

## Bringing Many Sons to Glory: The Theological Intersection of Sonship and Resurrection in Redemption and Christology—Part 1

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On what scriptural ground do we stand when we say that the second Person of the Trinity was “begotten”? Three scriptural terms provide possible ground:

- (1) Μονογενής (“only-begotten”) is used of his eternal state in John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9 and thus is possibly ground for the doctrine of eternal generation.
- (2) Πρωτότοκος (“firstborn”) is used of his resurrection in Colossians 1:18 and Revelation 1:5.
- (3) Γεννάω (“I beget”) is used in the LXX rendering of Psalm 2:7 which the NT quotes three times as being fulfilled in his resurrection (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).

Setting to the side the meaning of μονογενής and the question of eternal generation, we are left with two terms—πρωτότοκος and γεννάω—that denote a begetting and are applied to Christ’s resurrection.<sup>2</sup> That Christ was begotten by resurrection seems, however, to be at odds with indications of a pre-incarnation filial relationship, specifically statements that God “sent” his “Son” (Rom 8:3;

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<sup>2</sup> Some understand μονογενής to derive etymologically from γίνομαι (or γένος), not γεννάω. Despite the fact that γίνομαι and γεννάω share common etymological ancestry, it is argued that by the time of the NT, the birth component was retained only in the γεννάω line, and thus μονογενής denote merely uniqueness, as apparently is the case in Hebrews 11:17. See Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 73. Charles Lee Irons, however, has recently convincingly argued for the meaning “only-begotten” and the doctrine of eternal generation. “The Eternal Generation of the Son” (paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, San Antonio, 2016), accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.upper-register.com/papers/monogenes.html>. Wayne Grudem helpfully summarizes Irons and says that Irons has convinced him. *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 293–98. Although the validity of the doctrine of eternal generation is a question tangential to this article’s examination of the relationship of sonship to resurrection, Irons’ discovery that μονογενής does speak of begetting is parallel to this article’s discovery regarding πρωτότοκος.

Gal 4:4; 1 Jn 4:14).<sup>3</sup> Recent orthodox theologians have handled the tension in three ways, as indicated in the table below.<sup>4</sup>

Pre-Incarnate Sonship Only	Both Pre-Incarnate & Messianic Sonship	Messianic Sonship Only
Driven by avoidance of the heresy of Adoptionism; holds that the resurrection merely proved or declared the divine ontological sonship possessed by Christ from eternity	Holds that the resurrection was an adoption; avoids Adoptionism by seeing two senses of Christ's sonship: ontological sonship possessed from eternity past, and Adamic/messianic functional sonship culminated at the resurrection	Holds that sonship is a functional role that was not possessed from eternity past but rather assumed in the incarnation
Trevor Burke is a proponent. <sup>5</sup>	Developed by David Garner <sup>6</sup>	Proposed by John MacArthur <sup>7</sup>

This study seeks to advance the field of Christology by refining the center position's understanding of the messianic sonship imparted at the resurrection. Previous efforts to distinguish this messianic sonship from ontological pre-incarnate sonship have held that messianic sonship is not an ontological reality. Proponents speak of Christ by resurrection acquiring a "functional" sonship, entering a new "relationship," taking on a "role," or being "appointed" to or "adopted" into sonship.

This forensic, functional view can be traced to the traditional understanding of the term *υιοθεσία*, which Paul uses five times of believers in four passages (Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. [www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)

<sup>4</sup> Non-orthodox positions that deny the pre-incarnate deity of Christ include ancient Adoptionism and James Dunn's Christology from below. Dunn builds on the presupposition of disparate Christologies among NT authors and sees a non-divine, adopted Christ in Paul. See *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); and *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), chapter 2. For an evaluation of Dunn, see David Garner, *Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2016), chapter 7; and Macleod, 89–90.

<sup>5</sup> *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); and *The Message of Sonship: At Home in God's Household*, The Bible Speaks Today: Bible Themes Series, ed. Alec Motyer, John Stott, and Derek Tidball (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> *Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2016). See also Geerhardus Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus: The Modern Debate About the Messianic Consciousness*, ed. Johannes G. Vos, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1953), 141–42, 185–86; and Jared Ramler, "Social Justice and the Mediary Role of Christians as Vicereagents in the Kingdom of God" (PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 2014), 103.

<sup>7</sup> MacArthur was not denying the deity of Christ but rather making sonship a "role and function" that was taken on in the incarnation through Mary and thus is separate from the question of deity. MacArthur explained this role in terms of submission to the Father, not as an ontological reality. *Galatians*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), 108. MacArthur distinguished between Christ's birth by Mary and his resurrection, demonstrating the influence of the imprecise understanding of *υιοθεσία* that is corrected in this article: "He became a Son at birth; He was declared to be a Son in resurrection. The fullness of His sonship comes in His twice birth." *Hebrews*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 22–23. MacArthur has since retracted his teaching of incarnational sonship in "Reexamining the Eternal Sonship of Christ," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6, no. 1 (2001): 21–23; and John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 237–40.

1:5). The assumption has been that Paul used the term *υιοθεσία* to import into his teaching the first-century Roman practice of making legally a son one who was not biologically such, particularly as practiced by the emperors.<sup>8</sup> By making this allusion, Paul was allegedly adding to the NT's theology of sonship a new event in the *ordo salutis*—a legal, forensic adoption into God's family—that is distinct from John's birth model. Theology of sonship has consequently been bifurcated. A theology of a legal, forensic "adoption" sonship is built from Paul's four *υιοθεσία* passages, but it is held distinct from Scripture's "broader concept of sonship."<sup>9</sup> Because Paul closely connects *υιοθεσία* to resurrection in Romans 8:23, most literature that addresses our research question—the theological intersection of sonship and resurrection—are studies of the meaning and theological significance of *υιοθεσία*. And the research question is answered within the narrower theology of "adoption" sonship.<sup>10</sup>

This emphasis upon legal "adoption" has displaced recognition of the ontological nature of sonship, and with regard to the research question two unfortunate implications have ensued. First, the theological intersection of the adoptive declaration and resurrection becomes no more than a mere coincident conjunction in time. There is no explanation of *why*, *how*, or even *whether* resurrection actually culminates sonship. Second, because our resurrection is dependent upon Christ's (Rom 6:4–5; 1 Cor 15:21–22; Col 3:1), any NT statements about the impartation of sonship to Christ by resurrection (such as Rom 1:4) are explained as being his "adoption" into "functional sonship."

Although Garner takes a step in the right direction by arguing that *υιοθεσία* encompasses not only the legal (justification) but also the renovative (sanctification) aspects of salvation, he still does not break completely free of the approach to sonship just described. Consequently, with regard to the believer's filial renovation, he focuses on moral, not bodily, transformation. With regard to Christ, he still speaks of Christ's resurrection as an "adoption" that culminated his "functional" sonship.<sup>11</sup>

Understanding resurrection's impartation of sonship as a *legal* declaration and a *functional* reality is inadequate because Scripture speaks of it as an *ontological* reality. This article discovers that *πρωτότοκος* ("firstborn") is applied to Christ's resurrection in every Christological NT occurrence (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; and Rv 1:5). And it also finds that all three NT quotations of Psalm 2:7 apply *γεννάω* ("to beget," the LXX rendering of *לָדָה*) to Christ's resurrection (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5). Further, eschatological renewal by resurrection is called the believer's *παλιγγενεσία* ("new birth," Mt 19:28), and the resurrection's ontological "redemption of our body" is equated with our *υιοθεσία* (Rom 8:23). In Luke 20:36, Christ explains that those who have been raised will not only be *like* angels (merely a comparison) but also *be* sons of God (their actual ontology). The participle *ὄντες* is causal: they will be "sons of God" *because* they will be "sons of the resurrection." John

<sup>8</sup> For example, Francis Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul—Adoption," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 4 (1969): 458–66.

<sup>9</sup> For example, after writing a theology of adoption in *Adopted into God's Family*, five years later Trevor Burke also wrote *The Message of Sonship*, because as the preface explains D. A. Carson read *Adopted into God's Family* and "made the insightful remark that the notion of sonship was probably the larger biblical concept of which adopted sonship was a part" (10; cf. 160 and *Adopted into God's Family*, 71, 107).

<sup>10</sup> A full discussion of these works is available in chapters 1 and 3 of the dissertation.

<sup>11</sup> Garner, *Sons in the Son*, 195.

considered our current status as children of God to be a harbinger of consummated future filial status, which he speaks of as an ontological reality (“will be like Him” because we will “see Him just as He is,” 1 Jn 3:2). In summary, *begetting* is an ontological term and resurrection is an ontologically transformative filial event. Neither is a mere legal declaration or mere acquisition of a function.

### *Thesis*

Because Scripture applies this ontological language to the ontological event of the resurrection, this article seeks to refine Garner’s position by returning focus to the ontological nature of human sonship of God. Begetting a child is the act of originating another being to whom the parents impart their nature, their ontology. The ontological image of God is the nature that God imparted to his first human son, Adam, and is the nature into which God restores believers as he makes them once again to be his sons. Because the image of God is holistic, this nature of God’s sons includes not only a restored inner man (imparted by regeneration and refined by sanctification, culminating at entrance into God’s presence) but also a restored body (imparted by resurrection). It is because resurrection is the culmination of the restoration of sonship and its nature (i.e., the image of God) that Scripture speaks of resurrection as a literal, biological begetting into ontological sonship. Resurrection and an undying body are not merely benefits given to the sons of God as an inheritance based on their adoption. Resurrection is the mechanism by which God makes us fully sons because an undying body is part of the nature/ontology that sons of God possess.

