

# The Pneumatic Soteriology of Paul

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## Abstract

The apostle Paul has no problem ascribing soteriological significance to the Holy Spirit in his letters. For him, the Spirit is a soteriological agent. The Spirit regenerates and purifies the believer (Titus 3.3-6); he is seen as the faith-provoking and ethical-empowering agent of believers' continuous salvation (Gal. 5.16-26; 1 Cor. 2.4-5); he baptises believers into the body of Christ and enlivens their fellowship within this transformed existence (1 Cor. 12.13; Rom. 8.11); he is the Spirit of sonship (Rom. 8.15). Elsewhere, Paul's eschatology coalesces with his soteriology, with the Spirit playing a very significant role. For example, in Ephesians 1.13-14 the Spirit is the seal of believers' salvation for the eschatological redemption (cf. 2 Cor. 5.5; Rom. 8.23). His soteriological and eschatological perspectives are in tandem with his pneumatology.

**Keywords:** Spirit Baptism, Water baptism, in Christ, Soteriology, Eschatology.

## Introduction

There is almost a consensus among scholars as to the soteriological significance of the Spirit in Paul, and much research has been conducted in that respect. What concerns this study is a brief examination of the salvific importance of the Spirit in the thoughts of Paul. Attention will thus be focused on the exegetical study of key pneumatic soteriological passages in the *corpus Paulinus*.

## Born of Water and Spirit

In Titus 3.3-6, Paul emphasised that the salvation of the believing community was wrought through the washing and regenerative work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Dunn, 2010: 166, 168; Fee, 1994:780; Knight, 1989:1117; Wall, 2012:206). Schnackenburg (1964:11) claims that the washing of regeneration in this context is an allusion to baptism (cf. Bultmann, 1952:138; Ridderbos, 1975:398; Beasley-Murray, 1993:63; Denzer, 1968:361; Montague, 1970:157, 231; Wild, 1990:895; Rowland, 1985:223; Mollat, 1964:69-70). Guthrie (1997:1306) embraces both positions when he notes that the washing and regeneration could be either an allusion to baptism or a metaphorical description of the cleansing work of the Spirit. It is significant to note that, like John, Paul understands the cleansing/purifying, life-giving and life-transforming work of the Spirit as indispensable to eternal life/salvation. In John, 'born of water and Spirit' points to the cleansing and life-renewing work of the Spirit in the process of rebirth (John 3.3-5: cf. Isa. 32.15-17; 44:3-5; 55.1-5; Ezek. 36.25-27; 37.1-14; 39.29; 47:9; Jer. 17:13; Zech. 14:8; Joel 2.28; cf. 1 QS 4:20-22; *Jub.* 1.23; *T.Jud.* 24.3). In Titus 3.3-6 Paul presents a similar concept. Rebirth is wrought by 'water and Spirit: the cleansing/purifying

and new-creation work of the Spirit. Thus both authors associate cleansing and new creation work with the Spirit at rebirth. To be saved, according to Paul, is to be transformed from the realm of the flesh (v. 3) to the realm of the Spirit (vv. 5-6) through the cleansing and renewing work of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual dynamism is achieved through belief in the truth about Jesus (2 Thess. 2.13-14). Here also, Paul, like John, emphasises the soteriological correspondence between belief in the truth (the gospel about Jesus) and the salvation/eternal life actualised by the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6.11 is a parallel text to Titus 3.3-6 on this issue. There also, the new-creation or rebirth is achieved through a transformation from the flesh (vv. 9-10) to the realm of Christ (v. 11) by the washing and justifying work of the Spirit. Although ἐδικαιώθητε (justify) is used in this context vis-à-vis ἀνακαινώσεως (renew) in Titus, the concept is the same. It is by the sanctifying and renewing work of the Spirit that the one who believes is justified or rendered righteous before God (cf. Rom. 15.16) (cf. Dunn, 2010:167). The justifying work of the Spirit here becomes synonymous with the renewing work of the Spirit.

### **Baptism in/by the Spirit**

In 1 Corinthians 12.13 entrance and incorporation into the body is by the work of the Spirit. Although the preposition ἐν in the expression, καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐβαπτίσθημεν, 'for we were all baptised ἐν one Spirit', can mean in, on, at, with, by, among, the context suggests either 'by' or 'in'. If 'in' is preferred, as in Dunn (2010:127) and others (Fee, 1994:179, 181; Ridderbos, 1975:398; Pett, 1998:68; Grosheide, 1953:293) the Spirit becomes the medium of the baptism into the one body: 'for we were all baptised *in* one Spirit into one body' (cf. Matt. 3.11; Mark 1.8; Luke 3.16; John 1.33; Acts 1.5; 11.16). Such a reading implies that the baptism *in* the Spirit is, according to Paul, a baptism into the body, which is 'in-Christ' (cf. Rom. 12.5; Eph. 4.15-16; Phil. 1.1; 4.21; 1 Thess. 2.14) (cf. Ridderbos, 1975:221; Fee, 1994:182). This identification is given amplification by the concluding phrase, 'and have been made to drink of one Spirit'. To drink of one Spirit is equivalent to baptism in the Spirit and into the body. This conceptual interchange squares with Paul's 'in Christ'/'in the Spirit' equivalent elsewhere (Rom. 8.1-11) (for Paul's 'in Christ' - 'in the Spirit' close identification see also Ridderbos, 1975:220; E. Sanders, 1991:73, 74, 75; Toit, 2000:293; Dunn, 1998:408; 414; Zielsler, 1983:48, 63; Gunkel, 2008:113; Lampe, 1977:79, 80; Berkhof, 1964:25).

Ervin (1984:101) disagrees with this harmonisation and argues that 'we were baptised into one body' is initiatory, while 'we were made to drink of one Spirit' is a metaphor for fullness of the Spirit for mission. Thus, the former is conversion-initiation, while the latter is empowerment for mission. Such theological distinction is not clear in the passage. In the Old Testament, the pouring out of the Spirit like water/drink is associated with two functions: re-creation (Isa. 32.15; 44.3; Ezek. 39.29; Zech. 12.10/13.1) and prophetic empowerment (Joel 2.28). If such Old Testament understanding lies behind Paul's Spirit-drink metaphor, then the phrase 'and we were all given one Spirit to drink' should be seen as explicatory of 'the baptism in the Spirit into the body'. That is, it is a mystical metaphor showing the re-creative and empowering effect of the baptism of incorporation into the body by the Spirit in the one conversion experience. Gibley (1964:179, 181) views the baptism in this context as water baptism, claiming that it is through the baptism of water that the drinking/infilling of the Spirit is actualised. This is a very slippery position, as 'the Spirit' in the passage can either possess instrumental or locative force depending on the meaning ascribed to the ἐν preposition.

