

PAUL J. BROWN

Bodily Resurrection and Ethics in 1 Cor 15

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

360

Mohr Siebeck

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360



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Bodily Resurrection and Ethics in 1 Cor 15

Connecting Faith and Morality in the Context
of Greco-Roman Mythology

Mohr Siebeck

PAUL J. BROWN, born 1961; 1985 BM in Musical Studies and 1989 MM in Music Theory; 1997 MDiv; 2012 PhD in Theology (New Testament) at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Chicago, USA; currently Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Trinity College, Chicago, USA.

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For Susan

Preface

This monograph is a revision of my PhD dissertation, submitted to the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. In preparing this manuscript for print, I welcomed the opportunity to refine my argument and include interaction with some studies that had been published since my dissertation defense in November 2012. My hope is that the resulting book will support further study of the varied themes discussed in the following pages. The Greek and Latin inscriptions are presented, when possible, in facsimile format, approximating their appearance in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and other relevant authorities. Translations of Greek and Latin classical texts are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise noted. Hebrew Bible quotations follow the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Septuagint quotations follow Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, and New Testament quotations are from the Nestle-Aland 28th edition.

The subject of this study is the fruit of my rumination spanning several decades. Interest in the future bodily resurrection was first kindled by the ministry of Dr. Eldon Wilson, who passionately asserted that the resurrection was the hope of the church. His words still ring in my ears. A number of years later, my interest was fed further by a passing comment of Dr. Gregory Beale to the effect that the resurrection of Jesus might be the epicenter of New Testament theology. The notion that the resurrection may be more central to Paul's theology than the cross was intriguing. It was my subsequent pastoral ministry, and particularly, thinking through the need to comfort those who lost friends and relatives to death, that pushed me to read and wrestle with how Paul saw the knowledge of a future resurrection as a comfort for the bereaved Thessalonians. My intent in doctoral studies was to explore some aspect of the resurrection, but it was not until I sat in an exegesis class on 1 Corinthians that I knew that a study of 1 Cor 15 needed to be the focus of a dissertation. My interest was aroused by Dr. Eckhard Schnabel's comment in class that the connection between Paul's ethical imperatives and theology of the resurrection had yet to be thoroughly explored. Following his personal encouragement, I embarked upon the research problem that would lead me down a number of dead-end roads before the way opened up before me. As it turned out, my initial inclination to seek the answer to the ethical significance of the resurrection in

Paul's new-creational thought-world was wrongheaded, at least in this instance. Although Paul argued theologically, and used Edenic themes to do so, I found the key to Paul's discursive logic in his missionary impulse. It was by exploring what Paul might have thought his Greco-Roman audience understood that ultimately yielded fruit. This study is a tribute to the scholars who have seeded and watered my thoughts through the years.

No book is completed without the aid and influence of others; I would be remiss not to acknowledge those who have supported me throughout my studies and the writing of this book. Along my academic journey, a number of professors have significantly shaped my research sensibilities. I owe a debt to Dr. Gregory Beale and Dr. Gordon Hugenberger for their inspiration during my years at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I gratefully acknowledge the influence and wise guidance of my dissertation mentor, Dr. Eckhard Schnabel. On numerous occasions, his incisive comments rescued me from the tangle of details in which I was ensnared.

Thanks are due as well to Dr. Robert Yarbrough and Dr. Richard Averbeck who served as readers for my dissertation. I also wish to thank Dr. Jörg Frey for accepting my manuscript for publication and Dr. James Kelhoffer for his insightful review and critique. The study is stronger because of the influence of these scholars. A number of people have assisted to me in bringing this book to completion. My friend, Dr. Jonathan Marshall, was kind enough to answer technical questions early in the formatting process. Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and the team at Mohr Siebeck were also instrumental in seeing the project to print.

My deepest gratitude is for my family and close friends. My church families, Christian Fellowship Center and CrossWay Community Church, have been a significant support throughout my graduate studies. Their friendships, prayer support, financial gifts, and constant encouragement have often been the wind in my sails when my progress was slow. My parents, siblings, and children, have shown a level of interest and support well beyond the duties of familial obligation; my eldest daughter, Abbi, read and commented on the early chapters of the manuscript. I lastly acknowledge the joyful and thoughtful support of my wife, Susan, who read the entire manuscript and probed the logic of my findings from an outsider's perspective. She has been a great help in eliminating many errors and ambiguities. More importantly, however, she has been a constant and loving companion. Her influence in shaping my thinking and conduct throughout our years of marriage and ministry is difficult to overstate. She is my greatest earthly treasure.

Paul J. Brown
October 2013

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow *The SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al.). The following represents materials not included in the *SBL Handbook's* list of abbreviations.

