

“CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON”: Participation in Christ as Divine Sonship in Romans 8

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Perhaps no topic in contemporary Pauline scholarship has been viewed as more central to unpacking the Apostle’s soteriology than the question of what constitutes being “in Christ.”¹ While the notion received attention in the works of pioneering figures such as Adolf Deissmann,² Albert Schweitzer,³ and W.D. Davies,⁴ since E. P. Sanders’ landmark book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977), scholars have come to recognize participation in Christ as, to quote Michael Gorman, “a fundamental category for understanding Paul.”⁵ In one of the most cited passages of the work, Sanders states:

Being one body and one Spirit with Christ is not simply living out of a revised self-understanding, although that also may result. It seems to me best to understand Paul as saying what he meant and meaning what he said: Christians really are one body and Spirit with Christ, the form of the present world is passing away, Christians are really being changed from one stage of glory to another, the end will really come and those who are in Christ will really be transformed. But what does this mean? How are we to understand it? We seem to lack a category of “reality”—real participation in

- 1 James D. G. Dunn (*Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 396–410) points out that *en Christō* occurs eighty-three times in the broader Pauline corpus, fifty-eight in the undisputed epistles. Notably, outside of the Pauline corpus such imagery appears in the New Testament only in 1 Peter.
- 2 See Adolf Deissmann, *Die Neutestamentliche Formel “In Christu Jesu”* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892); *idem*, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. W. E. Wilson (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957 [1911]).
- 3 See Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. W. Montgomery (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988 [1930]).
- 4 See W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1965).
- 5 See Michael Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 3. See also the section, “Participation in Christ as the Key to Pauline Soteriology,” in Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xxix–xxxiii. Hays explains that by focusing on this issue, “Sanders put his finger on the heart of the matter” (xxvi n. 12).

Christ, real possession of the Spirit—which lies between naïve cosmological speculation and belief in magical transference on the one hand and a revised self-understanding on the other. I must confess that I do not have a new category of perception to propose here.⁶

In the nearly four decades since Sanders penned these words, great strides have been made in attempting to answer this challenge. Indeed, explicating what being “in Christ” means has been at the core of the much-discussed movement in Pauline studies known broadly as the “new perspective” on Paul.⁷ Outside of this movement, however, the conversation has also been advanced in significant ways by the recent work of John Barclay and a number of his students.

In this article, we shall first discuss some of the ways such recent scholarship has helped shed new light on what “participation” in Christ involves, highlighting work that has helped to underscore the transformative power of divine grace. Drawing on such developments we shall turn to Romans 8 to demonstrate the way sonship serves to integrate the various aspects of Paul’s discussion. As we shall see, being “in Christ Jesus” is inseparably linked to several important ideas: (1) atonement and fulfilling of the law; (2) the divine sonship of Christ; (3) the Spirit of sonship and the life of virtue; (4) the in-breaking of the age of divine sonship; and (5) the revelation of divine sonship in suffering. In sum, by means of Romans 8 we will seek to demonstrate that divine sonship serves to unite the various aspects of participation highlighted by the scholars above, for through empowering divine grace, adopted sons are enabled to be conformed to the Son, living out a life of holiness and virtue, fulfilling the just requirement of the law. Moreover, united to him, they share in the suffering that is necessary for the redemption of the cosmos, ushering in the eschatological age.

I. Participation and the Transformation of Human Agency in Pauline Scholarship

In his recent work, John Barclay has focused on Paul’s understanding of grace (*charis*), a term which, in the original Greek, could simply be translated as “gift.” In particular, Barclay has examined gift-giving in antiquity with some surprising results. While Western attitudes reject the idea that a gift entails obligations upon the recipient, holding that a gift must come with “no strings attached,” this was clearly not the understanding of Paul’s Graeco-Roman

6 E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 522–523.

7 For a balanced discussion, see Kent L. Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011).

audience. In fact, depending on both the nature of the gift and the identity of the giver, Paul's readers would have understood that a gift came with real obligations. Barclay writes, "It was extremely common in antiquity for recipients of gifts to feel themselves obliged to their donors; in fact this is so much taken for granted that it forms the subject of delicate negotiation from both sides (see Seneca, *De beneficiis* passim)."⁸

Indeed, Barclay goes on to show that Paul's language assumes such an understanding. In Romans 6, for example, "the idea that God gives gifts that put us under obligation to him does not seem to be a problem for Paul."⁹ Barclay explains, "the sense of submission and obligation runs very strongly through 6:11–13, and Paul has no difficulty in describing the 'newness of life' as a life lived under the rule of grace."¹⁰ Paul's description of Christians as "under grace" (*hypo charin*) "is paralleled by similar phrases in antiquity, such as the notice in Manetho that the king of Ethiopia was under obligation to Amenophis, king of Egypt, out of gratitude (*chariti hēn autō hypocheirios*)."¹¹

According to Barclay, Pauline grace is unique in that it is both (1) countercultural and (2) transcendent. First, it is countercultural because the gift is given to the unworthy. Yet, even though it is given to the unworthy, it nonetheless entails expectations. Barclay writes:

None of Paul's hearers would thus be the least surprised that God's supreme gift in Christ (the *charis* here spoken of), even if it was given without regard to worth (given, indeed, to the utterly sinful and ungodly), carried with it expectations and obligations which resulted from the gift. It was, if you like, *unconditioned* (based on no prior conditions) but not *unconditional* (carrying no subsequent demands).¹²

Thus while grace is a free gift it is inherently ordered towards a response.

However, reciprocity is only made possible because the gift itself is also transcendent. Here Barclay draws on Ernst Käsemann:

8 See John M. G. Barclay, "Under Grace," in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. B. Gaventa (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 63. On gift-giving in antiquity, Barclay also cites F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982); James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. W. D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990).

9 Barclay, "Under Grace," 63.

10 Barclay, "Under Grace," 62.

11 Barclay, "Under Grace," 63.

12 See Barclay, "Under Grace," 64.

The gift which is being bestowed here [in salvation] is never at any time separable from its Giver. It partakes of power, in so far as God himself enters the arena and remains in the arena with it. Thus personal address, obligation and service are indissolubly bound up with the gift. When God enters the arena, our experience is that he maintains his lordship even in his giving; indeed it is his gifts which are the very means by which he subordinates us to his lordship and makes us responsible beings.¹³

Barclay thus suggests that this gift can be called the “Christ-gift,” a gift that not only brings a real sharing in the divine life but which also fosters the formation of a Christian *habitus*.¹⁴ Because of this, Barclay characterizes Paul’s understanding of grace as “empowerment”¹⁵ and “energism.”¹⁶

This account of grace is able to address another major challenge in contemporary Pauline studies, namely, the apparent problem of how, on the one hand, salvation is the result of God’s free gift of grace (for example, Rom. 3:24; 11:6) and, on the other, his clear teaching that works will serve as the criterion of righteousness at the final judgment (for example, Rom. 2:12–13; 2 Cor. 5:10). In light of Barclay’s work, it appears safe to say that it is by means of the gift that those in Christ are enabled to do the works requisite for being declared righteous at the final judgment, making it possible for them to receive eternal life as recompense.¹⁷ In sum, Pauline grace operates on the

13 Ernst Käsemann, “The Righteousness of God in Paul,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 174, quoted from Barclay, “Under Grace,” 63.

14 See Barclay, “Under Grace,” 59–76.

15 John M. G. Barclay, “Grace and the Transformation of Agency in Christ,” in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, eds. F. E. Udoh, S. Heschel, M. Chancey, and G. Tatum (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 384 [372–389].

