War Scroll & *1QS* III 20-25).

In his discussion of the transformation of Moses’ face into glorious bright light on Mount Sinai (Exod 34:28-35), in 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 Paul alludes to this tradition of the glory of the redeemed as luminous light. Unlike these speculations, however, believers in Christ “with unveiled faces” looking into “the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another”.¹⁵ Similarly a number of scholars have sought to interpret the theological significance of the transfiguration of Jesus in the gospels with this background in mind (e.g., Lee 2004).

Ancient Jewish “sources” also made specific speculations on the nature of the sin of Adam and Eve. *The Life of Adam and Eve* (also called *The Apocalypse of Moses*) is an apocryphal “haggadic midrash on Genesis 1-4” (Charlesworth

¹⁴ The resemblance of this with John’s vision of the “woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12:1) and ready to do final apocalyptic battle with the evil “dragon”, is perhaps more than a mere coincidence.

¹⁵ This is one of several examples in which Paul polemically refers to extra-canonical speculations to emphasize his Christology, Eschatology and Soteriology.

1976:74), which, according to Eissfeldt, was written between 20 B.C. and A.D. 70 (1965:637) and which extensively embellishes the story of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve. In *The Life of Adam and Eve* 19:3, for example, Eve is made to narrate her story to Seth her son, in which she swears an oath to the serpent, "'Master, and by the Cherubim and the Tree of Life! I will give also to my husband to eat'. And when he [the serpent] had received the oath from me, he went and poured upon the fruit the poison of his wickedness, which is lust, the root and beginning of every sin, and he bent the branch on the earth and I took of the fruit and I ate" (Charles 1913). The fruit, which was eaten in disobedience, was hence regarded as poisoned with "lust" (*epithumia*) by the serpent. Accordingly, in some of these Jewish circles, "lust" became a generic term to depict sin in general rather than a particular expression for sexual sin.

After eating the fruit, Eve confessed, "I became bare of the righteousness with which I have been clothed" (*Apoc Moses 20:1-2*). Likewise Adam, after he had eaten the fruit, started accusing Eve thus "O wicked woman! What have I done to thee that thou hast deprived me of the glory of God?" (*Apoc Moses 21:6*). There was hence a very close association, at least in some ancient Jewish theological thought, between the fall of Adam and "lust of the flesh". Such a connection was easily assumed from the Septuagint of Genesis 3 in which "the fruit is described as 'timely' or 'seasonable', 'beautiful' and 'comely'", thus evoking the same connotations of "lust" (Jones 1996:2036; for discussion on these speculations, see also Sharpe 1973:35-46; Anderson 2001).

A summary of this section is in order. Within the Dead Sea Scrolls and rabbinic sources, Adam's glory before the fall was depicted in angelic terms and as a clothing of bright light that was thought to be related to day/night, light/darkness and sleep/wake rhythm. They believed that the cause of Adam's fall itself was derived from "the lust of the flesh", perceived as the root cause of all evil. The "righteous", who eschewed "lust of the flesh", would in the future inherit a glory of similar stature as Adam's pre-fall glory. The parallels of this summary with Romans 13:11-14 are evident. It is important to point out again that these examples in ancient Jewish beliefs only serve to illustrate not that Paul borrowed from these speculations, but that he sometimes

presented his teaching either to refute or to demonstrate a far superior teaching about the glorious inheritance of the saints in Christ. Our knowledge of these speculations, I suggest, enhances our understanding of the background of Paul's teaching.

3.4 The Divine Warrior motif in Paul

In Romans 13:12, Paul also describes the righteous character that believers were to adorn themselves with in military terms as the "armour of light". This is not the only place in the Pauline corpus¹⁶ where he depicts the character of the believer as a weapon by which God defeats his enemies; yet, here in Romans 13:11-14, Paul associates this with his Adam doctrine. Is this association of any significance?

As excellently demonstrated by Thomas Neufeld (1997), the Divine Warrior motif itself underwent radical re-interpretation from the Old Testament, where God is depicted as the Warrior who leads the hosts of angels to fight on behalf of his people, to Paul's teaching that God now indwells and transforms believers, to make them victorious warriors able to stand "against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12), "to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Eph 6:18), and to "have divine power to destroy strongholds...and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10:4-5).

The Old Testament background¹⁷ of this motif is extensive, but for our purposes, we shall focus on Isaiah 59, since it contains a number of parallels with Romans 13:11-14. In Isaiah 59, God the Warrior threatens to turn against his people because of their "transgressions" and "iniquities"; and because they

¹⁶ Other passages are 1 Thes 5:1-11 & Eph 6:11-18

¹⁷ E.g. Num 10:33, Judg 5:12, Pss 2, 29:10; 44:24, 69:1; 77:59-72 & Is 10:53-11:3. The motif itself occurs in extra-canonical sources (e.g. Wisdom of Solomon 5) and like the Adam doctrine is associated with several speculations.

behave like drunkards who “stumble at noon as in the twilight” (Isa 59:10). God would put on “righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in fury as in a mantle” (Isa 59:17) to fight against his “intoxicated” people. Instead of joining in with God to fight the works of darkness, God’s people in Isaiah 59 have covered themselves with works of iniquity (Isa 59:6); “justice is *far* from us, and righteousness does not reach us; we wait for light, and lo, there is darkness; and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.... We wait for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is *far* from us” (Isa 59:9-11).