AAPS	Ashgate Ancient Philosophy Series
AAW	Approaching the Ancient World
ABA	Associazione Biblica Italiana
AF	Archäologische Forschungen
AGRL	Aspects of Greek and Roman Life
ARelM	Ancient Religion and Mythology
<i>AthMitt</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
AYB	The Anchor Yale Bible
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
BARel	Blackwell Ancient Religions
BARIS	BAR International Series
BCAW	Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World
BibIntS	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BNP</i>	<i>Brill's New Pauly</i>
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BRS	The Biblical Resource Series
BSL	Biblical Studies Library
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BzAlt	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
<i>CAF</i>	<i>Comicorum atticorum fragmenta</i>
CBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CCSS	Catholic Commentary of Sacred Scripture
CEC	The Context of Early Christianity
CEJL	Commentaries of Early Jewish Literature
CL	Collection Linguistique (Société de linguistique de Paris)
<i>CLE</i>	<i>Carmina Latina epigraphica conlegit Franciscus Buecheler</i>
ConC	Concordia Commentary
CPNIVC	College Press NIV Commentary
CREJ	Collection de la Revue des Études Juives
CSR	Contributions to the Study of Religion
DCDCN	The Development of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea
<i>DNTB</i>	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship</i>
Ekstasis	Ekstasis: Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages

EPSC	Evangelical Press Study Commentary
ET	Études et commentaires
EzNT	Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament
FCCGRW	First Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World
FSC	Faith and Scholarship Colloquies Series
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
GBSNT	Guides in Biblical Scholarship New Testament Series
GCRW	Greek Culture in the Roman World
GPP	Gorgias Précis Portfolios
HMT	Handbuch der Moralthologie
HNTC	Harpers New Testament Commentary
HTANT	Historisch Theologische Auslegung Neues Testament
ICON	Image & Context
ILCK	The International Library of Christian Knowledge
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History
KTCH	Key Themes in Classical History
LPS	Library of Pauline Studies
MBib	Mellen Biblical Press Series
MNS	Mnemosyne Supplements
MNTS	MacMaster New Testament Studies
MR	Mythes et religions
MSÅAF	Meddelanden från Stiftelsens för Åbo Akademi Forskningsinstitut
MST	Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.
MThSt	Marburger Theologische Studien
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NTC	New Testament Commentary
ÖAW	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OSAD	Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents
PAST	Pauline Studies
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
RA	Revealing Antiquity
<i>RELat</i>	<i>Revista de Estudios Latinos</i>
<i>RevRJ</i>	<i>Review of Rabbinic Judaism</i>
RFCC	Religion in the First Christian Centuries
RivBib	Rivista biblica
RSAW	Routledge Sourcebooks for the Ancient World
RTNT	Reading the New Testament
SAS	Studien zur antiken Stadt
SBF	Studium Biblicum Franciscanum
SBLECL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and Its Literature
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SciAnt	Sciences of Antiquity
SGLL	Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary

SJSHRZ	Studien zu den jüdischen Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
SLG	<i>Supplementum lyricis Graecis</i>
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
STB	Studien zu Theologie und Bibel
StudBibL	Studies in Biblical Literature
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative: Jewish and Christian Traditions
TGP	Theology in Global Perspective Series
TGST	Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
UBW	Understanding the Bible and Its World
UUÅ	Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift
VCSS	Variorum Collected Studies Series
WSC	Wisconsin Studies in Classics
XB	Xantener Berichte
ZGB	Zürcher Grundrisse zur Bibel
ZMiss	<i>Zeitschrift für Mission</i>
ZNT	<i>Zeitschrift für Neues Testament</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction and Research Setting

When Paul embarked upon his journeys, proclaiming to the Greco-Roman world the good news of salvation through Jesus the Messiah, his goal was broader than winning an audience to a set of convictions. He sought to establish a community of believers who conducted their lives in a way that imitated the life of Jesus. Paul was not alone in his missionary ideals. For all the early apostles, being a disciple of Jesus entailed believing and living in specific ways.

It comes as no surprise that the cumulative voice of the New Testament authors urges believers to be conformed in thought and deed to Jesus Christ. How the individual authors sought to exhort their audience is varied and a subject of both pastoral and scholarly interest. The interrelationship between the theological teachings of the New Testament and the moral expectations for the earliest believers in Jesus the Messiah has long attracted the attention of modern scholars. Pauline scholars in particular often note a causal relationship between Paul's theology and his ethical teaching.

In the twentieth century, the interrelationship between theology and ethics has been a fruitful field for research that points most famously to the work of R. Bultmann and M. Dibelius. On the one hand, M. Dibelius saw little connection between Paul's theology and his ethics.¹ On the other hand, however, R. Bultmann saw a tight causal connection.² These two approaches set the agenda for decades and even today they are discernable

¹ Cf. Martin Dibelius, *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (ILCK; London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936), 142–49; 217–21; idem, *From Tradition to Gospel* (trans. Bertram Lee Woolf from the 2d rev. ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1935), 38.