Υἱοθεσία is a comprehensive term for the two-stage process—regeneration and resurrection—of God’s making us sons and imparting filial ontological nature to us. Υἱοθεσία is not a model of entrance into God’s family that is distinct from the models of non-Pauline scriptural authors. Rather, υἱοθεσία encompasses Scripture’s single sonship motif.

Pertaining to his humanity, Christ’s resurrection was his own literal, biological begetting into this Adamic/messianic ontological sonship, as the prototype of our begetting by resurrection.<sup>12</sup> This prototypical-begetting-by-resurrection Christology is encapsulated in the NT term πρωτότοκος (“firstborn”)—Christ was the first human being to be begotten into God’s family by resurrection. The mechanism by which we can explain the two senses of Christ’s sonship is the hypostatic union. On the one hand, as the second Person of the Trinity, Christ has possessed divine sonship of God from all eternity, the ontology of which pertains to what he is as deity, the nature of God. It is in this sense

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<sup>12</sup> This article describes God’s begetting of believers and of Christ by resurrection as “literal” and “biological,” and it describes the resultant sonship as “ontological.” This terminology is not intended to communicate that God’s action of begetting is a *bodily* action (i.e., that as the Mormons teach God has a body). Rather it attempts to capture the thesis of this article that God designed human procreation to reflect his act of begetting: for both, sonship is the sharing of filial life and nature, not a legal status despite lack of shared filial life and nature. Exactly how the incorporeal God’s begetting is reflected in human procreation is merely one more aspect of the age-old mystery of how an incorporeal God could be imaged by corporeal man. Another clarification will also prove helpful: because of the theological phrase *ontological Trinity*, the word *ontology* may automatically bring to mind the divine nature of Christ. However, *ontology* simply speaks of what one is, one’s nature, as opposed to one’s relationships, the things one possesses, or the functions one performs. Thus, in this article *nature* and *ontology* are used synonymously. And it must be remembered that in the incarnation Christ took on a new, human nature/ontology.

that Garner speaks of Christ's pre-incarnate "ontological sonship." This pre-incarnate sonship and divinity of Christ has been the orthodox position of the church through the centuries and is assumed in this article.<sup>13</sup> However, in the incarnation Christ *added* to his person complete humanity, including the human image of God, which is the ontological manifestation of human sonship of God. Christ's human sonship of God is, therefore, also an ontological reality, not merely a functional reality. It pertains to his human nature, just as his divine sonship pertains to his divine nature. Within this framework, we can understand how ontological transformation at the resurrection could be the literal begetting into *ontological* sonship of the one who was *ontologically* the Son of God from eternity.

### *OT Biblical Theology of the Intersection of Sonship and Life/Resurrection*

Moving through the OT in a biblical-theological study yields two insights into the intersection of sonship and life/resurrection. First, the image of God, the linchpin of which is the possession of life in the body, is the theological link between the two motifs. Second, possession of the image of God and filial status coalesce in a common purpose—dominion over the creation.

#### Genesis 1: Man Was Created Ontologically Glorious That He Might Discharge His Glorious Function of Dominion

Because God's word of choice for our eschatological salvation is "glory," we speak of the doctrine of "glorification." Although this future glory does outstrip Adam's original created glory, this article discovers that glorification is fundamentally a restoration of Adam.

God's glory is both ontological (what he is: Ex 33:18; 34:6–7) and functional (what he does, especially his rule: Ps 24:7–10). In Genesis 1:26–28, God created man in his image, and so Adam shared selectively in God's ontological glory because he was given the communicable attributes of God's nature (i.e., the image of God). Paul therefore says that man is the "image and glory of God" (1 Cor 11:7).<sup>14</sup> It has been widely recognized that the image included immaterial qualities—Adam was created morally pure and with special abilities that set him over the rest of creation. But several lines of evidence demonstrate that the image was holistic—it also comprised his body.<sup>15</sup> First, human

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<sup>13</sup> This orthodox theology has been argued convincingly elsewhere: Macleod, 90–91; Brendan Byrne, *Sons of God—Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul Against the Jewish Background*, *Analecta Biblica: Investigations Scientifcae in Res Biblicas* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 199–200; Gordon Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); and Robert Reymond, *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The New Testament Witness* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1990), 242–43.

<sup>14</sup> Other authors have cataloged the Scripture-wide connection between the image of God and glory: Dane Ortlund, "Inaugurated Glorification: Revisiting Romans 8:30," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51, no. 1 (2014): 116–19; Robert Pyne, "The Resurrection as Restoration: A Thematic Study in Paul's Theology" (ThD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990), 259–63; Ron Kangas, "The Glory of God and the Economy of God," *Affirmation and Critique* 7, no. 1 (April 2002): 3; and Tom Barnes, *Living in the Hope of Future Glory: The Glorification of the Christian*, Emmaus Series, ed. John D. Currid and Robert Strivens (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press USA, 2006), 20–30.

<sup>15</sup> See Meredith Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), chapter 1; G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, *Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), chapter 6; Pyne, 249–54; and Bernard Ramm, *Them He Glorified: A Systematic Study of the Doctrine of Glorification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 92–96.

procreation (“male and female He created them,” v. 27) was the mechanism for reproducing the image and filling the earth with ruling image bearers. Second, Genesis 9:6 regards an attack on the body as being an attack on the image of God.<sup>16</sup> Third, restoration of our body is a part of restoration into the divine image (1 Cor 15:49; cf. 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thes 5:23).

In Genesis 1:26–28, God not only made man in his image to share in his ontological glory, but he also commissioned man to mediate his functional glory, specifically his dominion over creation (note “glory” in Ps 8:5–6 and Heb 2:5–10). Several lines of evidence indicate that the holistic image of God credentialed man for the dominion. First, Robert Bell’s transformational system of Hebrew tenses says that the simple *waw* imperfect וַיִּרְדּוּ in Genesis 1:26 is modal.<sup>17</sup> This construction—the divine fiat of man’s ontology followed by the modal verb of man’s function—makes the former the means to the latter, as can be best translated, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, so that they may have dominion.”<sup>18</sup> Second, every other OT use of “image” (צֶלֶם) or “likeness” (דְּמוּת) speaks of ontological, never functional, similitude and representation. Third, the skeletal plan of v. 26—man would be made in God’s image and would rule creation—is fleshed out in verses 27–28: the image included being made in two genders, which would enable man to reproduce a race of other image bearers, which was the means of man’s ruling the creation. Fourth, throughout Scripture restoration of the image of God is always an ontological transformation, never a re-engagement in a function. The restoration includes the immaterial part (2 Cor 3:18) as well as the material (1 Cor 15:49) and is achieved by conformity to the ontology of Christ, the Image of God (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 3:10). And although we do share in Christ’s functional reign, it is never called the image of God.

In conclusion, it is evident that the image of God does not subsume man’s glorious function of dominion (typically called the “functional view” of the image). Rather the image is man’s glorious ontology (typically called the “substantive view”), and *glory* is the overarching umbrella that comprises the ontological image and the functional dominion for which the image credentialed Adam.

### Genesis 2: The Holistic Image of God Is Recast More Specifically as Possession of Life in the Body

The exact correspondence of all the other elements of the Genesis 1 and 2 narratives shows that God’s imparting to Adam the possession of life in Genesis 2 is the counterpart to his imparting the image of God in Genesis 1:

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<sup>16</sup> Pyne, 250.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Barrett and Robert Bell, *Bob Jones University Seminary Hebrew Handbook*, ed. Mary Schleifer, 6th ed. (Greenville: BJU Press, 2007), 52.

<sup>18</sup> My translation. Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum see a cohortative-imperfect sequence of verbs which likewise “marks purpose or result. The correct translation, therefore, is ‘let us make man . . . so that they may rule . . .’” They conclude, “An important exegetical point is at stake: the ruling is not the essence of the divine image, but rather a result of being made as the divine image.” *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 188, original emphasis (cf. 200–01).

Genesis 1	Genesis 2
The rest of creation, besides man (vv. 1–25)	The rest of creation, besides man (vv. 1–6)
Creation of man in God’s image (vv. 26a, 27a)	Creation of man as a living being (v. 7)
God’s gift of two genders as the means to be fruitful and multiply (vv. 27b–28a)	God’s gift of the woman as the means by which Adam would be fruitful and multiply (vv. 18–25)
Command to rule (v. 28b; cf. v. 26b)	Placement of man in the garden to rule (vv. 8–15)
Everything given to man (vv. 29–30)	Everything except one tree given to man (vv. 16–17)

Life is the union of the immaterial and material parts of the image of God, and death is their separation (2 Cor 5:1–8; Jas 2:26). God made man’s body and gave it life (Gn 2:7a–b), and in the summary statement of the resultant ontology—“man became a living being” (v. 7c)—נִפְשׁ designates the whole of man.<sup>19</sup> “Living נִפְשׁ” is therefore a summary designation for the holistic image of God, and possession of the life that animates the human body is the lynchpin of the image of God that enables man to rule.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the OT longs for a ruler who will have eternal life to reign forever (e.g., Dn 7:14; cf. Jn 12:34; Rv 22:5).

