

Understanding Πνευματικός in First Corinthians: Paul's Corrective Vision for Spirit Life

by

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ABSTRACT

Many English Bible translations use the term “spiritual” to translate the Greek adjective πνευματικός. Some translations are exploring alternative ways to render πνευματικός in an attempt to be more specific about what it means, indicating the word “spiritual” may not be an adequate understanding of πνευματικός.

Fifteen of twenty-six occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament occur in 1 Corinthians. The goal of this project is to ask, *Why does Paul repeatedly use the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians?* This project will clarify the context of 1 Corinthians and why Paul used the term πνευματικός the way he did, and will evaluate that use in light of the broader meaning of πνευματικός. I will argue that this adjective always means “pertaining to the πνεῦμα,” and in Paul’s letters the particular focus is almost always on the πνεῦμα of God, that is, in New Testament terms, the Holy Spirit.

Paul’s usage of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians is part of a corrective response to the distorted pneumatology of some in the Corinthian church. Paul’s vision is for an eschatological community of Christ, empowered by and living obediently to the Spirit in contrast to the schismatic, dysfunctional community that had arisen in Corinth during his absence.

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All English translations of the Greek New Testament are from the New International Version (NIV) 2011 unless otherwise noted.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The Greek adjective *πνευματικός* occurs twenty-six times in the New Testament, twenty-four of which appear in the letters of the Apostle Paul.¹ Although the term *πνευματικός* is not unique to Paul, his use of the term deserves a closer look for at least two reasons. First, his writing takes place amidst the dawn of the Christian church during which a great emphasis was placed upon the presence of God by the Spirit of the risen Lord. Post-Pentecost use of the term *πνευματικός*, especially in letters written to churches, may have a more Christian specificity in its meaning. Second, there is something unique about the way Paul uses the term *πνευματικός* in the letter of 1 Corinthians as compared to the rest of his letters. It is not that Paul understands the meaning of the term *πνευματικός* differently than he normally would, but the context in which he is using it, or the goal he has in mind, is slightly different because of what is going on in Corinth.

English Bibles often have the term *πνευματικός* translated as “spiritual,” although some recent translations, such as the 2011 NIV, have tried to be more specific with “by the Spirit” (1 Cor. 3:1) or “of the Spirit” (12:1). The term *πνευματικός*, as will be noted, pertains to *πνεῦμα*.² Although the term *πνεῦμα* can mean breath, wind, or the noncorporeal part of a human, in the New Testament it most often refers to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. We will need to ask how this understanding of *πνεῦμα* in the New Testament relates to our understanding of the cognate adjective’s meaning.

¹ See Appendix A on page 167 for a complete list of all occurrences of the Greek term *πνευματικός* in the New Testament.

² The adjective *πνευματικός* (*spiritual*) is related to the noun *πνεῦμα* (*spirit*) in a similar way that the adjective *σάρξ* (*flesh*) is to the noun *σαρκικός* (*fleshy*).

Although Paul used the term πνευματικός in four other epistles, over half of the occurrences in the New Testament are found in 1 Corinthians. Because Paul's letter to the church in Corinth is one of correction, the reader must ask what it was about the term πνευματικός that helped Paul make his case to the Corinthians. What was the Corinthian problem? What is the context in Corinth to which Paul writes 1 Corinthians to address the problem? And finally, what method did Paul use to address the problem in the letter of 1 Corinthians? The following sections will address these questions and establish a basis for and thesis statement of how this project will explore, analyze and clarify Paul's usage of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians.

1.1 The Corinthian problem

In his book *After Paul Left Corinth*, Bruce Winter asks what happened to the Christian community in Corinth after Paul completed his initial work in that city.³ After eighteen months of establishing this fellowship of disciples of Jesus, one would assume the issues Paul addressed in the letter of 1 Corinthians should not have become problems.⁴ Yet in the short three or so years of Paul's absence before writing the letter 1 Corinthians, the church definitely experienced difficulties that were subsequently communicated to Paul.

The premise of Winter's book is that Christians in Corinth were cosmopolitan, "citizens of this world and, in particular, citizens or residents of Roman Corinth. They had grown up in, and imbibed that culture before they became Christians."⁵ Part one of

³ Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 1.

⁴ As will be explored more fully in the following sections, Paul's initial visit to Corinth was at least eighteen months in length according to Luke's account in Acts 18:11.

⁵ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 27.

Winter's book outlines the influence of secular ethics that challenged the formation of Christian disciples in Corinth. Winter discusses the competitive secular discipleship of the sophistic schools, criminal law, religious veiling, patronage and other ethical norms of life in Corinth to demonstrate the social pressures Christians faced on a daily basis.⁶ Part two of Winter's book narrows the focus to the influence of social changes in three specific ways that affected the church: different marital sexual ethics and practices between Paul's preaching and the current Graeco-Roman lifestyle; increased attention and pressure to participate in cultic celebrations; and the dilemma of kosher foods and how to handle an invitation to eat "idol meat."⁷

In addition to Winter's suggested influences, there are five other influences that should be considered. The first is an increase in congregation size or the number of house churches in Corinth.⁸ It is important to consider the number of people gathering at the church in Corinth during Paul's residence there, but also the added congregants who did not benefit from Paul's instruction in person and would have relied on the first converts to inform them of Paul's teachings.⁹

⁶ Other authors who have made a significant contribution to identifying these factors are Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1975); John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); David Wenham, "Whatever Went Wrong in Corinth?" *ET* 108.5 (Feb. 1997): 137-41; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, MN.: The Liturgical Press, 1983).

⁷ These three factors are addressed in depth in chapters 10-13. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 27.

⁸ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor has provided a detailed analysis of the size of the Corinthian congregation and its potential for expansion during the years Paul was absent. Murphy-O'Connor, 178-185.

⁹ There is no solid evidence that the church in Corinth grew after Paul left them at the end of his eighteen-month stay. But there are at least four reasons to believe that the church did continue to grow after Paul left. The first is that this was the pattern of the early church. Luke records a few times that people were added to the total number of believers. The second is that the addition of new people who did not know Paul firsthand helps us to understand how some of his instruction was misunderstood. The third is that there seems to be certain people that Paul is less familiar with, like the man sleeping with his father's wife in chapter five and those who were recently betrothed to be married and their potential future spouses in chapter seven. The fourth is that Paul refers to unbelievers and inquirers in 1 Cor. 14:22-24 who may be present in the church gathering, indicating that these gatherings were open to others (i.e. "outsiders").

The second influence is itinerant preachers such as Apollos and the Apostle Peter. Although there is no explicit evidence Peter travelled to Corinth, he is mentioned four times in 1 Corinthians as “Cephas” and in three of those occasions Paul is appealing to the Corinthians to avoid factions based on a preferred leader, and also defending his own apostleship among them (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22; 9:5). It seems obvious that Peter visited Corinth at least once for some in the church to have named him as the person they followed.

Apollos, on the other hand, was in Corinth after Paul’s first visit and before he wrote 1 Corinthians (Acts 18:24-28; cf. 1 Cor. 16:12). Because of Paul’s note about Apollos’ reluctance to go back to Corinth in 1 Cor. 16:12, it is quite probable that he was present in Ephesus while Paul was writing the letter of 1 Corinthians. Apollos is mentioned seven times in 1 Corinthians, the first six appearing in the first four chapters as Paul deconstructs the Corinthian’s view of competing leadership. There is no doubt that Apollos had a major impact on the problems that arose in the Corinthian church.

The third influence is the Corinthian’s misunderstanding of what Paul originally taught.¹⁰ The textual evidence in support of this is possible is found in 1 Corinthians 5:9-10. Before writing the letter “1 Corinthians,” Paul wrote a letter now lost that is sometimes known as the “previous letter” (1 Cor. 5:9). In 1 Cor. 5:9-10 Paul has to clarify his instructions from his first letter, that he was not forbidding them to fellowship with all immoral people but only immoral brothers or sisters in the church. This simple misunderstanding helps to recognize how easy it is for people to hear something and

¹⁰ When referring to an issue that occurred in the church in Corinth, it is always difficult to know if the whole church experienced this difficulty or only some within the church. On this particular point, it is unlikely that the whole church misunderstood Paul, and this could have even been cause for some of the divisions this church experienced.

interpret it differently than what was intended.¹¹ More will be said on this topic later in the chapter when Corinthian slogans are discussed.

The fourth influence on the church in Corinth was sin, such as selfish desires and bad behaviours. These sometimes arise simply because people do not always do the right thing even when they are so instructed. There are problems that arise in the church in Corinth because of elitism and pride, exclusion, and hedonism. As Winter discusses, these sins can also be a result of social influences and pressures.

The fifth influence is that before he left the city, Paul could not possibly have been able to predict all of the issues and questions that would emerge after his departure. There were no New Testament scriptures that Paul could have recommended to them at this time, and although he taught the Corinthians from the Torah and the prophets, their access to these scrolls may have been limited due to the conflict with the Jews.¹² Paul's Christian life among them for those eighteen months is really all they had, besides the preaching ministry of Apollos and possibly the visit by Peter. Richard Hays explains:

We must remember that the church at Corinth is a church with no established Christian tradition, no members who have been believers longer than about three years at the most, no written gospels, and no authoritative Torah to regulate behavior. They are being forced to invent the Christian life as they go, and they are obviously having some trouble doing so. Under these circumstances, a living visible example of how to 'walk' in the ways of the gospel is indispensable.¹³

One other issue that requires comment regarding the Corinthian problem is the

¹¹ If there were multiple house churches with different leadership in each, then this might also contribute to this problem. This might be the reason different house churches identified with Paul or Peter or Apollos.

¹² It is difficult to know for certain how much conflict there was between Christians and Jews in Corinth, but during these years in the first century the relationship between Christians and Jews was strained. Most of the tension came from Roman authorities blaming Jews for the activity of Christians, and the Jews did not want this association. Given the narrative of Acts 18:1-17, one might speculate that there was ongoing tension between Jews and Christians in Corinth.

¹³ Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 74.

nature of the divisions that appear evident upon reading the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. It is common for commentators to pose Paul's appeal in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12 as the guiding exhortation of the entire letter. That is, all other concerns in 1 Corinthians emerge from their divisiveness.

According to 1 Corinthians 1:11 and the content that follows in the first four chapters, the report that comes from Chloe's people is about the growing factions in the church (1 Cor. 1:11-12; 3:1-4, 21-23). Paul identifies these factions by the leaders they associated themselves with, but no further explicit information is given about the nature of the divisions. Implicitly, the remainder of the letter expresses various kinds of division, such as the response to the incestuous man (5:1-13), using the courts against each other (6:1-11), prostitution and other sexual issues (6:12-7:40), eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols (8:1-11:1), head coverings in worship (11:2-16), the Lord's supper (11:17-34), expressions of gifts from the Spirit (12:1-14:40), and differing understandings of resurrection (15:1-58). Among the issues Paul identifies in his letter are exclusive behaviours based on socio-economic inequality and possibly ethnic and other expressions of inequality, knowledge and differences of conscience, and elite gifts of prophetic utterance. Although it should not be automatically assumed, it is reasonable to understand that those in the church who were wealthy, educated, and who were advancing in their experience of divine utterance were the same group of people. The people excluded were the poor, uneducated, slaves, people with a weaker conscience, and those who had not experienced prophetic utterance.¹⁴

¹⁴ One might wonder where the leaders of the church were in all of this exclusivity and bad behaviour. There is no evidence that Paul established elders in Corinth this early as he seems to have done later in his ministry. It is probable that those who facilitated the church gatherings in their homes were also regarded as leaders. There is significant probability that references to the "influential" people in Corinth (1

Gordon Fee is right to point out that even though there are factions within the church the main disagreement is not between individual members of the church, but with a certain group within the church that is rejecting Paul's apostleship.¹⁵ The contention between this certain group and Paul is made clearer in chapters four and nine of 1 Corinthians and the entire letter of 2 Corinthians. It is this primary disagreement that also fuels the disagreement between various groups in the church.