The echoes of these Isaianic statements in Romans 13:11-14 are loud enough, especially within the context of the Divine Warrior motif. In Romans 13, however, Paul reverses things so that the redeemed in Christ, unlike Isaiah’s hearers, are exhorted to clad themselves with the “armour of light” like God their military Captain, for salvation is *nearer* to them rather than being far. The Christians in Rome, unlike Isaiah’s listeners who were stumbling like drunkards “at noon”, should rather “live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness” (Rom 13:13).

The influence of Isaiah on Paul’s theology, especially in Romans, is well-documented (e.g., Gleason 1983). As eloquently put by Wagner, “Paul was attracted to Isaiah for answers to question that faced his congregation because he found in the prophet a fellow preacher of the good news” (2002:1). In Romans 13, Paul was teaching that in the final apocalyptic battle which is gathering, believers must put on their vestment of light and join in with Christ, their Divine Warrior, to defeat the world of darkness through their godly behaviour; for sooner rather than later they would be clad in these same garments of light that the hosts of God now do.

4. The role of Romans 13:11-14 in Paul’s theology in Romans

With this background in mind, we can now appreciate more fully “the plot”, which stitches the superficially disparate images together in Romans 13:11-14. The narrative goes like this: the day of “salvation” is fast approaching, at which time believers will be adorned in the full righteous clothing of the glorious image of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Adam. In their luminous garments of holiness, marking the awakened new day, they will participate in

the final apocalyptic battle in which God the Divine Warrior and his hosts will destroy the evil deeds of darkness forever. Christians should therefore, even now, cast away all the sinful conduct of the old Adam, and practically exhibit this godly character patterned after the righteous and shining vestment of the Spirit imparting Christ, the Last Adam, who indwells them.

Such a narrative fits into Paul's purpose for writing Romans very well. Though the specific situational context of the believers to whom Paul addressed Romans remains disputed among scholars, whether the epistle was written to deal with a Jewish/Gentile conflict in the congregation (Russell 1988:174-84) or to solve "a complex of purposes and hopes" (Cranfield, 1998:815) or Romans is a "tractate letter, outlining a general theological argument or series of arguments" (Moo, 1991:15) or, more likely, "to set before [the Romans] the gospel as he understood and proclaimed it" (Bruce, 1985:14), the above interpretation appropriately accords with any of these hypothetical contextual situations.

More importantly, when understood this way, the passage suitably fits into the flow of Paul's theological argument in Romans. The exhortations of Romans 12:1-15:16,¹⁸ which in Paul's overall theology in the epistle teaches "the outworking of the Gospel for the redefined People of God in everyday terms" (Dunn, 1988:705), is a unit that is bracketed by the priestly images in Romans 12:1-2 & 15:14-16, emphasising the need for dedication of believers both as God's acceptable sacrifices and as his priests. Paul's general concern in Romans 12-15 was to answer the question: how does the Church live between now and the fast approaching consummation? Having defined the old creation and its strictures in terms of the first Adam, Paul's answer to this question was to define the church of Christ as now involved in a mission with God to restore his creation back to the originally intended glory according the image of the Last Adam, just as it was the first Adam's original priestly ministry to be the steward of God's creation.

¹⁸ Most commentaries end the section at Rom 15:13 and place Rom 15:14-16 as a separate section in which Paul explains more of his circumstances. The parallels of Rom 12:1-2 with 15:14-16 would however suggest that, at least conceptually, the section more appropriately closes at Rom 15:16.

Consequently, in Romans 12:3-21 Paul explains the dynamics of fellowship within this new people of God, insisting that believers are to behave towards each other in love and unity because they belong to the Last Adam; they "are *one body* in Christ" (Rom 12:5). In Romans 13:1-10, he explains how the church should relate to the outside world, the first Adam, with regard to their civil duties and responsibilities. In Romans 13:11-14, the church needs to distinguish itself as people who belong to the Last Adam and not the first Adam and in Romans 14:1-15:13 Paul explains further the dynamics of fellowship within the body of Christ, "so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 15:6). The Last Adam therefore fulfils the originally intended duty of the first Adam through the church.

5. Implications and conclusion

If the background of Romans 13:11-14 can rightly be understood this way, it may be of benefit to explore a number of subsidiary questions that are raised, but whose answers call for further research and reflections. Firstly, on what basis did Paul combine the Last Adam doctrine with the Divine Warrior motif? I speculate at this stage that the answer to this question may be closely related to the "Son of Man" motif and the Jewish beliefs that saw Adam's original ministry as a priestly one. A second subsidiary question relates to how we may interpret other Pauline passages with similar clusters of images. It appears from our discussion that, probably, a review of the usual explanation that these clusters of images may have been staple verses that were randomly strewn together as an addendum to the epistles to exhort believers may be warranted. While it is very likely that there existed many familiar exhortational statements, further investigation of their underlying narratives and how these images functioned together to rouse the congregations to put the instructions into practice is likely to be much more fruitful.

I finally conclude that the cluster of images in Romans 13:11-14 had a narrative background that must have made it intelligible and inspiring for the Romans; and even more importantly, fitted into Paul's flow of argument in the epistle to the Romans. Spirit-led righteous behaviour of Christians, in the face of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, was so much vital to Paul, that

he employed the forceful theological image of creation and re-creation to inspire and enthruse believers to pursue holy living. We do well not to discard this narrative background, otherwise, Christian character formation becomes just another way of listing legalistic "do's and don'ts".

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