#### Genesis 5: Sonship Is Ontologically Manifested in the Image of God and Thus Is a Holistic Ontology and Qualifies Man to Rule

Several observations demonstrate that Genesis 5 parallels God’s creation of Adam in God’s image (vv. 1–2) with Adam’s begetting of Seth in Adam’s image (v. 3) in order that the latter might explain the former. First, Genesis 5:1–2 recounts God’s creation of man with details superfluous for the introduction of a genealogy yet drawn directly from 1:26–28: the verbs “create” (בָּרָא) and “make” (עָשָׂה), the term “likeness,” expression of that likeness as “male and female,” God’s “blessing,” and the designation אָדָם (“Adam”). Indeed, the whole rehearsal of God’s creation of Adam is superfluous to the introduction of a genealogy of human begetting unless the two are parallel. Second, Genesis 5:3 includes details superfluous to the recounting of a generation in a genealogy (they are not included in the begetting of Cain and Abel in 4:1–2 or in the other father-son generations in Genesis 5) yet drawn directly from 1:26–28: “according to his image,” “in his own likeness,” and the act of naming.<sup>21</sup> Third, 5:1–2 and 5:3 do not draw these details from 1:26–28 independent of one another; rather the details in 5:3 are set in overt parallel with the details in 5:1–2.

<sup>19</sup> Although נִפְשׁ is typically translated “soul,” “in its most synthetic use נִפְשׁ stands for the entire person. In Gen 2:7 ‘man became a living creature’ [נִפְשׁ]—the substantive must not be taken in the metaphysical, theological sense in which we tend to use the term ‘soul’ today.” Bruce Waltke, “נִפְשׁ,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980), 2:590.

<sup>20</sup> Although the animals like Adam owe their origination to God, Genesis 9 confirms that human life is categorically different from that of the animals because it is an aspect of the image of God.

<sup>21</sup> Subsequent use of אָדָם (e.g., in 5:1) shows that in 1:26 God was giving it as a designation for the race and specifically the man that he was creating.

The burning question, however, is whether the parallel was intended to include the nuance that the God-Adam relationship was filial like the Adam-Seth relationship. The point of emphasis in the parallel is the actions of God and of Adam—the verbs “to create” and “to father.” And the apex of that emphasis is the identical results of the two actions—both originated another being that shared the nature (was “according to the image” and “in the likeness”) of the actor.<sup>22</sup> Begetting is the act of originating another being to whom the parents impart their nature/ontology. Evidently Adam’s relationship to God was filial, and Adam’s possession of the image of God was the ontological manifestation of that filial relationship.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the image of God was the nature God imparted when he originated his first human son, Adam. Sonship is not merely a matter of relationship, function, or legal status. Rather it is a matter of transmission of nature, and the image of God comprised the communicable attributes of God’s nature, specially re-packaged as human filial nature.<sup>24</sup> These conclusions from Genesis 5 are confirmed by Luke’s calling Adam the “son of God” (Lk 3:38) and by Scripture’s story of the last Adam’s two-sided restoration of sonship and the image of God, the story traced in the remainder of this article.<sup>25</sup>

Two implications of this discussion follow. First, because the image of God is holistic, the nature of God’s sons comprises not only the immaterial part of man but also an undying body, and

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<sup>22</sup> Note that **צֶלֶם** (“image”) and **דְּמוּת** (“likeness”) are not common words in the Pentateuch (**דְּמוּת** only in Gn 1:26; 5:1, 3; and **צֶלֶם** only in Gn 9:6; Nm 33:52). And Genesis 1 and 5 (and 9:6 which points back to Gn 1) are the only time Scripture uses either word of mankind being the image/likeness of God. Further, Gavin Ortlund observes that the two terms are coupled in Scripture only in Genesis 1:26 and 5:3. “Image of Adam, Son of God: Genesis 5:3 and Luke 3:38 in Intercanonical Dialogue,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57, no. 4 (December 2014): 680. He concludes that Genesis 5:3 “seems to imply a comparison between creating and begetting—that is to say, a comparison between being created in God’s image and being God’s children” (679). That 5:1 uses only **צֶלֶם** while 5:3 uses both terms does no damage to this argument, for Genesis 1:26 uses both terms while 1:27 uses only **צֶלֶם**.

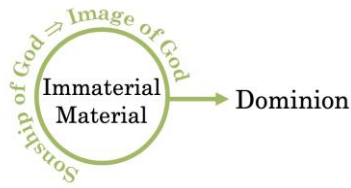
<sup>23</sup> “As Genesis 2:7 pictures it, the Spirit-Archetype actively fathered his human ectype. Image of God and son of God are thus twin concepts. This reading of that event in terms of a father-son model and the conceptual bond of the image and son ideas are put beyond doubt by the record of the birth of Seth in Genesis 5:1–3.” Kline, 23. Kline also notes the connection between sonship and the divine image throughout the NT (Rom 8:29; Heb 1:2 and following; Jas 3:9; 1 Jn 3:2). Gentry and Wellum note the connection between sonship and the image of God in other ANE cultures (160–61).

<sup>24</sup> Philip Hughes argues that sharing the image with a son in Genesis 5:1–3 is not just sharing outward resemblance but actually sharing one’s nature. *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 29. Robert Webb comments, “Sonship implies the derivation of the existence and nature of the second person, called son, from the first person, called the father.” *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), 28. Meredith Kline comments on 2 Peter 1:3–4, “In the vocabulary of Peter, ‘partakers of the divine nature’ expresses renewal in the image of God (2 Pet. 1:4).” “Creation in the Image of the Glory-Spirit,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (1977): 266.

<sup>25</sup> For example, “predestined” in Romans 8:29 shows that God’s having sons in his image is not merely redolent of Genesis 5:1–3 in Paul’s mind but actually predates Adam in the Father’s plan. Allen Mawhinney comments on Romans 8 that “the key to the uniting of the image and son themes must be found in Adam the image and son of God and in Jesus’ role of the second Adam.” “Υιοθεσία in the Pauline Epistles: Its Background, Use and Implications” (PhD diss., Baylor University, 1982), 208. See discussion of Romans 8 below. Before Liberal Theology of the last few centuries hijacked Adam’s filial relationship to God to support universalism, most evangelicals embraced the idea. So observes John Girardeau, *Discussion of Theological Questions* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1905), 430; and Thomas Crawford, *The Fatherhood of God: Considered in Its General and Special Aspects and Particularly in Relation to the Atonement*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1868), 1–2.



the life that God breathed into Adam's body (Gn 2:7) was filial life imparted by the Father to the son.<sup>26</sup> Second, because the image of God qualified mankind for dominion, it is God's sons that he has appointed to mediate his rule. These conclusions can be diagrammed as follows:



### Psalm 8: Confirmation that Sonship Is Ontologically Manifested in the Image of God and Is the Qualification for Dominion

The psalm is chiasmic, starting with God's glory permeating creation (vv. 1a, 9) and funneling to the means of that spread of glory—God's exaltation of insignificant man to the glory (vv. 4–5) of mediating God's reign over creation (vv. 6–8), which itself was made to bring God glory (vv. 1b, 3). However, awkwardly sticking out of this chiasm (i.e., with no corresponding line in the second half of the psalm) like a misplaced thought is a second means by which God will fill the earth with his glory—children exercising strength against God's enemies (v. 2). This duality of the means of God's glory would seem to indicate that it is the children (v. 2) who are the ones exercising the dominion (vv. 5–8), and Hebrews 2 confirms this conclusion.<sup>27</sup>

That sonship is here the qualification for dominion while in Genesis 1:26–28 the image of God is the qualification corroborates the interconnectedness of sonship and the image of God observed in Genesis 5. Accordingly, this study will find that NT quotations of Psalm 8:5 understand the “glory” (v. 5) of the sons (v. 2) to comprise not only the glory of Adam's dominion but also the glory of his original ontology—the image of God. In summary, Psalm 8 recognizes that Adamic dominion was to be exercised by sons of God in the image of God.

### Genesis 3: Adamic Glory and Sonship of God Are Lost

The blessings of Adam's glorious created filial existence and role were contingent upon his ethical performance (Gn 2:17). When Adam fell, therefore, the divine blessing often connected in the

<sup>26</sup> Throughout the remainder of the Genesis 5 genealogy, the repetition of the three stages of human existence—begetting, living for so many years, and dying—highlights the transmission of life as the key element of human procreation and sets it in stark contrast with death. Genesis 4–9 functions in the Genesis narrative as the evidence that 2:17 happened: Adam's sin did indeed result in the reign of death (murder in Genesis 4 and the death of *every* generation in Genesis 5, Enoch being the exception that proves the rule). Mawhinney notes that “being sons is the assurance of eternal life. Sonship is the opposite of death. . . . To say one is a son, is to say he will live” (193–94).