² Cf., e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951–1955), 1:330–33. Cf. idem, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," *ZNW* 23 (1924): 123–40 (repr. in *Exegetica* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967], 36–54); ET, idem, "The Problem of Ethics in Paul," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches* (ed. Brian S. Rosner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 195–216. He is followed by many. V. P. Furnish sees this interrelationship between the indicative and the imperative to be "the crucial problem in interpreting the Pauline ethic" (*Theology and Ethics in Paul* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968], 9).

in the work of scholars who take such divergent approaches as the ethnographic and theological.³ It is within the Bultmannian tradition that the research problem of this study is located.

1.1 The Problem

The research problem addressed in this study is an exploration of the relationship between Paul's theological convictions and moral instruction, both explicit and implied, as articulated in 1 Cor 15. The research is not primarily concerned with demonstrating that there is a real connection between Paul's resurrection convictions and his ethical instruction; the study explores how Paul argued for the veracity and nature of the future bodily resurrection in light of the Greco-Roman mores of those who denied the future resurrection, and also proposes how Paul's convictions called for moral obligation. This aim can be posed by the question: How did Paul seek to correct the convictions of the deniers of the resurrection so that they also felt a resulting weight of moral obligation?

1.2 The Approach

In arguing my thesis, I proceed with two presuppositions. First, I attempt to articulate Paul's logic with the understanding that he had every intention that the resurrection-denying Corinthians would embrace his convictions and, therefore, alter their behavior. This makes no statement about if Paul actually accurately assessed the situation at Corinth; he heard about the situation second hand. I argue my thesis taking Paul's understanding of the situation as a starting point since we have no other information to work with. I also make no statement regarding the efficacy of Paul's rhetoric. The degree to which the Corinthians were convinced by Paul is unknown. It is impossible to know how the Corinthians actually understood and felt about Paul's instruction.⁴ What is known about the reception of the letter

³ Examples could be multiplied, but compare for example the ethnographic work of Wayne Meeks to the theological work of Wolfgang Schrage: Wayne A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Wolfgang Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament* (trans. David E. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

⁴ In Paul's address at the Areopagus in Athens his strategy apparently yielded only partial results (Acts 17:22–34).

as a whole suggests that the problems were not entirely resolved, if at all.⁵ C. K. Barrett suggests that the matters specifically regarding the resurrection were cleared up since in 2 Corinthians we “hear of no more disputation about the resurrection.”⁶ Paul’s further discussion of the resurrection in 2 Cor 5:1–10, however, suggests that 1 Cor 15 may have been less definitive than originally intended. These unanswered questions underscore my approach in this study; the research focuses upon Paul’s intent and expectation of a positive result, not the actual results. Second, I understand Paul to be speaking to those who were ἐν Χριστῷ, to those who had received the gospel that Paul and the apostles preached (1 Cor 15:1, 3–5, 10). The research presented here proposes that the overarching thinking that instructed the afterlife convictions of the believers in 1 Cor 15 was derived from Greco-Roman religious afterlife paradigms. I argue that the Corinthians’ eschatology, which was informed by Greco-Roman mythology, was a significant contributing factor in causing them to believe and live in ways unbecoming for the community of believers (e.g., 1 Cor 15:12, 32–34). Paul’s intent was to instruct and convince the resurrection-denying Corinthians of the veracity and nature of a future resurrection in such a way as to appeal to their culturally-formed sensibilities so that they would embrace convictions consistent with Paul’s preached gospel. In so believing, he intended that they would feel a weight of moral obligation in his exhortation to recognize the corollaries of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection for the life of the believer, and thereby live a life that imitates the risen Lord, the heavenly man, by enduring hardship, laboring tirelessly, and abstaining from sin.

With reference to definitions, a number of significant issues intersect with this study. First, it is not unusual to find in recent work in New Testament ethics a careful distinction between the terms *morals* and *ethics*, the former focusing on behavior and the latter on the theoretical framework. For the purpose of this study, I use the two synonymously, although I typically use the term *ethics*. Second, scholars have endeavored to discern the *identity* of the Christian community, the *ethical teaching* of that community, and the resultant *ethos* in order to discern the ethics of the community. The application of social-science terminology to New Testament ethics is instructive at one level and slippery at another. It is beneficial for understanding issues that were germane to the first-century church: What were the acceptable moral norms? This terminology is also helpful because it softens the problem of how to understand the relationship between the

⁵ Cf., e.g., 2 Cor 7:8. For further discussion, see C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC 8; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1973), 5–11; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (AYB 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 37–47.