It is imperative to note that Paul views his 'in Christ' metaphor as the *domesticus* (domicile) of his soteriology (Rom. 3.24; 6.11, 23; 8.1-2; 1 Cor. 1.2, 30; 4.15; 15.22; 2 Cor. 3.14; 5.19; Gal. 2.4; 3.14, 26-29; 5.6; 6.15; Phil. 2.1; 3.9; 1 Thess. 4.16; 5.18). For him, 'in Christ' is a sphere where the Spirit-baptised person: (1) overcomes sin, becomes alive to God, and receives eternal life (Rom. 6.11, 23; 1 Cor. 15.22); (2) escapes eternal condemnation and is guided by the Spirit of life (Rom. 8.1-2); (3) experiences the sanctifying redemptive work of

God, leading to the imputation of the righteousness of God (1 Cor. 1.2, 30; Phil. 3.9; cf. 2 Cor. 5.21; Rom. 3.22; 5.17; Eph. 1.7); (4) receives divine son-ship (1 Cor. 4.15; cf. Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.6); (5) is purged of the veil of cognitive blindness and transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3.14-18; cf. Col. 3.10); (6) receives divine forgiveness and enjoys reconciliatory peace with God (2 Cor. 5.19); (7) is granted liberty from the estrangement of the law of sin and death (Gal. 2.4); (8) puts on Christ's image and becomes legitimate seed of Abraham and heir according to the promise (Gal. 3.14, 26-28); (9) experiences rebirth/new creation (Gal. 5.6; 6.15); (10) receives all spiritual blessings from God (Eph. 1.3); (11) enjoys a foretaste of the future life and reign with the Son (Eph. 2.6); (12) enjoys divine consolation, comfort of love, fellowship and mercy (Phil. 2.1); (13) is granted eschatological hope of future resurrection (1 Thess. 4.16); and (14) locates the divine will (1Thess. 5.18). (For similar perspectives on Paul's 'in Christ' soteriological metaphor, see also Diessmann, 1926:201-221; Morris, 1986:51-55; Ridderbos, 1975:60-61; Toit, 2000:294; Seifrid, 1993:436; Witherington, 1993:99; Ziesler, 1983:49-57; Dunn, 1998:396-401; Cranfield, 1985:174; Bultmann, 1955:177; Gunkel, 1998:112). This implies that the baptism in the Spirit, which is also a baptism into the body, is a baptism into a salvific sphere.

On the other hand, if 'by' is preferred, as in Schnackenburg (1964:28-29) the Spirit becomes the instrument, while water baptism becomes the medium (cf. Ervin, 1984:99; Montague, 1970:157). Schnackenburg (pp. 27, 28, 29) argues further that although water baptism is in view, the Spirit is emphasised as both the principle of unity and the life principle of the body (cf. Morris, 1986:81). For Atkinson (2011:98), God is the baptising agent and the Spirit is the immersing instrument. Thus, the Corinthians were baptised in one Spirit by God.

It is imperative to note here that whichever preposition is preferred, the Spirit is soteriologically significant in this incorporation experience. For Paul, Spirit baptism initiates believers into the body, a mystical sphere ('in Christ') where all their soteriological needs receive fulfilment. In view of this observation, Dunn (2010:129) might be right when he concludes on this passage that, 'there is no alternative to the conclusion that the baptism in the Spirit is what made the Corinthians members of the Body of Christ, that is, Christians.'

### **The Spirit as Ethical Guide**

The ethical/soteriological significance of the Spirit looms quite large in Paul's writings compared to those of John and Luke. Galatians 5.16-26 is probably the most popular passage on Paul's pneumatological ethics. Here, Paul exhorts the Galatian community that the key to overcoming the lust of the flesh is to follow the guidance of the Spirit (v. 17) (cf. Ridderbos, 1975:282). Parker (2005:97) overstretches the evidence when he claims that the ethical guidance of the Spirit should be understood as an impelling of our will towards the practice of righteousness. On the contrary, the guidance should rather be understood in a didactic sense as the teaching/revelatory role of the indwelling Spirit (cf. Jer. 31.33-34 / 2 Cor. 3.3) which leads to life (cf. Rom. 8.5-6).

Bultmann (1952:336) succinctly sums up the idea thus: 'Led by the Spirit does not mean to be dragged along willy-nilly but directly presupposes decisions in the alternative: flesh or Spirit' (cf. Otoo, 2014:2001). Living and walking according to the Spirit gives rise to the mortification of the flesh and the production of the fruit of the Spirit (vv. 19-25). Otoo (2014:144) makes a cogent observation when he notes that by the expression 'fruit of the Spirit' Paul is not alluding to natural qualities or qualities emanating from the natural self, but rather qualities produced as a result of the Spirit's presence in the community/individual (cf. Fee, 1994:444). On this note, Morris (1986:76) may be right to posit that it is ethical conduct, not ecstatic behaviour, which is the true index of Spirit reception. Being attuned with the Spirit guarantees ethical victory, while the opposite means being caught at the nexus of fleshly desires (cf. 8.9-11), which constitutes death.

The Spirit is the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1.4), that is, he enables the fulfilment of the righteous requirement of the law (cf. Rom. 8.3-4, 12-13; 14.16-18). The Spirit is the sanctifying agent and the ethical guide to believers (1 Thess. 4.3-8; cf. Rabens, 2014:203). He bears witness to the truth in Christ, and corrects in love and gentleness (1 Cor. 4.21). The Spirit empowers the conscience of the believer towards the truth (Rom. 9.1). It is in the Spirit that the conscience of the believer is attuned to the truth. The human mind is prone to error and falsehood without the Spirit (see further Keener, 2016:127, 128,134). Thus for believers, the Spirit is indispensable to their ethical rectitude and propriety. In the light of the role of the Spirit expressed in Romans 9.1, Paul's exhortations to walk in the Spirit, live according to the Spirit, mind the Spirit, etc., receive cognitive significance. Believers who walk in the Spirit or are led by the Spirit have their conscience directed away from falsehood to the truth. For Paul, the Spirit not only re-creates and initiates the believer into the salvific body of Christ, but continues to ethically transform the initiate towards the goal of Christlikeness or divine character. He is the ethical transformer in Paul's soteriological thinking (cf. Montague, 1970:199, 201).