<sup>27</sup> Although in Matthew 21:16 Christ cites Psalm 8:2 to explain the children praising him in his contemporary context, the NT later elucidates from Psalm 8 even deeper theology pertaining to eschatologically restored Adamic sonship. Hebrews 2 will be more closely considered in the second part of this article. The author of Hebrews speaks of Christ “bringing many sons to glory” (v. 10). This “glory” is the “glory” of lost Adamic dominion in Psalm 8:5 (quoted in Hebrews 2:7), and the concept of “sons” is drawn from the “infants and nursing babes” in Psalm 8:2. See Sam Horn, “Destined for Glory and Honor” (sermon, Burge Terrace Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN, September 25, 2016).

Genesis narrative to life, and especially its transmission (Gn 1:22, 28; 2:3; 5:2), was displaced by divine cursing and resultant death (2:17; 3:17–19; 5:29; Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21; cf. Gn 3:14; 4:11; 9:25). Specifically, the ground was cursed (Gn 3:17; cf. Rom 8:20–22) and became the means to man’s death (Gn 3:19). Creation would now rebel against man’s attempted dominion to provide food to sustain his life (vv. 17b–19a; Heb 2:8b), and it would ultimately triumph over man and reclaim his body (v. 19b). Death is therefore man’s ultimate failure to rule.

It would follow that the sonship that qualified man to rule was also lost, a conclusion confirmed by Scripture’s narrative of God’s *re*-imparting sonship to man (Jn 1:12–13; Jn 8:44; Eph 2:2–3; 1 Jn 3:10).<sup>28</sup> It is also the story of God’s *re*-imparting his image. The fall brought not merely the estranging of man’s filial relationship to God, but also the damaging of man’s filial ontology. Mankind did not cease merely to act like a son or even merely to have the benefits of a son—he ceased to *be* a son.<sup>29</sup> Damage of filial ontology does pertain in this life to the immaterial part (Eph 4:17–32), and so man now rules imperfectly over the creation. But it also pertains to the material: man is now a dying being (Gn 3:19; Ps 90), and so every descendant to whom Adam imparted the marred image of God (Gn 5:3) died (vv. 6–32), Enoch being the exception that proved the rule (v. 24). As noted above, death is the ultimate loss of filial ontology, for it rends the holistic image apart. The culmination of man’s failure to be God’s reigning son is, therefore, his death, and so the OT cultivates a longing for a messianic King-Son who will reign forever (2 Sm 7:12–16; Ps 2:7–12; 21:1–4; 89:26–29; Is 9:6–7; Dn 7:14; cf. Jn 12:34).

### Genesis 12 and the Typological Role of the Nation of Israel in the OT Era

The expectation begins in Genesis 12, where the divine blessing given in creation but displaced by cursing now reappears in the narrative (vv. 2–3). In fact, all three dominant themes of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:1–3—land, seed, and blessing—are drawn from 1:26–28, making the Abrahamic Covenant the beginning of God’s plan to redeem and restore creation.<sup>30</sup> Within that

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<sup>28</sup> It is on this basis that we reject Liberal Theology’s notion of universal sonship of God by virtue of birth into the human race. See J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (1973; reprint, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 201.

<sup>29</sup> The tension between man retaining the image after the fall (Gn 9:6) and yet needing the image to be restored (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9–10) is best preserved by saying that the image was “marred.” There is also a tension between Scripture’s apparently divergent teachings that (1) the image of God was marred but not lost in the fall and yet (2) fallen man in no way possesses sonship. Apparently, in God’s eyes there is a minimum quantity/quality of the image/nature of God which can still be regarded as filial, and in the fall mankind sank below that minimum (cf. 2 Pt 1:4).

<sup>30</sup> Genesis 4–11 catalogs the outworking of God’s judgment for Adam’s failure in Genesis 3 to live up to God’s intent in Genesis 1–2. Thus, because Genesis 12 is framed as the answer to the problem of Genesis 4–11, it is presented as the reversal of Genesis 3 and thus the restoration of Genesis 1–2. See Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), chapter 6; Ramler, chapter 4; Gentry and Wellum, 226–28; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 58–87; and Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 189, 236, 261.

framework, the seed and land components are an attempt at the restoration of a race of reigning Adamic sons (1:28).<sup>31</sup>

First, Israel's dominion (Ex 19:6) was redolent of Adam's reign over Eden (Ex 15:17; Is 51:3; Ez 36:33–36). And the epitome of her dominion was her king.<sup>32</sup> Second, this reign was intertwined with a national filial status (Ex 4:22; Dt 14:1; 32:6; Is 43:6; 64:8; Jer 3:19; 31:9; Hos 1:10; 11:1; Rom 9:4; Gal 3–4).<sup>33</sup> And the king was also the epitome of the nation's royal sonship.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, it is in David's dynasty that the intersection of rule and sonship reaches its zenith in the OT (2 Sm 7:12–16; Ps 2; 89:26–29).

Yet OT Israel failed in her filial role (Is 1:2; Mal 1:6), and specifically David's house failed (Ps 89:38–51; Ez 21:27; Acts 15:16–17).<sup>35</sup> And so Israel longed for an eternal filial ruler from David's line (2 Sm 7:12–16; Ps 2:7–12; 21:1–4; 89:26–29; Is 9:6–7; Dn 7:14; Mt 16:16; 26:63; Jn 1:49; 12:34). Israel was merely a type of this coming last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), the ultimate Seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16), and the greater Son of David (Mt 1:1; 22:42–45), and it was through that antitype that God's race of reigning Adamic sons (Rom 8:17–23, 29; Heb 2:10) would be reborn to fulfill the Davidic Covenant (Rv 21:6–7, quoting 2 Sm 7:14).<sup>36</sup> OT Israel's pre-Messiah sonship was immature (Gal 4:1–7) in that it was a national, functional reality, not the personal ontological reality of Adamic sonship that Christ restores. Specifically, the Mosaic Covenant made no provision for restoration of the image of God or of filial life to mankind, because there was no prototypical Image of God among men (Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4:4; cf. Jn 1:14), and the Resurrection and the Life was yet to come (Jn 11:25). Regeneration of the heart (Ez 36:26–27) and body (Ez 37; Is 25:8; 26:19) was expected as a future provision of the New Covenant in the age of the Spirit.

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<sup>31</sup> Note this connection between sonship of Abraham and sonship of God in NT passages such as Galatians 3:26, 29 and Hebrews 2:10–16.

<sup>32</sup> God's plan for Israel included a king (Gn 17:6, 16; 35:11; 49:10; Nm 23:21; 24:17; Dt 17:14–20) who “will embody the nation in himself.” Gentry and Wellum, 422. See also John Walton, *Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 68–71. Various authors connect Israel's kings' reign back to Adam: Brandon Crowe *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 39–40; Beale, 58–87; and Kim, 189, 236, 261.

<sup>33</sup> Israel's entrance into sonship came through God's redemption and bringing the nation into being in the Exodus (Ex 4:22; Dt 32:6, 18; Is 44:24; 63:16; Hos 11:1; cf. Is 1:2; 64:8; Jer 31:7–9, 20). Matthew Vellanickal, *The Divine Sonship of Christians in the Johannine Writings*, *Analecta Biblica: Investigationes Scientifcae in Res Biblicas* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977), 9–27. Sonship of Israel also appears frequently in the intertestamental literature (e.g., Wis 5:5; Sir 36:22; 2 Esdr 6:58; T. Moses 10.3; 2 Bar 13.9; Jub 1:25).

<sup>34</sup> Marianne Thompson, *The Promise of the Father: Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 47; Amy Peeler, *You Are My Son: The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 39; Gentry and Wellum, 397; and Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 80.

<sup>35</sup> Garner comments, “Israel's corporate sonship failure is a macrocosm of Adam's individual sonship failure, but it is also a microcosm of the covenantal failure of *all* the sons of Adam—whether Jew or Gentile. Hence, as Paul sees it, Israel's covenantal rebellion affirms the *cosmic* necessity of the work of the messianic Son (cf. Rom. 8:19–23; Col. 1:20) to bring filial glory” (259).

<sup>36</sup> “With an expanding yet organic notion of sonship and obedience, Israel's sonship recapitulated the sonship of Adam covenantally, and typified the eschatological sonship realized in the last Adam.” Garner, 77.

*NT Biblical Theology of the Intersection of Sonship and Life/Resurrection*

We now turn to the NT's story of that restoration of the nature of God's sons through Christ. First, by regeneration the Spirit makes us Spiritual children and gives us Spiritual life that begins the process (sanctification) to renovate our immaterial part into the image of God. Second, the Spirit will restore our material part into the image of God by imparting eternal filial life to our body by resurrection. Third, following this holistic restoration of the nature/image of God's children, God will restore his sons to the glorious position of dominion. The first two stages transform our ontology/nature by conformity to Christ, the last-Adam Image of God. And the third stage brings us to share in the last Adam's functional reign. The story culminates in a day of no more curse (Rv 22:3), in which God's restored sons inherit life from their Father (21:6–7, quoting 2 Sm 7:14—this is Davidic and thus restored Adamic sonship) and so reign forever and ever (22:5).

## Acts 13: Jesus Begotten by Resurrection

Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch (vv. 16–41) climaxes with Jesus' fulfilling the OT expectation of the Messiah's resurrection (vv. 30–37). Among other OT prophecies, in v. 33 Paul quotes Psalm 2:7—"You are My Son, today I have begotten You"—as a "promise made to the fathers" (v. 32) that the resurrection "fulfilled" (v. 33). Some say that the filial language tied to the resurrection is speaking merely of God's vindicating Christ's previous claim to be the Son of God.<sup>37</sup> Others concede that the resurrection was an impartation of sonship but merely by adoptive declaration.<sup>38</sup> However, γεννάω speaks not of a change of legal status but of biological begetting into ontological sonship.