⁶ Barrett, *Second Corinthians*, 6.

indicative and the imperative. The terminology is slippery, however, because there is no consensus how the terms should be defined. I will therefore use these terms only sparingly, and typically only when interacting with scholars who use the terms.⁷ Third, in both classical studies and modern New Testament studies there is ongoing discussion about how the term *myth* should be understood.⁸ As yet, no definition has won broad approval and the most general definition of *myth*, as traditional stories of significance, is inadequate.⁹ Despite the conspicuous ambiguities, *myth* and *mythology* are universally used among classicists when referring to the Greco-Roman stories of the gods and heroes. No such unanimity exists, however, among biblical scholars when referring to the Scriptures, Paul's gospel, or the convictions of the early Christ followers, although many scholars use the terminology.¹⁰ For clarity I restrict the terms *myth* and *mythology* to the

⁷ For further discussion regarding social-science terminology and theory, see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (LEC 6; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 14–15; idem, *Origins*, 3–11); Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Jan G. van der Watt, ed., *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (BZNW 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006). For appropriations and adaptations of Tajfel's social identity theory by biblical scholars, see Atsuhiko Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological and Socio-Historical Studies* (JSNTSup 285; London: T&T Clark, 2005); Bengt Homberg, ed., *Exploring Early Christian Identity* (WUNT 226; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); V. Henry T. Nguyen, *Christian Identity in Corinth: A Comparative Study of 2 Corinthians, Epictetus and Valerius Maximus* (WUNT 2/243; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Michael Wolter, "Die ethische Identität christlicher Gemeinden in neuestamentlicher Zeit," in *Woran orientiert sich Ethik?* (MTS 67; Marburg: Elwert, 2001), 61–90.

⁸ Cf., e.g., the discussion by classicists Ken Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (AAW; London: Routledge, 1992), 2–5; Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone, "Thinking through Myth, Thinking Myth Through," in *A Companion to Greek Mythology* (ed. Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone; BCAW; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 3–23; Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction* (trans. Thomas Marier; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 1–8; and Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (trans. Paula Wissing; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 1–26. For biblical scholars on *myth*, cf., e.g., Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings* (translated and edited by Schubert Miles Ogden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1–44; Burton L. Mack, *The Christian Myth: Origins, Logic, and Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

⁹ F. Graf notes, "Despite many attempts, it has proven impossible to arrive at a definition of myth (Gr. μῦθος/*mýthos*; Lat. *mythos*) that would satisfy all disciplines" (*BNP* 9:444). See also in Dowden, "Myth," 3; Graf, *Mythology*, 1–2.

¹⁰ Cf., e.g., the collection of essays generated from the Society of Biblical Literature's Seminar on Ancient Myths and Modern Theories of Christian Origins, Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller, eds., *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (SBLECL 5; Atlanta: SBL, 2011).

Greco-Roman narratives of gods and heroes. I typically apply the term *Scripture* to the canonical writings of the Jews and Christians and *gospel* to what Paul preached to the Corinthians. Although what Paul expounds to the Corinthians is spoken of as *myth* by a number of scholars,¹¹ I avoid this terminology when possible to make a clear distinction between the Greco-Roman influenced convictions of the believers at Corinth and Paul's gospel, which he received and proclaimed to the Corinthians and intends for them to believe (1 Cor 15:1–3).

1.3 The Methodology

The methodological approach used in this study seeks to understand the historical and cultural setting of 1 Cor 15 and how Paul's logic was relevant and reasonable for his largely Gentile audience. As such, my approach concerns only what R. Hays designates as "the descriptive task" in studying Pauline ethics.¹² I am not concerned with the "synthetic," "hermeneutic," or "pragmatic" tasks.¹³ My exegetical goal is to understand Pauline ethics in the first-century Corinthian setting via the window of one chapter in his first letter to the church. Therefore, I will only be examining a small portion of Pauline ethical teaching: i.e., the ethical significance of the future bodily resurrection. Broader historical concerns, theological foundations, sources, motives, and criteria for Paul's ethical teaching within the corpus, and even the letter, will only be addressed as they contribute to a fuller understanding of the connection between the eschatological convictions and the ethical implications in 1 Cor 15. I locate my exploration of the ethical significance of the bodily resurrection within the larger fields of New Testament ethics and, more narrowly, Pauline ethics.

This study seeks to understand Paul's communication through both exegetical and comparative methodologies, since the aim is primarily to trace Paul's logic and to posit what his audience might have reasonably understood. First, the exegetical analysis of 1 Cor 15 includes textual criticism, lexical studies, and syntactical, rhetorical, and discourse analyses, each considered within the Greco-Roman historical setting and occasion of 1

¹¹ Burton L. Mack, "Rereading the Christ Myth: Paul's Gospel and the Christ Cult Question," in *Redescribing Paul and the Corinthians* (ed. Ron Cameron and Merrill P. Miller; SBLCL 5; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 35–73; Ken Dowden, "The Myth that Saves: Mysteries and Mysteriosophies," in *A Companion to Greek Mythology* (ed. Ken Dowden and Niall Livingstone; BCAF; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 283.

