

REGNUM SPIRITI: THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE SOCIAL ETHICS OF THE KINGDOM

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Nearly a generation ago, George Ladd considered social ethics to be the unfinished business in his study of the kingdom of God.¹ Since his day there has been no lack of evangelicals interested to address that unfinished work, including those with distinctives in “signs and wonders,” spiritual formation and the “young evangelicals” who consider themselves “missional,” emergent, or simply “emerging.”² “Building the kingdom of God” is the mantra of a new generation of evangelicals that wants to be more socially and culturally engaged than their parents.³ Of course these join older liberal and Reformed voices that had long argued for transformation of culture as a goal of the kingdom’s “already.”⁴ To this growing and lively chorus, the present study proposes the person of the Holy Spirit as an important way in to understanding the aims and means of the kingdom of God in the present age.

The starting point for such a proposal is of course that the Holy Spirit is directly related to the manifestation of the kingdom in the present age. The connection of kingdom and Spirit has a long history on the basis of two lines of exegetical evidence.⁵ First are the several explicit statements in the NT

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¹ George E. Ladd, *The Presence of the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 278–304.

² Vineyard International (Derek J. Morpew, *Breakthrough: Discovering the Kingdom* [rev. ed.; Cape Town: Vineyard International], 2006), and with spiritual formation emphasis Dallas Willard claims a kingdom rubric in *The Divine Conspiracy* (San Francisco: HarperSanFran, 1998), chap. 1. The widespread use of kingdom rhetoric in the emergent/emerging movement is presented by Todd L. Miles, “A Kingdom without a King? Evaluating the Kingdom Ethic(s) of the Emerging Church,” *SBJT* 12 (2008) 88–103.

³ See the survey of “young evangelicals” by Matthew Lee Anderson, “The New Evangelical Scandal,” *The City* 1 (2008) 48–65. The discussion of eschatology begins on p. 61.

⁴ Charles Colson’s comments in *Christianity Today* (“What Are We Doing Here?” *CT* 43/11 [October 4, 1999]; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1999/october4/9tb152.html>), that the “cultural commission” to redeem and restore all of culture is just as binding as the Great Commission is representative of the Reformed view. Liberal theology of the nineteenth and twentieth century (social gospel, political and liberation theologies) tended to emphasize the cultural commission to the neglect of the Great Commission. Russell Moore’s claimed consensus of current evangelical eschatology reads very closely to the cultural mandate of Colson (Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2004]).

⁵ Lewis notes the early connection of the Spirit to the Kingdom through Rom 14:17 and Matt 12:28 in Ambrose (*On the Holy Spirit*, 3:20). Regarding Rom 14:17, the Spanish reformer Juan Valdes said “by the ‘Kingdom of God’ . . . he [Paul] means the rule of the Holy Spirit, for it is by his Holy Spirit that we begin to enter, meaning that we, in this present life, take possession of the Kingdom of God, and that in the life eternal we shall continue in it, rising again glorious, impassible, and

connecting the power of the Spirit to the kingdom of God—Jesus’ statement in Matt 12:28 (par. Luke 11:20), “If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you,” being an important example. In the Pauline corpus, the kingdom-Spirit connection is the basis of the apostle’s argument for unity in morally neutral questions in the present age: “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17).⁶ Similarly, the writer to the Hebrews in a warning passage asserts a current tasting of the “powers of the age to come” possible for those in peril of an inadequate faith.

The second line of evidence for a Spirit-kingdom connection is implicit in the development of the kingdom theme in the early church’s kerygma. Specifically, Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels preaches much about the kingdom (90+ times), but little of the Spirit (13 times). Conversely, Paul, whose attention is primarily given to realized eschatology, speaks little of kingdom *per se* (βασιλειζα and cognates 7 times), but much of the Spirit (110 times). This interchange of terminology has prompted further inquiry at deeper levels. N. Q. Hamilton’s investigation of the common eschatological framework the Synoptics share with Paul yields his conclusion that, “Just as in the Synoptics the future kingdom breaks into the present in the action of Jesus, so in Paul the future age has broken into the present by the action of the Spirit.”⁷ Youngma Cho’s study of common themes of sonship, life/eternal life, resurrection, and righteousness between the two support the conclusion that life in the kingdom for Jesus is the equivalent of life in the Spirit for Paul.⁸

Assuming the starting point that the Spirit’s presence in the present age is in fact the presence of the kingdom, or perhaps more precisely, the presence of the *power* of the kingdom, as Cho has it,⁹ we have grounds to probe the nature of the kingdom’s “already.” Simply put, we could say that for the present age all questions “kingdom” are really questions about the “Spirit.” The aims and means of the kingdom in the present age are none other than

immortal” (*Commentary on Romans* [LCC 25.315]; cited by J. P. Lewis, “The Kingdom of God is . . . Righteousness Joy and Peace in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17): A Survey of Interpretation,” *ResQ* 40 [1998] 62). Calvin also made a direct connection with the Spirit’s agency and the kingdom of God (*Institutes* 3.20.42; cited by Lewis in *ibid.* 63). Theological reflections connecting kingdom and Spirit begin as early as the Montanists and later in the Cappadocian Fathers, who asserted distinct kingdoms for the Father, Son, and Spirit ruling sequentially through history (cf. Tertullian *De exhortatione castitatis* 4 [PL2.969] and *De jejuniis* [PL 2.1020–23]). Joachim of Fiore, a sixteenth-century Calabrian abbot, also called for a distinct kingdom of the Spirit in his theology of history, though for him the Spirit’s kingdom was likely still future (cf. Mark Saucy, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus in 20th Century Theology* [Dallas: Word, 1997] 215–16, notes 24, 25). Jürgen Moltmann is a recent voice using “Kingdom of the Spirit” nomenclature for the present age. See the last section of his *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) and his essay, “The Trinitarian History of God,” *Theology* 78 (1975) 632–46.

⁶ Contrary to Eberhard Jüngel and Rudolf Bultmann who see Rom 14:17 as evidence for righteousness being the Pauline equivalent of Jesus’ kingdom of God (see A. J. M. Wedderburn “Paul and Jesus: The Problem of Continuity,” *SJT* 38 (1985) 192.

⁷ N. Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1957) 23–24.

⁸ Youngma Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005) chap. 3. Cho has an extensive bibliography of Spirit-kingdom studies.

⁹ *Ibid.* 105.

the aims and means of the Spirit. Thus, in the eschatological tension between the “already” and the “not yet,” it is biblical pneumatology that will hold us from the poles of over-realized or under-realized eschatology. We will begin exploring the question of the kingdom’s presence through the Spirit’s Trinitarian identity as the “Spirit of Christ” and then move into the more explicit biblical description of the Spirit’s role in the present age offering concluding implications at the end.

I. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE PRESENT AGE

1. *The Spirit’s Trinitarian identity.* With the beginning of the church’s systematic reflection on the Spirit in the fourth century, the Spirit’s identity as the “go-between-God” has defined his role both within the godhead and toward the creation. Starting from the Spirit’s procession from the Father through the Son in the economy of salvation (John 15:26), Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers found a means to explore the Spirit’s role in terms of God’s own self-relationality. As the Trinitarian person who proceeds in a unique way from the Father and “searches the very mind of God” (1 Cor 2:10), the Spirit is God who forms the relationship between the Father and the Son, revealing each to the other.¹⁰ Thus the Spirit functions as the most *immanent* and *imageless* member of the Godhead in the sense that he is utterly self-effacing.¹¹

Toward the creation this function manifests itself in the economy of salvation with the Spirit as the divine *Applicator* of the Father’s will conceptualized in the Son. Barth’s taxonomy of the Father as the Revealer, the Son as the revelation, and the Spirit as the effect of revelation captures this sentiment and points to the *subjective* provenance of the Spirit’s work in human beings.¹² Paul’s words in Romans 5 offer us a concrete example. In Rom 5:8, the cross of the *Son* is the demonstration of the *Father’s* love, but in verse five this love is “poured into our hearts” by the *Holy Spirit*.¹³ Loder and Niedhardt

¹⁰ Useful assessments of the church’s reflection on the Spirit can be found in James Loder and W. Jim Niedhardt, *The Knight’s Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Science and Theology* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers and Howard, 1992) 20–27; T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 191–251, and Bernd Oberdorfer, “The Holy Spirit—A Person? Reflection on the Spirit’s Trinitarian Identity,” in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism* [ed. Michael Welker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006] 27–46. Oberdorfer (ibid. 41) offers the baptism of Jesus as an intriguing instance of the Spirit’s intra trinitarian function. The Father’s announcement of the Son’s identity *comes after* the descent of the Spirit as a dove.