The Psalm 2:7 quotation is part of the sermon's major theme of God's provision of a ruling Messiah from the kingly lineage of David (vv. 21–23, 32–37).<sup>39</sup> And Paul weaves into the sermon three corollaries of this status as Davidic Messiah. The obvious first is the right to rule. Because the judges (v. 20a), prophets (v. 20b), and even king Saul (vv. 21–22a) failed in their rule, Psalm 2:6–7 looks forward to the enthronement (and subsequent reign in vv. 8–12) of the expected Messiah-King.<sup>40</sup> The Messiah's rule is *Davidic*. Second, as noted above, it is in Davidic-dynasty passages such as Psalm 2:7 (and Ps 89:27; 2 Sm 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; Is 9:6–7; cf. Lk 1:32; Heb 1:4–8, 13) that the intersection of the OT expectation of a ruler and of a son of God reaches its zenith.<sup>41</sup> Psalm 2 is a

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<sup>37</sup> Murray Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 74–75.

<sup>38</sup> Though he argues that *υιοθεσία* is renovative, all through *Sons in the Son*, Garner still speaks of both our resurrection and that of Christ as being our "adoption" (e.g., 195).

<sup>39</sup> Evald Lövestam, *Son and Saviour: A Study of Acts 13, 32–37. With an Appendix: "Son of God" in the Synoptic Gospels*, trans. Michael J. Petry, Coniectanea Neotestamentica (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1961), 37–38.

<sup>40</sup> Derek Kidner, *Psalm 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15 of *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 67–68. Peeler notes that subsequent OT and intertestamental authors find "in these verses [2 Sm. 7:14; Ps. 2:7] a reference to someone other than a historic king of Israel . . . a future descendant of David" (37).

<sup>41</sup> The subsequent reign of the king in vv. 8–12 of Psalm 2 is the reign of the enthroned "Son" (vv. 6–7, 12). Robert Alden notes that the chiasmic structure of Psalm 2 connects the installation of the king (v. 6) and the declaration of

meditation upon the Davidic Covenant, and the filial language of v. 7 (“My Son” and “begotten”; cf. Ps 89:26–27) dwells upon that of 2 Samuel 7:14 (“I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me”). The Messiah’s Davidic rule is *filial*. Third, the expectation of the enthronement of the Davidic Son-King was fulfilled by Christ’s resurrection (Acts 13:33–37, citing the promises of Ps 2:7; 16:10; Is 55:3). The Messiah’s Davidic filial rule *came by the imparting of unending life in resurrection* because the dominion promised as part of the Davidic covenant was to be forever (“everlasting,” Is 55:3).<sup>42</sup>

In conclusion, although David’s line failed, by resurrection the Father “begot” David’s ultimate descendant into his role as God’s forever-reigning Son in ultimate fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant and reclamation of Adam.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, David failed to realize each OT promise (vv. 32–37). First, 2 Samuel 7:12–14 (and thus also Ps 2:7) speaks of David’s *descendant*, not of David himself. Second, the everlasting covenant in Isaiah 55:3 was the Servant’s restoration of Israel from exile (the theme of Is 40–66), which was necessitated by the failure of the Davidic kings to lead the nation rightly. And third, David succumbed to the corruption from which the Messiah was preserved (Acts 13:36; Ps 16:10; cf. Acts 2:24–32).

Finally, note that Christ reclaimed these blessings in order that others might share in them. The plural ὑμῖν (v. 34) is pregnant with promise for those who respond to Paul’s plea to embrace the Savior of Israel (vv. 23–25, 38–41).<sup>44</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 15: Jesus, Our Organic Prototype

First Corinthians 15 expounds the dependence of our resurrection upon that of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 1 Thes 4:14; cf. Jn 14:19). In vv. 47–53, Paul contrasts two types of bodies as prototypical “images”: the “earthly” image of the “first man” (Adam), which is “perishable” and “mortal,” and the “heavenly” image of the “second man” (Christ), which is “imperishable” and has “immortality” (cf. v. 22). This contrast originates in Genesis 5, where the holistic, living image of God (vv. 1–2) is juxtaposed with Adam’s fathering offspring “according to his image” (v. 3), for every single one of whom tolls the death knell “and he died.”<sup>45</sup> God will restore believers’ bodies into the image of

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sonship (v. 7). “Chiastic Psalms: A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 1–50,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 14–15. See also Lövestam, 11–15, 81.

<sup>42</sup> Lövestam notes that the promise to David of everlasting dominion—עֶד-עוֹלָם—occurs three times in 2 Samuel 7:13–16 and is the connection between Isaiah 55:3 and the installation of the Davidic ruler as God’s reigning Son in Psalm 2:7: “The quotations from Ps. 2:7 and Isa. 55:3 in Acts 13:33f. appear as a manifestation of the close connection between divine son relationship and permanent dominion, which appeared to be characteristic of the promise to David, and which finds expression for example in Luke 1:32f. and Hebr. 1:5 ff. The words from Ps. 2:7, expressing the God’s son idea, are followed by the quotation from Isa. 55:3, implying the concept of everlasting royal power” (71–81).

<sup>43</sup> These connections permeate the NT (Lk 1:32–33; Jn 1:49; Acts 15:16; Rom 1:3–4; 2 Tm 2:8; Heb 1:4–5). Steven Mathewson notes that the “sure blessings of David” (Acts 13:34) include (1) resurrection, (2) a dynasty and an everlasting ruler, and (3) a Child through whom all these blessings would come. *Risen: 50 Reasons Why the Resurrection Changed Everything* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 21–22. See also Beale, 238–41.

<sup>44</sup> Lövestam, 80–81.

<sup>45</sup> Genesis 4–9 functions in Moses’ narrative as the catalog of the fulfillment of God’s promise to inflict death on sinners—individuals (ch. 4–5) and the human race (ch. 6–9). In Genesis 5 Enoch is the exception that proves the rule that every descendant of Adam, everyone who bears his image, dies.

God by means of conformity to the prototypical, glorious resurrection body of Christ, the Image of God (v. 49; Phil 3:21), for bodily he is “the image of the invisible [i.e., incorporeal] God” (Col 1:15; cf. 2:9).

Three expressions show that not only does resurrection conform our body to be *like* that of Christ, but it also is our coming to share organically *in* Christ’s resurrection life. First, Paul calls Christ our “first fruits” (1 Cor 15:20, 23), alluding to the organic ontological unity of the plant that produced the first grain with all the other plants.<sup>46</sup> Second, we come to share in Christ’s resurrection life by being “in Christ”—being united organically to him—just as those “in Adam” die (vv. 18, 22; cf. vv. 46–53; Rom 5:12–21; 6:4; Eph 2:6; Col 1:27; 2:12; 3:1–4).

Third, in contrast to Adam who merely received life, Christ became our “life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor 15:45), the life principle from which resurrection life flows to all those in him (cf. Jn 5:26; 11:25).<sup>47</sup> Since v. 45 is the only occurrence of *πνεῦμα* in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is drawing upon pneumatology developed elsewhere, specifically that the Spirit is the agent of resurrection life, both for Christ and for us (Jn 6:63; Rom 1:4; 8:11; 2 Cor 3:6; 1 Tm 3:16; 1 Pt 3:18).<sup>48</sup> The “Spiritual [*πνευματικός*] body” (1 Cor 15:44, 46), therefore, is a body that owes its life to the Spirit of God.<sup>49</sup> Further, “became a life-giving Spirit” (v. 45) captures Christ’s coming by resurrection to have the resurrection life that he imparts through the Spirit.<sup>50</sup> Christ is the life principle that is the source of

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<sup>46</sup> “These expressions [‘first fruits,’ ‘beginning,’ and ‘firstborn’] . . . focus attention upon the relationship of Christ as the first, to those others who are united to him. In arguing for the resurrection of the Corinthian believers who died[,] Paul does not refer to the sequentially prior resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:38–44), or of the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:32–37). For Paul, those resurrections had no constitutive relationship to the future resurrection of believers. Christ, however, was the firstfruits of the resurrection, the opening of the eschatological resurrection.” Mawhinney, 130–31. See also Richard Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul’s Soteriology*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1987), 34–35.

<sup>47</sup> Every NT occurrence of *ζωοποιέω* (“life-giving”) refers to resurrection, as it does here in vv. 22 and 36. The only unclear passage is Galatians 3:21, but there Paul is talking about eschatological life by justification, which is imparted by resurrection.

<sup>48</sup> Pyne shows that “the animating breath of Gen. 2:7 is equated with the *רוּחַ* of God” (283–85). Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner connect “life-giving Spirit” back to Ezekiel 37, where the restoration (pictured as resurrection) of God’s people comes by re-imparting God’s Spirit under the New Covenant (cf. 36:26; Is 32:15–18; 44:3–4; 59:21). *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 820. For other comments on the Spirit’s impartation of life, see also Garner, 268–78; Friedrich Baumgärtel et al., “*Πνεῦμα, Πνευματικός*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 6:366; and Pyne, 291–95.