¹² Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1996), 3–4.

¹³ Hays, *Vision*, 4–7.

Corinthians. Also considered is the greater textual and theological context of 1 Corinthians within the Pauline corpus.¹⁴ Second, the study also engages in comparative religion and tradition criticism to further illuminate or qualify the ways in which Paul's Jewish background and Greco-Roman context provided for the expression of his convictions and arguments regarding the nature of the bodily resurrection and its significance for ethics. The primary sources for these methodologies include the Old Testament, Second Temple Jewish writings, Greco-Roman texts, Greek and Latin inscriptions, tombs and epitaphs, archeological data, Acts, and the Pauline corpus.

1.4 The Structure of the Study

This study is divided into seven chapters beginning with a review of literature and a consideration of the Corinthian setting, proceeding exegetically through 1 Cor 15, and ending with a summary and conclusion. The following provides an overview for each chapter.

Chapter One includes an introduction to the aims and methods, and then locates the present research within the field of current New Testament ethics. I trace the major recent contributions in three areas that impinge upon the research problem: New Testament ethics, Pauline ethics, and research that directly addresses the problem of this study – the eschatological dimension of Pauline ethics and especially the significance of the resurrection for ethics in 1 Cor 15. The section will not attempt to trace the history of New Testament or Pauline ethics thoroughly. The aim is to establish the context of this study, raise issues relevant for the following sections, and demonstrate a need for a full-length study of the significance of the resurrection for ethics.

Chapter Two focuses upon the afterlife beliefs extant in the Greco-Roman cultural milieu during the first century and addresses Paul's afterlife convictions. The survey of the Greco-Roman afterlife beliefs seeks primarily to identify the breadth of convictions that were held by those

¹⁴ I take the thirteen letters in the Pauline corpus to be written by Paul. I also recognize that there is a discernable shift in content and emphasis between the earlier letters and the later letters. I understand this not as proof for various authors, but as evidence of differing occasions and maturing concerns. As such, I distinguish to some degree between Paul's early and later writings for proposing what Paul had and had not clearly taught at the different stages of his missionary labor. E.g., the opening clause of 1 Thess 4:13 suggests that Paul had not taught them about the future resurrection of the dead: οὐ θέλομεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων. This apparent ignorance is also discernable in 1 Cor 15. By Phil 3:20–21, Paul can talk of the future bodily resurrection with very little further explanation.

outside the Corinthian believing community. I then turn to Paul's resurrection beliefs, tracing the possible origins of his thinking.

Chapter Three seeks to understand the problem at Corinth regarding the denial of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:12). What did the erring believers at Corinth embrace regarding afterlife expectations? In this section, I interact with three categorical positions in recent research including an over-realized eschatology, the immortality of the soul, and afterlife nihilism. I conclude the chapter by proposing a reconstruction of the situation at Corinth that identifies the errant beliefs with a Greco-Roman religious background. I argue that the denial of a future bodily resurrection and resulting ethical problems that Paul addressed in 1 Cor 15 were caused in part by an eschatology influenced by Greco-Roman mythology. This proposed reconstruction becomes a hermeneutical key for tracing Paul's logical argument in the subsequent chapters of this study. I further support the proposed reconstruction by observing how beliefs influenced by Greco-Roman myths may have allowed for other moral failures in 1 Corinthians. Lastly, I propose Paul's strategy for correcting the errant convictions.

Chapters Four through Six constitute the exegetical portion of the study. Chapter Four explores Paul's understanding of the historicity of Jesus' bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:1–11). The goal of the chapter is to confirm Paul's conviction that the Messiah rose from the dead and to identify what Paul understood to be the nature of Jesus' resurrection body. This section lays the foundation for Paul's argument for the veracity and nature of the future resurrection and the moral obligation that he intended to flow from these beliefs. Chapter Five aims to demonstrate the consequences and reality of a future resurrection exegetically, as well as identify the ethical implications of the same (1 Cor 15:13–34). Chapter Six explores the nature of the resurrection body (1 Cor 15:35–58). The burden of the exegesis in this chapter answers a question that Paul anticipates: What will the resurrection body be like and how might this influence the moral behavior of the Corinthian believers?

Chapter Seven summarizes the findings of the previous chapters. The study concludes with a reiteration of Paul's main lines of argumentation for grounding ethical injunctions in the veracity and nature of the future resurrection for those who are in the Messiah.