### **The Spirit as the Convicting and Faith-Quickening Power within the Gospel Proclamation**

In Paul, the Spirit is revealed as the power within the gospel proclamation quickening a faith response or having a conversional impact on recipients of the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 2.4-5 Paul challenges the Corinthians that their faith or conviction in Christ was as a result 'of the Spirit and power' (πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως) inherent in the gospel (cf. 2 Cor. 4.13; 1 Cor. 12.1-3). Keener (2016:133) rightly understands the Spirit in this context as indispensable to the communication and understanding of the gospel message (cf. Pinnock & Callen, 2009:201). The 'Spirit and power' here should be understood, not as two distinct realities, but as two words expressing a single reality (hendiadys). In this case, the 'power' expresses the dynamic efficacy of the Spirit's work in the proclamation and reception of the gospel (cf. Fee, 1994:92; Dunn, 1988:420; Murphy-O'Connor, 1990:801; Montague, 1970:135). If the phrase is viewed in this way, Paul attests to the conversional power characteristic of his gospel by virtue of the Spirit's presence (cf. Rom. 15.18-19). This is of course, not to dismiss the miraculous dimension of the Spirit's power in this context (cf. Gal. 3.5; Acts 10.38).

A similar emphasis is evident in 1 Thessalonians 1.5-6. Here, Paul stresses three elements constitutive of the gospel: δύναμις (power), πνεύμα ἅγιον (Holy Spirit), and πληροφορία (assurance/conviction). The Holy Spirit is here sandwiched between the 'power' and the 'assurance' probably, to stress the two as significant operations of the Spirit. If this is the case, then Paul wishes to emphasise that in the preaching of the gospel the Holy Spirit is both the conversional δύναμις and the guarantor of eschatological salvific πληροφορία in the life of believers. Rabens (2014:200) makes a similar observation. He notes that the Thessalonians accepted Paul's gospel simply because the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit persuaded them (cf. Marshall, 1997:1279). This Spirit imbued gospel is capable of making disciples amidst afflictions, not least because of the joy it affords (1 Thess. 5.6). It is through the strengthening work of the Spirit within believers that faith is provoked in them as Christ indwells their hearts (Eph. 3.16-17). The convicting/faith provoking power of the Holy Spirit is the basis for Christian discipleship and existential joy (cf. Rom. 15.13). It can be concluded that, for Paul, the Spirit is both the miraculous and convicting power of the gospel message (Levison, 2009:280).

### **The Life-Giving Spirit**

Romans 8 may be seen as the *locus classicus* of Paul's pneumatic soteriology. This is because the ethical and life-giving function of the Spirit is given ample attention, as compared to the rest of the chapters within the *corpus Paulinum*. The first verse opens with a declaration which affirms that to walk after the Spirit is a true mark of being 'in Christ' and being part of

the redeemed eschatological community of God who have escaped eternal condemnation. The Spirit is accorded the title 'Spirit of life' whose law sets free from the law of sin and death. The 'law' in the expression νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος (the law of the Spirit) should be best understood, not as Torah, but as the life-transforming teaching/guidance of the Spirit in the hearts of believers 'in Christ' under the new covenant (cf. Jer. 31.31-34), or, in agreement with Thayer (1981:427) as 'the impulse of right action emanating from the Spirit'. This life-giving teaching/guidance of the Spirit in the hearts of believers is understood to have liberating force, that is, it empowers and guides them to fulfil the righteous requirement of Torah (v. 4), and thereby to escape the sin and death as a result of one's inability to fulfil Torah (cf. Gal. 3.10, 12).

The Spirit is the guarantor of life and peace (v. 6) and also of life because those who walk after his guidance escape the death and condemnation associated with carnal mindedness. Of peace, because those who walk in his guidance are subject to the law of God and thus are pleased with God (vv. 7-8). The Spirit as the Spirit of Christ indwelling the believer is an indicator of divine ownership (v. 9). To possess the Spirit of Christ is to be possessed by Christ (cf. Dunn, 1998:423; Fee, 1994:548), or better still, to be indwelt by the Spirit is to be indwelt by Christ (v. 10). Here, Christology coalesces with pneumatology.

The indwelling of Christ by the Spirit in the believer produces two contrasting soteriological effects. First, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν (the body is dead because of sin). Bultmann (1952:208) argues that the expression should be understood thus: 'If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, your *spirits* are alive because of righteousness' (cf. Fee, 1994:550, 551). The theological problem associated with this interpretation is two-fold. (1) It circumvents the transformative efficacy of what it means to be indwelt by Christ – for how can the body still remain dead when the second Adam, the life-giving Spirit, indwells it? It should be borne in mind that because of Christ in the believer, the 'now' σῶμα experiences a foretaste of the 'not yet' eschatological transformation, as the body of sin is destroyed (Rom. 6.6; 7.4-5; Gal. 2.20; 5.24). This 'now' transformation of the σῶμα receives completion at the *eschaton* (Rom. 8.23; 1 Cor. 15.50-53). (2) It robs the eschatological transformation of the body of its beginning in time, thereby denying its salvific continuum.

Paul's new creation circumcision metaphor is probably the appropriate grid for the understanding of this hermeneutically challenging phrase. Circumcision in Paul's soteriological language is most appropriately understood as the removal of the contagion of sin by the Spirit through dying and resurrection with Christ, as a means into the new covenant economy (Col. 2.11-13; Gal. 6.5; Rom. 6.5). When this insight is brought to bear on the phrase, its meaning becomes less difficult to grasp. Because of the contagion of sin the body needs to die (or be sanctified) through circumcision. That is, the putting off of the contagion of sin by the Spirit through identification with the death and resurrection of Christ. Romans 8.13 is revealing. There, the Spirit is emphasised as the instrument for this spiritual circumcision. The 'death of the body because of sin' then becomes a phraseological metaphor alluding to the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the process of re-creation. Keener (2016:106) expresses a similar thought when he claims that although immortality of the body is expected at the resurrection, it is given life in the present by the Spirit by being rendered an instrument for good rather than evil. Bultmann (1952:348) elsewhere alludes to the fact that by its crucifixion with Christ, the σῶμα of sin of the believer is destroyed; the believer dies to the world but lives to God in Christ as a result (Rom. 6.11, 13). This is the most appropriate theological context within which the expression should be best understood. This understanding not only appreciates the transformative efficacy of the inherence of Christ in the believer, but acknowledges the link between the 'now' and the 'not yet' work of the Spirit in the σῶμα.