¹¹ Loder and Neidhardt (*Knight’s Move* 25) follow Torrance (*Trinitarian Faith* 211–12) in speaking of the Spirit’s nature as *imageless* according to the intention of Athanasius’s and the Cappadocians’ synthesis. The Spirit is the mirror of the Son the way the Son is the mirror of the Father, however to the world the Spirit has no image (cf. Alasdair I. C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983] 56). In Basil, the Spirit’s mode of being is *transparent* and *translucent* (*De Sp. St.* 22–23, 46–47; cited by Torrance, *Trinitarian Faith* 212).

¹² Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1/1; cited by Oberdorfer, “Holy Spirit—A Person” 35.

¹³ Gordon Fee has noted another means by which Paul’s letters express the Spirit’s connection to our subjective experience in the concepts Paul associates with the Spirit. With the exception of 1 Cor 6:11, where justification is associated directly with the Spirit, justification, propitiation, redemption, and reconciliation are only connected with Jesus Christ. The Spirit’s conceptual domain in Paul’s

effectively speak to the subjective nature of the Spirit's ministry saying, "It is generally acknowledged that, without the Spirit, God would not be the god of the Scriptures, Jesus Christ would be a remote historical phenomenon, the church would be merely a socially-constructed character-building agency, and the ethical life of Christianity would be purely a matter of forming personal and social conscience."¹⁴

2. *The Spirit as the alter ego of Christ.* The self-effacing work of the Spirit that integrates the believer's life into the communion of the Father and the Son finds its most complete description in the Johannine literature. Here the Spirit's temporal subsequence to Christ is most clearly manifested and the Spirit specifically functions as the *remembrancer* of Christ. Hendry's comments on the Johannine Paraclete sayings note the utter unoriginality of the Spirit's work:

. . . the work of the Spirit is essentially of a reproductive nature; it has always to do with the work of the incarnate Christ. The Paraclete sayings lay marked stress on the unoriginality of the Spirit's work: this work, if we may so express it, is simply to hold the spotlight on Christ, to glorify him by taking what is his and showing it to the disciples (John 16:14). The Spirit is to be the remembrancer (ch. 14:26), not the innovator. This is not contradicted by the passage in the fifth Paraclete saying, which promises that the Spirit will lead into all *the* truth (the article must not be disregarded); for the truth, in the idiom of the Fourth Evangelist, is the truth that came by Jesus Christ (ch. 1:17), the truth which was given to him in its fullness by the Father (ch. 16:15), and of which he said, "I am . . . the truth" (ch. 14:6). It will be the office of the Spirit to declare this truth, not because he originates it, but because he hears it, and only as such is he the Spirit of truth (ch. 16:13). In a word, it is the function of the Spirit, according to the Johannine teaching, to re-present the truth that is in Christ.¹⁵

The Spirit as Christ's "public person," as Michael Welker has called him,¹⁶ raises an important issue for the Spirit's focus in the present age. Namely, which public phase of Christ's career the Spirit is applying to his church. While it is the *exalted* Christ who pours forth the Spirit according to Acts 2:34–36, the apostle Paul is careful to remind us that in this age it is the *suffering Jesus* that he models and who ostensibly the Spirit presents to us and shapes in us. Sentiments like those found in 2 Cor 4:7–12 and 12:4–10 where Paul gives voice to the "upside down" nature of his power in weakness and how he always carries in his body the death of Christ, together with those in Rom

letters include metaphors that emphasize the believer's experience, e.g. washing, rebirth, life-giving, sanctification, anointing, sealing, down payment, and first fruits (Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994] 856).

¹⁴ Loder and Niedhardt, *Knight's Move* 20. Calvin offers a similar conclusion: "until our minds are intent on the Spirit, Christ is in a manner unemployed because we view him coldly without ourselves and so at a distance from us" (Calvin, *Institutes* 3.1.3; cited by Loder and Niedhardt, *Knight's Move* 20).

¹⁵ Hendry, *Holy Spirit* 23–24. The Johannine Paraclete sayings flesh out why the Spirit is "the Spirit of Christ" for Paul in Rom 8:9 (Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994] 312).

¹⁶ Welker, *God the Spirit* 279–341.

8:17 and Phil 3:8–11 all show that for Paul in the present age we have been crucified with Christ and “that we are still hanging there” as Dunn says.¹⁷ So when the Spirit brings Christ to us and bears witness of him, it is still to the same Jesus who once called his followers to learn “meekness” and “humility of heart” (Matt 11:29).

Such a cruciform, Christocentric focus indeed marks the first caution for us against any tendency to make the Spirit more “messianic” than Jesus is in the present age. Utterly unoriginal in his aim to manifest the person of Christ, the Spirit’s mission in the present era will be delimited to the same extent Christ’s is. As we will see in the following section, the “in between times” that pertain to the mysteries of the kingdom are still only *anticipatory* of the final rule of Messiah, particularly as that concerns judging and ruling over the kingdom’s enemies. Strong claims among some, like Arnold Van Ruler for instance, for the Spirit’s messianic work moving out to Christianize the institutions of the world in the present age run afoul of Paul’s theology of the cross and the Spirit’s role in it.¹⁸ According to Michael Welker, the second Paraclete’s present ministry radically parallels the first’s, which was to reject political power and move to forgive sins and drive out demons.¹⁹

3. *The nature of Christ’s kingly rule in the present age.* Given the Spirit’s function as the *alter ego* of Christ, one of the natural means of addressing the focus of the Spirit’s ministry in the present age will be to briefly survey the nature of Christ’s present ministry. In the Trinitarian economy, the two should not be different. Furthermore, in the discussion of Christ’s present ministry Ps 110:1 (“Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet”) will have to be the starting point because it appears it was so for the NT writers. Not only is Ps 110:1 the most cited and alluded to OT text in the New,²⁰ but it is the text used by the NT writers to posit a fundamentally *intercessory* face to Christ’s present work as exalted king. This is particularly true in the book of Hebrews which has the greatest use of Psalm 110 of any NT book and where the heavenly session of Christ establishes: (1) the conclusion or capstone of redemptive activity more than the commencement of specific ruling activity;²¹ and (2) the intercessory high priestly ministry of Christ as

¹⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit*, vol. 2: *Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 350–51.

¹⁸ Arnold Van Ruler’s *Calvinist Trinitarianism and Theocentric Politics* (trans. John Bolt; Toronto Studies in Theology; Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989) 6–8, 204, speaks of the Spirit’s messianic work reaching into the political arena and society and ushering in the full salvation of the kingdom of God. For a response to Van Ruler from Luke, see Robert L. Gallagher, “The Holy Spirit in the World: In Non-Christians, Creation, and Other Religions,” *ASPS* 1 (2006) 17–33, esp. p. 26, and the critique offered by I. John Hessellink, “Contemporary Protestant Dutch Theology,” *RefR* 26 (1973) 67–89, esp. p. 89.

¹⁹ Michael Welker, “The Holy Spirit,” *Theology Today* 46 (1989) 6.

²⁰ Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43; Acts 2:34; Heb 1:13; allusions: Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55–56; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22.