16 Barclay, “Grace and the Transformation of Agency,” 388, n. 38.

17 Besides the article cited above, see John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); *idem*, “Grace and the Countercultural Reckoning of Worth: Community Construction in Galatians 5–6,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul’s Letter*, eds. M. W. Elliot, S. J. Hafemann, N.T. Wright, and J. Frederick (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 306–317; *idem*, “Believers and the ‘Last Judgment’ in Paul: Rethinking Grace and Recompense,” in *Eschatologie—Eschatology*, eds. H.-J. Eckstein, C. Landmesser and H. Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 195–208; *idem*, “Manna and the Circulation of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 8:1–15,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, eds. J. R. Wagner, C. K. Rowe, and A. K. Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 409–426; *idem*, “By the Grace of God I Am What I Am: Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul,” in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and his Cultural Environment*, eds. J. M. G. Barclay and S. J. Gathercole (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 140–157; *idem*, *Obedying the Truth: A Study in Paul’s Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

basis of a non-competitive account of divine and human agency. God actually empowers the recipient of the gift so that the very obligations of the gift can be met.

Barclay's work represents a significant contribution to the complex discussion of divine and human agency in grace, that is, whether the relationship should be understood as properly "monergistic" or "synergistic"? Two of Barclay's students, Kyle Wells and Ben Blackwell, have also made significant contributions regarding Pauline participation. In their work, "participation" is more fully explicated in terms that, on the one hand, maintain a non-competitive account of divine and human agency and, on the other, emphasize the transforming nature of grace.

Drawing on Barclay's account of grace and his work on the non-competitive relationship between divine and human agency, Kyle Wells has demonstrated that such an understanding has obvious roots in both Old Testament texts and Second Temple sources. Among other things, Wells examines Jewish sources that express hopes for the day when God will transform the hearts of his people, empowering them to obey him.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. . . . ³³ But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: *I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (Jer. 31:31, 33)

I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. (Jer. 32:39)

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ezek. 36:26–27)¹⁸

As Wells demonstrates, such texts indicate the hope that God will himself *cause* his people to obey him. Wells writes, "God's saving agency perpetually works in the newly created moral agent (see, for example, Jer. 32:39; Ezek.

18 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical translations are taken from the RSVCE.

36:27).¹⁹ Human responsibility is thus understood as *empowered* by divine grace. Before moving on, it is worth noting here the work of Colin Miller, who has also demonstrated the non-competitive relationship between divine and human agency in Paul, yet also highlighted the important role that virtue can play in accounting for how divine grace both transforms and empowers those who are members of the body of Christ.²⁰

Ben Blackwell goes even further in explaining the way grace effects a transformation of the believer. Drawing on Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria to help illuminate Pauline soteriology, Blackwell makes a compelling case that the language of *theosis* helpfully unpacks what participation in Christ constitutes.²¹ Among other things, Blackwell points to passages in Romans that associate the glorification of believers with immortality.²² What sin caused humanity to lose, namely, the “glory (*doxa*) of the immortal God” (1:23), is regained in justification (Rom. 3:23–24). Those who seek “glory” and “immortality” will be given “eternal life” (Rom. 2:7). Likewise, those who suffer with Christ will be “glorified with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). In addition, those who are justified have been “glorified” (Rom. 8:30; *edoxasen*). Blackwell thus argues that glory is “a participation in divine life.”²³ Yet Blackwell employs an important word here: *Christosis*. For Paul, “glorification” and “justification” are essentially about being “conformed to the image of [God’s] son” (Rom. 8:30). Blackwell’s emphasis on *theosis* also shares points of contact with the work of Michael Gorman, who has further emphasized that participation in Christ is necessarily cruciform and deiform.²⁴

Having discussed the various contributions of Barclay, Wells, Miller, Blackwell, and Gorman, we might ask whether there is something that serves to unite their various approaches that might simultaneously serve to explicate the nature of Paul’s language about being “in Christ.” Below we shall argue that there is: divine sonship. Moreover, in addition to less recent monographs

19 Kyle Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: Interpreting the Transformation of the Heart*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 157 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 61.

20 Colin D. Miller, *The Practice of the Body of Christ: Human Agency in Pauline Theology after MacIntyre*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 200 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

21 See Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/314 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

22 Ben C. Blackwell, “Immortal Glory and the Problem of Death in Romans 3.23,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32 (2010): 295–297.

23 Blackwell, “Immortal Glory and the Problem of Death in Romans 3.23,” 304.

24 See Michael Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

by James Scott²⁵ and Brendan Byrne,²⁶ the work of Trevor Burke has further spotlighted the importance of divine sonship in Pauline thought.²⁷ Kevin Vanhoozer has even argued that divine sonship should be seen as "the epitome of what it means to be 'blessed in Christ.'"²⁸ Yet it is somewhat puzzling that divine sonship has received as little attention as it has. Going forward we will draw on these recent developments in Pauline scholarship to demonstrate the definitive nature of divine sonship for Paul's soteriology.

II. Divine Sonship as Participation in Christ in Romans 8

By means of an analysis of the five elements in Romans 8 listed above, we will now seek to demonstrate that divine sonship serves to integrate the various aspects of participation highlighted by the scholars whose work we have reviewed above. As we shall see, the energizing power of grace is ordered to a specific end—conformity to the divine Son, which, as we shall see, entails living out a life of holiness and virtue and fulfilling the just requirement of the law. Moreover, conformed to the image of the Son, those "in Christ" share in the suffering that is necessary for the redemption of the cosmos, ushering in the eschatological age.

1. Atonement and the Fulfillment of the Law

In Romans 8:1, Paul is able to declare that there is "no condemnation" for those who are in Christ Jesus and proceeds to explain why this is the case in verses 2–4.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for a sin offering, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:2–4)²⁹

25 James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992).

26 Brendan Byrne, "Sons of God"—"Seed of Abraham": A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul Against the Jewish Background, *Analecta Biblica* 83 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979).

27 Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 22 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

28 Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From 'Blessed in Christ' to 'Being in Christ,'" in *In Christ in Paul*, eds. M. J. Thate, K. J. Vanhoozer, and C. R. Campbell, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 2/384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 21.

29 Our translation.

In light of making clear the challenge posed by the disordered desires that reign in the flesh in Romans 7, Paul further explains why those in Christ Jesus are not condemned. Here his rationale seems related to a line of thinking that emerged earlier in the epistle in Romans 3:25.

23 . . . since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as an *expiation* [*hilastērion*] by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; 26 it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:23–26)

Here it is crucial to recognize that Christ's death serves a two-fold purpose: (1) to set right those who have violated the covenant and (2) to demonstrate divine righteousness. The interpretive crux is Paul's language of Christ as a *hilastērion* in Romans 3:25. To unpack Paul's thought, therefore, it is necessary to carefully examine the significance of this term.

In the LXX, the term *hilastērion* is used to render the Hebrew word for the mercy seat atop the Ark of the Covenant (Lev. 16:14–15; see Exod. 25:17–20). Of course, this object was at the center of Israel's cult on the Day of Atonement. Yet due to the fact that Paul identifies a person, Christ, as a *hilastērion*, many scholars have argued that Paul's language finds a closer parallel in 4 Maccabees 17:21–22, a passage where the term is linked to the atoning death of the martyrs:

And the tyrant was punished and our land purified, since they became, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation. Through the blood of these righteous ones and through the *propitiation* [*hilastērion*] of their death the divine providence rescued Israel, which had been shamefully treated.³⁰

While it is not likely that there is a direct literary relationship between Romans 3:25 and 4 Maccabees 17:21–22, the conceptual similarities between the two texts are hard to deny. In both places the death of the righteous is attached to

30 Taken from H. Anderson's translation in James C. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Anchor Bible Reference Library, 2 vols. (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983), 2:563 [henceforth OTP]. For more on this passage, see Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 648–656.

two ideas: (1) God's covenant righteousness and (2) the restoration of those who have violated the covenant.

Though 4 Maccabees helps to illuminate Paul's teaching, it should nevertheless be underscored that, as Douglas Campbell rightly notes, "It seems that the author of 4 Maccabees is echoing Leviticus 16 and 17 and the feast of atonement, Yom Kippur, when he describes the atoning effect of the deaths of the martyrs."³¹ In other words, the sacrificial and atoning terms associated with the martyrs' deaths are predicated on an understanding of the atoning sacrifices of Israel, in particular the sacrifices offered on Yom Kippur. The same, therefore, ought to be said of Romans 3:25. To understand Paul's language, one must come to grips with what Israel's atonement sacrifices involved.