<sup>49</sup> Gaffin notes that in the NT “*πνευματικός* always has specific reference to the activity of the Holy Spirit (e.g., Rom 1:11; 7:14; 1 Cor 12:1; 14:1; Gal 6:1; Eph 1:3; 5:19; Col 1:9)” (85–86). “Spiritual,” therefore, does not mean that the body is non-material, for it is still a “body.” Although the contrast with “flesh and blood” in v. 50 could seem to indicate that the Spiritual body is somehow not material, the following context indicates that it is mortality, not materiality, that is in view in this phrase. In his post-resurrection body (which is the prototype for our Spiritual bodies), Christ corrected the disciples’ misconception that he was merely a “spirit” without “flesh and bones” (Lk 24:37–43).

<sup>50</sup> “Life-giving Spirit” is capturing the mystery of the conjoining of Christ and the Spirit in the Father’s work of resurrection. *Ζωοποιέω* (“life-giving,” v. 45b) always refers to resurrection, and it is performed by not only the Spirit (Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6; 1 Pt 3:18) but also the Father and the Son (Jn 5:21; cf. Rom 4:17). In his incarnation, Jesus works in the power of the Spirit (Lk 3:16; 4:18–19; Acts 1:2; cf. Acts 2:33; Jn 15:26). In Romans 8, therefore, although both the Spirit (v. 9a) and Christ (v. 10) separately have a role in the Father’s work of resurrection (“Spirit of Him who raised Jesus,” v.

our life in the eschatological age of the Spirit that the OT anticipated.<sup>51</sup> The eschatological promise of life in the Spirit broke into the present age when the Spirit resurrected Christ and was given to believers to regenerate their inner man with Christ's resurrection life (Rom 8:10–11a; Ti 3:5). And the promise will consummate one day when the Spirit also gives Christ's resurrection life to believers' mortal bodies by their own resurrection (Rom 8:11b, 23, 29). The Spirit performs both parts of this holistic animating restoration of the image of God by conforming us to the ontology of the Image of God.

It is evident that our resurrection and all the blessings of the age of the Spirit flow from not only the work of Christ but also from his person as our "life-giving Spirit." Four points of Christology are apparent. First, resurrection transformed the material ontology of Christ's human nature to be the prototypical material part of the restored Adamic image of God. In vv. 21–22, Paul parallels Adam's fall and Christ's resurrection because both events changed the ontology of the individual so that all those "in" that individual share organically in that ontology and bear that image (cf. vv. 47–49). Accordingly, v. 45 says that Christ "*became* a life-giving Spirit" (emphasis added).<sup>52</sup> The cross makes evident that the incarnation gave Christ a mortal body after the fallen image of Adam ("the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom 8:3; cf. Heb 10:5). Resurrection, however, transformed it into the Spiritual body, thereby making Christ the life principle of the age of the Spirit and culminating his reclamation of the holistic Adamic image of God as the prototype for our restoration into that image (1 Cor 15:49–53; Phil 3:21; cf. Jn 5:26–29). Because God is immaterial "spirit" (Jn 4:24), not only this acquisition (incarnation) but also this restoration (resurrection) pertains to his human nature. Accordingly, in vv. 21–22, resurrection came "by a man" the same as did death (v. 21; cf. "first man" and "second man" in vv. 45, 47). Dependency is organic because of Adam and Christ's solidarity of human nature with those "in" them: because death and resurrection are both human-body experiences, resurrection of necessity had to come in the same way that death did—"by a man."<sup>53</sup>

Second, Christ's reclaimed Adamic material ontology qualified him for Adamic rule. Though the interjection of Christ's rule in v. 24 seems abrupt, the quotation of Psalm 8:6 in v. 27 indicates that this kingdom concept is Adamic and so actually is an extension of the discussion of Adam's death

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11, emphasis added), Paul conjoins the two as "the Spirit of Christ" (v. 9b) who dwells in us (v. 11) and will give life (v. 11b).

<sup>51</sup> In the OT era, the Spirit came temporarily on principle characters to empower them for key tasks (Jgs 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sm 10:10; 11:6; 16:14; 19:23). Leon Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 40–52. Permanent, universal possession of the Spirit was an eschatological promise anticipated in the OT, and so Garner notes, "The Old Testament saints well understood that the promised outpouring of the Spirit represented the ushering in of the eschatological age (cf. Jer. 31; Ezek. 36; Joel 2; Acts 2)" (95; cf. 98–99). See also F. F. Bruce, "Christ and Spirit in Paul," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 59 (1977): 268–69.

<sup>52</sup> Gaffin argues that ἐγένετο is understood from the parallel construction "became a living soul" (v. 45) (80).

<sup>53</sup> "Christ as the first-fruits [communicates that] . . . the primary significance of Christ's resurrection lies in what he and believers have in common, not in the profound difference between them: the accent falls not on his true deity but on his genuine humanity. The Resurrection . . . is not so much an especially evident display or powerful proof of Christ's divine nature as it is the powerful transformation of his human nature." Richard Gaffin, "Redemption and Resurrection: An Exercise in Biblical-Systematic Theology," *Themelios* 27, no. 2 (2002): 19. Robin Scroggs agrees. *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 93.

and the last Adam's life in vv. 21–23.<sup>54</sup> Adam's death was his ultimate loss of dominion, but the last Adam reclaims that lost reign over all things up to and including rule over death (v. 26). Accordingly, vv. 24–28 speak not of Christ's absolute, autonomous rule as *deity* but rather of his reclamation of *human* Adamic viceregency under God.

Third, the Adamic image of God was for Christ the ontological manifestation of his Adamic sonship. Beyond reclamation of Adam's ontology (the image of God) and rule, Paul also draws from Psalm 8 (as also does Heb 2) that Christ's role as the last Adam was filial, for the Adamic rulers under God in Psalm 8:5–6 are the children from v. 2. And Paul draws in the children's fight against God's enemies in Psalm 8:2: as the last Adam, Christ wins final victory over God's enemies (the greatest of which is death, v. 26) and thereby restores the Adamic filial rule of Psalm 8:2, 6. He then subjects himself to God (1 Cor 15:28), taking Adam's intended place as viceregent. It is at this point that Paul for the first and only time in the chapter calls the last Adam God's "Son" and spotlights the title with an emphatic *αὐτός*. This section on Christ's Adamic reign (vv. 24–28) also begins with *πατήρ* ("Father," v. 24, also the only occurrence in the chapter), which the title *θεός* (really the whole Granville Sharp construction *τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί*) makes superfluous unless it is prominent in Paul's argument. Paul inserts these titles into the two summary statements of Christ's submission to God (vv. 24 and 28) that bookend this section on Christ reclaiming Adam's viceregency, thus implicitly accentuating what he has taught overtly elsewhere—that Christ's Adamic reign is filial.

Fourth, Christ's person and work as the Last Adam are redemptive, for his role is incomplete until "the end" (v. 24), which will be "when all things are subjected to Him" (v. 28). Christ's victory over death (v. 26) was merely the "first fruits" (vv. 20, 23) and will be complete (v. 54b) only when his followers are also transformed as he was (vv. 50–54a). "Inherit" (v. 50) makes our sharing in Christ's reclaimed Adamic filial status the basis of our coming to share in his reclaimed Adamic holistic vital ontology and corollary reign (the "kingdom," v. 50).

In conclusion, Adam's lost blessings are restored as we by union come to share in Christ's act of resurrection and his subsequent Spiritual life. Christ became the prototype of the restoration of Adam by the ontological transformation he underwent in his resurrection. The material part of the Adamic image of God, an undying body, was restored to him, and thus his filial Adamic nature was made complete, credentialing him for Adamic rule. Although these connections between sonship and resurrection merely underly what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, in Romans 8 they become explicit and thus are confirmed.

#### Romans 8: Jesus, the Πρωτότοκος

To people suffering in corporeal trials (vv. 10–11, 17–23, 26, 35–36) Paul writes with the same hope found in 1 Corinthians 15—the culmination of their salvation that he has been expounding

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<sup>54</sup> Verse 25 also alludes to the Davidic and thus Adamic reign in Psalm 110:1, and "under His feet" possibly also alludes to the Adamic reign of Psalm 8:6.



in Romans 1–8 is resurrection life in the Spirit.<sup>55</sup> Romans 8:13 summarizes the contrast of vv. 1–13: living in the flesh/sin earns death while living according to the Spirit/righteousness is the way of life. Γάρ introduces v. 14 as the rationale for that conclusion: “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Paul’s reasoning—that those in the Spirit have life because those in the Spirit are sons—shows that he considered resurrection life to be a corollary of sonship. Although this is the first mention of the believer’s sonship in Romans and so its insertion here into the discourse on life in the Spirit seems abrupt, the rest of chapter 8 casts the intersection of the two as a reclamation of the sonship and life given to Adam.