²¹ From the use of Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:3 and 10:12, G. Dautzenberg has observed the “unmistakable tendency” of the Session tradition to point back to the cross and symbolize the *closing* of the

we have for example in Heb 8:1: “Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”²²

A second feature of Christ’s rule in the present age concerns his posture towards his enemies. Psalm 110 sets the tone for this question as well in a couple of ways. First, while the text does set up a priestly activity towards the king’s own people, Ps 110:1 is also used in the NT to establish the king’s present *passivity* toward his enemies. Hebrews 10:12–13 relates how Christ, having made sacrifice for sin, *sat down* at the right hand, and is *waiting* for his enemies to be made his footstool. The picture in Hebrews comports with what scholars refer to as the “absentee Christology” in Luke-Acts where Christ is seemingly inactive in heaven awaiting his return as judge (Luke 19:11–26; Acts 10:42; 17:31).²³

Second, while it is true that Psalm 110 is conspicuous in the NT for what it teaches about Christ’s activity towards his own, it is also conspicuous for what is omitted. Here we note the contents of Ps 110:2: “The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, ‘*Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.*’” And here is a remarkable thing: while verse 1 is the most-quoted part of the OT in the New, verse 2 of Psalm 110 is *never quoted* or alluded to by the NT writers. Aside from what this might say about the propriety of ruling or even reigning language to describe the present ministry of Christ,²⁴ the omission highlights what we see elsewhere in the NT about Christ’s present “binding” (Matt 12:44) and “disarming” (Col 2:15) activity toward his enemies. Again, Christ’s present focus appears to be most directly concerned with the calling out (plundering the strongman’s house—Matt 12:44ff.) and building up his elect ones in the church for life in the present age. Toward his enemies, Christ operates presently only to contain their activities insofar as they concern the primary objectives he has toward his saints. The enemies are still allowed to retain their kingdom (Col 1:13) and to have their work over the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2) whose eyes they have blinded to the truth of Christ (2 Cor 4:4), not to mention the schemes they are permitted to enact against believers (1 Pet 5:8; 2 Cor 2:11).

The import of all this for the Spirit’s (and the kingdom’s) current role is that since the Spirit by nature is not an innovator, but rather his is a highly unoriginal work *vis-à-vis* Christ’s, we should expect to find similar patterns

redemptive deeds of Christ (G. Dautzenberg, “Psalm 110 im Neuen Testament,” in *Liturgie und Dichtung* [ed. H. Becker and R. Kaczynski; 2 vols.; St. Ottilien: Eos, 1983] 1.141–71).

²² Cf. Rom 8:34. I have detailed the use Psalm 110 in Hebrews to comment on the nature of Christ’s current reign in Mark R. Saucy, “Exaltation Christology in Hebrews: What Kind of Reign?” *TJ* 14 NS (1993) 41–62.

²³ Dunn, “Towards the Spirit of Christ,” in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism* (ed. Michael Welker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 11, n. 30.

²⁴ Russell Moore claims it a matter of consensus today among evangelicals that Christ is presently “reigning” in his session at the right hand (Moore, *Christ’s Kingdom*, 39–42) although he and others in this camp have difficulty explaining the reason why reign language goes underground in the epistles until Revelation and why Christ as “king” (βασιλεύς) follows the same pattern. See Darrell Bock’s accounting of these difficulties in “The Kingdom of God in New Testament Theology,” in *Looking into the Future* (ed. David W. Baker; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 53, n. 47.

in the Spirit's ministry. If Christ's posture in the present age is primarily concerned with calling and building up his own and only indirectly engaged with his enemies in an "absentee Christology" *modus operandi*, we should expect the Spirit's (and the kingdom's) role to be no different. We press on with this possibility in the following section.

II. THE LOCI OF THE SPIRIT'S POWER IN THE PRESENT AGE

1. *Setting the stage: The Spirit in the new covenant hope of Israel's prophets.*

In the unfolding drama of God's reign in Scripture, the OT promise of a new covenant (*locus classicus*, Jer 31:31–34) stands as the immediate precedent to our discussion of the Spirit's intentions for the present age. Within the new covenant—which encompassed the fundamental "promise" of God begun in Abraham for a people, a land, and blessing to all peoples²⁵—the Spirit, as Eichrodt has noted, marks the "central miracle" of Israel's hope.²⁶ This is, first of all, because of the Spirit's association with the Inaugurator of the new covenant. The Spirit will "rest upon" the Lord's Servant, a shoot from the stem of Jesse (Isa 11:1–2; cf. 42:1; 61:1–4), and he will proclaim the release of the captives, bring restoration to Israel as a nation among nations, and finally bring healing to creation itself.²⁷ Most important for the covenant story is that the specific dynamic for this work will be a dramatic, once-for-all resolution of the sin problem as the Lord's Servant takes upon himself the transgressions of many (Isa 53: 6, 12) and provides forgiveness so that their sins Yahweh "will remember no more" (Jer 31:34). Only when the sin problem is resolved can any of the personal, social, or creation blessings of the new covenant be realized.²⁸

The Spirit's anointing of the Expected One then was to be the channel through which renewal would affect the entire creation—the world of men and nature. The Coming Age was to be saturated with the Spirit as he would be poured out on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28ff.). God's people would grasp their identity as the Lord's special possession: "I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring . . . One shall say, 'I am the Lord's,' another shall be named after Jacob, and

²⁵ Recent accounts of the new covenant's place in the one covenant program of God are Scott J. Hafemann, "The Covenant Relationship," in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology* (ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 20–65; and Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (NSBT 23; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007). Walter Kaiser has connected the promise and the covenant program especially in his work *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).

²⁶ Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 2.59.

²⁷ This is the threefold nature of the prophetic hope according to the summary of Gowan (Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology of the Old Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986] 2).

²⁸ On forgiveness as the basis for all of the provisions of the new covenant, see Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985) 87; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36* (AB 21B; New York: Doubleday, 2004) 470; and John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961) 329; and Welker, "Holy Spirit" 9–14. The restoration of Israel by the Suffering Servant of the new covenant had worldwide significance in the implementation of the covenant program (Andreas Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001] 42–49, 252–53). See Isa 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 52:13–53:12.

this one shall write on his hand, ‘The Lord’s’” (Isa 44:3, 5). The Spirit will write Yahweh’s Torah instruction on the heart of his people and cause them to walk in his statutes (Ezek 36:26–27; Jer 31:33–34). The result will be a collective quickening of the “dead bones” of the exiles of Israel bringing them back into their own land: “And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land” (Ezek 37:14).²⁹ The restored nation would then represent the vanguard of a revelatory work as God shows his glory to all the world of men. In Ezek 39:21–29, it is precisely because Yahweh “shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel” (v. 29) that the nations will know Yahweh’s compassionate and holy character.³⁰ But the nations will not only know Yahweh by the example of the Spirit’s work upon Israel, for it is from Israel that the Spirit-Anointed One will affect the final political solution for all humanity and “bring forth justice to the nations” (Isa 42:2–4) with vengeful judgment on the unjust (Isa 61:2; 34:8). Lastly, the poured-out Spirit will extend restoration to the creation in abundant productivity and fertility (Isa 32:15; Jer 31:5, 12–14).

Even this cursory treatment of the prophets’ hope for the Spirit when put up against what the NT writers know of the Spirit’s ministry offers more insight into the “already” and “not yet” of the Spirit’s work in the present age. First, as concerns the “not yet,” the Spirit’s coming was to have a profound effect on the “house of David.” When the Spirit of grace and supplication is poured out “they will look upon Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him . . . they will weep bitterly over him” (Zech 12:10). The world still awaits the Spirit’s revivification of Israel’s exiles and their restoration to their national land in fulfillment of God’s promises. Neither Jesus nor Paul considered this as yet accomplished.³¹ Jesus’ vision for the restoration of Israel further frames the already-not yet condition of the Spirit’s outpouring at Pentecost in fulfillment of Joel 2:29–32 after which the apostles clearly hold “times of restoration” to be yet future for Israel in Acts 3:18–21.³² Something

²⁹ So Montague rightly understands Ezekiel 37 to be “a graphic symbol for the rebirth of the nation” (George T. Montague, *Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1976] 48). The restoration of the nation of Israel to its land is inextricably linked to the new covenant promise of Jer 31:1–26; 31–34, 38–40; 32:36–44.