Specifically, the question that must be answered is this: what did it mean for sacrifices to make "atonement"? Of course, the matter has been much debated. In some cases, it is clear that the Hebrew term for atonement, *kipper*, involves "purification."³² In other instances, however, the terminology has the connotation of a "payoff" (see Num. 31:50) or "ransom" (see Exod. 30:16).³³ While some have simply suggested embracing the ambiguity involved with this range of meanings,³⁴ Old Testament scholar Jay Sklar has convincingly argued that the debate regarding whether *kipper* sacrifices pay a ransom price or effect purification is a false choice. Sklar writes,

At times, the aspect of ransom may be emphasized, and at others, that of purification, but the fact that sin and impurity in sacrificial contexts both *endanger* and *pollute* implies atonement must address both of these realities. In short, the verb *kipper* refers to 'ransom-purification': that which

31 Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 650.

32 See, for example, Lev. 12:8, where such sacrifice causes the offerer to be "pure" (*tāhēr*). Likewise, in passages such as Lev. 14:52–54 and Lev. 16:30, this terminology of purification is used in connection to *kipper*. See, for example, Baruch Levine, *In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 56–61; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, Anchor Bible 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1040, 1080–1082.

33 For example, in the descriptions of the census money (see Exod. 30:16; Num. 31:50) and the homicide law (see Num. 35:31–33), the verb *kipper* clearly functions as a denominative from *kōper*. See also Lev. 17:11, where it serves as a "ransom" for life. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1082; Frank H. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in Priestly Theology*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 91 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 184. Milgrom downplays the "ransom" significance of the cult (see *Leviticus 1–16*, 1082–1083). However, his attempt to isolate the concept from cultic contexts is problematic. See the critique offered in J. Alan Groves, "Atonement in Isaiah 53: 'For He Bore the Sins of Many,'" in *The Glory of the Atonement*, eds. C. E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 65–68.

34 See James W. Watts, *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus: From Sacrifice to Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 133.

rescues the sinful and impure from the wrath of the Lord (ransom), and cleanses their sin and impurity (purification). Both elements are part of sacrificial atonement.³⁵

Indeed, this approach has parallels with the view of atonement found in the Letter to the Hebrews. Among other things, in Hebrews 9:11–10:22 we learn that the blood of Christ both *ransoms* (Heb. 9:12, *lytrōsis*; Heb. 9:15, *apolytrōsis*) from sin and *purifies* the sinner (Heb. 9:13–14, *katharotēs*, *katharizō*).³⁶

In addition to Sklar's analysis, it is also important to draw attention to the work of Roy Gane, who has examined the way the offering of atoning sacrifice served to both address theodicy questions and inculcate character. According to Gane, the atoning sin offerings made throughout the year (Lev. 4–5) and on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), serve to address both the problem of sin and the question of God's justice, for in vindicating his justice God also sets the worshipper right.³⁷ In fact, Gane suggests that if God did not remove the problem of sin through atoning sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, he would be forced to abandon his people as a result of justice.³⁸ In other words, through Israel's sacrificial cult, justice was actualized wherein both the penalty for sin was paid and the worshipper was restored to right covenantal relationship, one that included the purification of the worshipper.

Gane's analysis helps to illuminate why, for Paul, Christ's death is seen as the preeminent atoning sacrifice, such that he could identify Jesus as a *hilastērion*. In Christ's blood God demonstrates his justice toward sin while also, through the sacrifice itself, setting right ("justifying") sinners. An important

35 Jay Sklar, *Leviticus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 3 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2014), 53. See also *idem*, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, and Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005); *idem*, "Sin and Impurity: Atoned or Purified? Yes!" in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, eds. Baruch J. Schwartz et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2008).

36 Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that in his study of the language in Hebrews, Christopher A. Richardson (*Pioneer and Perfector of Faith: Jesus' Faith as the Climax of Israel's History in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/338 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012], 33) finds Sklar has made his case "convincingly."

37 See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 379–380. We here use the translation of "sin offering" for the *ḥattā't* ("sin") offering. Of course, in the Levitical law code this type of sacrifice is not simply concerned with moral infractions. Because of this many scholars (including Gane) now speak of the sacrifice as a "purification offering". Yet, in this context, such a translation would obscure the allusion evoked by Paul's language. Because of this we here use the traditional translation of "sin offering", recognizing the limitations of such terminology. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the "guilt offering" (*āšām*), a sacrifice which does in some instances deal with impurity due to immoral acts (e.g., theft, cf. Lev. 6:1–7) was sometimes translated with the term *hamartia* ("sin") in the LXX (cf., e.g., LXX Lev 5:7; Isa 53:10).

38 See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 380.

passage that helps to further illustrate this line of reasoning within the Pauline corpus is 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Paul states that God "made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." While the question of what it means that Christ was "made sin" is contested, reading it together with Romans 3:25 in mind, it appears valid to suggest that when Paul states that Christ became sin, he most likely indicates that Christ became a "sin offering."

Turning back to Romans 8 we find confirmation of such a reading. In Romans 8:3 Paul states that God sent his son in the likeness of sinful flesh *peri harmartias*, literally, "for sin." As Blackwell notes, this Greek phrase is used over sixty times in the LXX to describe the sin offering (see Lev. 4, 5, 16; Isa. 53:10).³⁹ In light of the apparent cultic imagery in Romans 3:25—not to mention the likely appearance of a cultic allusion in 2 Corinthians 5:21—it appears best to translate Paul's language about Christ being given *peri harmartias* as, "for a sin offering." This reading would serve to further illuminate the inner logic behind Paul's statement in the following verse, namely, "that the just requirement [*dikaiōma*] of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4).

While scholars have contested the exact meaning of Paul's language in Romans 8:4,⁴⁰ it is important to note that the term *dikaiōma* appears earlier in the epistle to the Romans, namely, in Romans 5, where Paul states that Christ's one *dikaiōma* is the cause of humanity being able to receive the gift that brings life and justification:

16 And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18 Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's *just act* [*dikaiōmatos*] leads to acquittal and life for all men. (Rom. 5:16–18)⁴¹

39 See Blackwell, *Christosis*, 128, n. 58. Outside of Leviticus, *peri hamartias* is often used in reference to the sin offering (e.g., Num 6:11, 16; 7:16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 70, 76, 82, 87; 8:12; 15:24, 27; 29:5, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38); 2 Kgs [4 Kgdms] 12:17; Ps 39:7; Ezra [2 Esd] 6:17; 8:35; 2 Macc 2:11) or sacrifices offered on account of sin (e.g., Exod 32:30; Job 1:5).

40 For a good overview of the various interpretive options, see Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, 266–269.

41 RSVCE adapted.

As Colin Miller has recently argued, this passage is best read as affirming that it is through Christ's one *dikaiōma* that humanity receives the gift of *dikaiōsis*.⁴² By means of the dynamics of grace (*charis*), believers are empowered to live justly and so receive eternal life. In Romans 8:4, then, the *dikaiōma* of the law is fulfilled in the ones who are "in Christ." As in Romans 5:16–18, this comes on the basis of Christ's death, here described as a sin offering, yet for a distinct purpose, namely, that the "just requirement of the law" may be fulfilled in believers (Rom. 8:4).

In order to demonstrate what this involves, it is important to take stock of two fundamental clues that Paul gives within Romans concerning what it might mean to fulfill the just requirement of the law. The first is found in Romans 3:31, where Paul states that faith "confirms the law" (*nomon histanomen*). Yet it is important to note that this is not the only clue that Paul offers in regard to fulfilling the law in Romans. Notably, Paul explicitly speaks of fulfilling the law in Romans 13:8–10. In particular, Paul turns to what the Romans "owe" one another, namely, love:

Owe to no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore, *love is the fulfilling of the law*. (Rom. 13:8–10)⁴³

Here Paul returns to the central commandments of the law previously mentioned in the epistle, such as the prohibitions against stealing and adultery (Rom. 2:21–22) and coveting (Rom. 7:7–8), only this time in a very different way than in Romans 2 and 7, respectively.