1.5 The Significance of the Project

For decades, scholars have observed the possible connection between resurrection and ethics in passing, but a fuller exploration of Paul's understanding of the future resurrection of the dead in relation to his ethical teaching has received little sustained attention. Thus far, no monograph-

length study covering this specific aspect of Pauline ethics has been written. This study seeks to fill the gap in current scholarship by a full-length study of 1 Cor 15 focusing on the issues that contribute to Paul's understanding of the future bodily resurrection and its significance for ethics.

This study demonstrates an advance within the larger fields of Pauline theology and ethics in three areas. (1) Although a small number of scholars have recently suggested that the problem at Corinth arose from Greco-Roman thinking, this study contributes to a fuller understanding of the historical situation that gave rise to the denial of the resurrection among the Corinthian believers. (2) It posits how the Corinthian eschatological beliefs influenced by Greco-Roman myths about heroes and gods adversely affected their behavior. (3) Lastly, it contributes to Pauline ethics by proposing how he leveraged their cultural mores with the intent of making Pauline thinking about the future resurrection a convincing motivation for moral living among the first-century believers at Corinth.

1.6 Review of Recent Research

The purpose of this section is to establish the current state of scholarly research regarding Pauline ethics and, specifically, how Paul's belief in the bodily resurrection was significant for ethics.¹⁵ The material with which I interact in this section is primarily descriptive: that is to say, there is no sustained attempt to apply the ethical teaching of the New Testament to a twenty-first century setting.¹⁶ I engage with scholars who employ the de-

¹⁵ Richard B. Hays ("Mapping the Field: Approaches to New Testament Ethics," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* [ed. Jan G. van der Watt; BZNTW 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006], 3–19) describes six approaches that, in reality, are but two basic ways of addressing New Testament ethics – a descriptive approach and an approach that attempts to apply the findings to the present era.

¹⁶ Scholars who endeavor to apply New Testament ethics to the modern and postmodern setting do so with differing assumptions and agendas. Cf., e.g., the moral principle approach of Reinhold Niebuhr (*An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* [New York: Harper, 1935], esp. 37–61). Many have played a variation on this same theme; see, e.g., Richard A. Burrige, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Eduard Lohse, *Theological Ethics of the New Testament* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); and Russell Pregeant, *Knowing Truth, Doing Good: Engaging New Testament Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008). More radical postmodern methodologies include Brian K. Blount, *Then the Whisper Put on Flesh: New Testament Ethics in an African American Context* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), Willi Marxsen, *New Testament Foundations for Christian Ethics* (trans. O. C. Dean; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984). For those who apply New Testament ethical

scriptive approach and with the descriptive work of those who include modern applications.¹⁷ Although scholars give some attention to the ethical significance of the future resurrection in the Pauline corpus, this section demonstrates that no scholar has attempted a sustained study of the correspondence between the future resurrection and ethics in 1 Cor 15. I first survey recent New Testament ethical studies, move thereafter to Pauline ethics,¹⁸ and lastly interact with studies that address the connection between the future bodily resurrection and ethics.

1.6.1 New Testament Ethics

W. Schrage's monograph on New Testament ethics begins with Jesus and his teaching, and then moves through the New Testament canon in a roughly chronological order.¹⁹ He understands Jesus' ethical teaching as grounded in his kingdom proclamation, which Schrage takes to be eschatological rather than apocalyptic or sapiential. The will of God for a person is focused upon the eschaton. When Schrage turns to Paul, the focus is still eschatological, but he employs different terminology – using language of gospel and new creation rather than kingdom. As such, Paul's ethical teaching is described by Schrage as christological, in that the death and resurrection of Jesus are understood to inaugurate a new creation.²⁰ Paul's ethic is thus motivated and shaped by the transformative and ongoing christological event, Jesus' death and resurrection, which is only to be completed at the final day.²¹ The balance of the monograph views the particularities of the later canonical books through the same eschatological

teaching with a concern for narrative continuity, cf. Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); idem, *The Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981); and Hays, *Vision*.

¹⁷ E.g., Hays, *Vision*. Less significant studies include J. L. Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973); Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); and Ceslas Spicq, *Théologie morale du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Gabalda, 1970).

¹⁸ A survey of works on Pauline ethics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be found in Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 242–79. A survey of major works in the recent past, both New Testament and Pauline ethics, appears in Wendell L. Willis, "Bibliography: Pauline Ethics, 1964–1994," in *Theology and Ethics in Paul and His Interpreters: Essays in Honor of Victor Paul Furnish* (ed. Eugene H. Lovering and Jerry L. Sumney; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 306–19; Werner Zager, "Neutestamentliche Ethik im Spiegel der Forschung," *ZNT* 11 (2003): 3–13.

¹⁹ Schrage, *Ethics*; see also his *Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paränese: Ein Beitrag zur neutestamentlichen Ethik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1961).

²⁰ Schrage, *Ethics*, 163–241.