³⁰ So also Ezek 36:26–30 where a clear progression of the Spirit’s outpoured power can be noted—first the individual, then the restored nation/renewed land of Israel as a revelation to the surrounding peoples. “The Lord intends to prove his holiness—that is, to manifest his power in the sight of the nations—by an act of redemption” (Montague, *Holy Spirit*, 46).

³¹ “Contemporary scholarship is nearly united in the view that Jesus’ vision concerned Israel as a nation and not a new religion. He wanted to consummate God’s promises to Israel, and saw this taking place in the land of Israel” (Scot M. McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999] 6; cited by James M. Scott, “Jesus’ Vision for the Restoration of Israel as the Basis for a Biblical Theology of the New Testament,” in *Biblical Theology Retrospect and Prospect* [ed. Scott J. Hafemann; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002] 133–34). Scott discusses the issue for Paul in comments relative to Romans 11 and 1 Corinthians (pp. 138–40).

³² The disciples’ use of the word “restoration” (ἀποκαταστάσεως, 3:21) according to Oepke, was a technical term for the messianic, political restoration of Israel to its own land (A. Oepke, “ἀποκαθίστημι, ἀποκατάστασις,” *TDNT* 1:388–89). Gallagher also sees the “already not yet” pattern for Luke-Acts. This age is the age of repentance and then comes the restoration according to Acts 3:18–21 (Gallagher, “Holy Spirit in the World” 26).

of Joel's expectation of the Spirit was clearly present, but something was still yet to come. Similar conclusions may be rendered regarding the restoration of the human societies and the creation itself under the personal "reign" of Messiah.³³

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that significant aspects of the prophetic expectation regarding the Spirit are "already." These we will explore in greater detail below, but for the moment we can note how these concern primarily the work of the Spirit that the prophets saw as internal to the believer: the Spirit infused into the heart of God's people (Ezek 11:19–20; 36:26–27) who cleanses and washes them applying the fundamental covenant grace of forgiveness (Jer 31:34).

2. Hope inaugurated: The Spirit's application of the new covenant in the NT. At this point of our course we now have two focal points against which we can understand the documents of the NT regarding the Spirit's aims and purpose in the present age. From Part 1, we saw the theological significance of the Spirit's Trinitarian identity and specifically his identity as the *alter ego* of Christ. We then noted how the primary activity ("reign"?) of Christ in this age is for the liberation through forgiveness of sins and further building up of his disciples in a time characterized by the cross and suffering. *Intercession* is the primary way the NT refers to Christ's present ministry at Father's right hand. Toward his enemies, Christ works now in a containing manner—binding them and disarming them where Christ's disciples are concerned, but allowing them dominion still over their "kingdom" until a later time when he will judge and dispatch them finally.

A second focal point appears now in Part 2 from the OT prophetic hope of the new covenant. The Spirit was to be poured out bringing new life to the individual heart, the whole of human society and the very creation itself. Key was the activity of a Spirit-anointed one who would take upon himself the transgressions of many and so forge the foundation of forgiveness necessary to the presence of all of the new covenant blessings. However, the prophetically foreseen judgment of the Messiah has not yet yielded the change in Israel itself, human society, and the creation. The "already" and the "not yet" of the Spirit delineated in the OT then mirrors the "already" and "not yet" of the present activity of Christ. Against this background we are ready to consider the explicit aims and focus of the Spirit in the NT.

At the outset of this discussion, it needs to be said that the NT is a corpus thoroughly united by its explication of the new covenant promise.³⁴ Hafemann

³³ It is not without significance that the prophets particularly associate "reign/rule" language with the presence of Messiah among his restored people *administering justice to the nations*. See Jer 23:5; and Isa 24:21–23; 52:7; Micah 4:7 where the verb מָלַךְ, "reign," is used in context of Messiah's exercise of justice among the nations. The word "king" (מֶלֶךְ) also appears in the same national, political context of the hope in Isa 33:17, 22. In the day of deliverance Israel will "rule" (רָדָה) over his oppressors (Isa 14:2) and the Branch will "rule" (שָׁלַט, Zech 6:13) from Zion.

³⁴ The notion appears counterintuitive, but a glance at NT theologies reveals little or no significant treatment of the new covenant in the discipline. Included in this list are many evangelical works: Leonhard Goppelt, *New Testament Theology* (1978, 1981); George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (1974); Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology* (1990); Donald Guthrie, *New*

is one who has recently argued for the integrative power of the covenant motif in Scripture as a whole and the NT in particular through the new covenant.³⁵ Not all that prominent on the surface, the new covenant makes its claim for centrality from its appearance at the key point where Christ explains his death to his disciples as offering the “blood of the new covenant for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:28), the commentary on Jeremiah 31:31ff. in Hebrews 8–10, and from Paul’s fundamental calling as a “minister of the new covenant” (2 Cor 3:6). As we will see below, the advent of the Spirit and his work particularly in effecting and applying forgiveness of sins provided in Christ’s cross marks key planks of the new covenant that permeate the fabric of the NT documents, but it will suffice at this point to say the NT is truly the corpus of the new covenant.³⁶

a. *Proclamation of new covenant forgiveness to the nations.* Moving directly into the NT itself, the fundamental new covenant aims of the Spirit in the present age fall into two mutually-perpetuating categories: Gospel proclamation and the formation-edification of Christ’s body, the church. Proclamation is visible in the well-known activity of the Spirit that we find particularly, but not exclusively, in Luke-Acts.³⁷ Relative to the new covenant motif, Luke’s

Testament Theology (1981); Schreiner, *New Testament Theology* (2008); and Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament* (2005).

³⁵ Hafemann, “Covenant Relationship.” See other sources offered there. The heuristic value of the covenant stands particularly in its ability to engage the motifs of kingdom, promise, and family in the biblical system. On these connections see also the works of Scobie and Dumbrell (William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning: Revelation 21–22 and the Old Testament* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001]; idem, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* [Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984]; Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003]).

³⁶ Although it is likely that the original use of ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη as the title of the NT corpus derived from an understanding of the progress of redemptive history, it soon “lost its dynamic weight and became nothing more than just a title” under the weight of Origen’s allegorical hermeneutics (W. Kinzig, “Καὶνὴ διαθήκη: The Title of the New Testament in the Second and Third Centuries,” *JTS* NS 45 [1994] 519–44; and W. C. van Unnik, “Ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη—A Problem in the Early History of the Canon,” in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. Van Unnik* [NovTSup 30; Leiden: Brill, 1980] 171). In fact, the theological reflection on the covenant motif is very erratic and undeveloped in the earliest patristic literature (E. Ferguson, “The Covenant Idea in the Second Century,” in *Texts and Testaments: Critical Essays on the Bible and Early Church Fathers* [ed. W. E. March; San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1980] 135–62; idem, “Covenant,” *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* [2 vols.; 2d ed.; New York: Garland, 1997] 1:297–99).