While in chapters 2 and 7 the commandments of the law testify to the inability of humanity to obey the law due to the disordered desires of the heart, in Romans 13:8–10 Paul now presupposes that the Romans are somehow capable of keeping these very commandments. In sum, Paul tells the Romans to lay aside the works of darkness that define the life of disordered desire (*epithumia*) and instead to "put on the armor of light," in particular, to "be clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:12b–14: *endusasthe ton kyrion Iēsoun Christon*). As Michael Thompson and Jung Hoon Kim have shown, in

42 As Miller argues (*Practice of the Body of Christ*, 71–72), in light of the way *-osis* terms function (for example, *theosis*), *dikaiōsis* should be seen as "becoming just." This coheres nicely with 2 Cor. 5:21, noted above, that through Christ becoming a sin offering those in Christ become the righteousness of God.

43 Our translation.

antiquity, the metaphor of "putting on" another person signified putting on the person's character.⁴⁴

At this point we are in a good position to return to the question at hand, namely, what it might mean for the just requirements of the law to be fulfilled (Rom. 8:4). In light of the context, as well as the work of scholars such as Barclay and Wells mentioned above, it would seem that Paul's point is that those who belong to Christ are enabled by the gift of grace to fulfill the very commandments of the law that fallen humanity could not. To back up to Romans 8:3, Jesus' act of atoning sacrifice has both demonstrated divine justice and rectified the sinner. In fact, believers are initially justified (Rom. 3:24) and then called to a deeper appropriation of justice, or in Paul's terms, to become "slaves of justice" (Rom. 6:12–23).⁴⁵ While in Romans 2 sinful humanity is incapable of keeping the law, in Romans 8 Paul explains that believers now have the capacity to fulfill the *dikaiōma*, the "just requirement of the law." Strikingly, Paul here speaks of Christians in terms similar to those he has already used for Jesus, whom he spoke of as the one whose "*just act* [*dikaiōmatos*] leads to acquittal and life for all men" (Rom. 5:16–18). Indeed, as we have seen, Rom. 3:25 and 8:2 would suggest that Christ's redeeming act involved a sacrificial dimension. It cannot go without notice, then, that Paul goes on to urge Christians to "present their bodies as living *sacrifices*" (Rom. 12:1). What is the relationship between the sacrifice made by Christ and that offered by believers?

Before answering that question, let us return to Romans 8:2–4 to note that Paul is clear that the basis for fulfilling the just requirement of the law turns on two key aspects: the Son and the Spirit. As for the Son, it is necessary to take a step back and address what it means that Jesus is God's Son. Specifically, what does Paul mean when he describes Christ as God's "own son" (Rom. 8:3)?

2. The Divine Sonship of Christ

To illuminate Paul's understanding of Christ's relationship to God, it is helpful to examine the background of his language of divine sonship. Significantly, Paul's Jewish heritage linked such imagery with individuals specifically mentioned in Romans. While Paul affirms that Israel received divine sonship (Rom. 9:4; see Exod. 4:22; Hos. 11:1), such imagery was also linked to two other figures that are prominently mentioned in Romans: Adam and David. As others have noted, while Adam is not specifically iden-

44 Michael B. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12:1–15:13*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 59 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Jung Hoon Kim, *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, Library of New Testament Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2004).

45 See Barclay, "Under Grace," 61–62.

tified as the “son of God” in Genesis, his status as such seems to be implied in the Pentateuch. In Genesis 1, God creates Adam in his “image” and “likeness” (Gen. 1:26–27), terms later used in reference to Adam and Seth’s relationship (Gen. 5:3). In light of this, it is no wonder that Adam is identified as “the son of God” in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:38). Thus, as David Litwa suggests, “even in Genesis 1:26, Yahweh wants to draw humankind into a kinship relationship with himself. As an image of God, the human is a son of God.”⁴⁶

Divine sonship language is also famously used in connection with the Davidide (for example, 2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7; 89:27; 2Q252 5:3–4; 4Q174 I 1:21:2; 1Q28a 2:11–12; 4Q369).⁴⁷ While it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the Davidide was divine, nonetheless, the manner in which the king is spoken of in passages such as Psalms 2 and 110 lends credence to Scott Hahn’s suggestion that the adoption of the Davidide is best described in “covenantal-realist” language.⁴⁸ Yet Paul’s language in Romans would suggest that Christ’s sonship surpasses David’s. For one thing, Paul explains that Christ was “designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). In comparison to both Adam and David, it is clear that Jesus enjoys a status for Paul that surpasses theirs. In regard to Adam, whom Paul calls “a man of the dust” (1 Cor. 15:47), Jesus is seen as superior in that he is the “last Adam . . . *the man from heaven*” (1 Cor. 15:45, 47). Moreover, the glory of the last Adam is greater than that ever possessed by Adam (see 1 Cor. 15:45–49).⁴⁹

46 M. David Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Pauline Soteriology*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 101. There is good reason to read Paul’s language against the backdrop of the Adamic glory traditions attested in later works, such as *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (20:1–2; 21:6), which have earlier precedent in sources such as Sir. 49:16; Philo, *Creation* 136–150; CD-A 3:18–20; and 1QS 4:23. As scholars such as Blackwell and Campbell has rightly argued, Rom. 5:12 together with Rom. 3:23 highlight that when Adamic humanity sins and “lacks the glory of God,” this deficiency is directly related to mortality. In other words, having the glory of God would seem to be equivalent to immortality. Thus Paul’s own logic would suggest that Adam originally possessed both. For further discussion, see Ben C. Blackwell, “Immortal Glory and the Problem of Death in Romans 3:23,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32/3 (2010): 285–308; Douglas A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21–26*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 65 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 173.

47 See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 162: “The individual most often designated as ‘the son of God’ in the Hebrew Bible is undoubtedly the Davidic king, or his eschatological counterpart.”

48 Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises*, Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 195.

49 See Benjamin L. Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second*

What is more, Jesus' identity seems to surpass not only the status of Adam and David but, for Paul, is even spoken of in divine terms. Avoiding some of the missteps taken by others, Chris Tilling makes the compelling case that Paul understands Christ's relationship to believers in terms of YHWH's relationship to Israel. For instance, Tilling highlights the way Paul speaks of both God and Jesus as not only faithful and loving, but as the ones who grant grace and judge sin.⁵⁰ Moreover, Tilling points to the fact that the kind of devotion that Paul mandates for God is also to be given to Christ (including the title of "Lord").⁵¹ Notably, for example, in Philippians 2:10–11 the language used by Isaiah 45:23 to describe the universal recognition of the God of Israel as the only true God ("every knee should bend. . . every tongue confess") is applied to devotion to Jesus.⁵²

Likewise, Tilling highlights the way Paul draws on the Greek version of Deuteronomy 6:4 in 1 Corinthians 8:6, where Paul associates "God" with "the Father" and "Lord" with "Jesus Christ": "yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." Drawing on Bauckham, he points out that ". . . the prepositions are divided between the Father (*ek* and *eis*) and the Lord (*dia*) in significant fashion. In Romans 11:36 Paul applies all three prepositions to God; in 8:6, they are significantly divided between the one God and the one Lord."⁵³

Still, to be clear, Tilling's argument involves more than cherry-picking particular texts. The strength of his argument lies in the way he shows how such texts relate to the larger patterns at work in Paul's thought. For example, the use of Deuteronomy 6:4 in 1 Corinthians 8:6 appears within the broader discussion of 1 Corinthians 8–10 in which Paul explains that Christ-devotion necessarily entails rejection of idolatry. For Paul, faith in the one God of Israel is understood, as Deuteronomy itself suggests, not simply in terms of a theological claim (that is, monotheism) but in terms of a relationship to which one must be committed. It is against this backdrop that Tilling then explores Paul's admonition to the Corinthians to reject pagan idols, understood as a pre-requisite of faith in Christ. In short, for Paul, the relationship between God and Israel is paralleled in the relationship of Christ to believers. 1 Corinthians 8:6 is thus just one element of the larger discussion that highlights Christ's divine role. To name just a few other examples, whereas idolatry

Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 160 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 223–262.