²¹ Schrage, *Ethics*, 181.

lenses. Regrettably, Schrage's eschatological outlook is not as helpful for addressing the specific issue of the ethical significance of the resurrection since his discussion focuses upon the transformative effect of Jesus' death and resurrection, which is completed at the final day, rather than upon the motivation of the believer's own resurrection for pre-parousia living. What he does offer for Pauline ethics is a new-creation framework that places all behavior in a forward-looking context and affirms the fact of a future resurrection. He does not, however, touch upon the importance of the nature of the resurrection for ethical behavior.

S. Schulz covers much of the same ground as other scholars.²² His most significant contribution is his discussion of the norms, criteria, and motivations in Paul's early teaching. The work of Christ is both the ground and defining factor in the lifestyle of the Christian. More precisely, the participatory nature of the life in Christ and the inaugurated eschatological dimension of living both suggest that the Spirit-empowered life in Christ is defined and motivated by the past events of Christ's death and resurrection. The future resurrection is but the culmination of what is already true of the believer. The christological emphasis therefore dominates his discussion and the specific issue of the significance of the future resurrection upon ethics remains largely unaddressed.²³

R. Schnackenburg's original 1962 study on the moral teaching of the New Testament became an important text and was translated into English shortly thereafter.²⁴ An updated edition followed the original monograph, in which Schnackenburg revised his opinions and structure (e.g., the division of Paul's letters into authentic and deutero-Pauline, the additional treatment of Jude and 2 Peter, and the consideration of the Synoptics after the Pauline corpus). He also added a significant amount of new material (e.g., what was a one-volume work is now two).²⁵ Schnackenburg begins his study with Jesus, moves to the primitive church, and finishes with the church in the canonical period. His treatment of the Pauline and deutero-Pauline letters places the ethical teaching of the corpus squarely upon the foundation of Christology. It is the saving work of God through Jesus Christ and the subsequent gift of the Spirit that empowers the Christian in

²² Siegfried Schulz, *Neutestamentliche Ethik* (ZGB; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1987).

²³ Schulz, *Ethik*, 5, 311–19; 333–402.

²⁴ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (trans. J. Holland-Smith and W. J. O'Hara; New York: Herder & Herder, 1965). Cf. the original German edition, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments* (HMT 6; Munich: H. Hueber, 1962).

²⁵ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments* (HTKNT Supplementband 1/2; Freiburg: Herder, 1986–1988).

the fight against sin.²⁶ Schnackenburg concludes his study by suggesting common threads that are woven throughout the New Testament. Three themes recur: (1) “das Menschenbild in der Glaubenssicht des Neuen Testaments,” by which he means that humankind is created by God in God’s image (Gen 2:7; 1:27), but is now a new humanity in Christ, which should affect the personal and interpersonal dimensions; (2) a distinctively New Testament “Weltverständnis,” which places the Christian at odds with the world, for although Christians live in the world they are not of the world (1 Cor 7:29–31; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17); and (3) the church as the primary locus of a pronounced social emphasis in the New Testament where an ethos of love and preferring one another should prevail.²⁷ Each of these themes provides a framework within which to place the bodily resurrection, but specific discussion is not a part of Schnackenburg’s work.

F. Matera focuses upon Jesus and Paul to understand the main influences on ethical teaching in the early church.²⁸ He approaches the text with a rhetorical/literary methodology rather than tracing the theological development of ethical teaching through the text as Schrage and Schnackenburg do.²⁹ His exclusive focus upon the individual texts about Jesus or by Paul without synthesizing the writings of the New Testament, however, can leave some of the ambiguities in Scripture rather opaque. For Matera, life is to be a loving response to God’s salvific work through Jesus Christ, lived in light of the Parousia, i.e., the final judgment.³⁰ It is imitation of Jesus within the faith community; the moral life therefore is concretely a life of faith and love, doing the will of God.³¹ Matera’s assessment of the specifically Pauline eschatological contribution to the ethical teaching of the New Testament is Paul’s emphasis upon a final judgment that motivates moral behavior even though an element of a hope in the Parousia is present.³² The future bodily resurrection itself is not, therefore, a motivating force for Paul in Matera’s estimation.

R. Hays’ contribution has become an important English-language text for New Testament ethics.³³ Like Schrage, he sees the eschatological dimension as important, but unlike Schrage, he identifies two additional lenses that bring definition to the ethical imperatives of the New Testa-

²⁶ Schnackenburg, *Botschaft*, 2:14–71.

²⁷ Cf. Phil 2:1–4. Schnackenburg, *Botschaft*, (1) 2:272, 273, 274; (2) 2:275, 276–78; (3) 2: 278–81.

²⁸ Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

²⁹ Matera, *Ethics*, 7–9.

³⁰ Matera, *Ethics*, 248–50.

³¹ Matera, *Ethics*, 250–56.

³² Matera, *Ethics*, 250.