³⁷ Pentecostal scholarship has been especially keen to highlight the missionary aspect of the Spirit’s work in Luke-Acts because of the vested interest that Luke remain distinct from Paul’s soteriological focus. Aside from the motivation, which is difficult to sustain in the NT documents especially as demonstrated in recent studies on Lukan and Pauline *intertextuality* (e.g. Paul Elbert, “Possible Literary Links between Luke-Acts and Pauline Letters Regarding Spirit-Language,” in *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice* [eds. Thomas L. Brodie et al.; Sheffield: Phoenix, 2006] 226–54), there has been much that is commendable from this relatively new wing of evangelical scholarship. On the missionary emphasis of the Spirit in Luke see especially, Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom*; Gallagher, “Holy Spirit in the World”; and John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). According to H. C. Kee, the primary role of the new community [in Acts] is proclamation (H. C. Kee, *Good News to the Ends of the Earth: The Theology of Acts* [London: SCM, 1990] 89; cited by Penney, *Missionary Emphasis* 56).

narrative is clear that the Spirit-driven proclamation is fundamentally a word about the forgiveness of sins and also that this proclamation extends beyond the borders of ethnic Israel to the “ends of the earth.” Both of these new covenant elements are central to the Lukan “Great Commission” of Luke 24:36–49: “that repentance for forgiveness (ἄφεσις) of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (v. 47). In Acts they serve as paradigmatic to the Spirit’s work: the theme of forgiveness (ἄφεσις) is characteristic of the church’s proclamation (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; cf. the conceptual parallels in “washing away” [ἀπολείω, 22:16] or “wiping away” sins [ἐφαλείφω, 3:19]), and the proclamation is thrust out to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).³⁸ The nexus of Spirit–new covenant – kingdom takes shape when we further observe Luke’s use of kingdom of God as a summary cipher for the message of forgiveness. The proclamation of forgiveness is “the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” in Acts 8:12, 28:23, 31.³⁹

However, Luke is not isolated in the way he connects the themes of Spirit, kingdom, and the advance of new covenant forgiveness to the nations. In John 20:22–23, Jesus sets up the Johannine Great Commission by “breathing” the Holy Spirit on the disciples. The Spirit is already connected to John’s rare use of kingdom language in John 3:3–5, but here the Spirit’s advent calls out a function in forgiving sins: “And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive (ἀφίημι) the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained.’”

The Gentile mission of Paul is also characterized as a proclamation of forgiveness of sins in Acts 13:38 and as preaching of the kingdom of God in Acts 20:24–25, but Paul also knows the Spirit’s role in his preaching as the one who makes the gospel’s impact powerful (Rom 1:16; 1 Thess 1:5–6), bringing Christ’s true identity to the understanding of his hearers (2 Cor 3:8; 1 Cor 2:3–5, 6–16; 12:3).⁴⁰ The word he preaches is the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17) through which he understood his ministry of the new covenant to be in fact a ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:6). It was by a revelation of the Spirit that he himself received the gospel (Eph 3:5–7) so that he could mark his own proclamation as being about the “promise” of the Spirit (Gal 3:14)—a term which for Paul was central to his understanding of the Gentiles’ inclusion into God’s eschatological people on equal footing as Jews.⁴¹

The promise of the Spirit that engaged Paul’s Gentile mission was clearly a fulfillment of the new covenant among his Gentile converts. However, while Paul is eager to see Gentiles experience the new covenant’s “yes” in Christ

³⁸ Penney, *Missionary Emphasis* 19–22.

³⁹ The kingdom of God forms an inclusio for Acts from its appearance in Acts 1:3 and 28:31 (D. W. Palmer, “Mission to the Jews and Gentiles in the Last Episode of Acts,” *RTR* 52 [1993] 63–64; cited by Penney, *Missionary Emphasis* 69).

⁴⁰ Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 825–26, 849–51, 854–55.

⁴¹ Fee notes, “that in the two places where Paul equates the Spirit with the language of ‘promise,’ he does so in the context of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the eschatological people of God (Gal 3:14 [cf. vv. 21–22]; Eph 1:13–14) (Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 811).

(2 Cor 1:20), there is part of the new covenant provision that he never takes up in application to Gentiles and this is significant for his understanding of the “already” and “not yet” of the new covenant/kingdom/Spirit. Specifically, as Hafemann notes, Paul “does not pick up the language of God once again planting Israel in the land after the exile, though this too is inextricably linked to the new covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:31–34.”⁴² Paul does the same thing when discussing the blessings of Abraham, which he also understands as the basis of the new covenant “promise of the Spirit” (Gal 3:14). In Gal 3:7–8, Gentiles are indeed children of Abraham by faith (v. 7), but they are related to Abraham’s promise only at the point where those blessings extend out to the nations (v. 8; cf. Gen 12:3), and not where they had addressed the nation that would come physically from Abraham, that is, Israel (Gen 12:2). So again Paul sees Gentiles joining into the covenant program not in the place of Israel, but in their own place as “the nations”—a situation the prophets were careful to establish as well (Isa 19:24–25).⁴³ For Paul, there still remains a “climax of the covenant” beyond his own Gentile mission and the first coming of Christ. His ministry of the new covenant remains only penultimate to what is still in store for “his kinsmen according to the flesh” when Yahweh according to his [new] covenant will “take away their sins” (Rom 11:25–27).⁴⁴

b. *Formation and equipping of Christ’s body.* The same power of the Spirit that Luke, John, and Paul saw enabling gospel proclamation and the conversion of Jews and Gentiles was the power that worked to enable the new believers to live out their identity as Spirit-people (Rom 8:9). This power has an individual, but ultimately a corporate dimension for the NT writers. To the individual believer the Spirit’s power is for the deepening application of the grace of God in Christ’s cross, for as Paul tells the Corinthians, “now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God” (1 Cor 2:12). It is in the believer’s knowledge of grace that Paul understands the connection between Christ, the Spirit, and the believer because grace is both “the event

⁴² Hafemann, “Covenant Relationship” 59.

⁴³ Paul’s explicit discussion of the locus of Gentile participation in the Abrahamic blessing (Gal 3:7–8) should be important in determining the meaning of “the Israel of God” in Gal 6:16. Paul neither here nor anywhere else considers the Church as a replacement of ethnic Israel which is contrary to many for whom the Church in Acts is the restored “Israel” of the prophets carrying out the missionary project to the nations, as we have for example in Penney, *Missionary Emphasis*, and David L. Tiede, “The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1,” *HTR* 79 (1986) 278–86.

⁴⁴ The “climax of the covenant” phrase is N. T. Wright’s (cf. *The New Testament and the People of God*), but the meaning taken up here differs from Wright who understands the Church as the ultimate expression of the covenant promise, fully replacing Israel. Hafemann engages Wright’s replacement view on this point in his review of *The New Testament and the People of God* in *JETS* 40 (1997) 305–8. The reference to the new covenant in Rom 11:27 clarifies the meaning of the “and so” of verse 26. From chapter nine Paul is speaking of the course of salvation history for Israel, his “kinsmen according to the flesh” (9:3). It is not until the full number of the Gentiles is brought to faith (11:25) that Israel will “see” (11:26; cf. 11:8–10) and again flourish from the root of Abraham (see Walter C. Kaiser, “An Assessment of ‘Replacement Theology’: The Relationship Between the Israel of the Abrahamic-Davidic Covenant and the Christian Church,” *Mishkan* 21 [1994] 16–17).

of Christ” and also a near synonym for the Spirit in his writings.⁴⁵ As the one who has the Spirit, the believer is united to Christ and experiencing his life in their body. This is why for Paul the Spirit is not just the source of power for miracles,⁴⁶ but the “Spirit of life” (Rom 8:2, 6), who “gives life” to those who turn to Christ (2 Cor 3:6). This union to Christ is “the newness of the Spirit” (Rom 7:6) that makes the believer a “new creature” (2 Cor 5:21) as Christ’s redemptive work of reconciling, propitiating, and justifying is brought to the believer’s subjective experience.⁴⁷