1.2 The context of the Corinthian correspondence

In the book of Acts, Luke records Paul making two visits to Corinth. The first visit is recorded in Acts 18:1-18 during Paul's second missionary journey. Based on the archaeological discovery of Gallio's Inscription, most scholars date Paul's first visit to early spring of AD 50.¹⁶ Luke indicates that Paul stayed in Corinth for eighteen months, which means he could have been back in Jerusalem (Acts 18:22) by late fall of AD 51.¹⁷ The second visit is recorded by Luke in Acts 20:2-3, indicating that Paul stayed in Greece for three months during Paul's third missionary journey. The remainder of Acts 20

Cor. 1:26-29), to those taking their brothers and sisters to court (1 Cor. 5) and those attending the pagan temple festivities were generally the more wealthy class within the church in Corinth, and presented a social class division that contributed to the other divisions noted in 1 Corinthians. For an insightful look at the social dynamics of first-century Corinth, see Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1975), and John K. Chow. *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*. (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Gordon Fee summarizes in his revised commentary, on page 6, "The basic stance of the present commentary is that the *historical situation* in Corinth was primarily *one of conflict between the church and its founder*. This is not to deny that the church was experiencing internal strife, but it is to argue that the greater problem of "division" was between Paul and some in the community who were leading the church as a whole into an anti-Pauline view of things. For Paul, this conflict presents a twofold crisis – over his authority and his gospel. Furthermore, the key issue between Paul and them, which created both of these crises, most likely had to do with the Corinthian understanding of what it means to be "spiritual" (*pneumatikos* = people of the Spirit)." Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 6.

¹⁶ Jerome Murphy-O'Connor offers a convincing explanation of the dating of the Gallio Inscription and therefore the timing of Paul's visit to Corinth. Murphy-O'Connor, 161-169.

¹⁷ Could have been more – perhaps "another" 18 months. But 18 months does allow for an early spring arrival in AD 50 and a late fall departure in AD 51.

narrates Paul's journey back to Judea via Macedonia and Caesarea to bring the collection to the saints in Jerusalem. However, the letter of 2 Corinthians indicates that Paul made another visit in between the two visits that Luke narrates, making the last visit Paul makes to Corinth his third.

After the first eighteen months Paul spends in Corinth in AD 50-51, he sailed to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila in the fall of AD 51, and a short time thereafter returned to Jerusalem before the winter months made sailing difficult. Paul returns to Ephesus before the winter of AD 52 where he stayed for about three years.¹⁸ Because Paul addresses the request by some in Corinth for Apollos to return to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:12), it is suggested that Apollos returned to Ephesus in either AD 53 or AD 54, and perhaps is one of Paul's informants which began the letter correspondence.

The first letter Paul wrote to the church in Corinth is often referred to as the "previous letter" from Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 5:9, "I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people." Although this letter is unavailable, it is evident that Paul had written to the Corinthians regarding sexual immorality before he wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians.¹⁹ Paul's clarification of what he meant (1 Cor. 5:9-10) reveals that his initial instruction was misunderstood. Paul makes clear in 1 Cor. 5:9-10 that his concern was relationships within the church, not relationships with the people of the city who did not profess Christ, at which point he expands the scope of sins from just

¹⁸ Luke indicates that Paul was in Ephesus or "based in Ephesus" while ministering in the province of Asia for a period of two years in Acts 19:10 and a period of three years in Acts 20:31. To indicate that Paul was in Asia at that time for "about three years" is a best guess given the limited information available.

¹⁹ According to Thiselton, several "Church Fathers interpret ἔγραφα in v. 9 as an epistolary aorist denoting the present act of writing." Thiselton refutes this claim because of the immediate context, ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, meaning, "in my [the] letter." Thiselton states that "Calvin, Beza, Estius, Grotius, Bengel, and virtually all modern commentators" agree. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 408-409.

sexual immorality to sins of greed, swindling, idolatry, verbal abuse and drunkenness (1 Cor. 5:10-11). Paul's theological premise for his correction is that God judges those in the world, but the church is to make judgments for itself (1 Cor. 5:12-13; cf. Matt. 18:15-20).

Other than a few observations one might make implicitly from Paul's comments in 1 Cor. 5:9-10, there is no information available for determining what precipitated Paul writing this first letter. It might be assumed that with a regular "come and go" of Paul's associates and others including Timothy, Titus, Priscilla and Aquila, and even Apollos, that Paul kept a close watch over his churches.²⁰ More than likely, Paul's reason for writing the "previous letter" came from a report from one of these travelling companions.

The letter of 1 Corinthians is then considered the second letter Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, best dated sometime in AD 55, before Paul made the painful visit to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:1).²¹ Paul wrote the letter of 1 Corinthians as a response to the reports he received regarding the behavioural and ethical, and thus theological, issues emerging and developing in the church in Corinth. Paul indicates in the letter at least three sources of information he received from Corinth: an oral report from Chloe's people (1 Cor.

²⁰ Another individual who may have brought news from Corinth at some point before 1 Corinthians was written is Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler in Corinth who takes over after Crispus converts to Christianity (Acts 18:8). The only other mention of Sosthenes is in 1 Cor. 1:1, where Paul includes this name in the opening address line. It is possible this is not the same person as the synagogue ruler in Acts 18:17. But if it is, then both of the synagogue rulers in Corinth were converted to Christianity and the second, Sosthenes, became a part of Paul's leadership team, eventually making his way to Ephesus where he assisted Paul writing the letter of 1 Corinthians.

²¹ Based on 1 Corinthians 16:6, Thiselton indicates the letter of 1 Corinthians was written in spring in either AD 54 or AD 55. Thiselton, 29-32. Because of the emphasis on the collection at the end of the letter and the further narrative found in 2 Corinthians 8-9 which places a large emphasis on completing the mission of the collection for Jerusalem, it is possible that the death of Claudius in October of AD 54 was also a significant factor in motivating Paul to write 1 Corinthians, which would then confirm the date as spring AD 55.

1:11); a visit from Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17); and a letter that was delivered to Paul, perhaps by the previous three gentlemen.²²

It is not clear who wrote the letter that was delivered to Paul in Ephesus, but it appears at least some from the church in Corinth contributed to its writing.²³ The most explicit evidence for this letter is when Paul referred to it specifically, “Now for the matters you wrote about” (1 Cor. 7:1a). This is the first of six occurrences of *περὶ δὲ*, which Gordon Fee asserts are Paul’s written cues that each of the six occurrences are references to issues emerging from the Corinthian letter.²⁴ Margaret Mitchell’s contribution to understanding the use of *περὶ δὲ* helps to caution Hurd’s reconstruction project of the “previous letter,” which Thiselton calls “speculative.”²⁵

²² An interesting third report hypothesis is the return to Ephesus of Apollos. Originally from Alexandria, Luke narrates Apollos’ arrival to Ephesus and his departure for Corinth in Acts 18:24-28. From the seven times Apollos is mentioned in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4, 5, 6, 22; 4:6; 16:12), it is quite clear that Apollos was in Corinth and that he stayed long enough to be a part of the developing factions. The last mention of Apollos in 1 Corinthians is 16:12, which is the last of the six *Περὶ δὲ* statements in the letter, possibly indicating Paul’s last response from the letter sent from Corinth. From Paul’s reply it appears some in Corinth would have liked Apollos to return and that Paul did in fact urge him to return. This is evidence that Apollos had travelled back to Ephesus sometime after Paul arrived at Ephesus on his third missionary journey, and before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Could Apollos also have reported to Paul regarding issues at Corinth? Or, as some have noted, was Apollos’ report what initiated the first letter Paul wrote (1 Cor. 5:9)?

²³ Because it is reasonable to assume that Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus brought the letter from Corinth and stayed the winter prior to Paul writing 1 Corinthians, it is estimated that Paul received their visit and the letter from Corinth in the late fall of AD 54.

²⁴ Fee writes, “This ‘now about’ formula will appear five more times (7:25; 8:1 -8:4]; 12:1; 16:1, 12). Almost certainly these pick up subsequent items in their letter to Paul, although as noted above, not necessarily in order.” Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 305.

²⁵ Thiselton, 32-39; John Coolidge Hurd Jr., *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 61-71. Mitchell begins her argument by stating, “It is a unanimous conclusion in scholarship on 1 Corinthians that the phrase *περὶ δὲ* (“and concerning . . .”) in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12 provides in some way the key to the structure and composition of the letter.” And while she does not argue against the possibility of Paul using the phrase *περὶ δὲ* as topic markers from the letter the Corinthians wrote to Paul, she does demonstrate in her research the various ways *περὶ δὲ* is used in other Greek literature and makes her case that it cannot be assumed this was addressing the matters of the letter point by point. Margaret Mitchell, “Concerning *περὶ δὲ* in 1 Corinthians,” *NovT* 31 (1989): 229-56.

The oral report Paul received was from “Chloe’s people” (literally “by those of Chloe,” ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης).²⁶ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor assumes Chloe is an Ephesian merchant and “her people” are staff sent to Corinth on business.²⁷ While somewhat presumptuous about Chloe’s work, it is more persuasive to understand her people as staff, or even as slaves as Gerd Theissen suggests, than family as indicated by most translations with “household,” including the NIV.²⁸ The conclusion that Chloe was Ephesian may also be debated. John Hurd doubts Chloe’s people were Corinthian because the text indicates the information came from the people, not the church.²⁹ While Thiselton and Fee think it is probable that she was from Asia and had some connection to the Ephesian church, Theissen writes, “They scarcely belong in Ephesus – if it is assumed that Romans 16 contains a list of greetings to people in Ephesus – for they are not mentioned there although two groups of slaves are.”³⁰ Most would regard this report as oral, that is, Chloe’s associates just arrived in Ephesus from Corinth and they report to Paul concerning the things they have recently witnessed in the church in Corinth.

Sometime after the letter of 1 Corinthians was sent to Corinth, Paul receives information from Corinth that some people are causing trouble.³¹ From Ephesus, then,

²⁶ Not much is known about who Chloe’s people are and their relationship with the Apostle Paul. The fact that these associates would know details of the Corinthian church means they gathered with the church while in Corinth or at the very least had some connection with those who were a part of the church. They must have also been fairly close to Paul to feel obligated to give him feedback upon their return to Ephesus.

²⁷ Murphy-O’Connor, 173.

²⁸ Theissen notes that family would have always been referred to by the father’s name even if he was dead. Theissen, 57, cf. 92-94. One must also keep in mind that “household” in the first century would have had a slightly different connotation than our concept of “family” today.

²⁹ Hurd, *Origins of 1 Corinthians*, 48.