On the second soteriological effect: τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην (but the spirit is life because of righteousness), three words control the understanding of this expression. That is,

πνεῦμα, ζωὴ and δικαιοσύνην. In the New Testament, πνεῦμα can mean air/wind (e.g. Jn. 3.8; Heb. 1.7), the anthropological spirit (e.g. Luke 8.55; 23.46; Acts 7.59), spirit as opposed to matter (e.g. Luke 24.37; Acts 23.8), and the divine Spirit (e.g. Matt. 1.18; 20; Eph. 1.13) (cf. Thayer, 1981:520, 521). Fee (1994:551; cf. Bultmann, 1952:208; Dunn, 1998:432) argues that πνεῦμα in this context is the divine Spirit. Contrary to this position, the anthropological sense is rather the case (cf. Gruenler, 1989:940; Fitzmyer, 1990:853). This is because the whole concept is about the soteriological effect of Christ's presence in the believer via the Spirit (the transformation of the believer's body and spirit). Hence, the most appropriate pair to the σῶμα is the human spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 7.34). The word ζωὴ can mean normal earthly life (e.g. 1 Pet. 3.10; Luke 12.15; Acts 8.33) or life as the exclusive essence of God (e.g. Jn 1.4; 3.36). The meaning which does most justice to the context is 'divine life'. Also, δικαιοσύνη, more generally, is understood as the righteousness which God gives. However, in this context it points to Christ, expressed as the embodiment of God's life-giving grace, which makes the sinner acceptable to God upon possession. In the light of the understanding dredged from these three dictions, the meaning of the expression becomes apparent. Thus, the spirit (πνεῦμα) of the believer is identified with divine life (ζωὴ) because Christ, the embodiment of God's life-giving grace (δικαιοσύνη) indwells the believer through his Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 15.45). The indwelling presence of Christ in the believer by the Spirit is the life-giving power in the believer and the means by which the spiritual circumcision of the believer is actualized.

In verse 11 the Spirit is presented as the life-quickening agent of both the body in time and the eschatological resurrected body. This now-and-not-yet life-quickening work of the Spirit is predicated on the power that raised Jesus from death. Although it is not clear in the text whether this power is the Spirit or God himself, the association of the Spirit with resurrection/new-creation in Ezekiel 37.8, and probably 1 Corinthians 6.14 and Romans 1.4 (cf. 2 Macc. 14.43-6; *Sibylline Oracles* 4.179-92; *mSot.* 9.15) tends to tip the balance in favour of the Spirit (see also; Gunkel, 2008:83; Wright, 2003:193, 203; 256, 257; Burke, 2014:133; Thiselton, 2013:72; Dunn, 1998:262; Scott, 1993:15; Fitzmyer, 1990:853).

Sowing to the flesh leads to death, while sowing to the Spirit leads to eternal life (Gal. 6.7-9). 'To sow' here is metaphorical. It points to the fulfilment of the promptings of either the flesh (cf. Gal. 5.19-22) or the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5.22-24). Sowing to the Spirit falls within the locution of Paul's *paraenetic* expressions: walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5.16; 25); be led by the Spirit (Gal. 5.18; Rom. 8.14); live in the Spirit (Gal. 5.25); walk according to the Spirit (Rom. 8.4); and live according to the Spirit (Rom. 8.5) (cf. Fee, 1994:465). Bultmann (1952:337) insightfully observes that these expressions are locutions describing the Spirit as the source, power and norm of present conduct. Morris (1986:77) has a similar thought. For him, these expressions point to the fact that the presence of the Spirit is the dominating component of the Christian life (cf. Ridderbos, 1975:222). Sowing to the Spirit is equivalent to living or walking according to the promptings of the Spirit (see also Swete, 1909:211). Paul's use of these expressions probably finds its background in the Old Testament, where to walk in God's ways/commandments is to live by them with a consequent soteriological reward (Lev. 18.4-5; Ezek. 18.9; cf. Deut. 28.9; 1 Kings 3.14; 8.23; 11.38; Ps. 119.1; 128.1-6). To walk away from God's ways or commands is disobedience, and the consequence is death (Lev. 26.27-33; 2 Kgs 21.22-23; Jer. 44.10, 11, 23; Ezek. 5.6-17; 20.16). In a similar vein, walking according to the Spirit leads to life, while the opposite leads to death (Rom. 8.5-6, 13; Gal. 6.8).

In summary, walking/living according to the Spirit, is for Paul, a road map to attaining eternal life and a true sign of one's incorporation into Christ. The guidance of the Spirit is a means by which the believer fulfils the righteous requirement of the Law and escapes eternal condemnation associated with Torah. To be in-dwelt by the Spirit is to be owned by Christ. This indwelling means victory over sin and attainment of eternal life.

### **The Spirit as both the power within and behind the worship of the believing community**

Like John, Paul also views the Spirit as the power both within and behind the worship of the believing community. The Spirit is understood as the unifying bond of fellowship among the believing community (2 Cor. 13.13-14; Eph. 4.1-6; Phil. 2.1). In 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 we read that the communal worship of the believing community in Corinth was enlivened by the functional gifts of the Spirit (cf. Phil. 3.3). On this note, Dunn (1998:421) observes that the Spirit was at the heart of the worship of the Corinthian church. The Spirit is the author of praise and thanksgiving worship within the body (Eph. 5.18-21), as well as the empowering presence behind the church's prayer life (Rom. 8.15; 15.30-32; 1 Cor. 14.14-18; Gal. 4.6; 26-27; Eph. 6.18). The Spirit is a preserving power behind the worship of the believing community in that he is the divine presence within the body (1 Cor. 3.16; 6.19), inducing its ethics and promoting its spiritual οἰκοδομή (edification) (1 Cor. 14.1-5, 26). The Spirit is the author of believers' community fellowship (κοινωνία) (2 Cor. 13.13; cf. Hubbard, 2014:173), that bond of Spiritual life-giving fellowship among believers in relation to God and Christ (cf. Montague, 1970:191; Berkhof, 1964:57-65). He is also the source of the church's joy (1 Thess. 1.6). In short, Paul understands the Spirit as the empowering; unifying, enlivening, and preserving presence of the body in the church's on-going salvific relationship with God in worship (see also Paige, 1993:411-412).