50 Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 236–237.

51 Ibid., 237.

52 Ibid., 111.

53 Ibid., 83. The Greek terms in the original text have been transliterated.

for Deuteronomy involves sinning against the God of Israel (see Deut. 20:18), Paul links eating idol food to sinning “against Christ” (1 Cor. 8:12).

This brings us back to Paul’s language in Romans 8: “*sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for a sin offering*, he condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Is the reference to the “sending” of the son “in the likeness of sinful flesh” an allusion to Christ’s pre-existence? Here one must be careful. On the one hand, the language of Christ being “sent” in Galatians 4:4 and Romans 8:3 does not in and of itself necessitate that Jesus is pre-existent since, after all, Paul is “sent” (1 Cor. 1:17). Nevertheless, the language used for the sending of Jesus is unique in both Galatians 4:4 and Romans 8:3. In these passages the sending of the Son is linked principally to his bodily existence—in Galatians 4:4, Christ is born “of a woman” and in Romans 8:3 he is sent “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” The idea thus seems to be that God sends his pre-existent son into the world.

What tips the balance in favor of such a reading is the famous Christological passage in Philippians 2:5–8:

Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was *in the form of God* [*en morphē theou*], did not count *equality with God* [*to einai isa theō*] a thing to be grasped [*harpagmos*], 7 but *emptied* [*ekenōsis*] himself, taking the *form of a servant* [*morphēn doulou*], being born in the likeness of men [*en homoiōmati anthrōpōn genomenos*]. 8 And being found in human form [*kai schēmati heuretheis hōs anthrōpos*] he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

While some have claimed that the term *harpagmos* suggests Christ is not viewed as possessing status equal to God, but that he only “grasped” at it, a close reading makes such an understanding difficult to maintain. For one thing, though language of *morphē* (“form”) may seem to suggest that Christ only “appeared” to be divine, as Frank Matera points out, *morphē* can be used in the sense of “‘nature’ or ‘status,’”⁵⁴ which, in context, appears to make the most sense of Paul’s usage here. Gorman writes, “the parallel phrases ‘form of God’ and ‘form of a slave’ mean that to the extent that this one really took on the form of a slave, he also really was in the form of God—and vice versa.”⁵⁵ Indeed, the language of “equality with God” is likely meant to explain what being in the “form of God” means.⁵⁶ Thus, following Roy Hoover, the majority

54 See Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 128.

55 Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 22.

56 Numerous scholars agree on this point. See, for example, N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the*

of interpreters have come to read the expression *harpagmos* as indicating, "not whether one possesses something, but whether or not one chooses to exploit something."⁵⁷ Such also makes the most sense of Christ's act of "emptying" (*ekenōsen*) himself. Given that the passage clearly indicates that Christ was first "in the form of God" and *then* was "born in the likeness of men," the most natural reading would involve recognizing here some sort of claim regarding Jesus' pre-existence—that is, his birth follows some other type of existence.⁵⁸

In fact, the language of the Philippians passage bears a striking resemblance to the statement in Romans 8:

"being born in the likeness of men" (<i>en homoiōmati anthrōpōn genomenos</i>)(Phil. 2:6)	"sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (<i>huion pempsas en homoiōmati sarkos harmartias</i>)(Rom. 8:3)
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Again, in Galatians, the sending of the Son is linked precisely to his being "born" (Gal. 4:4). While it is possible that one could be sent from one's birth, in light of the work of Tilling, the larger context of the Philippians passage, and Paul's language elsewhere (for example, 2 Cor. 8:9), it appears better to suggest that Paul's divine Christology also entails pre-existence. It would seem it is from his pre-existent state that Christ is sent into the world, born of woman in the likeness of sinful flesh. All of this would further explicate Paul's repeated description of Christ as God's "own son" (Rom. 8:3, 32); his sonship is not associated with adoption but with divine pre-existence.

Going on, Paul makes clear that God sent his son for a purpose: "in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3–4). How is the sending of the Son related to the law being fulfilled in believers? To answer this question, it is helpful to bring together various aspects of Paul's theology and, in particular, recognize that Paul links Christ's coming in the flesh in Galatians 4:4 to his being born "under the law" in order that he might liberate those under the law from the "elemental spirits [or 'principles'] of the cosmos" (*stoicheia tou kosmou*). Within the larger context of Galatians 4, Paul explains that the reason the law is unable to bring full sonship to Israel is due to the

Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 83; Gerald F. Hawthorne, "In the Form of God," in *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, eds. R. P. Martin and B. J. Dodd (London: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 104.

57 Roy W. Hoover, "The Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution," *Harvard Theological Review* 64 (1971): 118. Hawthorne ("In the Form of God," 102), states that the "majority of recent interpreters" have affirmed Hoover's reading.

58 As Wright notes, that pre-existence is in view makes the most sense, for the language "does not involve merely the substitution of one sort of humanity for another" (*Climax of the Covenant*, 92). Such an idea may also be hinted at in 2 Cor. 8:9.

law being fit for adolescents under a tutor. Because of this, God sent his own Son to enable both Israel and the Gentiles to receive full adoption as sons. The reason this can work is that in the resurrection Christ became a “life-giving Spirit,” for rather than the law giving life (Lev. 18:5), it is the Spirit of the risen Christ who gives life. This serves as a particularly fitting transition to our investigation of the Spirit’s role in bringing about the just requirements of the law in believers.

3. *The Spirit of Holiness and the Life of Virtue*

In the first part of this article we examined the work of scholars, such as Wells, who have looked at Jewish hopes that God would send forth his Spirit in the eschatological age to enable Israel to learn obedience. Among others, we mentioned Ezekiel, where it is clear that this giving of the Spirit entails a transformation of life such that those indwelt are empowered for obedience: “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes” (Ezek. 36:27). The prophet goes on to famously describe this renewal of Israel with “resurrection” imagery (Ezek. 37).

Here in Romans 8, Paul suggests that resurrection life is present through the Spirit. For Paul, the Son and the Spirit are inseparable. This close relationship can be seen in Romans 8:9–11, where Paul states that:

But you are not in the flesh, *you are in the Spirit*, if in fact the *Spirit of God* dwells in you. Any one who does not have the *Spirit of Christ* does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if *Christ is in you*, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the *Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies* also through his Spirit who dwells in you. (Rom. 8:9–11)

In this passage Paul calls the same “Spirit” both the “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ” before proceeding to speak of how “Christ is in you.” As a result, it appears clear that not only is there an inseparable connection between Christ and the Spirit, but it is through the Spirit that the risen Christ comes to live in believers.

Moreover, the indwelling of the Spirit is not only ordered to present existence in Christ, but it is through the same Spirit that believers will be physically raised at the resurrection of the dead. Wells connects the prophecies of Ezekiel to the eschatological work of the Spirit quite well when he suggests:

Keeping in mind that Christ’s resurrection marks the beginning of one general epochal event (1 Cor. 15:22–23),

Paul, like Ezekiel, believes that God pours out his Spirit *during* the resurrection; that is, between the start of the resurrection begun with Christ and the conclusion of that event at the resurrection of all believers. Since the outpouring of the Spirit is integral to the Resurrection event, through receiving the Spirit believers themselves begin to share in that event. . . . the Spirit which inhabits believers is nothing other than the Spirit of Christ (*pneuma Christou*, 8:9). Paul's union doctrine entails mutual-penetration: those in Christ Jesus (*en Christō Iēsou*, Rom. 8:1) have Christ in them (see Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:16–17) and are thereby united to his resurrection existence. This union delimits a believer's present participation in the fulfillment of Ezekiel's restoration promise.⁵⁹

As Wells rightly notes, the empowerment for obedience that the Spirit brings was promised beforehand to Israel upon return from exile, and it appears correct to conclude that Paul views those promises as fulfilled through Christ in those who believe.