³⁰ Gerd Theissen, 92. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* 121. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 55.

³¹ The informant is best understood as Timothy because he would have arrived in Corinth shortly after the arrival of 1 Corinthians, and Paul wanted the Corinthians to treat Timothy well (4:17; 16:10-11). Before Paul left Ephesus for Corinth, he sends Timothy and Erastus ahead of him into Macedonia, indicating that Timothy must have returned to Ephesus after his stay in Corinth (Acts 19:22).

Paul travels directly to Corinth for a brief, but painful, visit (2 Cor. 2:1; cf. 12:14, 13:1-2). Not much is known about this visit except that he immediately follows it up with a letter written “out of great distress and anguish of heart and many tears” (2 Cor. 2:4), which apparently caused sorrow and hurt (2 Cor. 7:8). The fact that Paul needed to write this letter indicates that his painful visit was unsuccessful.

The “tearful letter” (referred to above) that Paul wrote “out of great distress and anguish of heart” (2 Cor. 2:4), is the third known letter Paul wrote to Corinth. This letter, like the “previous letter,” is lost. The only information available is that Paul describes that this letter caused sorrow and hurt for some in the church in Corinth - yet the sorrow that it caused led to repentance, which produced earnestness and eagerness to clear themselves and the readiness to achieve justice within the community (2 Cor. 7:8-13a). This response delighted Paul, and along with the visit and subsequent report from Titus (2 Cor. 7:13b-16), set Paul up for his final letter and visit to Corinth.

The letter called “2 Corinthians” in the New Testament is Paul’s fourth known letter to Corinth.³² It was written sometime while Paul was in Macedonia. After the riots in Ephesus, with Timothy and Erastus travelling ahead of him into Macedonia, Paul sails for Troas. It appears he made arrangements for Titus to possibly meet him in Troas, because even though positive things were happening in his ministry there, he was restless when Titus did not come (2 Cor. 2:12-13). Paul continues on to Philippi through the port city of Neapolis, and sometime later Titus arrives in Philippi from Corinth and reports all

³² Gordon Fee among others make the case that 2 Corinthians is at best two letters that were merged. There are other proposals that it may even be more than two letters. This debate is not important for this study and for that reason it will be assumed 2 Corinthians is a single composition, in agreement with the work by Barnett and Harris. Paul W. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 15-16; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 51-54

that had happened upon the delivery of the “tearful letter” (third letter) that Paul had sent. The whole event of Titus and Paul meeting in Philippi, encouraging the churches in Macedonia and making a final collection for the saints in Jerusalem, travelling to Illyricum, and all the while writing the letter “2 Corinthians” happened in AD 55-56 (Acts 20:1-3). Finally, in late fall of AD 56, Paul makes his third and final visit to Corinth and stays for three months (Acts 20:3). He completes the collection in Corinth at that time, writes a letter to the church in Rome and sends Phoebe to deliver the letter anticipating a journey to Spain after bringing the collection to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:23-29; 16:1). Paul’s original plan to board a ship in Cenchreae changed when he heard about a plan to ambush him (Acts 20:3). He instead sent most of his companions on the ship while he travelled through Macedonia with Luke. Paul and Luke celebrated the days of unleavened bread in Philippi before catching up with their companions in Troas after celebrating the Passover (Acts 20:6).³³

The context of Paul’s entire correspondence with Corinth (personal visits, letters, and reports from those associated with Paul), demonstrates that everything written in 1 Corinthians is part of a much bigger and longer conversation than simply one letter. With the various issues arising through the report from Chloe’s people and through the letter that the church sends to Paul, everything that Paul writes in 1 Corinthians should be understood as a corrective response based on the issues and questions that have been posed to him by various representatives of the church and those connected to the church.

³³ Paul and Luke would have presumably sailed out from Neapolis, the port city near Philippi. Because they were against the prevailing winds it took five days of sailing to arrive in Troas (unlike his earlier trip from Troas to Neapolis that only took two days, mentioned in Acts 16:11). According to F.F. Bruce, if this trip was taken in the spring of AD 57 (and it is quite probable) then the week in Philippi would have been April 7-14. F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, Revised Edition [NICNT] (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 383.

Two important observations need to be noted from this lengthy narrative of correspondence. The first is that the nature of the letter is apologetic. Paul is first and foremost defending his apostleship to the Corinthians and the gospel he preached, which was received by faith in Corinth (1 Cor. 2:4-5). Paul's defense of his apostleship is more acute in 2 Corinthians, but is already present in 1 Corinthians, especially in chapters 4 and 9. Although some of the factions in the church could have been encouraged by preferences of preaching and teaching, the suspicion against Paul is clear and this has contributed to a group forming against Paul. The various issues and arguments regarding Christian discipleship and the church have a role to play within these fragmented groups, but the larger issue is a rejection of Paul's apostolic authority in their ranks. With the erosion of Paul's authority in the church is also the distortion of the gospel Paul preached. For Paul, defending his apostleship is defending the gospel; the two cannot be separated.

The second observation is that the occasion of 1 Corinthians provides the backdrop for Paul's challenge to the Corinthians regarding their understanding of πνευματικός. Their pursuit of σοφία (*wisdom*), γνῶσις (*knowledge*), χαρίσματα (*gifts*), and their over-realized eschatology consequently formed an understanding of the term πνευματικός as an achievement or a symbol of status in the community. Their distorted understanding of the work of the Spirit resulted in pride, elitism, and exclusion. This, of course, troubled Paul and gave rise for his corrective remarks in 1 Corinthians. These Corinthians, whom Paul affirmed as "enriched in every way" (1 Cor. 1:4), expressed the advantage of God's Spirit through wisdom, knowledge and gifts, but had failed to behave in ways consistent with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Not only does Paul correct

their understanding of what it means to be πνευματικός, but pastorally he also invites them to live in such a way.³⁴

In summary, the letter of 1 Corinthians must be understood as one of many ways Paul and the church in Corinth were communicating with each other on various issues that were emerging in Corinth. The reader of 1 Corinthians today must carefully identify how the reports Paul received, both orally and by letter, inform Paul and guide the way he responds in his letter. Although Paul is not limited to writing only in response to the reports he received, much of 1 Corinthians is a part of this larger correspondence. The evaluation of Paul's responses contained in 1 Corinthians to the church in Corinth needs to recognize this correspondence and how Paul uses the reports he received to construct this letter.

1.3 Corinthian slogans and Paul's method of quoting his opponents

The context of the Corinthian correspondence clarifies the complexity of 1 Corinthians as only one part of an ongoing correspondence of letters, reports, and personal visits. Although 1 Corinthians contains a great deal of general and practical instruction for Christians today, it is first and foremost a letter of response to the believers in Corinth, addressing the ongoing issues in the church that were reported to Paul.³⁵ One cannot truly understand the instructions in 1 Corinthians without having some idea of the larger correspondence between the church and her founder.³⁶

³⁴ The NIV2011 translates the dative plural “πνευματικοῖς” as “people who live by the Spirit” in 1 Cor. 3:1. The phrase “people of the Spirit” might also work here, but the translators are making a choice to distinguish those who have the Spirit and those who are actually living according to the Spirit.

³⁵ Reading 1 Corinthians, as other New Testament letters, is reading someone else's mail. The canonical status does not remove the occasion, which gives the reader the context for the instruction.

³⁶ One might also wonder if some of the factions were naturally caused by the various house churches in Corinth that constituted the larger church at Corinth.

One method Paul uses to interact with the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians is by stating or quoting their ideas and questions prior to his corrective response. As Paul responds to the issues in the church or to questions that came from reports or their letter, it is reasonable to suggest that Paul may have expressed Corinthian ideas and practices in his own words or used terminology they employed in the various reports and documents he received. If it can be concluded that much of Paul's agenda in the letter of 1 Corinthians is to correct their understanding on various issues by first stating their ideas that occasionally formed into slogans, then it is also possible that Paul's repeated use of the term *πνευματικός* in 1 Corinthians is being used this way.

A clear example of Paul quoting the Corinthians is in his opening appeal in 1 Cor. 1:10-12 where he calls for unity among them because he has heard reports of their quarrels. To illustrate what he is referring to, he quotes them in what appears to be a set of aphorisms or slogans, "What I mean is this: One of you says, 'I follow Paul'; another, 'I follow Apollos'; another, 'I follow Cephas'; still another, 'I follow Christ'" (1 Cor. 1:12). The NIV inserts quotation marks around the four "follow" statements to indicate these are the things that Chloe's people reported to Paul that some in the church at Corinth were saying. It does not make any sense for the reader to understand these statements as Paul's instruction to the Corinthians. Moreover, Paul clearly states, "one of you says," indicating that he is aware of the things they are saying about themselves.

This happens again in chapter 8 where Paul is responding to the questions the Corinthians asked him in their letter regarding eating food that had been sacrificed to idols in the pagan temples. Statements such as "we all possess knowledge" (8:1) and, "An idol is nothing at all in the world" (8:4) and, "There is no God but one" (8:4) could easily

be understood as Paul's instruction. But understanding the context and how Paul responds to the Corinthians in chapters eight through ten helps the reader identify these statements as Corinthian slogans that Paul repeats in order to address the problems that had emerged in this context.³⁷

In 2010, Jay Smith wrote an article called "Slogans in 1 Corinthians" that furthers the work of other scholars regarding the idea that Paul occasionally quoted a slogan (word or phrase) from some in the church of Corinth in order to comment on it or argue against it.³⁸ In his article, Smith indicates that the term "slogan" may be a bit misleading because "the search is not simply for clever, rhetorical turns of phrase. Instead it is a search for Corinthian expressions in 1 Corinthians, regardless of their form."³⁹ Smith clarifies the use of the term "slogan" by defining it as "a motto [or similar expression that captures the spirit, purpose, or guiding principles] of a particular group or point of view at Corinth, or at least a motto that Paul was using to represent their position or attitudes."⁴⁰ What Smith and others are pointing to are the various ways Paul addresses

³⁷ Gordon Fee comments that "the repeated 'that' ('we know that . . . and that . . .') makes it almost certain that he is here quoting them." Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 409.

³⁸ Smith specifically cites the previous work of John C. Hurd, Jr., Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Roger L. Omanson, and Paul C. Siebenmann. Each of these authors, and many other commentators, have discussed Corinthian slogans and have suggested various ways of understanding them. Jay E. Smith, "Slogans in 1 Corinthians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167.665 (January 1, 2010); Hurd, 1983; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford, UK: University Press, 2009): 20-31; Roger L. Omanson, "Acknowledging Paul's Quotations," *The Bible Translator* 43 (1992): 201-13; Paul C. Siebenmann, "The Question of Slogans in 1 Corinthians," (PhD Dissertation, Baylor University, 1997).

³⁹ Smith, "Slogans in 1 Corinthians," 84. Even if the word "slogan" is not the best way to describe the way the Corinthians kept beliefs or ideas at the forefront of their thoughts and conversations, it is a quick way to refer to the full range of Corinthian belief that is known only because Paul repeats it in his letter to them. Perhaps these could be referred to as aphorisms designed to communicate key ideas that one or other groups believed. They may have even served as a kind of catechism in the church community.