### **The Spirit as the fulfilling instrument of the promised new covenant**

Jeremiah 31.31-34 (cf. 24.7; Ezek. 11.8, 19; 36.26-27) promised a future where God would make a new covenant, as opposed to the old covenant, with the house of Israel. In this covenant, God himself would imprint his laws in the minds and hearts of his people, resulting in the forgiveness of sins, the independent knowledge of God, and divine ownership. In 2 Corinthians 3.3 (cf. vv. 6-8) Paul reveals the Spirit as the instrument of fulfilment of this new covenant promise: the Spirit is the means by which God imprints his ἐπιστολή (letters of commandments) upon the hearts of his people, resulting in regeneration and new covenant relationship. The γράμμα (the written Mosaic Law) of the old covenant is killing, whereas the πνεῦμα (Spirit) of the new covenant is life-giving (v.6).

In verses 14 to 16, the old covenant κάλυμμα (veil) which once blinded the minds of God's people, preventing them from comprehending the revelation of God in the γράμμα, has in the new covenant been removed in Christ as one turns to the Lord. The 'Lord' in verse 16 is closely identified with the Spirit in verse 17 (cf. Ziesler, 1983:46), meaning that to turn to the Lord and to turn to the Spirit are two ways of saying the same thing: conversional reception of the Spirit (cf. Dunn, 1998:422). If turning to the Lord means conversional Spirit reception, which in turn leads to the removal of the old covenant veil of blindness, then there can be little doubt that Paul understands the Spirit as instrumental to new covenant soteriology (cf. Turner, 1998:115; Hubbard, 2014:165; Dunn, 2010:135). Such conjecture is validated by the fact that this unveiling is understood as a transformation into the image of Christ wrought by the Spirit (v. 18; cf. Ridderbos, 1975:220; Lampe, 1977:84; Swete, 1909:195-195).

In Genesis 22.18 (cf. 12.3; 18.18) God proclaims that the blessings of all nations under the new covenant will be located in the seed of Abraham. In Galatians 3.14 Christ is identified with this promised seed of Abraham in whom the blessing of Abraham, identified as the Spirit, is located. Possession of the Spirit in the new covenant is possession of the promised Abrahamic seed and blessing, who is construed as the genesis of the Christian life, inseparably attached, and consequent to faith in Christ (Gal. 3.2-3). Dunn (2010:108) is right when he notes that the promise to Abraham has a dual fulfilment: in Christ as the promised seed, and in the reception of the Spirit. The observation of Gunkel (2008:81-82) on this subject is revealing. He notes a conceptual link between Galatians 3.14 and 3.18, 29 and argues that for Paul, possession of the Abrahamic promise is tantamount to possession of the kingdom. The validity of such a conclusion rests on the deduction that the noun κληρονομία used in

this context for 'inheritance' denotes 'the eternal blessedness in the consummated kingdom of God which is to be expected after the visible return of Christ' (Thayer, 1981:349). This future inheritance is equated with the promised Spirit in Galatians 3.14. Also, possession of the Spirit legitimates heirship of this inheritance in Galatians 3.29. Tying these knots together, possession of the Spirit becomes a present realisation or foretaste of the future possession of the kingdom. Fee (1994:394) differs from Gunkel in his understanding of the meaning of 'inheritance' in this context. For him, it is 'being Abraham's true children'. Although such perspective is not alien to the context, it is a bit too narrow, especially granting the use of the term elsewhere in Paul (Col. 3.24; Eph. 1.13-14; Rom. 8.15; cf. Matt. 21.38; Mark 7.7; Lk. 20.14). In these passages, 'inheritance' is connected to the glorious future kingdom and all its blessedness (cf. Ridderbos, 1975:203), suggesting that the future kingdom is most likely in view in this context.

In Romans 8 the Spirit is construed as the operational power of the new covenant. Under the new covenant, the Spirit is the instrument that liberates people from under the old covenant (8.1); the Spirit gives life (8.2; cf. 1 Cor. 15.45; 2 Cor. 3.6; 4 Ezra 3.5; Judith 16.14; *Syb. Or.* 4.46) (cf. Gunkel, 2008:84; Bultmann, 1952:336; Fee, 1994:525); the Spirit is an ethical guide into the fulfilment of the righteous requirement of the law (8.4; cf. Fee, 1994:536; Montague, 1970:207), leading to life and peace (8.6); the Spirit is the guarantor of divine ownership (8.9; cf. Fee, 1994:548); the Spirit is a life-quickening agent of the eschatological dead σῶμα (8.11; cf. Fee, 1994:552, 553; Gunkel, 1998:83; Lampe, 1977:80; Dunn, 1998:262); the Spirit is the instrument that brings liberation from the entrapment of the flesh (8.12-13); the Spirit is the agent of divine adoption/sonship (8.14-15; cf. Gal. 4.6) (cf. Fee, 1994:566; Montague, 1970:09; Dunn, 1998:435; Manson, 1959:163; Kruse, 1993:17). In a nutshell, for Paul, the Spirit is the enlivening power of the new covenant.

Thus far, the Spirit as the fulfilling instrument of the promised new covenant is the means by which the ἐπιστολή of Christ is imprinted upon the hearts of believers. He is the remover of the old covenant κάλυμμα; he is the object of the promised Abrahamic blessing; and he is the enlivening and operational power of the new covenant.

### **The Spirit and sonship/adoption**

The indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. 3.16; 6.19), who guides the believer (Rom. 8.14; Gal. 5.18, 25) is for Paul, the harbinger of divine sonship/adoption. To be a child of God, is to be led by the Spirit (Rom. 8.14). Spirit reception does not only bequeath divine life to the believer (8.2; cf. 1 Cor. 15.45; 2 Cor. 3.6), but also grants divine sonship. This soteriological consequence of Spirit reception is given amplification in Romans 8.15. Here, the spirit of bondage, a probable metaphor for the law under the old covenant, is put in antithesis with the Spirit of adoption. This contrast recalls the symbolic antithesis of Hagar and Sarah, bondage and freedom, old covenant and new covenant, birth according to the flesh and birth according to the promise (Spirit) elsewhere (Gal. 4.22-31). The bearing this has on the interpretation of Romans 8.15 is that to receive the Spirit of adoption is to possess the Abrahamic promises: faith in Christ (Gal. 3.2, 14; 5.5-6); birth according to the Spirit (Gal. 4.28-31), and freedom from the bondage of the Law of the old covenant (Gal. 3.13-14; 4.31; 5.1).