At this point it is worth returning to Paul's statement in Romans 8:2 that "the law" of the "Spirit of life" has set the Romans free from the law of sin and death. To link 8:2 with 12–13, it appears that the liberation from the law of sin and death not only occurs once for all, but it is also progressive in the sense that believers are called to put to death the sinful deeds of the body that lead to death. Instead, those who are in Christ are to live by "the law" of the "Spirit of life," the promised eschatological principle of obedience.⁶⁰ Those who have the Spirit of Christ are now empowered to leave behind sin and death and fulfill the just requirement of the law.

For Paul, the Spirit-empowered life in Romans 8 involves a real transformation. Thus the life in the Spirit is contrasted with the life of vice. This reading finds direct confirmation in Galatians 5:16–26, where Paul offers his famous virtue and vice lists, first listing the works of the flesh before contrasting them with the fruits or virtues of the Spirit. As for his addressing vice, Paul offers a list of the works of the flesh in 5:19–21, such as sexual immorality (5:19: *porneia*), impurity (5:19 *akatharsia*), idolatry (5:20: *eidōlōlatria*), rage (5:20: *thumos*), selfish ambition (5:20: *epitheiai*), and excessive feasting (5:21: *kōmos*). In Galatians 5:22–26, Paul offers a direct contrast to the works of the flesh with the "fruits" or virtues of the Spirit, which includes love (5:22: *agapē*),

59 Wells, *Grace and Agency in Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, 262; Greek font transliterated.

60 See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 482–483.

patience (5:22: *makrothumia*), goodness (5:22: *agapōsunē*), faithfulness (5:22: *pistis*), and self-mastery (5:23: *enkrateia*).

It is particularly interesting to note that Paul includes this last element in his virtue list. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle highlights the importance of *enkrateia* (“self-mastery”) in order to live a life of virtue.⁶¹ Here Paul suggests that this virtue is a fruit of the Spirit, further highlighting that Paul’s gospel is far from morally libertarian. Instead, it involves the very power for living the life of virtue. Moreover, Paul’s inclusion of *enkrateia* serves to further highlight that, in the dynamics of grace, divine agency does not cancel out human agency but rather enables believers to be active participants in the work of the Spirit.

Therefore, in looking to summarize the role of the Spirit in fulfilling the law in Romans 8, it appears that the law of the Spirit is closely associated to the fulfillment of the just requirement of the law. In connecting this to our passage in Romans 8, this entails both putting to death the flesh and its works, and instead living by the Spirit and its fruits, a process that requires the full, embodied participation of believers. This entire process can rightly be viewed as the life of graced virtue, as Litwa suggests:

For Paul, it is adherence to Christ’s virtues which enables self-transcendence. Even though Paul is not partial to the word “virtue” (ἀρετή [*aretē*])—using it only in Phil. 4:8—he presents several virtue lists which could be described as qualities of the divine Christ. For Paul, the virtues are the “fruits of the pneuma” (Gal. 5:22)—the pneuma which Christ is (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17). Being inhabited by the divine pneuma is analogous to being in the state of justice (or inward harmony). The divine pneuma of Christ develops virtue in the believer so that the believer’s old self can be controlled and eventually transcended. The human being driven by the pneuma thus becomes a “son of God” (Rom. 8:14, cf. 15, 16, 19, 23, 1:4), a sonship fully realized when the believer is delivered from the present body (v. 23), glorified (vv. 17–18, 21, 30), and assimilated to the divine Christ (v. 29, cf. 17).⁶²

61 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.1.1145b; 7. 7.1150b; James W. Thompson, *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 138.

62 Litwa, *We are Being Transformed*, 209.

While some aspects of Litwa's analysis seem to go beyond what Paul is saying, in particular his suggestion that believers are "assimilated" to the divine Christ,⁶³ his analysis is both broadly correct and, what is more, serves to highlight that this conformity to Christ is itself "justice." Being clothed with Christ's virtues and character is thus a realization of the eschatological age. With this being said, we are on the brink of what serves to illuminate the inner logic behind the entire process of pneumatic fulfillment of the law unto eternal life according to Paul, namely, it is living the life of divine sonship.

4. *The In-breaking of the Age of Eschatological Suffering and Divine Sonship*

Beginning in Romans 8:14 through the end of the chapter (Rom. 8:39), Paul turns to what can be seen as the climax of his argument in Romans 1–8. Paul states:

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are *sons of God*.
15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received *the spirit of sonship*. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that *we are children of God*, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, *provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him*. (Rom. 8:14–17)

As Barclay demonstrates, Pauline grace truly unites aspects that are often set in opposition by modern interpreters of Paul, namely, divine and human agency, as well as gift and obligation. By means of our analysis of divine sonship we are in the position to build on Barclay's work and suggest these aspects work together by means of divine sonship itself. For Paul, believers are not only empowered to fulfill the just requirements of the law, but receive divine sonship through the Spirit. Thus, the heart of Paul's apocalyptic theology centers on the in-breaking of *the age of divine sonship*.

While this entire line of thinking coherently accounts for Paul's teaching in Romans 8, there is one major element of the chapter we have yet to address: why is sonship so closely connected to suffering? Why does Paul insist that we are "children of God" and "heirs with Christ" so long as believers "suffer with him" (Rom. 8:17)? To answer that question, we now turn to the second part of Romans 8, where it becomes clear how divine sonship serves to fully illuminate the nature of participation in Christ. Paul states:

63 Rather than "assimilated," it would be better to say "united" or "conformed" to the divine Christ. Litwa over-interprets the material to suggest that Paul held to a view of deification that makes the members of Christ divine in virtually the same sense Christ himself is, failing to fully account for the distinction between the adopted sonship of believers and what appears to be Christ's unique status as God's "own son" in Paul.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed [*apokalyphthēnai*] in us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning in birth pangs together until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. . . (Rom. 8:18–24a)⁶⁴

While Romans 8:18 can rightly be seen as a transitional verse in the chapter, it is important to note that it also serves to integrate the various elements of Paul's argument, in particular explicating the role of the *sufferings* of the sons of God. In Romans 8:18, Paul makes the remarkable statement that the present sufferings are not worth being compared to the "glory to be revealed in us" (*tēn mellousan doxan apokalyphthēnai eis hēmas*).

That Paul links suffering with the coming of the glorification of believers in the eschatological age coheres well with other Second Temple sources. As scholars such as Dale Allison, Harry Hahne, Marvin Pate, Douglas Kenard, and Brant Pitre have demonstrated at length, texts describing the eschatological restoration of God's people often envisioned their deliverance as occurring after a period of great tribulation and suffering.⁶⁵ Such traditions are clearly present in Daniel. In Daniel 7, the coming of the eschatological kingdom associated with the figure described as "one like a son of man" is linked with imagery of the persecution of the saints (Dan. 7:25) and their eventual deliverance (Dan. 7:26–27). Likewise, Daniel 12 links the coming eschatological tribulation to resurrection imagery:

64 Translation adapted from the RSVCE. Most notably, we have rendered *eis hēmas* in v. 18, "in us," as the NIV does. See also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 506. In addition, *synōdinei* has been explicitly translated as "labor pangs," a meaning the majority of commentators recognize and which we will further explain below.