⁴⁰ Smith, "Slogans in 1 Corinthians," 82. Smith notes this as a conflation of Paul Siebenmann and Stanley K. Towers. Siebenmann wrote, "A motto is a maxim which encapsulates the spirit, purpose, or guiding principles adopted by an individual or a group." Siebenmann, 54.

the Corinthians using a word, phrase, or even idea that the Corinthians were using to justify their beliefs or behaviours, or to summarize key aspects of their theology.⁴¹

Smith acknowledges his presupposition regarding Corinthian slogans, “that Paul routinely cited pre-existing materials – whether an Old Testament text, a saying of Jesus, a line from a Greek poet, an early creedal fragment or hymn, or presumably a Corinthian slogan – without giving explicit indication that he was doing so.”⁴² The point that Smith makes is that Paul does not always state the sources he is drawing from, making it difficult for modern readers to identify when he is, in fact, referring to another source. Smith also recognizes that these slogans “may be of Paul’s own making (wording) and thus do not necessarily have to be proverbial in nature or highly stylized in form.”⁴³ The idea is not that they phrased these statements in cute or well-marketed ways – but a statement that simply represents or expresses their position or point of view on any given issue.⁴⁴

The reason it is important to identify Corinthian slogans in the text, according to Smith, is that if readers ignore this question they run the risk of promoting something that Paul was actually arguing against. Smith states his main point this way:

The point in all this is rather simple: the slogans embedded in 1 Corinthians must be ferreted out, and Paul’s reaction to them must be ascertained. Otherwise one risks endorsing what Paul rejected (or perhaps rejecting what Paul endorsed).

⁴¹ Siebenmann compares Paul’s quotation methods with other Greco-Roman authors to show how these techniques were not just Pauline, but standard practices in the first century. Siebenmann, 47. See also Christopher D. Stanley, “Paul and Homer: Greco-Roman Citation Practice in the First Century CE,” *NovT* 32 (1990): 49.

⁴² Smith, “Slogans in 1 Corinthians,” 72. Smith charts all of the citations that lack acknowledgement from 1 Corinthians, including Old Testament quotations, Old Testament allusions, Sayings of Jesus (allusions), Greek poet Menander, and Creedal or hymnic fragments on pages 72-73, 13 possible references in all.

⁴³ Smith, “Slogans in 1 Corinthians,” 83.

⁴⁴ Smith, “Slogans in 1 Corinthians,” 84. It may also be true that these “slogans” were words or statements that came from Paul’s own teaching, that were either misunderstood or misapplied in Paul’s absence.

Such a mistake could have disastrous consequences for Christian theology, ethics, and witness.⁴⁵

In order to bring consistency to how slogans are identified, Smith suggests a number of specific criteria.⁴⁶ Although the application of Smith's criteria do not guarantee a correct identification, they are helpful ways for interpreters to discuss each suggested slogan. Of special note are three additional tests that Smith offers:

- Contextual congruency: Does identifying and isolating a slogan make the best sense of the immediate context?
- Confirmation by others in the history of exegesis (the mature reflection and collective wisdom of “the interpretive community”).
- Convergence of multiple strands of evidence.⁴⁷

Paul Siebenmann contributes to this discussion in his 1997 dissertation called “The Question of Slogans in 1 Corinthians.” For Siebenmann, the whole point is to identify how Paul attempts to connect with his recipients on their terms. Siebenmann writes, “Paul’s letter (1 Corinthians) indicates that he did choose to integrate literary citations in creative ways, and that he employed quotations to re-establish communion with the Corinthian church.”⁴⁸ Siebenmann concludes, then, that Paul’s reason for making use of Corinthian expressions was to connect with his audience in more effective ways.

Siebenmann, convinced Paul knew exactly what he was doing while employing the Corinthian slogans, states, “Paul’s masterful use of quotations provides ample evidence of his awareness of the role quotations play in the establishment of communion

⁴⁵ Smith, “Slogans in 1 Corinthians,” 71.

⁴⁶ Smith, “Slogans in 1 Corinthians,” 84-86. For a full list of specific criteria for identifying and isolating Corinthian slogans in 1 Corinthians, see Appendix B on page 168.

⁴⁷ Smith, 85-86.

⁴⁸ Siebenmann, 50.

with one's readers."⁴⁹ Using other people's thoughts and speech to communicate to them without indicating clearly each time that you are doing that requires a certain level of intimacy or knowledge of each other in the relationship. Paul's citations are mostly imbedded right into his instruction, and although it is sometimes difficult for modern readers to identify these quotations, the Corinthians would have easily heard their own slogans in Paul's letters when read aloud. Siebenmann elaborates, "When participants in a communication know one another well, it is not necessary to introduce details with phrases such as 'you know that,' or 'some are saying that' ... Accordingly, omissions of introductory marks are not only appropriate but they also serve to indicate the degree of interpersonal identification achieved."⁵⁰ Siebenmann's claim assumes more than it can prove and perhaps should have been conditioned with "they can under some circumstances serve to indicate the degree of interpersonal identification achieved," as there is no way of quantifying this achievement. Nonetheless, what Siebenmann is pointing to are some helpful ways of identifying possible links between communication participants through literary device.

Although not every New Testament scholar agrees with the concept of slogans or the criteria by which to determine what is in fact a slogan, the theory of such quotations in 1 Corinthians is becoming more accepted over time. Siebenmann states, "The designation of the Corinthian expressions quoted by Paul as slogans is the result of a gradual process which has produced wide-spread acceptance within the field of New Testament scholarship."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Siebenmann, 49.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 50.

⁵¹ Ibid., 52.

Gordon Fee states that the repeated phrase in 1 Cor. 6:12 and 10:23 is “almost certainly a Corinthian theological slogan,” confirmed as Paul “qualifies it so sharply as to negate it – at least as a theological absolute.”⁵² In the case of 1 Cor. 7:1, Fee refers to the Corinthian quotation as a maxim and then comments, “Most likely, therefore, as elsewhere (6:12-13; 8:1, 4), Paul is here quoting from the letter itself, if not its actual language, at least in sentiment.”⁵³

Anthony Thiselton is more explicit about his view of Corinthian slogans. Commenting on the work of Hurd, Thiselton writes, “There can be no question that the initial clause of v. 12 represents a quotation used as a maxim by some or by many at Corinth . . . The overwhelming majority of modern scholars adopt this view, and tables of such writers are readily at hand.”⁵⁴ On several occasions throughout his commentary Thiselton refers to Hurd’s work of listing the many scholars in support of this view.⁵⁵

An example of a widely accepted slogan in 1 Corinthians is, “I have the right to do anything,” found in both 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23.⁵⁶ The NIV has consistently translated this part of these verses as something the Corinthians were saying, using

⁵² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 278. Although it is possible that these statements of freedom could have emerged from Paul’s own Christian ethics, it is more probable that these statements came from the privileges that Roman citizens enjoyed and were entitled to (see *When Paul Left Corinth* by Bruce Winter, 81-82).

⁵³ Ibid., 307.

⁵⁴ Thiselton cites John Hurd’s table on page 68, Thiselton, 460-461, Hurd, 68. The table Hurd provides includes twenty-four scholars and whether they acknowledge slogans in 1 Cor. 6:12, 13; 7:1; 8:1, 4, 5f, 8; 11:2. Although recent research has suggested more slogans than Hurd’s list, it is significant that sixty-three percent of the chart affirms slogans in 1 Corinthians, even given the current suggested slogans list. 7. Smith offers charts indicating the positions of prominent scholars on the issue of Corinthian slogans (p. 87) and indicating all of the prominent English translations and whether they recognize these slogans in their translation (p. 88).

⁵⁵ Thiselton, 272. Hurd states, “It will be recognized immediately that all of these propositions were cited in Chapter 3 as being, in the opinion of a number of scholars, Paul’s quotations of the Corinthians’ slogans. These scholars explain the fact that the above statements favour the enlightened Corinthians’ position by suggesting that they are in fact the Corinthians’ own words.” Hurd, 120.

⁵⁶ The quotation may be more familiar in the King James Version which reads, “All things are lawful unto me.”

quotation marks and even adding “you say” to clearly indicate that Paul was quoting the Corinthians. Most modern translations include quotation marks in these texts but many of the older translations do not.⁵⁷ Where the quotation marks are not given, the reader has a choice to read it as a quotation even without the quotation marks, or to read it as a part of Paul’s instruction, ignoring the contrastive ἀλλά in the middle of the statement. For the latter choice, the reader is left to explain how to make sense of Paul first instructing them that they are permitted to do all things and then second, offering a different perspective that opposes the first by stating that it is not beneficial.

Another example of a Corinthian slogan that has been widely accepted is 1 Corinthians 7:1, “Now for the matters you wrote about: ‘It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.’” What is clear in this verse is that Paul wants to respond to something about which the Corinthians wrote to him in a letter (1 Cor. 7:1a). What is less clear is whether the following statement in quotation marks is Paul’s response to the Corinthians regarding their question, or whether in fact it is their question, and Paul is simply quoting it before responding to it beginning in 1 Cor. 7:2 (1 Cor. 7:1b). Gordon Fee’s 1980 article on 1 Corinthians 7:1 and his 1996 commentary and subsequent commentary revision in 2014 demonstrate the shift the NIV made regarding the interpretation of this verse.⁵⁸ His argument not only addresses the translation of ἀπεσθαι, but also the insertion of quotation marks, suggesting it was the idea that the Corinthians were supporting, not something Paul is teaching them.

⁵⁷ The translations that do not use quotation marks in 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 are KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB.

⁵⁸ Gordon D. Fee, “1 Corinthians 7:1 in the NIV.” *Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society* 23.4 (December 1, 1980): 307-314.

One of the more debated Corinthian slogans is found in 1 Corinthians 6:18, which is translated in the NIV, “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.” Some older English translations do not include the word “other” as it is not in the Greek text. Most current English translations, such as NIV, NLT, and ESV insert “other” as an attempt to make sense of the adversative δὲ statement that follows as an exception to the “all” (πάν) statement regarding sin.⁵⁹

The difficulty with adding the word “other” into the text is the attention this brings to Paul’s theology of sin and the body. One would then have to agree that sexual sin is the only sin that is committed against the body. Not only does this ignore the multitude of sins that have a very obvious and explicit effect on the human body, but it also inadvertently creates a hierarchy of sins, with sexual sins being the most egregious.

There are only three English translations that have made the intentional choice to view this instruction as a Corinthian slogan by placing quotation marks around it and choosing not to include the word “other” in the text.⁶⁰ By placing quotation marks around “All sins are outside the body,” these translations are saying that this is what the Corinthians believed, and Paul’s corrective instruction follows with, “but the immoral person sins against his own body” (6:18b, NET).

In his article on 1 Cor. 6:12-20, Denny Burk explains the criteria he uses to demonstrate a Corinthian slogan in 1 Cor. 6:18. First, this text has certain formal features

⁵⁹ One must admit that even though a text can cause a modern reader difficulty, this does not preclude a full understanding of the original audience.