Adoption by the Spirit is most likely the eschatological redefinition of the concept of Israel as God's son in the Old Testament (Exod. 4.22-23; Jer. 3.19; Ps. 2.7; 82.6; Hos. 11.1; Isa. 1.2; 63:16). Israel's unique status as God's children meant that they have been sanctified and separated from the Gentile nations unto God by the covenant of circumcision, with the implication of living faithful unto God and walking in his ways (Gen. 17.10; cf. Exod. 19.5; Deut. 5.29; Jer. 7.23; Ps. 78.10-11; cf. Cullmann, 1959:273). As the covenant of circumcision was the true mark of inclusion or membership of God's family in the Old Testament (cf. von Rad, 1961:196; Williamson, 2003:123), so Paul, in Romans 8.15, sees the Spirit of the new covenant as the defining mark of membership of God's family or the agent through whom



believers become God's children (cf. Coetzer, 1981:184; Fee, 1994:565; Fitzmyer, 1990:853). Thus the Spirit replaces circumcision as the defining emblem of God's children.

The understanding of the Spirit as a marker of divine sonship is given theological emphasis when Paul stresses that by the Spirit, believers cry out Ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ (Abba Father). In its Aramaic setting, Ἀββὰ is a register of intimacy and endearment (cf. Fee, 1994:411; *contra* Gunkel, 2008:80; Lampe, 1977:88, 88; Manson, 1962:946, who view the term as glossolalic ecstatic manifestation inspired by the Spirit). Jesus' usage (Mark 14.36) in prayer points to his unique filial position of love, oneness and intimacy with the Father. For Paul, the oneness of believers with the Son (1 Cor. 6.17; Gal. 3.27) gives them the right to share this unique position of sonship with him, hence the believers' cry, 'Abba Father' (cf. Dunn, 1992:619; Cranfield, 1985:188-189). This 'Abba' cry establishes three things. (1) Through that, the Spirit both affirms and attests to the adopted status of believers (cf. Gunkel, 2008:79; Dunn, 1998:437; Lampe, 1977:88; Fee, 1994:564; Fitzmyer, 1990:854), their recreation into God's family, as well as their heirship with the Son. (2) Through that, the Spirit affirms and attests to the intimate relationship of believers with the Father, as the veil has now been removed in Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3.14- 4.6). (3) Through that, the Spirit affirms and attests to the endearing status of believers to the Father (cf. Rom. 5.5, 8; 8.37; Eph. 2.4-5). The verse 16 links Spirit reception to the inheritance of the kingdom. It is by the reception of the Spirit that believers become children of God and hence, joint heirs with Christ in relation to the future kingdom.

Galatians 4.6 is a co-text with Romans 8.15. In this passage, Paul reminds the believers in Galatia that because they are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of his son into their hearts. Spirit reception here should not be understood as posterior to sonship, thereby suggesting alienation from it, rather the theological trust of the passage should be seen as a reiteration of the role of the Spirit as witness in Romans 8.16. The passage asserts that because believers are sons God has sent forth his Spirit into their hearts as a witness or confirming agent to this new status (cf. Rom. 8.16). Quoting Galatians 4.6 and Romans 8.16, Ridderbos (1975:201) alludes to this understanding when he observes that the sending of the Spirit into the hearts of God's children is to witness with their Spirit. For Paul, the Spirit is not only the author of divine sonship, but its witness.

In Romans 8.23 Paul attaches the eschatological dimension to the adoption by the Spirit. Here again, as in 8.15, the Spirit, through glossolalic prayer, affirms the adoption of the saints, albeit in eschatological categories. More important is the observation that Paul attests to another aspect of the adoption by the Spirit: τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος (the redemption of the body). According to Paul, Spirit reception grants present membership into God's family (Rom. 8.15), however, this membership comes to complete fulfilment when the body is ἀπολύτρωσιν (fully redeemed or delivered by the full payment of the ransom; cf. 1 Cor. 15.50-58). Adoption is here conjoined and equated with resurrection (cf. Cranfield, 1985:200; Moo, 1997:1141), with the Spirit identified as the common perfecting agent. Thus adoption in Paul has both 'a now' and 'a not yet' significance (cf. Ridderbos, 1975:200; Davis 1984:13; Scott, 1993:17; Manson, 1962:946; Fee, 1994:574; Cranfield, 1985:199-200).

Believers eagerly await the fullness of their adoption because they possess the 'firstfruits' (ἀπαρχή) of the Spirit. 'Firstfruits' appears in the Septuagint version of Exodus 23.16, 19, Numbers 18.12, 13 and Deuteronomy 18.4. There, the produce as 'firstfruits' carries the idea of initial evidence and guarantee of future harvest. Christ as the 'firstfruits' of those who are fallen asleep carries a similar thought: his resurrection is the initial evidence and guarantee of the future resurrection of believers. In Romans 8, the idea is that believers' possession of the 'firstfruits' of the Spirit means that the life-giving work of the Spirit in their lives at this present aeon is an initial evidence and guarantee of their possession of the fullness of this life in the future. Here, the genitive, 'of the Spirit', is taken as a genitive of apposition, indicating the 'firstfruits' as the life-giving work of the Spirit, and not the Spirit himself (cf. Cranfield, 1985:199), or as Berkhof (1964:106) terms it, it is a genitive of explication, pointing

to the Spirit's present agency: conversion, forgiveness, communion with God, joy, etc., as the foretaste of the coming kingdom. Although Fee (1994:573) defends the 'apposition' view, he differs in his claim that the 'firstfruits' points to the 'Spirit' himself (cf. Bultmann, 1952:158; Dunn, 1998:470). The problem with such a claim is that it makes the reception of the Spirit in this context a down payment of that for which believers eagerly await. Although such understanding is not alien to Paul's pneumatic eschatology, it does not fit the 'firstfruits' imagery, which evokes the meaning of a pledge, foretaste or guarantee (cf. Fitzmyer, 1990:854; Montague, 1970:186). As Thiselton (2013:73) puts it, 'it is a pledge of more of the same quality or kind to come', and not a down payment as Fee's claim suggests. Gunkel (2008:82) views the genitive, 'of the Spirit' as a 'partitive' genitive, indicating the 'firstfruits' as the partial conferral of the Spirit, with a future expectation of full bestowal. This position is frail in the sense that it is difficult to trace a present partial reception of the Spirit by believers in Paul (1 Cor. 12.13; Eph. 5.18; Titus 3.5; Eph. 1.13). What is discernible in Paul is a partial experience or foretaste of the soteriological works of the Spirit, with a future hope of complete fulfilment (Rom. 8.14-30; Eph. 1.13-14; 2 Cor. 1.20-22; 5.5; Gal. 4.6-7). This makes such a 'partial view' an alien construct to Paul's theology (cf. Fee, 1994:573, n. 297).