### The Believer’s Future Life in the Spirit Is Restored Adamic Glory

In vv. 17–18, 21 and 30, Paul encapsulates the future inheritance of the “heirs” (v. 17; cf. Gal 4:7; Ti 3:7), their future life in the Spirit, in the term “glorified.” And he casts it as restored Adamic glory, for the Spirit undoes the Genesis 3 curse on creation (vv. 19–21) and restores the Genesis 1 Adamic image of God (v. 29). This Adamic glory restored by the Spirit comprises life, the image of God, sonship, and dominion over creation.<sup>56</sup>

First, Adamic glory includes life by resurrection. Verses 1–13 argued that those in the Spirit have life, and verse 10a brings up the obvious exception that apparently disproves the rule: believers are in the Spirit (v. 9), and yet their bodies are still mortal (v. 10a). Verses 10b–11 give the answer: life in the immaterial man now (v. 10b) guarantees that life will be given to the outer man in the future (vv. 11, 17–30).

Second, Adamic glory includes sonship. Paul’s argument that present life guarantees future life rests on the fact that present sonship (vv. 14–17a) is the guarantee of future sonship (vv. 17b–30): being a son gives the right of inheritance (v. 17a), which is inheritance of Adamic glory (vv. 17b–18), which is “the revealing of the sons of God” (v. 19) and future υἰοθεσία (v. 23).<sup>57</sup> As just noted, sonship is the status of which life is a corollary (vv. 13–14), and so if present sonship guarantees the inheritance of future sonship, then it also guarantees future life. And the whole argument rests upon the fact that the Spirit is the giver of both present (vv. 15–16) and future (v. 23) sonship and therefore is the giver of present (v. 10) and future (v. 11) life. In short, regeneration and resurrection are the two stages of life in the Spirit. The Spirit and his gift of life and sonship in the inner man now (vv. 9–17a) is therefore the “first fruits” (v. 23) of life and sonship to come by resurrection (vv. 17b–24; cf. 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5).<sup>58</sup> Life and sonship are two sides of the same coin of the promised restored Adamic glory in

<sup>55</sup> Of the twenty-seven times in Romans that πνεῦμα designates the third Person of the Trinity, nineteen are in Romans 8.

<sup>56</sup> The γάρ of v. 19 introduces vv. 19 and following as the reason that this glory (v. 18) is worth anticipating. Essentially, Paul entices believers to live for future glory by unpacking its components throughout the rest of the chapter.

<sup>57</sup> It is critical to note that the inheritance is an additional future aspect of sonship itself, not merely a consequence of possessing sonship. Resurrection is not merely an inheritance given to those who are sons of God. It is the final stage of those sons’ becoming sons and possessing filial nature.

<sup>58</sup> Based on the sequence in vv. 14–17 (Spirit → sonship → “eschatological heirship and glorification” → “future, resurrection aspect of υἰοθεσία”), James Scott argues that “the present aspect of υἰοθεσία (v. 15) is integrally related to the future aspect (v. 23). . . . The Spirit provides a bridge between the two aspects, so that the one necessarily leads to the

the eschatological age of the Spirit. Resurrection is certain because the life and sonship that we have now in the inner man is merely an advanced experience of the eschatological promise of holistic life and sonship in the age of the Spirit.

Some observations about Paul's use of *υιοθεσία* are in order. Although the word was used in Paul's day to speak of entrance into sonship, Romans 8 (and Gal 4, discussed in the second part of this article) does not teach anything about *how* we enter into sonship.<sup>59</sup> Rather Paul expounds the resultant state of sonship and assumes that the readers will know from that teaching and from their previous theology what event of entrance into that state of sonship *υιοθεσία* designates. The state in Romans 8:14–16 is present possession of life and sonship in the inner man as imparted at conversion by the Spirit of God, which touches off the battle of sanctification between the flesh and the Spirit. This state is the result of the Spirit's work of regeneration, and so in v. 15 *υιοθεσία* designates the event of regeneration—the Spirit's life-giving ontological transformation of our inner man by new birth—not a mere legal declaration of adoption.<sup>60</sup>

Because there is nothing in the *υιοθεσία* passages about a legal adoptive entrance into sonship, any proposed theology of adoption derives instead from a first-century cultural practice external to Scripture. To be sure, the interpreter must pay attention to the cultural background of Scripture. But when that cultural background flies in the face of what is going on in the passage, then the scriptural author is retooling the term to fit his theology, not wholesale importing the cultural practice to teach new theology. Paul is not importing some ancient practice of adoption and thereby adding an event—a legal adoption—to our *ordo salutis*.

So why does Paul use *υιοθεσία* rather than a term for birth? Simply put, there is more to our entrance into sonship than our regeneration at the time of conversion, for in v. 23 Paul defines *υιοθεσία* with the appositional phrase “the redemption of our body.” This *υιοθεσία* is a future event for which the believer is “waiting eagerly” (v. 23; cf. Eph 4:30) and has “hope” (v. 24). Evidently *υιοθεσία* is a comprehensive term for the entire process of our holistic restoration into sonship and its filial nature and life in the age of the Spirit, and that process actually comprises *two* events of ontological change—regeneration (v. 15) and resurrection (v. 23). Paul chose to use *υιοθεσία* for its bare lexical meaning—“to make a son”—but he retools it from designating the event of a legal adoption to instead subsume this entire two-event process of natural, biological impartation of ontological sonship.

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other.” *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 259–61.

<sup>59</sup> Scott found interchangeable use of *υιοθεσία* with synonyms denoting the adoption process (xiii–xiv, 55). However, he cautions that “it is necessary to distinguish between the meaning of a term and its [cultural] background in any particular context,” and so “just because *υιοθεσία* is a Hellenistic term of adoption does not mean it always stands for a Hellenistic institution of adoption” (61). Thus, Scott found a way to be straightforward with the lexical meaning of *υιοθεσία*—the act of making one a son—but still derive its theology from the OT rather than from a secular practice allegedly used by Paul as a metaphor.

<sup>60</sup> The second part of this journal article will examine the other *υιοθεσία* passages and further dispel the notion of a dichotomy between an “adoption” model in Paul and a “birth” model in John. For example, the birth terminology is used across the NT by various authors other than John, including Paul (1 Cor 15:8; Gal 4:19–31; Ti 3:5; 1 Pt 1:3, 23; Jas 1:18). Paul's theology clearly included a birth model as the first stage of *υιοθεσία*.

Further, Paul uses the *υιοθεσία* term because it captures the relationship between these two stages of the process. As observed above, the linchpin of Paul's argument in Romans 8 is the concept of rights of inheritance: present sons inherit future sonship (Rom 8:17). The purpose of the first-century *υιοθεσία* adoptions was to give rights of inheritance to the son by bringing him into the family. But again, Paul retools the term: our rights of inheritance are imparted by the ontologically transformative event of natural, biological new birth, not by legal adoption despite lack of natural birth. Further, the inheritance itself is the ontologically transformative entrance into the future dimension of sonship by resurrection, not a mere legal declaration.

Third, Adamic glory includes the image of God. Paul has spoken of resurrection as an imparting of sonship (v. 23), and here again he makes filial status in v. 29 and glorification (i.e., resurrection) in v. 30 interchangeable statements of the end goal to which we are "predestined." But here, Paul inserts restoration into the image of God as the means to the filial status, and thereby he reveals *why* resurrection is an imparting of sonship. As with the abrupt insertion of sonship in v. 14, because the image of God has also not been mentioned previously in Romans, Paul is again drawing on theological background in the OT.<sup>61</sup> Specifically, vv. 19–22 show that he is drawing on Adam's ontological glory as the holistic image of God, the linchpin of which was possession of life in the body, all as Adam's filial nature. The Spirit restores the immaterial part of the image by regeneration (vv. 10–17a; and the process continues by sanctification: 2 Cor 3:18) and the material part by resurrection (vv. 17b–24).

Fourth, Adamic glory includes dominion. When Adam's glorious filial ontology is restored in us, the Father will also restore Adam's functional glory of dominion (vv. 19–22). The curse on the ground (Gn 3:17) resulted in "slavery" (v. 21) to "futility" (v. 20) and "corruption" (v. 21). Now creation rebels, and the ultimate expression of that rebellion and man's ultimate failure to rule is creation's reclaiming of man's body (Gn 3:19). Thus, man is in bondage to death (Rom 5:12; Heb 2:14–15). Both man (v. 23) and creation "groan" (v. 22), "wait eagerly" (v. 19), and "hope" (v. 20) for man's "freedom" (v. 21) and "redemption" (v. 23; i.e., freedom by payment of a ransom).<sup>62</sup> This freedom will come by "revealing of the sons" (v. 19), for creation's anticipated "freedom" will be the "glory of the children of God" (v. 21b; cf. "glory" in v. 17–18). Paul is speaking of a restoration of the Edenic ideal of Adamic glory—for man to be a forever-reigning son of God in the holistic image of God.

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<sup>61</sup> Charles Wanamaker observes, "There is no contradiction between the conclusion of the sorites [i.e., the logic in vv. 29–30 of 'foreknew . . . predestined . . . called . . . justified . . . glorified'] and the insertion into it [i.e., insertion of 'to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren'] because to be conformed to the image of the Son of God is synonymous with being glorified." "The Son and the Sons of God: A Study in Elements of Paul's Christological and Soteriological Thought" (PhD diss., University of Durham, 1980), 406. See also Barnes, 20 and following; and Frank Matera, *God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 122. For a helpful discussion of the connection between "image" and "glory" in Paul, see Dane Ortlund, 116–19.

<sup>62</sup> Pyne, 111.