⁶⁰ The three translations that include quotation marks in 1 Cor. 6:18 are the World English Bible (WEB, 2000), the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB, 2004), and the New English Translation (NET, 2005). The NET translates 1 Cor. 6:18 this way: “Flee sexual immorality! “Every sin a person commits is outside of the body”—but the immoral person sins against his own body.”

that belong to the diatribe style. Second, Paul's interlocutors are not imaginary but represent real voices from the Corinthian church. Third, Burk offers a brief exegesis of the text based largely on the work already done by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor.⁶¹ These criteria echo some of the same features from Smith's article.⁶²

While debate continues about what constitutes a Corinthian slogan, what is not debated is that in several places in this letter Paul addresses a concern or a question by first using a phrase or idea, sometimes with specific terminology, that the Corinthians were already using. This effective way of addressing concerns not only clarified for the recipients his focus, but it also functions as a form of interpersonal connection.⁶³

Smith, Hurd, Murphy-O'Connor, Omanson and Siebenmann have all advanced the study of slogans in 1 Corinthians, but none of them include the term πνευματικός in their study of words or slogans used by Corinthians in specific theological ways.⁶⁴ Yet the way Paul uses the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians demonstrates some of the criteria Smith and others outline. Examples of this are the repeated use of a word in the same letter; the vocabulary or theology that other contexts suggest is exclusively or characteristically Corinthian; and the confirmation by others and the convergence of multiple strands of evidence.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Denny Burk, "Discerning Corinthian Slogans through Paul's Use of the Diatribe in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18 (2008): 120.

⁶² Smith, 84-86.

⁶³ Omanson and Smith among others have done a great job to begin outlining criteria by which interpreters should make decisions about Corinthians slogans. Of course, this does not settle the matter, but it does provide the framework for creating a standard that others can now refer to as they weigh the evidence. There will still be disagreement along the way, but these criteria will be helpful to keep misguided excitement from reaching beyond the evidence in the text.

⁶⁴ Through personal correspondence via email, Smith has agreed that terms such as πνευματικός belong in this conversation regarding Corinthian slogans.

⁶⁵ Smith, 85-86.

The difficulty is not only establishing that πνευματικός was a term some of the Corinthians were using for their own purposes, but also determining what Paul wants the Corinthians to understand by the way he is repeatedly using it. Anthony Thiselton states, “It is difficult to be certain when Paul is citing slogans about ‘being spiritual’ (πνευματικός) as many Corinthians used the term, and when he is moving toward a redefinition of ‘spiritual’ to mean *reflecting the work of the Holy Spirit of God*.”⁶⁶ This study must not only demonstrate that the term πνευματικός was used in a particular way by some of the Corinthians, but also how Paul reasserted the regular understanding of the term and thus argued for a certain understanding of the activity of the Spirit.⁶⁷

In his 1973 dissertation *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology*, Birger Pearson demonstrates that Paul uses the term πνευματικός because of its prevalence in the Corinthian church. Pearson comments on Paul’s use of πνευματικός in chapter two of 1 Corinthians, “What is decisive in this passage is that Paul is dependent upon the opponents’ terminology, but uses this terminology to express his own radically different theological point of view.”⁶⁸ For Pearson, Paul had no choice but to use the Corinthian terminology to address what they were so passionate about, but he does so with a “radically different theological point of view.” He understands Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός quite differently than how he supposes the Corinthians to have understood it. He writes,

⁶⁶ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 225.

⁶⁷ It is highly probable that Paul used the term πνευματικός in his preaching and teaching in Corinth, which then was misunderstood or twisted in some way from Paul’s original intent. But even if he didn’t, Galatians 6:1 gives us evidence that πνευματικός was a part of Paul’s vocabulary prior to his ministry in Corinth and therefore it is still valid to say that Paul was “reasserting” the regular, or perhaps “Christian,” view of this term.

⁶⁸ Birger Albert Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and Its Relation to Gnosticism*, SBL Dissertation Series 12 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1973), 31.

Paul is accommodating himself to the opponents' terminology, but is radically re-interpreting it. For Paul the πνευματικός man is the one who walks according to the Spirit of God in the light of what he has received from God (v. 12, cf. Rom. 8) apart from any created potentiality in himself.⁶⁹

Pearson's description of Paul's "radically different" view of πνευματικός should not be understood as Paul inventing something new to present to the Corinthians, but simply the distance between the two understandings of the term, and therefore understandings of the Holy Spirit. This "distance" is demonstrated in the Corinthians using the term to emphasize status in the community while Paul emphasized an "influence of the Spirit." Regarding the specific πνευματικός-ψυχικός terminology pairing, Pearson writes, "Paul's own use of this terminology constitutes, as it were, a re-interpretation of the opponents' own terminology. It is for this reason, as we noted above (p. 4f.), that Paul's own use of this terminology is confined to his letter to the Corinthian congregation."⁷⁰ Describing Paul's usage as a re-interpretation is only helpful as a comparison to the Corinthian usage of πνευματικός, as it does not appear Paul changes the way he uses πνευματικός in comparison to the way he always used this term.⁷¹

Although there is still an active debate about some of the suggested slogans in 1 Corinthians among scholars today, it is conclusive that Paul has occasionally quoted the Corinthians or repeated things the Corinthians had been saying or had written to justify

⁶⁹ Pearson, 40. Perhaps a helpful correction would be that Paul is accommodating himself to his opponents' "view" of this terminology, and in his own usage, which would be consistent with the way he uses it in his other letters (and perhaps the way he originally taught it in Corinth), it may have appeared to some of the Corinthians as a radical re-interpretation.

⁷⁰ Pearson, 26. While it is true that Paul's own use of the πνευματικός-ψυχικός terminology is confined to 1 Corinthians only, what Pearson fails to include is how Paul used the term πνευματικός alone in his other letters, giving clues to how he is using it in 1 Corinthians. Of specific mention is the Galatians 6:1 occurrence, because Galatians precedes 1 Corinthians and therefore πνευματικός was not simply "Corinthian terminology" but terminology that the Corinthians were mis-using according to Paul.

⁷¹ Although Paul does not change the way he uses this term in 1 Corinthians in comparison to how he always used it (at least in all known Pauline letters), one might want to add that he is using the term πνευματικός with special emphasis in 1 Corinthians because of the way the Corinthians had supposedly been using the term.

their behaviour and to promote their actions. To address Corinthian issues in a way that was helpful and direct, Paul's method was often to first quote the Corinthian slogan or summarize their thoughts or attitudes, and then to proceed by responding to their catchphrases with his own thoughts. The challenge, of course, is to develop consistent principles for identifying when something is Paul's teaching and when he is actually quoting or summarizing statements from the Corinthians.

I will argue in this thesis that the term *πνευματικός* was used by Corinthian leaders to express their theological ideas. There are two specific points to be made concerning Paul's use of *πνευματικός* in 1 Corinthians. The first is that Paul used the term *πνευματικός* often in 1 Corinthians because his method of correcting their behaviour was to use the words and phrases they were using incorrectly, a similar approach to how Paul repeated ideas through what Jay Smith refers to as "slogans." The term *πνευματικός* is not so much a Corinthian term as it is a Pauline term that the Corinthians were using for a certain claim to status within the community. By repeating it back to them, Paul gets their attention and helps them see their error. Second, it also appears that Paul also uses the term *πνευματικός* consistently with his other letters, which means his purpose is for them to understand this term and the theology of the Spirit in a way consistent with the other churches, and perhaps consistent with how he taught them originally.

It appears that the Corinthians were using the term *πνευματικός* for self-promotion, perhaps as a symbol of status in the community. Common Greek words such as *σοφία* (*wisdom*) and *τέλειος* (*mature*) were also used alongside of *πνευματικός*. As these uses are examined, it is not hard to see the inflated view that some in Corinth had of themselves, perhaps even referring to themselves as *οἱ πνευματικοί* (1 Cor. 3:1). Paul

addresses the arrogant and elitist attitudes regarding their status in the community by using the term πνευματικός in a way that confronts their behaviour. This thesis will demonstrate that Paul uses the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians to re-calibrate their understanding of the work of the Spirit, along with the meaning of the term πνευματικός, to something that was radically different from their current understanding. Paul connected πνευματικός to the eschatological activity of the Spirit in order to have the mind of Christ, to experience the presence of Christ, to engage the body of Christ, and to benefit from the resurrection of Christ. This study will demonstrate that Paul's usage of πνευματικός not only exposes the incorrect view the Corinthians held and lived out, but also demonstrates the way Paul would have wanted them to understand the term and the theology behind the term.

1.4 Research Question and Thesis Statement

Paul's repeated use of the Greek adjective πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians gives the reader a clue that something unusual is going on in Paul's response to the church in Corinth.⁷² It should not seem unusual for Paul to use the term πνευματικός to interact with any of his churches. What is unusual is the frequency with which he uses πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians in comparison to all his other letters. This increased frequency is what prompts the question of this project: **Why does Paul repeatedly use the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians?**

Identifying the term πνευματικός as a Corinthian slogan or "buzz word" is crucial

⁷² The Greek adjective πνευματικός occurs in the New Testament twenty-six times and has no occurrences in the Septuagint. Of the twenty-six occurrences in the New Testament, twenty-four are found in Pauline epistles and fifteen of those in the letter of 1 Corinthians.

to understanding how Paul was determined to address the Corinthian problems with their own expressions.⁷³ The diatribe discourse Paul employs to highlight the term πνευματικός and the theology it represented to the Corinthians reveals the conflicted understanding of this Greek adjective between the writer and recipients.

The thesis of this project will demonstrate that the Apostle Paul's usage of the Greek adjective πνευματικός in the letter of 1 Corinthians is a corrective response to the distorted pneumatology of some in the Corinthian church. Whereas some in the church at Corinth associated the meaning of πνευματικός with social status resulting in elitist and exclusionary activity and behaviours, Paul uses the term πνευματικός to refer to the agency, and thus the fruit of the Holy Spirit in every true believer. This corrective response emerges primarily from Paul's vision for an eschatological community of Christ, empowered and living obediently to the Spirit. This vision is expressed through God's revelation in Christ, through exclusive fellowship with Christ, through the edifying assembly of Christ, and through the resurrection of Christ, and all believers.

1.5 Overview of project

Chapter one, the introduction and current chapter, has sought to identify the Corinthian problem and why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. The context of this letter is one of numerous interactions Paul and those of his travelling team had with the church in Corinth. Each of these interactions built on the previous, whether by letter, someone giving a report, or by a personal visit. 1 Corinthians is a letter of correction against the divisive and exclusive behaviours that emerged among some of the believers in Paul's

⁷³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 5.

absence. It occurs early in this history of exchange and so that later documents, such as 2 Corinthians, might reveal whether Paul was successful in re-calibrating the term πνευματικός in the Corinthian church. Paul's methodology of responding to the reports and letter he received from Corinth in confronting these behaviours will be examined, especially assessing the use of Corinthian slogans.⁷⁴ Included in the broad sense of understanding slogans are words or ideas that some in the church at Corinth championed or used to justify their behaviour accordingly, and among these words and ideas was the word πνευματικός, and the pneumatology that it represented to them. This section will demonstrate how Paul used the term πνευματικός, radically different from how the Corinthians were using it,⁷⁵ as a way of addressing the concerns and questions of the Corinthians with, and on, their terms. Chapter one concluded with the question this project is asking, the corresponding hypothesis and a brief overview of each chapter.