What could be said about the Spirit thus far in this section is that, for Paul, the Spirit is the Spirit of sonship/adoption (cf. Bultmann, 1952:335; Moo, 1997:1140; Fee, 1994:562; Dunn, 2010:149). The soteriological significance of this assertion is that, in Paul adoption means eschatological redemption (Rom. 8.23), divine sonship and heirship (Rom. 8.14-17; Gal. 4.4-7), salvific freedom (Rom. 8.15, 21; Gal. 4.28-31), predestination, divine selection or ownership (Eph. 1.5, 11; Rom. 8.14). Accordingly, if the Spirit is understood as the harbinger of adoption, then the Spirit is for Paul, a soteriological agent.

### **The Spirit and Eschatology**

In Ephesians 1.13-14 (cf. 2 Cor. 1.22; 5.5), Paul alludes to the eschatological dimension of the soteriological work of the Spirit. The Spirit is understood as the seal (σφραγίς) of believers' eschatological promise of redemption. Σφραγίς could mean authentication, security, or mark of ownership. All these shades of meaning are implied in this context. Thus, the Spirit as God's σφραγίς on believers marks them as God's possession/adopted children and authentic heirs of the inheritance in Christ, and secures them until the final redemption (see also Morris, 1986:80; Parker, 2005:61; Ridderbos, 1975:400; Fee, 1994:669). For Bultmann (1952:137-138), the term σφραγίς in this context is an allusion to baptism. Thus through baptism the baptised person is sealed, that is, placed under the protection, security and ownership of the Name of the κύριος. On the contrary, the sealing is more likely an activity of the Spirit than a reference to baptism (cf. Ridderbos, 1975:400; Dunn, 2010:160). Schnackenburg (1962:88) expresses his reservations on this baptism referent position when he observes that, if there be any allusion to baptism, that connection is only a figurative pointer to the reality of the Spirit. More significant is the observation that the Spirit in Ephesians 1.13 is depicted as the instrument of the sealing, thus emphasising the soteriological function of the Spirit as the marker or stamp of (1) those predestined to adoption as sons (v.5); those redeemed through the blood of Jesus (v. 7); those who are members of the eschatological ingathering in Christ (v. 10); and those who are heirs of the 'now' and the 'not yet' inheritance (v. 11). The view of σφραγίς as an allusion to baptism robs the Spirit of these soteriological functional features.

In Genesis 38.18, the signet-ring (*hōtām*) is mostly translated in the Septuagint as σφραγίς (cf. Levison, 2009:256-260). There, the seal (*hōtām*), as a pledge to Tamar was significant in three aspects. First, it was for her, a down payment of the full settlement in the future (vv. 17-18). Second, it signified for Tamar an evidence of her possession of Judah's σπέρμα (seed) (v. 18). Third, it was a testimonial mark of her future redemption (vv. 24-26). If Paul had Genesis 38 in mind when he termed the Spirit as the seal of believers, then there can be little doubt that he had all three aspects in mind. That is, the Spirit as seal in Paul's thought is for believers, (1) the down payment of their future redemption (cf. Rom. 8.23; 2 Cor. 1.22;

5.5), (2) an evidence of their possession of Christ, the promised σπέρμα (cf. Gal. 3.14-16), and (3) a testimonial mark of their future redemption (cf. Eph. 4.30). Knitting both the lexical and historical perspectives on the term σφραγίς together, the shape which emerges for the understanding of the seal in Ephesians 1.13-14 is that the Holy Spirit as the seal of the believers' promise has the following features: He marks believers as God's possession/adopted children and authentic heirs of the inheritance in Christ; he is the security, true mark and down payment of the future redemption of believers; and he is the evidence of believers' possession of the promised σπέρμα.

The Spirit is further construed as the guarantee (ἀρραβών) of believers' inheritance in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1.22; 5.5) until the redemption of the purchased possession. The term ἀρραβών means a pledge, that is, 'money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid' (Thayer, 1981:75; cf. Berkhof, 1964:106; Schnackenburg, 1964:87; Pett, 1998:115). Understood thus, the Spirit as ἀρραβών of believers' inheritance means that possession of the Spirit is for them, the present assurance, down payment, and foretaste of their future promise (cf. Dunn, 2010:159).

### **The Spirit and Divine Revelation**

Paul understands the Spirit as the author of prophetic revelation (1 Cor. 12.8; 1 Cor. 14.26-40; 1 Thess. 5.19-20; 1 Tim. 4.1; cf. 2 Sam. 23.2-3; Zech. 7.8-12). The Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1.17-21; cf. 1 Cor. 12.7-8; 14.2; Eph. 3.1-5; cf. Isa. 11.1-2; 1 Enoch 49.2-3; 61.11-12). Here also, the terms 'wisdom' and 'revelation' should be taken as a hendiadys, stressing the fact that the Spirit is the revealer or mediator of divine revelatory wisdom (cf. Gen. 41.38-39; Ezek. 11. 24-25). This revelatory wisdom leads to the knowledge of God, divine illumination, and belief/faith. Paul admits that the deep mysteries characteristic of his gospel proclamation were given by the revelation of the Spirit (Eph. 3.3-7). The Spirit is conceived as a teacher, revealer, discerner and excavator of divine hidden wisdom (1 Cor. 2.9-14; cf. Gunkel, 2008:78; Levison, 2009:280; Fee, 1994:96-107; Lampe, 1977:81-82; Montague, 1970:136). The Spirit is the Spirit of God, who possesses exclusive knowledge of the mind of God, and reveals God's mind concerning his people (vv. 11-12). Atkinson (2014:149, 152) rightly calls the Spirit, God's mind reader, in this context. Accordingly, to possess the Spirit is to possess the mind of God concerning his children (cf. Lampe, 1977:81). Without the revelatory and discerning power of the Spirit, it is impossible for the natural man (ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος), that is, man as a living being in his natural existence without the experience of the Spirit's rebirth (see also Fee, 1994:105; Montague, 1970:137; Swete, 1909:179), to comprehend God (v. 14). This suggests that for Paul, the Spirit is indispensable to the acquisition of divine revelation, and thus the knowledge of God. Turner (1996:110) views the work of the Spirit here as the enabler of authentic Christian faith. This is sound because without the Spirit the ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος not only lacks the content of authentic Christian faith (divine revelation and knowledge), but more importantly, lacks the illuminating agent (the Spirit) to this content, which leads to authentic faith.