## Christ's Role in the Restoration of Adamic Glory

Glorification in Romans 8 is the conjoined work of the Spirit and Christ (note the bookend “in Christ” in vv. 1–2, 39 and “Spirit of Christ” who brings life in v. 9–10).<sup>63</sup> Specifically, in Romans 8 Christ's role is the organic prototype for our restoration by union with him into Adamic glory.

Resurrection is our coming to share in Christ's Spirit-given life (v. 11) and glory (v. 17), which the following context fleshes out as being Adamic glory, including the Adamic image of God and filial life. Because this glory is inherited (“heirs,” v. 17) Adamic sonship is the basis for receiving that Adamic glory. It would seem to follow that Christ brings us to share in his reclaimed Adamic glory by bringing us to share in his reclaimed Adamic sonship, and “fellow heirs with Christ” (v. 17) confirms this conclusion.<sup>64</sup>

Three points from Paul's summary statement in vv. 28–30 confirm and expand these theological conclusions. First, Christ is the Image of God, conformity to which restores the Adamic image of God (v. 29).<sup>65</sup> Because Paul makes conformity to Christ (v. 29) and restoration of Adamic glory by resurrection (v. 30) interchangeable statements of the end goal of predestination, “image” in v. 29 is the *material* part of the image of God.<sup>66</sup> Christ is the organic prototype of reclamation of the holistic Adamic image of God by resurrection. Pertaining to his body, Christ was incarnated in the post-fall image of Adam until his resurrection ontologically restored that body into the immortal body possessed by Adam before the fall. Yet because the holistic image of God is the ontological manifestation of sonship of God, Christ's role as our organic prototype goes deeper.

Second, the Father specifically ordained that restoration of material Adamic glory and the material image of God would happen by means of conformity to Christ as the prototype because the Father wanted to make believers to be Christ's brothers (v. 29).<sup>67</sup> Here is confirmation of the conclusion above that God brings children into his family by bringing them to share in the sonship of their elder brother (reclaimed Adamic sonship) and conforming them to his filial nature (the holistic Adamic image of God).<sup>68</sup> Yet because Christ reclaimed the material part of the image of God (i.e., the

<sup>63</sup> Pyne (110) and Dane Ortlund (131) connect the blessings of glory in Romans 8 to being united with Christ in Romans 6–7.

<sup>64</sup> Scott notes the prototype concept in “fellow heirs [συγκαληρονόμοι] with Christ” (v. 17) (248–49).

<sup>65</sup> Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 192.

<sup>66</sup> Byrne astutely notes that “the only other place where Paul makes allusion to an εἰκὼν of Christ is 1 Cor 15:49” (117). Wanamaker also connects conformity to the image of Christ in Romans 8:29 to conformity to Christ's body by resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:49 and Philippians 3:21 (212–13). Thus, contrary to the typical interpretation, the comfort of Romans 8:28–29 for the readers suffering in corporeal trials is not heightened present sanctification into immaterial Christlikeness, and the “all things” (v. 28) is not the reader's present suffering. Rather Paul's comfort lies at least primarily in hope of future material transformation by conformity to Christ's body, and the “all things” of v. 28 are the stages of salvation in v. 30 that all “work together” as an unbreakable chain to bring about the glorification/resurrection to which God has “predestined” the believer (vv. 29–30), i.e., his “purpose” “according to” which we were “called” (v. 28).

<sup>67</sup> Εἰς τὸ εἶναι is a purpose infinitive. See also Kangas, 3.

<sup>68</sup> Scott notes that the sonship in v. 29 is the future aspect of υἰοθεσία in v. 23 (245). Burke sees that Christ's sonship (vv. 3, 29) bookends our coming into sonship (vv. 8:15, 23) and concludes that the latter is dependent on the former. *Adopted into God's Family*, 192–93. Robert Tannehill notes that “fellow heirs with Christ” (v. 17) and “firstborn” (v. 29) together pervade the chapter's argument with the theme of brotherhood of Christ. *Dying and Rising with Christ: A*

ontological manifestation of Adamic sonship) by means of resurrection, and because we will be conformed to his material part of the image of God by resurrection, resulting in our being Adamic sons, Christ's role as our organic prototype goes deeper.

Third, God's purpose in giving believers Adamic sonship by means of conformity to Christ is not merely that they might be brothers with Christ, but that he might be the *πρωτότοκος* ("firstborn") among those brothers. Some argue that *πρωτότοκος* means merely "preeminence."<sup>69</sup> However, "among many brethren" shows the term is designating a literal, biological begetting, the first one in the family.<sup>70</sup> Further, *begetting* speaks of not merely *having* but *coming into* sonship, and so Christ's *entrance into* Adamic sonship by resurrection was the prototype for our entrance. By resurrection he was begotten into full Adamic sonship and filial ontology by taking on the restored material aspect of the image of God and human filial life. And now our restoration into the image of God culminates by the conformity of our body to that of Christ and our sharing in his filial life by our begetting by resurrection.

### Conclusion

Although "begetting" is an ontological term and resurrection is an ontological event, the theological intersection of sonship and resurrection has been explained as a mere forensic "adoption," both for us and for Christ. In addition to a faulty approach to the term *υιοθεσία*, it has become evident that there is a second reason that future sonship is spoken of as a forensic rather than an ontological reality—inadequate attention to the image of God, which is the ontology/nature that God imparts to his children. This article has sought to advance Garner's position by returning focus to the ontological nature of human sonship of God, and the argument can be distilled into five points:

- (1) The image of God is the nature that God gives to his sons: a father gives his nature to his children, and God gave the communicable attributes of his nature to his son Adam.
- (2) Because the image of God is holistic, the body is a part of that filial nature.
- (3) The linchpin of the image of God is the possession of life, the union of the two parts—material and immaterial—of the holistic image animated by the Spirit of God.
- (4) Restoring the filial nature, therefore, is a two-stage process, the two stages of life in the Spirit: regeneration/sanctification restores the immaterial part of the filial nature (culminating at entrance into God's presence following death), and resurrection restores

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*Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), 110–11. "The key to the uniting of the image and son themes must be found in Adam the image and son of God and in Jesus' role of the second Adam." Mawhinney, 208. See also Garner, 74–75, 142. He notes that Paul uses the same verb (*προορίζω*) for God's predestination of us to *υιοθεσία* (Eph 1:4–5) and to conformity to the image of his Son and glorification (Rom 8:29–30).

<sup>69</sup> Wanamaker, 407–08; and George Zeller and Renald Showers, *The Eternal Sonship of Christ* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1993), 103–04.

<sup>70</sup> Note that the term is used in Colossians 1:18 (*πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*) and Revelation 1:5 (*ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν*) of Christ's resurrection, and the plural *νεκρῶν* makes his *πρωτότοκος*-by-resurrection role prototypical. These passages will be explored more fully in the second part of this article.

its material part. Υιοθεσία is a comprehensive term that subsumes this two-event process of ontological restoration.

- (5) Because he was fully human, Christ's human nature included the material part of the image of God, which was restored to undying human filial nature by resurrection as the prototype for our restoration.

In his humanity, Christ reclaimed Adamic sonship of God and all the blessings of Adamic glory that flow from it, specifically (1) the filial ontology of the life and undying body that is the material part of the holistic human image of God and (2) the glorious function of filial dominion for which that glorious ontology qualifies man. Christ's resurrection was no mere adoption or entrance into "functional sonship" (as contrasted with his pre-incarnate "ontological sonship"). By resurrection the Father begot Christ into filial life and completed the process of restoring in him the nature of Adamic sons, the holistic image of God. Christ is the organic prototype not only for Adamic filial ontology but also for literal begetting *into* Adamic filial ontology by resurrection. And Paul encapsulates all these facets of Christ's prototypical role in the literal (i.e., "first to be born") meaning of the title πρωτότοκος.

Because 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 8 locate Christ's role as the πρωτότοκος within his humanity, the mechanism by which we can explain the two senses of Christ's sonship is the hypostatic union—pre-incarnate sonship pertains to Christ's divine nature, while messianic sonship pertains to his human nature, for he was fully man, including possession of the human image of God. Whereas Garner explains these two senses of Christ's sonship as ontological and functional, this article's thesis allows for both senses of his sonship to be ontological—one divine and one human. Within that framework, we can understand how *ontological* transformation by resurrection could be the literal begetting into sonship of the one who was *ontologically* the Son of God from eternity.

This conclusion not only does no damage to the doctrine of Christ's pre-incarnate sonship pertaining to his divine nature, but it actually presupposes and even strengthens it, for it explains those passages that speak of *entrance into* ontological sonship at resurrection as being independent of the question of his possession of pre-incarnate sonship and divine ontology. It thereby enables us to be simultaneously straightforward with passages that speak of his begetting by resurrection (i.e., we can interpret the "begetting" terminology at literal face value) and true to orthodox theology of the divine pre-incarnate sonship of Christ. This conclusion is actually no explanation of their relationship at all but rather a willingness to embrace the mystery of the hypostatic union and to preserve one more facet of that tension that the church has been preserving since Chalcedon. May we be ever prepared to bow in humble reverence before the mystery that God, in the fullness of time, sent his divine Son through Mary to be begotten as his human Son by resurrection, that we through him might have sonship.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;  
Endless is the vict'ry Thou o'er death hast won.*<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Edmond Budry, "Thine Be the Glory," trans. Richard Hoyle.