Chapter two will examine the word formation of the Greek term πνευματικός, beginning with a brief study of the corresponding noun πνεῦμα. The meaning of πνευματικός will be explored through Greek grammars, theological dictionaries and commentaries, most of which deal primarily with the New Testament writings. In this chapter a working definition of πνευματικός will be established that will then be tested by surveying the way the term is used in Greek literature. This chapter will also examine a few other Greek terms that have a particular association with πνευματικός in the context

⁷⁴ Gordon Fee's argument against the 1984 NIV translation of 1 Cor. 7:1 was the impetus for changes made in the 2002 TNIV and finally the 2011 NIV. His argument not only addresses the translation of *haptesthai*, but also the insertion of quotation marks suggesting it was the idea that the Corinthians were supporting, not something Paul is teaching them. Fee, "1 Corinthians 7:1 in the NIV," 307-314.

⁷⁵ Pearson, 40.

of the letter of 1 Corinthians and have become important for this study, especially other adjectives with -ικός endings such as ψυχικός and σαρκικός.

Chapter three will survey the occurrences of the term πνευματικός in Greek literature predating the New Testament, examine all twenty-six occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament, and also look at some of the occurrences in the writings of the Church Fathers. The survey and examination of all of these occurrences of πνευματικός will be compared with the working definition that was established in chapter two. This chapter will demonstrate that there are some underlying consistencies in the fundamental meaning of πνευματικός from the earliest writings to the Church Fathers. What will also be demonstrated is a major shift in how it was used in the New Testament, specifically to refer to the agency of the Spirit of God.

Chapter four will be the longest chapter of this project, investigating all fifteen occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians in detail, noting the challenges the Corinthians received from Paul and the specific and consistent way Paul uses the term πνευματικός to address these challenges. The chapter will be made up of four sections, each covering a portion of the letter where the term πνευματικός is used to a greater or lesser extent to make his point.

The first section of chapter four will study 1 Corinthians 1-4, with the emphasis on the four occurrences of πνευματικός in chapters two and three. The occurrences of πνευματικός in these two chapters are the most crucial to this project. Paul confronts the factions that have formed in the church at Corinth, the personality cults that form when a group of people are distracted from the gospel by misguided rhetoric, and the quarrels

and strife that occur as a result of these competing postures.⁷⁶ Paul uses the term πνευματικός alongside ψυχικός and σαρκικός in chapters two and three to reveal to the Corinthians the difference between a life “of the flesh” and a life “of the Spirit.” Paul ironically employs the term τέλειος⁷⁷ in 2:6, communicating his assessment of their current lack of Christian maturity.⁷⁸ He then contrasts τέλειος (2:6) with νήπιος (3:1) to reinforce his assessment and make clear that it is their jealousy and quarreling that gives evidence of their childish posture which keeps them from being πνευματικός. In this context the term πνευματικός does not function as the goal of maturity but the necessary condition for adult living, which is a Christian identity that contains the fullness of the Spirit’s work. The term πνευματικός, then, is Paul’s way of describing the work of the Spirit in humanity, what might be explained as the process of sanctification and the pursuit of holiness. The characteristics, or fruit, of such maturity will be seen to contradict the jealousy and quarrels that are currently taking place in the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3). Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός in chapters two and three is to describe a Spirit-animated identity that helps to bring people to maturity to make decisions in a way that is aligned with God, or the purposes for which God has designed humanity. Paul refers to this maturity of thinking, or this adult way of making decisions, as “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).

⁷⁶ “So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

⁷⁷ The Greek word translated “mature” in 1 Cor. 2:6 is τέλειος, often meaning *complete* or *perfect*. The KJV uses the word “perfect” in this verse. Thiselton suggests that this is an inappropriate translation. It could be that Paul was sarcastic here and announcing he had words of wisdom for those who “have arrived” is something that would have stung in Corinth. But the better understanding of Paul’s announcement is simply to view τέλειος as a word meaning “spiritual adults” as Thiselton suggests. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 231.

⁷⁸ Pearson is clear on this point, “We note here that the idea of perfection, maturity, is tied to the achievement of σοφία.” Pearson, 28.

The second section of chapter four will study 1 Corinthians 5-10, with most of the emphasis on the three occurrences of πνευματικός in chapter ten. Paul's challenge here is specifically against the Corinthian error of pursuing freedom through γνώσις (*knowledge*). Paul confronts their pride that tolerated incest and prostitution (1 Cor. 5-6). He confronts their sexual immorality and also answers their questions regarding sexuality in marriage and singleness (1 Cor. 6-7). Paul then continues with an elaborate argument in 1 Corinthians 8-10 against their claims to freedom as they permitted themselves the attendance at temple meals. For some people in Corinth knowledge signaled freedom, but the freedom they pursued was damaging to the fellowship of the church. Paul's ultimate goal in chapter ten was to warn the arrogant church members in Corinth that Israel, too, had provisions from the Spirit and yet have failed. Paul's use of the term πνευματικός in chapter ten is to describe a Spirit-animated fellowship that brings the focus to the presence of Christ, and it is accompanied by a command to seek not their own good but the good of many.

The third section of chapter four will study 1 Corinthians 11-14, with most of the emphasis on the three occurrences of πνευματικός in chapters twelve and fourteen. Paul's challenge here is specifically against the Corinthian error of pursuing elitism through χαρίσματα (*spiritual gifts*).⁷⁹ Paul confronts their ignorance regarding the activity of the Spirit of God, their desired uniformity as a replacement of unity, and their exclusion of the poor and the less expressive in the assembly. Paul's description of the church using the metaphor of the body prioritizes the activity of the Spirit (πνευματικός) over the

⁷⁹ The phrase "spiritual gifts" is used in many English translations and so it is an easy reference point when discussing χαρίσματα. Throughout this project an effort has been made to translate χαρίσματα without using the English term "gifts" as the meaning is something closer to "divine resources bestowed."

achievement of *χαρίσματα*. Gordon Fee suggests that Paul's opening three verses in chapter 12 help the reader understand the main point of chapters 12-14.⁸⁰ For Fee, the whole argument is about the activity of the Spirit of God. Paul is not saying they should stop being ignorant about spiritual gifts (12:1), but that they should stop being ignorant about the Spirit (or spiritual things, or spiritual matters). For Paul it is not a single *χάρισμα* that demonstrates the gathered community as a body, but the multitude of expressions or manifestations given by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:7). Using the term *πνευματικός*, Paul demonstrates his vision for a Spirit-animated assembly that forms a unified expression of the body of Christ.

The fourth section of chapter four will study 1 Corinthians 15. Paul's challenge here is specifically against a false understanding of the resurrection, and perhaps even the denial of the resurrection. Although it is somewhat difficult to determine exactly what the Corinthians believed about the eternal state of believers, it appears that some did not believe in the resurrection at all and others would have been more specifically against a bodily resurrection or bodily eternal existence. To confront these false understandings of last things and human bodies, Paul returns to the *πνευματικός-ψυχικός* association from chapter two. Here Paul also includes *χοϊκός* (*earthly*) to emphasize the distinction of the spiritual body and natural body. Although Paul's argument does not explicitly promote physical resurrection, it does promote a bodily resurrection, which may have physical implications. For Paul the difference between *πνευματικός* and *ψυχικός* is not necessarily physicality or visibility. Paul's use of the term *πνευματικός* in chapter fifteen is to describe a Spirit-animated body that brings the focus to the resurrection of Christ as the

⁸⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 638.

firstfruits of many to come, and it is accompanied by a command to give themselves to the work of the Lord.

Chapter five, the conclusion, will summarize the findings from each chapter of the project. Although the Corinthians originally accepted the gospel that Paul preached, and Paul's gospel was demonstrated by the power of the Spirit of God (2:4-5), their understanding and practice soon became distorted through their pursuits of wisdom, knowledge, spiritual gifts, and false understandings of last things and human bodies. Paul's consistent use of the adjective πνευματικός (together with the related noun πνεῦμα) in 1 Corinthians to describe the work of the Spirit of God countered the Corinthians' understanding of a Christian identity which ultimately resulted in pride, exclusion, elitism, and a distorted eschatology. The work or activity of the Holy Spirit, and thus *the fruit of the Spirit*, is required for something or someone to be described as πνευματικός. In Paul's understanding, the term πνευματικός always implies the πνεῦμα, and most of the time this refers to the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER TWO: The meaning of πνευματικός and related Greek terms

The meaning of the Greek adjective πνευματικός and the specific way the Apostle Paul used it in the letter of 1 Corinthians is the primary focus of this project.⁸¹ The following chapter investigates how the word πνευματικός was formed and how it has generally been understood by scholars in grammar books, theological dictionaries and commentaries in the context of the New Testament. This chapter will also examine a few other Greek terms that have a particular association with πνευματικός in the letter of 1 Corinthians, and that have become important for this study. Of particular interest are the terms ψυχικός and σαρκικός, adjectives with the -ικός ending.

2.1 The Greek noun πνεῦμα

The Greek term πνευματικός is a derivative adjective from the noun πνεῦμα (*wind, breath, spirit*). The principal use and understanding of the Greek term πνεῦμα in ancient Greek history is “wind” or “breath.” This is confirmed in the primary definition of πνεῦμα in BDAG as “air in movement” like *blowing* or *breathing*.⁸² Prior to the Hellenistic era, the word πνεῦμα was not used beyond these elemental forces. Anthropological and divine uses of πνεῦμα did not appear until some of the Stoic writings and the translation of the Septuagint (LXX).⁸³ Today one might use ‘spirit’ to refer to the inner self, to thoughts, intellect, or even emotions. But the ‘psychic’ part of humanity was not associated with πνεῦμα prior to the Hellenistic era. In her book *The*

⁸¹ Rom. 1:11; 7:14; 15:27; 1 Cor. 2:13 (x2), 15; 3:1; 9:11; 10:3, 4 (x2); 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44 (x2), 46 (x2); Gal. 6:1; Eph. 1:3; 5:19; 6:12; Col. 1:9; 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:5 (x2). See Appendix A on page 167 for full chart of all twenty-six occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament.

⁸² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 832.

⁸³ The Hebrew term *ruach* has a similar range of meanings to the Greek term πνεῦμα and no doubt had influence on the LXX translators to choose πνεῦμα as the default equivalent.

Concept of Spirit, Marie Isaacs states that “the term πνεῦμα was not used in this ‘psychic’ sense in pagan Greek literature.”⁸⁴ The Greeks used ψυχή to refer to their inner thoughts and θυμός to refer to their emotions.⁸⁵

Isaacs’ research demonstrates that the use of the term πνεῦμα to describe the divine presence and the ‘psychic’ part of humanity was first evident in Stoic writings and in the LXX. This is also evident in the Septuagint, the Wisdom of Solomon (Wis) and Philo. The Stoics did not have a dualism between spirit and matter and thus would have used the term πνεῦμα for both the divine and for humans. Jews maintained a separation between God and matter, and while insisting upon the perfection of God, would thus include ἅγιον with πνεῦμα when applied to God.⁸⁶ Isaacs remarks, “For the Jews there could be no equation of God and the world, nor of the divine with matter.”⁸⁷ Philo also makes this distinction, viewing the πνεῦμα as the essence of divinity within a person.⁸⁸

In the New Testament πνεῦμα is most often, but not exclusively, translated “Spirit” and refers to the third person of the Trinity. There are other uses of πνεῦμα in the New Testament that pertain to “breath,” “wind,” “inner part of a human,” as well as “noncorporeal beings” (i.e. “evil spirits”).⁸⁹ BDAG defines πνεῦμα as “air in movement” like blowing or breathing, “that which animates or gives life to the body,” “a part of human personality,” “an independent noncorporeal being,” and also “God’s being as controlling influence, with focus on association with humans.”⁹⁰ The term πνεῦμα does

⁸⁴ Marie Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit. A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* [Heythrop Monographs 1] (London, UK: Heythrop College, 1976), 11.