### **The Spirit as Christ's indwelling presence**

For Paul, The Spirit is both the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God (cf. Ziesler, 1983:4; Lampe, 1977:79), and the means through which the Old Testament salvific concept of God dwelling amongst his people (Ezek. 43.9) is actualised in the new covenant (Rom. 8.9-11; cf. Gal. 4.6; Phil. 1.19; 1 Cor. 3.16; 1 Cor. 6.19-20; Eph. 2.19-22). To have the Spirit is to be indwelt by Christ and thus to possess the righteousness of God (Rom. 8.9-11). Such Spirit-Christ identification here, and elsewhere (1 Cor. 15.45; 6.17; 2 Cor. 3.17; Rom. 8.9; 15.18-19; 1 Cor. 12.3) has led Gunkel (2008:113) to argue that for Paul, Christ is himself the Spirit (so Deissmann, 1926:171, 175; Lampe, 1977:79). Ziesler fairly warns against such a conclusion (cf. Turner, 1996:131; Fee, 1994:267, 311 n. 91; Cranfield, 1985:182) and argues that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ because he communicates Christ to the believer. For

Turner (1996:131), it is because the Spirit is 'Christ's executive power, and self-revealing presence'. Arguing along similar lines Ridderbos (1975:88) claims that the reason for such identification is that it is in the revelation and work of Christ that the manifestation and work of the Spirit is experienced. For Berkhof (1964:26), the exalted Christ, is the Spirit, not in complete identity, but to emphasise that the Spirit is Christ in action. Dunn (1998:264) claims that the relationship between Christ and the Spirit is a close identification, but not a complete one, and that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ because the character of Jesus' ministry has become the character of the Spirit. The validity of all these perspectives, contra Gunkel and the others, is that they observe the Christ-Spirit identification through the prism of function, not ontology. Christ is not the Spirit and the Spirit is not Christ in the ontological sense. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8.9; 2 Cor. 3.17; Gal. 4.6; Phil. 1.19) because he is the soteriological functional regent of the exalted Christ on earth: he is the means through whom the exalted Christ indwells the believer (Rom. 8.9-11); he is the means through whom Christ gives life to the believer (Rom. 8.2, 9-10; 1 Cor. 15.45; 2 Cor. 3.17); he is the revealer of the mysteries of Christ (2 Cor. 3.18; Eph. 3.1-5); he is the bonding agent in the believer's mystical union with Christ (1 Cor. 6.17; 12.13; Eph. 4.4; cf. Col. 2.12; 3.27; Rom. 6.4-5; 1 Cor. 12.27; Rom. 12.4-5; Eph. 4.15-16; 5.23); he is a mark of ownership for Christ (Rom. 8.9); he is the operational power of the exalted Christ (Rom. 15.18-19; Gal. 3.5; 2 Cor. 3.17); he is the builder and strengthener of Christ's body (1 Cor. 14.1-5; 2 Cor. 13.13; Eph. 4.1-6; Phil. 2.1; 3.3); and he is the convicting power behind the proclamation of the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 2.4-5; 12.1-3; 2 Cor. 4.13).

Two problem texts (1 Corinthians 15.45 and 2 Corinthians 3.17) tend to tip the balance in favour of Gunkel at face value. In 1 Corinthians 15.45 we read that Christ, the second Adam, became a life-giving Spirit. Understanding the text as a complete identification of Christ with the Spirit, as a cursory look at the text might suggest, is to overlook the theological emphasis of the passage. The meaning of the text should be best examined from the juxtaposition of the 'first Adam' with the 'second Adam'. The first man Adam became ψυχὴν ζῶσαν a (living soul) because through him humanity inherited the natural body (cf. v. 44), understood as the sinful body, the old man or the old nature (Rom. 5. 12-15; 6.6-7; Eph. 4.17-24; Col. 2.11; 3.5-11). On the other hand, Christ became πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν a (life-giving Spirit) because through him believers received/inherited the Spirit who gives life (Rom. 7.4-6; 8.9-10; 1 Cor. 6.17; Gal. 3.14; 4.6-7).

In 2 Corinthians 3.17 the Spirit is closely identified with Christ thus: 'now the Lord is the Spirit.' The meaning of this phrase should be examined, not in isolation, but in relation to its context. In verse 14, Christ is the locus of the taking away of the veil, which is synonymous with regeneration. Verse 16 is explicatory of verse 14, emphasising that this regeneration in Christ is possible only when one turns or converts to the Lord. Thus conversion or turning to the Lord yields regeneration or the lifting up of the veil. The Lord here then is not simply Christ, but God's salvific disposition towards the convert in Christ. Understood thus, the 'Lord is Spirit' in this context is not a complete identification of the Spirit with Christ, rather it is to emphasise that this salvific disposition towards the convert in Christ is the work of the Spirit. It is the Spirit in Christ, who removes the veil and sets the convert free, transforming him into the image and glory of Christ (vv. 17b; 18). Paul calls this the ministry of the Spirit, as opposed to the ministry of death (vv. 7-8).

## Conclusion

This brief survey of Paul's pneumatic soteriology has shown that he associates the washing/cleansing, life-giving and life-transforming agency with the Spirit. The Spirit is the means by which believers are bonded with, and incorporated into, Christ's body. The Spirit for Paul is the power behind the ethical living of believers: to be led by the Spirit is to fulfil the righteous requirement of the law, which leads to life. The Spirit is conceived as the power behind the gospel proclamation and its convicting, faith-provoking power. He is the life-giving

fulfilling agent of the new covenant promise. Through his ministry (1) the people of the new covenant interiorise the life-saving law of God in their hearts, (2) the veil of ignorance which once prevented access to the glory of God is removed, so believers can experience a life-transforming encounter with God, and (3) the Abrahamic new covenant promises become a reality in the life of the believer.

The Spirit is the means by which Christ and his righteousness indwell believers, which for them is a mark and a seal of their ownership by Christ. The Spirit is the Spirit of sonship. To have the Spirit is to be a true son of God, delivered from under the bondage of the old covenant Law. Thus for Paul, the Spirit is the defining index of Gods children (cf. Keener, 2016:132; Fee, 1994:107; Dunn, 1998:427 n77). He is the Spirit of Christ, closely, but not completely identified with him. To possess the Spirit is to receive a present assurance, guarantee and down-payment of a future redemption/resurrection. The Spirit is the mediator and illuminator of divine revelation in Christ. He is conceived as the author, bond, and the very life of believers' fellowship.

It could be argued, based on the above examination, that the Spirit is the very nucleus of Pauline Christianity. Thus for Paul, the Spirit is the *sine quo non* of salvation.

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