65 See Dale C. Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Harry A. Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8:19–22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Library of Biblical Studies; London: T & T Clark, 2006); Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation and the End of the Exile*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 2/205 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); C. Marvin Pate and Douglas C. Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 54; New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

. . . *there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered.* . . . ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. 12:1b–3)

Numerous other sources containing such expectations could also be mentioned.⁶⁶

Notably, in certain texts, the eschatological restoration and the coming of the Messiah is *specifically* linked to the language of *birth pangs*:

I was in distress *like a woman giving birth* the first time when her labour-pains come on her and a pang racks the mouth of her womb to begin the birth in the 'crucible' of the pregnant woman. For children come through the breakers of death and the woman expectant with a boy is racked by her pangs, for through the breakers of death she gives birth to a male, and *through the pangs of Sheol there emerges, from the 'crucible' of the pregnant woman a wonderful counselor* [see Isa. 9:6–7] with his strength... (1QH^a 11:7–10)⁶⁷

And thus the Lord commanded the kings and the mighty and the exalted and those who possess the land, and he said, 'Open your eyes and lift up your horns, if you are able to recognize *the Chosen One*.' And the Lord of Spirits 'seated him' upon the throne of his glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured upon him. And the word of his mouth will slay all the sinners [see Isa. 11:4], and all the unrighteous will perish from his presence. . . And they will see and recognize that he sits on the throne of his glory. . . *And pain will come upon them as (upon) a woman in labor, when the child enters the mouth of the womb, and she has difficulty giving birth.* . .

66 See, for example, 1 En. 46:8–47:2; 56:5–57:3; 91:5–74; 93:1–10; 103:15; Jub. 23:11–31; Sib. Or. 3:182–95; Pss. Sol. 17:11–32; T. Mos. 9:1–7; 4Q171 2:9–19; 4Q174 frag. I col. I, lines 18–19; col. II, lines 1–7; 4Q177 col. II, lines 8–11; 1QS 1:17–18; 3:23; 4:18–23; 8:1–3; 9:8–11; CD^a 1:4–17; 1QM 1:11–12; 15:1–3; 16:15–17:3; 17:8–9.

67 Translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997/1998), 1:149 [henceforth DSSSE].

and pain will seize them when they see that Son of Man
sitting on the throne of his glory. (*1 Enoch* 62:1–4)⁶⁸

While certainly not dependent on any of these particular passages, Paul's language in Romans 8, which describes how those who "belong" to the Messiah (Rom. 8:9) will be glorified (Rom. 8:17), but only after a period of tribulation, described as "birth pangs" (Rom. 8:22), has been rightly understood against the backdrop of such traditions.⁶⁹ Indeed, as Pitre has convincingly argued, such expectations are not without earlier precedent—the language of birth pangs is clearly linked with the age of the eschatological Davidide in Micah 5:2–4 and Jeremiah 30:5–9.⁷⁰ In short, believers are heirs with the Messiah, provided they "suffer" with him, since the era of the "birth pangs" of the eschatological age has been inaugurated by his coming.

Furthermore, that Paul links the terminology of eschatological suffering to sonship is hardly surprising. As Byrne has helpfully highlighted, in a number of texts, divine sonship is directly connected to suffering (see Esther 16:14–16; 3 Macc. 6:28; 7:6; Wis. 2:13–20; 5:4–5; 16:1–13). In fact, the connection between sonship and suffering is found in texts describing the period of eschatological suffering. Thus, for example, in the text of *1 Enoch* 62 cited above, we read that the "Lord of the Spirits" will hand over the wicked to the angels to be punished "so that they may exact retribution from them for the iniquity that they did to his children" (*1 Enoch* 62:11).⁷¹ Likewise, after describing the period of eschatological tribulation in cataclysmic terms, *Sibylline Oracles* 3:704 explains, "the sons of the great God will all live peacefully around the Temple, rejoicing in these things with the Creator."⁷² In his own words, Byrne notes:

In short, it may be said that around sonship of God there hovers the idea of immunity from death. This immunity does not preclude suffering, or even physical death; but it involves an ultimate destiny to preservation, to life with God, which human oppressors are compelled to recognize and which even spiritual powers must respect. God's 'sons'

68 Translation taken from George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 79–80. On the recent movement of scholarship towards the early dating of this section of *1 Enoch*, see the studies in Darrell L. Bock and James H. Charlesworth, eds., *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

69 See, for example, Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 204.

70 See Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, 223–231.

71 From Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 81.

72 Translation from *OTP*, 1:377.

are those who enjoy or are destined to enjoy eternal life with him.⁷³

The link between sonship and suffering in Romans 8, therefore, is hardly surprising.

As J.R. Daniel Kirk has demonstrated, there is an important connection between Romans 1:4 and Paul's argument in Romans 8:12–30, for while it is the Spirit of holiness who resurrects Jesus and appoints him divine Son in power in Romans 1:4, here in Romans 8 the Spirit is at work in the adopted children of God to bring about the same resurrection existence.⁷⁴ While in the introduction to Romans it is Jesus' death and resurrection that marks the beginning of the age to come, here in Romans 8 it is the suffering and subsequent glory of the *adopted* sons of God that is also directly connected to the restoration of all things, for Paul continues in verse 19 and states that the entire creation waits in eager expectation for the "*revealing of the sons of God.*" This brings us to the last element of our analysis, that is, the link between suffering and divine sonship.

5. *The Revelation of Divine Sonship in Suffering*

As we have seen, for Paul, eschatological hope involves the expectation of the revelation of the sons of God: "the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). How will this take place? In light of Romans 8:14–17, it appears right to conclude that the revelation of the sons of God will occur in a rather similar manner to the divine Son. For one thing, the suffering of the adopted sons will reveal their divine sonship; they will be like Christ who suffers, and so be conformed to the image of the Son (see Rom. 8:29). Perhaps, though, what is even more significant is Paul's apparent suggestion that *the suffering of the sons of God plays a role in the glorification of the entire cosmos*. In fact, we can see this line of reasoning when Paul clearly states: "not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23). Strikingly, both believers and all creation are awaiting the redemption of the sons of God.

In context, then, Paul speaks of a properly cosmic hope:

20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own
will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; 21
because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage

73 Byrne, *Sons of God*, 63.

74 J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 137–138.

to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom. 8:19–21)

While the identity of the one subjecting creation to futility is a matter of debate (likely God), what appears clearer in light of Paul's argument in Romans is that the original source of creation's subjection to futility is the sin of Adam. Paul explains in Romans 5 that it was through the sin of Adam that the "powers" of sin and death entered the world and subsequently took all of humanity captive, thereby accounting for the law's inability to make Israel righteous (Rom. 5:12–14). However, through the righteous deed of the last Adam, humanity is granted true justice as a gift of grace and thereby restored to life, both now and in the world to come (Rom. 5:15–23). This restoration to life is closely connected to sharing in God's immortality or glory, for all humanity lacks the immortal glory of God due to Adam's sin yet finds justification through the Christ-gift, a gift which comes through Christ becoming a *hilastērion* (Rom. 3:23–25).

How is all this connected? It appears that the logic is as follows: through Adam's sin, all humanity needs redemption. Yet, rather than the law, it is the atoning death of Jesus Christ through which creation is set right. Put differently, it is in Christ's death that God definitively answers the question of theodicy and demonstrates his righteousness through being just and justifying sinners. In justifying sinners and making them sons of God, Christ sets all things right through the members of his risen body, the corporate last Adam. This is done through the sons of God being under grace as slaves of justice, a justice that necessarily leads to suffering, for the passing away of the present evil age is actualized through the suffering of the sons of God. Paul describes this process as the "birth pangs" of the created order (Rom. 8:22). The in-breaking of the world to come thus centers on the suffering of the sons of God unto glory. As Burke rightly notes, "the created order is not only dependent upon but looks to the sons of God for its future liberation."⁷⁵

As a result of the link between the suffering of the sons of God and the in-breaking of the world to come, Allison rightly suggests that, "Paul's time belongs to the pangs of the Messiah."⁷⁶ Gager offers an excellent summary of the inner rationale between the sufferings of the sons of God and the in-breaking of the world to come when he notes:

The suffering of the believer now appears not as an isolated instance, but as an integral and *necessary stage in the cosmic*

⁷⁵ Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 181. Moreover, this concept is right at home with the eschatological tribulation tradition.

⁷⁶ Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come*, 65.