⁸⁵ Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit*, 11.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ BDAG, 832.

⁹⁰ BDAG, 832-836.

not mean all of these things at the same time, and one should be cautious not to apply all of them to the New Testament usage equally.

It is significant that πνεῦμα is not simply “air” but the “movement of air.” The πνεῦμα was not understood as just a substance but an action, a life-giving force. This not only clarifies why πνεῦμα was primarily used as “wind” and “breath,” but also how it eventually came to mean ‘that which gives life to the body’ or other descriptions of life-animation. It will be demonstrated in the following chapter’s analysis of writings predating the New Testament that the Greek adjective πνευματικός functioned similarly as a dynamic reality versus a static one. What might this say for how we are to understand God’s active presence or work in the life of the believer?

Another association that is important for this study is that of πνεῦμα and σοφία (which will be discussed further below). Marie Isaacs states, “The author of Sap Sol not only closely associates πνεῦμα and σοφία; he also uses terminology which stresses the affinity (and sometimes the identification) of πνεῦμα/σοφία with God.”⁹¹ Isaacs suggests here that in the Wisdom of Solomon the vapour of God’s breath (πνεῦμα) is associated with wisdom. This association will be investigated more closely in chapter three.

2.2 The Greek adjective πνευματικός

The Greek term πνευματικός is a derivative adjective from the noun πνεῦμα that was given an *-ικος* suffix. Derivative adjectives usually have a cognate noun they are derived from and are not considered primary adjectives. Under the category of *Secondary or Derivative Adjectives*, A.T. Robertson classifies Greek adjectives with *-ινος* and *-ικος*

⁹¹ Isaacs, 20.

endings as substantives (i.e., essentially equivalent to a noun).⁹² Robert Van Voorst, on the other hand, argues that the *-ικος* suffix has the significance of “belonging to,” which would give the term *πνευματικός* the meaning of “belonging to the spirit.”⁹³ This classification is comparable to the adjective *σαρκικός* which derives from the noun *σάρξ*, (*flesh*), meaning “belonging to the flesh.”

James Moulton states that the suffixes *-ικός* and *-ινος* emerged during the classical period (in words such as *φυσικός* and *μαντικός*) after *-κός* was added to the *-ι-* stem.⁹⁴ While the suffix had its beginnings with the idea of “belonging to,” it “came into common use with Attic writers in the latter part of the fifth century B.C., where the meaning of ‘pertaining to,’ ‘with characteristics of,’ became prominent.”⁹⁵ Moulton explains that the difference between the suffixes *-ικός* and *-ινος* is that *-ικός* connotes “like” and *-ινος* “made of,” which he suggests corresponds to that found in English suffixes *-y* and *-en* (i.e. *earthy* and *earthen*). He concludes, “The termination *-ινος* denotes a *material* relation, while *-ικός* denotes an *ethical* or dynamic relation, to the idea involved in the root.”⁹⁶

Moulton’s observations regarding the etymology of *πνευματικός* are consistent with Gordon Fee’s conclusion that, “The word itself belongs to a class of adjectives ending in

⁹² A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), 158.

⁹³ Robert E. Van Voorst, *Building Your New Testament Greek Vocabulary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 8. James Moulton and Wilbert Francis Howard. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Vol. II. Accidence and Word-Formation* (New York, NY: T & T Clark, 1968), 378.

⁹⁴ James Moulton, 359, 378.

⁹⁵ Moulton, 378.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

-ικός, formed from their corresponding nouns and bearing the meaning, ‘belonging to, or pertaining to,’ the corresponding noun.”⁹⁷ The meaning of πνευματικός as “belonging to or pertaining to the πνεῦμα” is then a good foundation with which to start.

As indicated earlier, the adjective πνευματικός is derived from the noun πνεῦμα (meaning “air in movement, *blowing, breathing*”). It would eventually come to mean “that which animates or gives life to the body, *breath, (life-)spirit*.”⁹⁸ Prior to Christian writing, πνεῦμα would predominantly have been used to talk about the wind or one’s breath, which can therefore lead to a secondary deduction, namely, *that which indicates the presence life*. The corresponding adjective πνευματικός should also be understood in this way. Regarding the term πνευματικός, Gordon Fee notes, “This is another of the words in the NT that bears a strong Pauline stamp. It does not occur in the LXX. In classical and Hellenistic Greek it had to do primarily with wind or air; thus it is found only rarely in Hellenistic texts as an adjective pertaining to the human πνεῦμα.”⁹⁹

The third edition of BDAG defines the adjective πνευματικός as “pertaining to spirit as inner life of a human being, *spiritual*” and “having to do with the (divine) spirit, *caused by or filled with the (divine) spirit, pertaining/corresponding to the (divine) spirit*.”¹⁰⁰ Although fairly consistent with the first and second editions, it is interesting to notice Danker’s revision from capital “S” *Spirit* to lower case “s” *spirit*. Either Danker thought it redundant because of the word “divine” in parentheses or he is introducing a shift away from the assumption that this adjective is always referring to the activity of

⁹⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 29.

⁹⁸ BDAG, 832.

⁹⁹ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 29.

¹⁰⁰ BDAG, 837. See Appendix C on page 169 for a detailed comparison of the definition of the Greek term πνευματικός in all three editions.

God's Spirit in the New Testament.¹⁰¹

The shift Danker makes from “*Spirit*” to “*spirit*” is consistent with one of the definitions from the first and second editions which simply acknowledges the *inner life of a human being*. From this definition there is no significant distinction between “Spirit” and “spirit” when translating πνευματικός. As a result, it is largely from the context in which the term πνευματικός is found that one must determine whether the “spirit” under discussion is human, divine or evil.

The focus of the article by Albert Schweitzer in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT) leans more toward capital “S” *Spirit*, while acknowledging that each use of the term is unique. Schweitzer says that when πνευματικός is used in contrast to ψυχικός it is specifically referring to the Spirit of God, which is a fair point as most scholars understand the adjective ψυχικός to describe the person without the Spirit, or simply the natural person.¹⁰² When πνευματικός is used to modify impersonal nouns, Schweitzer resists descriptions like “bearing” and prefers words of “origin” or “source” (“from”). For example, when Paul describes food, water, and a rock as πνευματικός, these objects do not “bear” the Spirit but are “from” the Spirit. One might add that impersonal objects can also have significance beyond their material properties when it is the Spirit of God who provides them, or uses them, for purposes of revelation.

Although some commentaries do not specifically comment on the meaning of πνευματικός, several do and it remains consistent with these scholars that πνευματικός in

¹⁰¹ Danker could also be indicating that “Spirit” is a way of speaking about divine power or agency, but not about God himself.

¹⁰² Albert Schweitzer, “πνευματικός,” Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), Translated by G.W. Bromiley. Volume 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 436.

the New Testament pertains to the Spirit of God in some way. Gordon Fee is more specific regarding the application to people even though some of these occurrences are describing impersonal things. He states, “In its 24 occurrences in Paul’s letters it is almost always an adjective referring to the Holy Spirit, and ordinarily means ‘people who have the Spirit.’ Unfortunately, the traditional rendering ‘spiritual’ (as e.g., the NRSV, ESV, NAB and most others) leads the reader in every imaginable wrong direction.”¹⁰³ Fee concludes that the use of *πνευματικός* when describing people is to indicate the presence of the Spirit who enables, as opposed to some intuitive process of discernment or evaluation of *spiritual things*.¹⁰⁴

Joseph Fitzmyer acknowledges the various nouns that *πνευματικός* modifies, yet concludes in a manner similar to Fee, “It modifies diverse things (food, drink, rock, body, and persons), which are always thought to be under the influence of God’s Spirit in some way.”¹⁰⁵ Sometimes it is contrasted with *psychikos*, ‘animated’ (2:14; 15:44 bis, 46); sometimes with *sarkinos* (*sarkikos*), “fleshy” (3:1, 3 bis; 9:11).¹⁰⁶ One might have to probe Fitzmyer’s definition of *ψυχικός* to understand that he is referring to the comparison that is created between animated by the Spirit versus animated by the flesh. His description of “under the influence of God’s Spirit in some way” is consistent with other scholars as well as the working definition of *πνευματικός* in this project.

In explanation of the “spiritual” food, drink, and rock in 1 Corinthians 10, C.K. Barrett makes a notable observation that although this food, drink, and rock was

¹⁰³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 130.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁰⁵ Barrett suggests that “further significance” of inanimate objects described as *πνευματικός* may be symbolic or typical, as in the Christian sacrament. Barrett, 222.

¹⁰⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *I Corinthians* [The Anchor Yale Bible, Volume 32] (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 182.

πνευματικός, it was also material. Barrett concludes, “The word (πνευματικός) is usually employed by Paul to denote some thing (or person) that is the bearer or agent of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁷ For his part, Nighswander comments in his essay on spirituality in 1 Corinthians, “For Paul, it was always about the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁸

Witherington observes something similar regarding the occurrence of πνευματικός alongside ψυχικός in 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul argues for a “bodily” resurrection. Because “spirit” is typically understood as immaterial, a πνευματικός body might easily be misunderstood as an oxymoron. But if πνευματικός refers to the agency of a noun rather than its non-physicality, then the focus changes from what this body is made of or what it looks like, to how this body operates or in what way is this body given ability or from what source it obtains meaning? Drawing from Harris’ book *Raised Immortal*, Witherington writes:

As has been pointed out by M. Harris, adjectives or qualifiers ending in *-ikon* normally carry an ethical or functional meaning. It is unlikely that Paul means by *sōma pneumatikon* (v.44) a ‘body made up of spirit.’ That would be a non sequitur, since Paul elsewhere assumes that spirit is immaterial. He means, rather, that the resurrection body will be animated and empowered by the Spirit, just as the present physical body (the *sōma psychikon*) is animated and empowered by a physical life principle or force, which the creation story says God breathed into human beings.¹⁰⁹

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Anthony Thiselton writes, “For Paul *new*

¹⁰⁷ Barrett, 222. Although “things” are not usually described as “bearing” or having “agency,” Barrett explains that these objects were “used by the Spirit as visible prophecies of what was still to be established.” Barrett might have also included the words “influenced by” or “identified with” to signal that inanimate objects are usually tools or instruments and not agents.

¹⁰⁸ Dan Nighswander, *1 Corinthians* [Believers Church Bible Commentary] (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2017), 370.