It is with the presence of the new *life* of Christ by the Spirit that the new covenant’s promises are particularly marked in the present age. In 2 Corinthians 3 and Galatians 3 and 4 Paul makes explicit the contrast between the former and the new covenant by means of the Spirit of God who now writes on the tablets of human hearts (cf. Ezek 36:25–27; 37:14; Jer 31:33) enabling the righteousness of God’s people in the new era (Rom 8:3–4; Gal 5:16–25).⁴⁸ This understanding within Paul’s Christocentric view of the Spirit—“the Lord is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18)—shows the merit of Davies’s contention that “the inwardness of the new covenant of Jeremiah’s hope is achieved for Paul through the indwelling Christ, the new Torah ‘written in the heart.’ The Law within him is Christ in him; the indwelling Christ has replaced the old Torah written on tablets of stone and has become a Torah written within.”⁴⁹ Additionally, the “spirit of sonship” that now governs the believer’s new intimacy with God, as Abba (Rom 8:14–16; Gal 4:6), speaks to the new covenant’s provision for a fuller experience of the covenant’s intention that God would have a people and he would be their God.⁵⁰ Finally, as the new covenant had predicated the aforementioned blessings upon resolution of the sin problem, so the Spirit

⁴⁵ “Specifically Pauline is the use of the word [grace] to expound the structure of the salvation event. The linguistic starting-point is the sense of “making glad by gifts,” of showing free unmerited grace. . . . Paul orientates himself, not to the question of the nature of God, but to the historical manifestation of salvation in Christ. He does not speak of the gracious God; he speaks of the grace that is actualized in the cross of Christ (Gal 2:21, cf. vv. 15–20). . . . If God’s favour is identical with the crucifixion, then its absoluteness is established. We are saved by grace alone” (H. Conzelmann, “χαρις,” *TDNT* 9:394). Dunn concurs with many Pauline scholars in his affirmation that “grace” is nearly synonymous with “Spirit” in Paul’s letters (Dunn, “Towards the Spirit of Christ” 19; cf. his *Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998] 319–23).

⁴⁶ “[I]t is probably significant that when he recalled the work of the Spirit, which constituted the proof positive that God was calling for and richly blessing the Gentile mission, he spoke then not of miracles and signs and wonders, but of *the grace of God* working through him (Gal 2:7–9). For ‘grace’ was itself a word that Paul found it necessary to coin afresh in order to describe the wonder of what he and others were experiencing. As such it epitomized the effect of the Spirit on their lives, not in terms of power or of ecstatic worship, but in terms of a *wholly generous acceptance and enabling by God*. For Paul *charisma* never amounted to anything unless it expressed the *charis*, the grace of God manifested most clearly in Christ” (Dunn, “Towards the Spirit of Christ” 24).

⁴⁷ In this see the observation of Fee in n. 13 above. The objective-subjective functions of Christ and the Spirit have been observed in Paul from the order of the Trinitarian persons in the benedictions of 2 Cor 13:14 and 2 Thess 2:13 (Hendry, *Holy Spirit* 35).

⁴⁸ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 843, Hafemann, “Covenant Relationship” 56–59.

⁴⁹ W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 226.

⁵⁰ Hafemann, “Covenant Relationship” 59–61.

is especially associated with Christ's cross.⁵¹ Not only does the Spirit "pour God's love" demonstrated on the cross into our hearts (Rom 5:5, 8), but he is actively seeking our transformation into the image of the *crucified Christ*. The cross is the Christian's boast not just as the means to life in the Spirit but also as the continued experiential result of that life.⁵² The Spirit who brings Christ to me means a crucifixion for me, Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20; cf. 6:14). It also means that life in the Spirit is closely tied with suffering and cannot spurn participation in weakness, fear and trembling as Paul argued to the Corinthians.⁵³

The character of the believer's own existential experience of Christ through the Spirit has a collective aspect in the Church, the "family of the new covenant."⁵⁴ The Spirit that renews the individual's heart and unites her to Christ also unites her to others in Christ's body (1 Cor 12:13). In this dimension the kingdom-Spirit power (δύναμις) is directed to the mutual edification of the members through service to one another in love (Eph 4:10–16; Gal 3:5; 1 Thess 4:8). The Spirit's power in this regard can be manifest in miraculous expressions (1 Cor 2:4–5; Gal 3:5; Rom 15:19) and the less spectacular, but in many ways more potent, power to remain steadfast in the faith (Col 1:11), abound in hope (Rom 15:13), and to grasp the fullness of Christ's life indwelling them (Eph 3:16–10). Paul's rare use of kingdom language with regards to the present age shows up in just this kind of context for the church at Rome. The kingdom is manifest in their presence when by the Spirit they defer to one another in matters of conscience, for the "kingdom is not in eating and drinking, but righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17).

Gathered in community and with each one empowered with the new life of forgiveness in Christ, the new covenant promise of God dwelling among his people (Ezek 37:27) takes initial form in the Church. The temple metaphor is particularly apt for Paul to describe the new covenant reality as God communes with his people in the "face-to-face" intimacy as he did with Moses under the older covenant forms (1 Cor 6:19–20; 2 Cor 2:14–4:6; 6:16).⁵⁵ Now the Spirit who indwells and unites the new covenant community also reveals

⁵¹ C. Cosgrove has demonstrated the centrality of the association of cross and Spirit in Galatians. According to Cosgrove Paul's rhetoric about justification by faith versus law is really aimed at the ultimate issue of having the Spirit by participating in the cross. Galatians 3:1–14 is the key center of the book, not the more traditional view of 2:15–21 and 3:10–14 (C. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study of the Argument and Theology of Galatians* [Macon, GA: Mercer, 1988] chap. 1).

⁵² "... cosmic crucifixion with Christ [participation in Christ's death] has cruciform existence as one of its consequences for Christian experience in the world" (Cosgrove, *Cross and Spirit*, 188; cf. Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ* [BZNW 32; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967]).

⁵³ See the discussion in Cosgrove, *Cross and Spirit* 188–94; also Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and the Spirit: An Exegetical Study of II Cor 2:14–3:3 within the Context of the Corinthian Correspondence* (WUNT 2/19; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986).

⁵⁴ Hafemann, "Covenant Relationship" 59–62. Gordon Fee argues the prophetic hope of Isa 63:9–14 as standing behind the temple imagery in 1 Cor 6:19–20. The Spirit would fill not only the believer, but also the gathered community (Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* 869).

⁵⁵ "Moses' veil acted as a barrier to Israel, but the veil is removed in Christ (v. 14) and to that extent "every Christian has become a Moses" (R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians* [WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 1986] 71). Hafemann notes Paul's intentional conflation of covenant formulae in Lev 26:11–12 and

in their midst the basis of their unity as *Torah-free* association because of the Torah written on their hearts.⁵⁶

Furthermore, as each one has grasped God's new covenant grace in Christ's cross, they also live together as the community shaped by the new covenant's forgiveness of sins. That is, the same participation in the cross that gave them the Spirit in the first place continues to ground their relationship to one another—as they have been forgiven so they can forgive one another (Col 3:13). The same self-effacing love and humility of the cross funds their own love for one another (Phil 2:1–11) and quickens their demonstration and proclamation to the world of this life-through-death theology.⁵⁷ Toward the world, a particular emphasis of the Spirit's work in the new covenant community of the present age is the demonstration of unity grounded in love. It is by one Spirit that both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father (Eph 2:18). There is only one body and one Spirit (Eph 4:4), by one Spirit they were baptized in to one body (1 Cor 12:13) and minister a diversity of the same Spirit's gifts to each other (1 Cor 12:7–31), but the body is one (1 Cor 12:12, 20; Rom 12:4).

3. *Hope in tension: The Spirit and the eschaton.* Two final Pauline texts are important to note before we can draw implications for the kingdom in the present age. Both texts clearly reveal the fundamentals of Paul's Already-Not Yet perspective and both do so in terms of the Spirit.⁵⁸ The first, Rom 8:1–27, neatly demarcates the Spirit's functions from the "already" (8:1–17a) to the "not yet" (8:17b–27). In all, the Spirit's work is categorized in ways familiar to us from our previous discussions:⁵⁹ (1) the Spirit is the signal of the kingdom's *inauguration*—the final age has begun with Christ's work resolving the sin problem (8:3–4); the Spirit comes as the life-giver (8:2, 13) and the "Spirit of adoption" who places believers into God's family (8:14, 16); and the power source for believers to experience Christ's victory over sin in their own lives (8:12–13). (2) The Spirit also is the *sustainer* of those caught in

Ezek 37:27 to make the point to the Corinthians that they are "the temple of God's Spirit" in 2 Cor 6:16 (Hafemann, "Covenant Relationship" 60–61).