³³ Hays, *Vision*.

ment. The subtitle of his monograph makes these themes clear: the community, the cross, and the new creation. Taken together, he understands Paul to see “the community of faith being caught up into the story of God’s remaking of the world through Jesus Christ.”³⁴ The first lens through which Hays evaluates ethical behavior is the believing community as the eschatological people of God who “prefigure and embody the reconciliation and healing of the world.”³⁵ It is this people who are the recipients of the imperatives: the ones called to discipleship in the interim time between the resurrection and Parousia.³⁶ In the prefiguring of the healing/salvation of the world, Hays comes close to the notion of a life affected by the future resurrection. The second lens that Hays employs is that of the cross. Believers are exhorted to be imitators of this cruciform symbol of humility and model of obedience.³⁷ The last lens is the new creation. This is the truly eschatological dimension of Hays’s grid, for it is in the new creation that Christians find hope for the future and a motivation to bear the fruit of the new age in the face of the old age, which is fading away.³⁸ When applied to the bodily resurrection, this is Hays’s most provocative proposal. He fails, however, to expound specifically on the ethical significance of a future resurrection, which is the connection that Paul makes in 1 Cor 15.³⁹

A collection of essays edited by J. van der Watt defines and describes the identity, ethics, and ethos of the New Testament and early church.⁴⁰ Though this volume lacks the synthesis and consistency of a single-author monograph, the essays contribute to a better understanding of the theology and social setting that form the identity, ethics, and ethos of the early Christian communities. The difficulty, of course, is that since these three are overlapping concepts, there are varying interpretations among the contributors of what constitutes an example of each theme in their assigned text. The volume concludes with an essay by van der Watt who attempts to draw together the recurring themes that emerged from the essays of the twenty-two different contributors.⁴¹ His summary concludes that the widely

³⁴ Hays, *Vision*, 45.

³⁵ Hays, *Vision*, 32.

³⁶ Hays, *Vision*, 196–97.

³⁷ Hays, *Vision*, 197.

³⁸ Hays, *Vision*, 198–200.

³⁹ Hays’s more controversial contribution – i.e., his use of Scripture for contemporary application – is beyond the scope of this study. For a critical assessment of Hays’ methodology, cf. Dale Martin’s critique (review of Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*, *JBL* 117 [1998]: 358–60).

⁴⁰ Watt, *Identity*.

⁴¹ Jan G. van der Watt, “Again: Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament; A Few Tentative Remarks,” in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (ed. Jan G. van der Watt; BZ NW 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 611–32.

divergent findings make it plain that there was no systematic ethical teaching or moral practice within the earliest church. What van der Watt further concludes, however, is that across the corpora there is a consistent looking back to the life, ministry, and salvific acts of Jesus Christ. At the same time there is also a looking forward to the eschatological consummation of all things. Both the looking back and looking forward experience a gravitational pull toward an applied ethics that highly values imitating Jesus in his acts and obeying his teaching and interpretation of the Torah, all aided by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.⁴² The eschatological dimension is seen as primarily a motivating factor that brings hope to moral living. As with the work of the previous scholars reviewed, the overall eschatological emphasis on hope is suggestive for application to the resurrection, but no clear discussion is present in the essay collection.

The work of W. Meeks cannot truly be described as New Testament ethics.⁴³ He takes the approach of a historical ethnographer, one who describes a culture found in history, preferring not to call it New Testament ethics.⁴⁴ What he shares in common with New Testament ethicists is the descriptive work of the first-century environment based upon the available texts. What distinguishes his work is his extensive use of Greco-Roman, Jewish, and sub-apostolic writings in addition to the New Testament. His results are different in that, as an ethnographic inquiry, the purpose is not so much to define foundational theological instruction for the formation of ethical teaching, but to describe the phenomena of the socialization of a moral community. When theology enters the conversation, it is theology that is shaped by the inherited culture and the emerging Christian culture for the pragmatic purposes of identifying the community and drawing the boundary lines defining who was in and who was out. Since he does not directly address theology, the carefully considered teaching of morals based upon a belief structure is only tangentially in view. His main concerns are to focus upon community identity and morality. He concludes that there is no one factor, nor even one group of factors, that formed the morality of the early church. Neither is there a unity within the early church of what was proper moral behavior except in the community defining acts, particularly the sacraments of the church. He addresses the role of eschatological expectations for the moral imperatives as one factor in defining moral behavior. Within this eschatological dimension, his primary thrust is the motivation of a final judgment. With reference to the vindication of the saints, he does address the place of the resurrection.

⁴² Watt, "Again," 629–32.

⁴³ Neither does Meeks believe that there truly can be such a thing as New Testament ethics: Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (LEC 6; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); idem, *Origins*.

⁴⁴ Meeks, *Moral*, 14–15; idem, *Origins*, 3–11.