*birth process whose culmination will be the glorious liberty of the children of God.*⁷⁷

This relates to our previous discussion of believers "putting on Christ," that is, putting on his character, by further highlighting that the path of suffering unto glory is a necessary stage in the in-breaking of the world to come. In other words, *Christosis* is not only inextricably linked to justification, it is necessary for the full actualization of the world to come. This at last brings us to the connection between divine sonship and sacrifice.

It is worth noting that it is no coincidence that Paul has linked the divine Son's suffering with atonement language (Rom. 3:25). As we have already mentioned, in Jewish sources such as 4 Maccabees, the suffering of the righteous is said to have atoning significance. Indeed, in sources describing the eschatological tribulation, atonement terminology is linked to the sufferings of the righteous. In Daniel 9:24, the period of tribulation is specifically linked to the need to "to atone for iniquity." In 1QS 7:4 we read that the righteous must endure suffering faithfully, "in order to atone for sin by doing justice and undergoing trials. . ."⁷⁸ Likewise, 4Q171 2:9–12 describes the righteous "taking upon themselves" the period of "affliction," employing the very same term that is used for the Day of "Atonement" in the Dead Sea Scrolls (see CD–A 6:19). As Pitre explains, "by bearing the sufferings of this period, the righteous will engage in an act of redemption."⁷⁹ Many other texts could be cited.⁸⁰ All of this sheds further light on Paul's language about *Christ's* role as a *hilastērion*. As the Messiah, Jesus has ushered in the eschatological age in his atoning death.

We are now in the position to see just how crucial the Spirit's role as the "Spirit of Sonship" is. Far from being merely a necessary consequence of justification, *Christosis*—becoming like the Son—is precisely what the sons of God where predestined for, as Paul states in Romans 8:29–30:

29 For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, those he called he also justified, those he justified he also glorified. (Rom. 8:29–30)

77 Gager, "Functional Diversity in Paul's Use of End-Time Language," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970): 330, italics mine; as cited in Adams, *Constructing the World*, 183.

78 Taken from DSSSE, 1:89.

79 Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, 452.

80 For further discussion see, for example, Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, 78–92; Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, Word Biblical Commentary 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 387–388; Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, 402–403; 451–454.

It cannot be overestimated that the very purpose of predestination is divine sonship. Yet here we have not merely a juridical divine sonship. Paul tells us what divine sonship means: “conformity to the image of his son.” Moreover, he further specifies how this conformity to Christ is actualized—through calling, justification, and glorification. Not only does this reading link justification to conformity to Christ’s divine sonship,⁸¹ but it also highlights how the divine sonship of believers *requires* conformity to the divine Christ himself.

As we have already noted, one of the most important passages for understanding Christ’s divinity is Philippians 2. Here, as Gorman has helped to show, we discover the divine origin of Christ’s self-giving. Appealing to the work of Joseph Hellerman, Gorman shows that the narrative pattern of the passage suggests a *continuous* downward descent, which is intended to contrast Jesus’ example with the Roman *cursus honorum*, that is, “the elite’s upward-bound race for honors,” and locate the origin of the descent in the preexistent Christ’s actions.⁸² Gorman argues that the structure of the passage reveals that what Christ performs in the *form of a slave*, namely, humbling himself and accepting crucifixion, parallels the action he takes in his status as in the *form of God*, namely, emptying himself and being born in the likeness of men. In other words, what he does in his humanity is thus an expression of what he does in his divinity, that is, he gives himself.

Thus instead of rendering *hyparchōn* as “though,” Gorman argues instead that the word should be understood as “because.” Philippians 2:6, therefore, is best read as, “. . . *because he was in the form of God*, he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself.” This makes better sense of the continuous descent depicted. Christ’s self-giving is not viewed as antithetical to what he does in his divinity but expressive of it. In embracing the cross, he does not act in a way contrary to his divine character. Rather, the cross reveals the self-giving love of Christ’s divine person. That such a reading is correct would seem to be confirmed by 1 Corinthians 1:18–25. As Gorman points out, in 1 Corinthians “Paul argues that Christ crucified is the counterintuitive reality of divine wisdom and power, that the cross is in fact *theophanic*—revelatory of God’s essential attributes, known in the reality and narrative of the crucified Messiah.”⁸³

81 For more discussion, see Michael P. Barber’s essay in Alan Stanley, ed., *Four Views on the Role of Good Works at the Final Judgment* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), as well as his responses to James D. G. Dunn and Thomas R. Schreiner.

82 Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 16, citing Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 132 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

83 Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 27.

Yet, notably, Paul's description of Christ's actions in Philippians 2 is ultimately ordered to soteriology. What Christ has done serves as the basis of Paul's *parenesis*.

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now,
not only as in my presence but much more in my absence,
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 *for*
God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good
pleasure. (Phil. 2:12–13)

The "therefore" (*hōstē*) indicates that Paul's exhortation flows from the account of the Christ story in the preceding verses; Christians must now live a life that is consonant with Christ's example. This is not the result of mere human effort or imitation alone, but of the divine power at work in believers. Here we find something similar to what Paul says in Galatians: "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*" (Gal. 2:20). We might say, what Christ has done in his personal body, he now accomplishes in his corporate body, that is, in believers. Thus just as Paul links sacrificial language to Christ's work (for example, Rom. 3:5; Rom. 8:2), the self-giving of the Philippians expressed in their contribution to the relief of the saints is described in cultic terms: "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18). Indeed, Paul even identifies the community as a temple.⁸⁴

Here we return to a question we also raised above. Paul explains that the Son's "*just act [dikaiōmatos]* leads to acquittal and life for all men" (Rom. 5:18). As we pointed out, the same terminology is later applied to believers in Romans 8:2: believers now have the capacity to fulfill the *dikaiōma*, the "just requirement of the law." As we have seen, Christ's act is understood in terms of atoning sacrifice in Romans 3:25 and 8:3. It cannot go without notice that Paul also describes the need for believers to "present their bodies as living sacrifices" (Rom. 12:1). In Romans 8, it is not only the suffering of Christ that ushers in the eschatological redemption, the suffering of believers *also* participates in that work. Is this because Christ's redemptive work is somehow insufficient? Not in the least. Rather, *their participation in his mission is precisely the work of Christ, who, with his Spirit at work within them, conforms them to his image, empowering them to "fulfill the just requirements of the law" and offer themselves as sacrifices in union with him.*

Here we come full-circle and return to Barclay's work, with which we began the essay. As Barclay has shown, it is God's *charis* that wills and works

84 See Michael P. Barber and John A. Kincaid, "Cultic Theosis in Paul and Second Temple Judaism: A Fresh Reading of the Corinthian Correspondence" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Region of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, CA, November 25, 2014).

in believers, and this is precisely ordered to conforming them to the divine Son. Far from being semi-Pelagian, it is all through the divine gift, which empowers believers to fulfill the *telos* of the gift, namely, being “conformed to the image of his Son.”

Conclusion

On the basis of our analysis of Romans 8, our argument could be summarized as follows: the divine Son became man so that the sons of God might be conformed to him, that is, through his sin offering, those who belong to Christ are made just and empowered by the Spirit so that the just requirement of the law are met in them. In order to accomplish this, the sons are formed in the virtues of the divine Son through the Spirit, and this results in a cruciform *theosis* that conforms the adopted sons to the divine Son and serves to further inaugurate the world to come.

In continuity with the eschatological tribulation tradition, the suffering of the righteous sons of God is the necessary condition for the full arrival of the glory of the world to come. Those who suffer with Christ attain the freedom of the glory of the children of God and help to bring all of creation into that same glorious life. In order to accomplish this, God justifies and glorifies the sons of God and this brings about the very purpose of their predestination: conformity to the image of the divine Son. In summation, it is our concluding contention that participation in Christ centers on divine sonship, wherein those who are “in Christ” are by grace what he is by nature and through this filial grace are empowered to become like him in his death and resurrection and, through the Spirit, receive the world to come as their recompense.