⁵⁶ The revelation that Gentiles and Jews stand on equal footing is itself a work of the new covenant Spirit. Commenting on Eph 3:2–13, Fee writes, ". . . for Paul both the revelation of it and the actual inclusion of Jews and Gentiles together in Christ (1:13–14; 2:18, 22) are the work of the Spirit. . . . What required revelation of God—that was common stock for all—but that they would be included Torah-free and on equal grounds with Jews, so that God in Christ had formed one new humanity of the two peoples. Such an understanding could have come only through the Spirit's revelation, both through Jews' and Gentiles' common experience of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13) and the cognitive understanding of what Christ and the Spirit had done" (Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* 852).

⁵⁷ Welker notes the two-directional motion of the Spirit here as he thrusts the Church *out* in proclamation but also attracts the world *in* because of love (Welker, "Holy Spirit" 20).

⁵⁸ For an account of the eschatological structure of Paul's theology see Hermann Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 44–87; and G. Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. R. B. Gaffin; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980) 91–125.

⁵⁹ Following here the categories of J. Bertone's study, "The Function of the Spirit in the Dialectic Between God's Soteriological Plan Enacted but Not Yet Culminated: Rom 8:1–27," *JPT* 15 (1999) 75–97.

the tensions of the “already” and “not yet” (8:23–27). Paul notes the suffering and weakness of believers in the present age (8:17–18, 26) and how they are borne along by the Spirit’s intercession (8:27) and presence as “first fruits” that create hope (8:23–25).⁶⁰ (3) Finally, the Spirit is the *surety* of the kingdom’s culmination. The resurrection of Jesus by the Spirit (8:11) signals the Spirit is already active as “first fruits” of the full harvest (8:23). His work securing the believer’s experience of adoption (8:15) qualifies them as heirs of future glory (8:17–18) when their bodies and the creation itself will be fully redeemed (8:19–23).⁶¹

The picture Paul painted for the Romans of the Spirit’s function in the present era of ever-increasing decay funds his exhortations for the issues threatening unity in their midst in Romans 14 and 15. Underrealizing the kingdom-power in their midst, the Romans have not deferred to their weaker brother. But the Spirit-kingdom is all-sufficient for righteousness, joy, and peace in the body (Rom 14:17). By contrast, in Corinth it was a triumphalistic overrealized attitude toward the Spirit’s presence that threatened the integrity of the body of Christ. Though they did not lack any gift (χάρισμα, 1 Cor 1:7), the Corinthians were still fleshly in their judgments concerning things of the Spirit in the present age. “The reasoning seems to have gone like this,” Dunn says, “we believe in Christ as risen and exalted Lord; we believe that through the Spirit we are brought into union with Christ in his exaltation; therefore the hallmark of the experience of the Spirit should be experiences of exaltation, of being taken out of our lowly, narrowing human condition and being united with Christ in heaven, enjoying experiences of heavenly glory.”⁶² To this attitude Paul makes another rare use of “kingdom/reign” language with the sarcastic retort of 1 Cor 4:8: “You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings (ἐβασιλεύσατε) without us; and *I* would indeed that you had become kings (ἐβασιλεύσατε) so that we also might reign with you (συμβασιλεύσωμεν).” The present age was not the time of reigning that God had in store for Paul or the Corinthians. Indeed, the true power which represents the kingdom, for the kingdom is present in “power” (δύναμις, 1 Cor 4:20), is power which was modeled on the power of the cross. It was a power that left Paul still a spectacle to the world, the dregs of all things, condemned to death, weak, without honor, hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, and toiling. But it was nonetheless a power that enabled Paul to *bless* when reviled, *endure* when persecuted, and *conciliate* when slandered (1 Cor 4:9–13). His is a different *power* for the present age; and it is a power thoroughly conditioned by his theology of the cross. It is the power of a word of the cross (1 Cor 1:18, 24) that enables him to rightly appraise all reality (1 Cor 2:5ff.). It is a power for wondrous manifestations of the Spirit, even raising the dead (1 Cor 6:14;

⁶⁰ Cf. also J. Christiaan Beker, “Suffering and Triumph in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” *HBT* 7 (1985) 105–19.

⁶¹ The concept of the Holy Spirit as a seal (σφραγίζω) and pledge (ἀρραβόν) in 2 Cor 1:21–22 and Eph 1:13–14; Eph 4:30 marks the believer as God’s possession “sealed for the day of redemption” (Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 806–8).

⁶² Dunn, “The Spirit and the Body of Christ” 350; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 800, 810.

15:43), but it is power all in the service of love (1 Cor 13:13) and still awaiting final expression at a later time (1 Cor 15:50).

Paul's explicit mention of kingdom with the future resurrection in 1 Cor 15:50 should not be missed because it runs parallel to another event by which Paul challenges the Corinthians' overrealized understanding of the Spirit: judging the world (κόσμος, 1 Cor 6:2–3). In the OT judging the nations, resurrection, and "kingdom" were all features of the age to come.⁶³ In 1 Corinthians, Paul continues that prophetic viewpoint and holds each of these to be *still* future. Judging the nations is altogether future for him, and though Paul knows of the presence of the "first fruits" of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:23) and also the presence (kingdom) power (1 Cor 4:8), the "kingdom" and the final redemption of the resurrection is reserved for a later time of Christ's return.⁶⁴

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: WHAT IS THE KINGDOM UP TO NOW?

We began our study with the premise that the locus of the kingdom's presence was the activity of the Holy Spirit in the present age. Questions of the kingdom for the present age are basically questions of pneumatology. The Trinitarian identity of the Spirit followed from this indicating the Spirit's particular function as the *alter ego* of Christ. This in turn steered us into the NT's description of Christ's present activity at the right hand of glory through Psalm 110. In the *absentee Christology* of the present age, Christ's primary intent seems to be with securing the redemption and fullness of life for those who are his through *intercession* and dealing with his enemies only insofar as they oppose this present intent. More direct action against his enemies will be taken at a later time. Theologically, the observation was made that we should expect the Spirit, as the Son's *alter ego*, to follow this same course.

When taken up in the prophetic vision of the age to come, the contours of the Spirit's ministry emerged in the career of the Servant of the Lord, anointed with the Spirit to inaugurate a new covenant. The new covenant's administration of the one covenant program forms the essential bridge to the NT where kingdom, covenant, and Spirit are revealed in their "already and not yet" character. The "already" is particularly grounded in the new covenant's provision for the final resolution of the sin problem as the fundamental ground of renewal that would begin in the human heart and ultimately transform all human society and the world of nature itself. The new covenant's vision for final social and political renewal of the world order is also closely tied to a work

⁶³ On the resurrection in the new covenant hope, see Isa 26:18–19 and Matt 11:5. For judgment, see Isa 42:2–4.

⁶⁴ The kingdom's future in the resurrection of 1 Cor 15:50 supports a sequential understanding of the events and the nature of Christ's reign in 1 Cor 15:24. First is the resurrection of Christ as the "first fruits" then the end with the resurrection of Christ's people (cf. 15:50), then the reign of Christ in the kingdom after which he offers the kingdom up to the Father. On this reading of 1 Cor 15:24, see Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) 280–86, and the sources cited there.

of the Spirit upon the national entity of Israel bringing them back from exile and planting them in their land under the leadership of the Lord's anointed.

Within the NT, the Spirit's function in the present age follows closely the career of Christ in his first coming and centers most directly on the immediate provision and application of the new covenant's forgiveness of sin. The self-sustaining cycle of Spirit-inspired and guided proclamation of a "message of forgiveness" (Luke 24:47), the Spirit's indwelling the believer's heart bringing the life of *crucified* Christ, and the Spirit's formation and maintenance of the believing community, exists in the present age as a collective pledge to the cosmos of a sure and final manifestation of God's reign.

In the meantime, the NT scribes of the Spirit are careful to tread a middle course between our underrealizing and overrealizing the Spirit's aims for the present time. Key to this course is their awareness of the conflicted character of this present age where decay, weakness, and suffering from flesh and other spiritual powers remain until the appearance of the Son of Man in his glory. To underrealize the Spirit's presence is to neglect the Spirit's *dynamis* to love, forgive, and live in unity with those in the community of faith (Romans). To overrealize it is to collapse the "not yet" into the present "already" (Corinthians). Kingdom power in the Spirit in the present age is the power to triumph in faith, hope, and love; it is the power to realize Christ's life—including his deeds of power—in the face of world forces still ordered to destroy and kill. But, as even Christ's own demonstrations of Spirit power attest, the Church's proclamation and manifestation of the Spirit in the present age remains but proleptic anticipations to another appearing of the Lord's Servant, who in the power of the Spirit will regather the nation that rejected him, bring lasting justice to the social fabric of all nations, and ultimately release the creation from its groaning in its slavery to corruption.

Translated into the "Kingdom Now!" rhetoric and praxis of many keen for social justice in this world, the "already and not yet" of the Spirit-kingdom yields seven theses all of which derive from the fundamental *cruciform* shape of the kingdom that yet exists in a world darkened and enslaved to sin.

- (1) The kingdom's project in the present age is one of magnifying the fame of the *crucified* Lord Jesus Christ.
- (2) The kingdom's witness is inherently connected to the body of Christ, the church. As the temple of the kingdom's power in the present age, the local church is the social face of the kingdom to the world.
- (3) As the proclamation and demonstration of the *forgiveness of sins* "is the central theme of the Holy Spirit,"⁶⁵ then so is it the particular intention and content of the kingdom's mission in the present age. Though the kingdom's operation of this mission take place within all human cultures and will in some measure impact human culture, the kingdom is not intending for the "redemption of culture" or the final overturning of the sinful institutions and values of the world system in this age.⁶⁶ Redemptive visions of that nature for the present

⁶⁵ Michael Welker, "Holy Spirit" 6.

⁶⁶ D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 216–18. This is not a denial that kingdom soteriology is holistic redemption of the physical and spiritual, only an

age indeed find little support in the NT documents, which is fact admitted by the most ardent of Christian social ethicists.⁶⁷

(4) The means of realizing the aims of the kingdom are the same as Jesus' own. He announced and demonstrated the kingdom, a model of word and deed. Regarding the church's engagement of society, this seems to imply our making *direct connections* between social projects and the Lord in whose name they are done. The world has its own humanitarian projects; the kingdom is interested in *Jesus'* projects, so that others may know why they are objects of Christ's love through the church. Deeds of the kingdom's power are always in the service of proclamation of the kingdom's forgiveness.

(5) The church also proclaims the message of forgiveness in Christ by the way it lives out the kingdom's power before society. In terms of the Spirit, *unity* and *reconciliation* are a central focus of the kingdom in the present age. The kingdom's power is particularly manifest when those of different race, age, and culture unite together in the love that comes from the living Christ by the Spirit. John 13:35 is very much about the kingdom in the present age.

(6) The kingdom operates collectively in the world through the church, but this is because of its prior working *individually*. The character of the church to the world is only derivative from the liberated and forgiven character of its members. The kingdom is keenly focused to the building up of *individual people* and uniting them together in the body of Christ as a radical community displaying and proclaiming the life of the *Crucified One*. This is the pattern of world impact in the present age.⁶⁸

(7) Thus, the kingdom in the present age is *neither defeatist nor triumphal*. The influence upon cultures from communities of forgiven and spiritually free kingdom citizens may ultimately trickle up to politics and society's institutions, but given the character of the present age where the enemies of the kingdom are still given domination, the kingdom's *chief aim* is new covenant forgiveness. Political gains in the present age hold no guarantee for endurance or exemption from corruption by evil in other ways. They are not guaranteed to be other than isolated occasions because the "judging" associated with wide-scale political success is not the lot of the church in this age (1 Cor 6:2–3). Still, in its explicit goals for the present age, the kingdom is not defeated either. The political, culture-transforming ambitions of the Crucified King at his first appearing remain the context of kingdom ambitions in the present age. The power-through-weakness

affirmation that the social/physical is always in the service of the proclamation and realization of the spiritual in the present age.

⁶⁷ For example, Enda McDonagh, *Social Ethics and the Christian* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979) 80. McDonagh makes her case for a supposed institutional focus of the kingdom's proclamation on theological-logical grounds of "the overall thrust of God's dealings with mankind" (ibid. 80). Political and Liberation theologies of the past generation similarly struggled to find their social program in the NT (Saucy, *Kingdom in the Teaching of Jesus* 258–59).

⁶⁸ With Russell Moore and others cited by him (*Kingdom of Christ* 98–100), I consider the individual's experience of the new covenant to be directly connected to the restoration of the *imago Dei*. Jesus as the Last Adam and himself the εἰκὼν of God (Col 1:15) ultimately leads a restored humanity in fulfillment of its vocation in relation to the creation. As the original *imago Dei* had ruling responsibilities (Gen 1:28), so the Last Adam's humanity does too. But the danger here is collapsing the "not yet" of redeemed human ruling into the "already," which Paul clearly denies to us in the present age (1 Cor 4:8).

modus operandi of Christ in his first coming made him reject political power and move to forgive sins and drive out demons, as Welker reminds us.⁶⁹

The middle course the NT outlines for the church in the present age is to be sure one of tension. And tension is something that is not well tolerated particularly in affluent societies of the twenty-first century where desire and means of eliminating discomfort rule, and the raw destructive face of evil is more masked, and “sin” is often reduced to something like overindulgence at the dinner table.⁷⁰ But for the present time this tension is God-ordained and, where the kingdom is concerned, fully God-resourced in the Spirit. His grace in the Holy Spirit/kingdom is sufficient to be citizens of the kingdom and to successfully carry out the kingdom’s praxis of faith, hope, and love.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Welker, “Holy Spirit” 6. The intent here is something other than the mutual exclusivity of Luther’s two kingdoms where the kingdom of God was invisible, spiritual, and not involved in politics. Because the Holy Spirit applies the grace for full restoration of humanity, impact of salvation in the social and political spheres is to be expected. However, the issue is one of means and ends of such impact for the present age.

⁷⁰ Fee and Carson rightly observe that affluence and tolerance of the western world tends to skew us to over realized kingdom/Spirit eschatology (Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* 823–24; Carson, *Christ and Culture*, 223–24). In comparison to the global experience of the church, the affluent world knows little of persecution and suffering that informs the biblical theology of the cross. Welker notes: “A powerful sign of the great crisis of our culture and of Christian faith and Christian theology is the fact that we are no longer capable of understanding the phenomenon of sin and the forgiveness of sin. We seem to live in a thoroughly moralized culture, which lumps all types of erroneous behavior together by making them the object of a process of universal moral perception and communication. . . . Whoever talks about “sin” is either a religious functionary who impulsively insists on denying that the world has come of age, or a self proclaimed supermoralist” (Welker, “Holy Spirit” 12). One wonders how much of the enthusiasm and easy optimism for social justice and redeeming culture is a product of theologizing by wealthy westerners.

⁷¹ The phraseology is Clowney’s who summarizes the politics of the kingdom in the present age as the politics of faith hope and love (Edmund P. Clowney, “The Politics of the Kingdom,” *WTJ* 61 [1979] 291–310).