¹⁰⁹ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth* (Grand Rapids: MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 308. Murray Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 112. In addition, it may also describe a body that is completely suitable for a realm in which πνεῦμα is the dominating essence, rather than σὰρξ or ψυχή.

creation and transformation came from beyond and were constituted by the agency of the Holy Spirit, not an immanent human spirit.”¹¹⁰ Thiselton partly bases his argument on Paul’s use of the term ψυχικός in contrast to πνευματικός, writing, “the term ψυχικός stands in contrast to that which is animated and motivated by God’s Spirit.”¹¹¹ More specifically, Thiselton states, “We believe that this is a decisive indication that Paul wishes the adjectival form πνευματικός to be understood as meaning of the Spirit (of God), and not as the more bland *spiritual*, which allows for the very misunderstanding which Paul wishes to exclude.”¹¹²

In his book on *The Holy Spirit*, Thiselton is quite emphatic about how the term πνευματικός is used in the New Testament. Commenting on Paul’s use of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 12, he writes, “It is crystal clear, and impossible to deny, that when Paul uses the Greek word *pneumatikos*, ‘spiritual,’ he is alluding specifically to the agency, work, and effects of *the Holy Spirit*, for whom the lordship of *Jesus Christ* has become the supreme criterion (1 Cor. 12:3).”¹¹³ Thiselton narrows his definition of πνευματικός to Paul’s usage in the New Testament which is consistent with the definition of πνευματικός in this project and the survey that follows of all twenty-four occurrences in Pauline letters.

It makes sense that πνευματικός would have a more general definition of “pertaining to the πνεῦμα” during a time when πνεῦμα was used predominantly as “breath” or “wind.” But in the Christian era, and especially in New Testament writings,

¹¹⁰ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGNT] (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1283.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 267.

¹¹² Ibid, 265.

¹¹³ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 471.

πνεῦμα was used mainly to refer to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity.

Gordon Fee states, “Since the word πνεῦμα primarily refers to the Holy Spirit in Paul, one might expect the corresponding adjective to function similarly.”¹¹⁴ And so the general definition of πνευματικός (“pertaining to the πνεῦμα”) takes on more specificity in Christian writing, as “belonging to, or pertaining to, the Spirit of God.” If people or things pertain to the Spirit of God, they bear the influence and effect of the Spirit, and are energized or animated by the agency of the Spirit. The term πνευματικός then, as it is used in the New Testament, means “the influence of the Spirit’s agency in a person or thing.” The way this influence is expressed in specific contexts, especially in 1 Corinthians, will be the focus of chapters three and four of this project.

2.3 The Greek adjective ψυχικός

The Greek term ψυχικός (*natural*) is also a derivative adjective with the -ικός ending. It is derived from the noun ψυχή (*soul*), which BDAG defines as “life on earth in its animating aspect making bodily function possible.”¹¹⁵ The term ψυχή is another term that is multivalent in meaning, but generally is used in the Septuagint and New Testament to refer to that which gives flesh and bones function or animation. Without the agency of ψυχή, one would simply be flesh and bones. The point for now is that the use of the adjective ψυχικός describes something that is “of the ψυχή,” or “that which pertains to the ψυχή.”

Although ψυχή is generally an invisible, noncorporeal entity, the focus of ψυχικός is not its substance but its agency or its effect. As BDAG demonstrates, it is difficult to

¹¹⁴ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 30.

¹¹⁵ BDAG, 1098.

define this word without relating it to πνευματικός, or defining it by the English gloss “unspiritual,” which is merely the negation of “spiritual” that translations of English Bibles provide for πνευματικός.

One of the preferred ways of understanding both πνευματικός and ψυχικός is in relation to each other as opposites. The opposition centres around the πνεῦμα:

πνευματικός is pertaining to the πνεῦμα and ψυχικός is pertaining to the absence of πνεῦμα. The confusing part is that πνεῦμα and ψυχή are sometimes used synonymously in Greek literature, including the meaning in the New Testament, and so one must conclude that the use of these terms is not completely consistent.¹¹⁶

There is only one occurrence of ψυχικός in the Septuagint and six in the New Testament.¹¹⁷ Of the six found in the New Testament, four occur in 1 Corinthians. The remaining two can be found in James 3:15 and Jude 19. In James 3:15, the author is referring to a wisdom (σοφία) that “comes from above” (heaven?), as opposed to all other wisdom, which he describes with three different words: *earthly* (ἐπίγειος), *unspiritual* (ψυχικός), and *demonic* (δαιμονιώδης). The intent is not to understand these three terms synonymously, but to emphasize various realms that are not the source of God’s wisdom. The message James proclaims using the term ψυχικός is that the wisdom of God is not to be found in the natural self, or the enlivened human being (the gloss “unspiritual” is not the preferred understanding for the meaning of ψυχικός).

¹¹⁶ Or at the very least, these terms have a wider semantic range that needs to be accounted for than is sometimes noted in the literature, e.g., on some occasions Paul seems to be using πνεῦμα anthropologically: Rom. 1:9; 11:8; 12:11; 1 Cor. 5:4; 14:14; 16:18; 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:13; Gal. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:22; Tim. 4:22.

¹¹⁷ The one occurrence in the Septuagint is in 4Mac. 1:32, translated as “mental” in the NRSV. The author is distinguishing desires that are ψυχικός (mental) and σωματικός (physical).

In Jude 19, the author explicitly lays out the definition of ψυχικός as pertaining to those who do not have the Spirit, saying, “These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.” Here Jude is warning against “scoffers” (Jude 18) whose actions divide people and this is because they are ψυχικός, translated in the NIV as those “who follow mere natural instincts.” What is important to recognize here is that they must rely upon human sources of wisdom which are deficient because they have no access to divine revelation. Jude concludes that they are ψυχικός because they “do not have the Spirit” (πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες).

It is important that ψυχικός is not assumed to be of evil disposition just because it is “without the Spirit.”¹¹⁸ Although without Spirit the natural self is also a sinful self, the focus of ψυχικός is not so much “evil” or “sinful” as it is “natural” and therefore incapable of receiving divine revelation. This is clarified in 1 Corinthians 2-3, where Paul juxtaposes πνευματικός with ψυχικός in chapter two and with σαρκικός in chapter three. In chapter two, the distinction seems to be having or not having the Spirit. In chapter three, the distinction is living by the Spirit or not living by the Spirit. Both ψυχικός and σαρκικός are set in opposition to πνευματικός, but ψυχικός is positioned in a more neutral state (limited to human wisdom), whereas σαρκικός is definitely choosing a life contrary to the Spirit even while having access to the wisdom of God.

The three other occurrences of ψυχικός in 1 Corinthians are found in chapter fifteen (twice in 15:44 and once in 15:46). Including the occurrence in 1 Corinthians 2:14, all four of these occurrences directly relate to Paul’s usage of πνευματικός. Not

¹¹⁸ Quoting from Robertson and Plummer, Thiselton writes, “ψυχικός is used of a man whose motives do not rise above the level of merely human needs and aspirations.” Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 267.

only does Paul use the term ψυχικός in opposition to his use of the term πνευματικός, but there is not another instance in all Greek literature where these two words are found in relation to each other.

Birger Albert Pearson's 1973 dissertation called *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology* takes a closer look at the relationship of this terminology.¹¹⁹ While some of Pearson's observations are no longer as much of a concern to modern scholarship, like gnostic influences in Paul's writings, his research not only demonstrates the meaning of πνευματικός as "pertaining to the πνεῦμα" in the sense of the Spirit of God, but shows how this meaning is reinforced more specifically with Paul's usage of the corresponding term ψυχικός. This association will be further developed in chapters three and four of this project.

2.4 The Greek adjectives σαρκικός and σάρκινος

The Greek adjective σαρκικός is a derivative of the noun σάρξ and is best understood as meaning simply "pertaining to the σάρξ." While σάρξ is most often translated "flesh," it is used by both Septuagint and New Testament authors literally ("material that covers the bones of a human or animal body")¹²⁰ as well as figuratively (either "of the earth/world or human" [1 Cor. 1:26] or "evil desire" [Gal. 5:16]). The term σαρκικός denotes both of these two major meanings.

Robertson states, "Σαρκ-ικός (from σάρξ, Arist., Plut., LXX) is a man who lives according to the flesh and is here opposed to those who are πνευματ-ικοί (from πνεῦμα,

¹¹⁹ Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*.

¹²⁰ BDAG, 914. Also included in this sense is the physical body itself, the ancestral and mortal nature of a being human, or simply the outward part of being human.

from Arist. down, but not in LXX, pertaining to the wind).”¹²¹ While Robertson’s term “opposed” might be too strong, or at the very least requires more context, it is evident that while these two terms have the same endings, theologically they are opposite in meaning.¹²²

The term σαρκικός occurs in the New Testament seven times, six in the Pauline corpus.¹²³ The only non-Pauline occurrence is found in 1 Pet. 2:11, where the author warns of “sinful desires” (σαρκικός) which wage war against your soul (ψυχή).¹²⁴ Following the logic of the previous -ικός words, σαρκικός is best understood in the New Testament as “pertaining to the σάρξ.” Then one must investigate the context to determine if the adjective is describing something physical or figurative.

The adjective σάρκινος also derives from σάρξ and is often regarded as a synonym of σαρκικός. Van Voorst points out that adjectives with the -ινος suffix have the significance of “material” or “type.”¹²⁵ Although these two adjectives are often translated similarly (i.e. “of the flesh”), σαρκικός indicates that something “belongs to the flesh,” while σάρκινος indicates that something is actually “made of flesh.” An example is where Paul writes to the Corinthians, “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living

¹²¹ Robertson, 158.

¹²² Robertson also adds that, “ὁ ψυχ-ικός (from ψυχή, Arist., Polyb., down) is the man possessed of mere natural life (1 Cor. 2:14) as opposed to regenerate (πνευματ-ικός) life (1 Cor. 2:15).” Here it is clear for Robertson that the difference between these terms is not just one of physicality, but the πνευματικός life is one of regeneration. Robertson, 158-159.

¹²³ The term σαρκικός occurs in Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 3:3 (x2); 9:11; 2 Cor. 1:12; 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:11.

¹²⁴ The definition of ψυχή here remains the same as what has been stated earlier on page 45 (“life on earth in its animating aspect making bodily function possible”). However, here the author seems to go slightly beyond bodily function to relate to what might be the ψυχή without the body. Bauer calls it, “a condition in which it no longer makes contact with the physical structure it inhabited, whereupon it leaves the realm of earth and lives on in Hades or some other place outside the earth.” BDAG, 1098.

¹²⁵ Van Voorst, 8. Robertson suggests that σάρκ-ινος must mean more than “made of flesh” but “rooted in the flesh.” Robertson, 158.

God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” (2 Cor. 3:3, KJV). Here the word “fleshy” is σάρκινος, referring to the human flesh where God will write on the flesh with his Spirit as opposed to tablets of stone.¹²⁶

2.5 The Greek noun σοφία

The Greek word σοφία (*wisdom*) occurs fifty-one times in the New Testament. Seventeen of the twenty-eight occurrences in Paul’s letters occur in 1 Corinthians and the first fifteen appear in chapters one and two, making the opening two chapters a unique context based in which to investigate the meaning of σοφία in early Christianity. No less important in 1 Corinthians are the eleven occurrences of the adjective σοφός (*wise*), ten of which occur in the first three chapters.

The Greek noun σοφία is normally translated “wisdom” in the New Testament. The term σοφία can certainly mean “wisdom” in a general way, like, “understanding” or “insight,” or “the capacity to understand and function accordingly.”¹²⁷ But there are at least two traditions or associations that could be in focus with the use of this term in the Pauline corpus.

One of these traditions is the Jewish wisdom tradition which emerges from the Sapiential Books of the Septuagint: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, the Book of Wisdom and Ben Sirach.¹²⁸ The first five are accepted universally in the biblical canon while the last two are found in the Apocrypha, considered deuterocanonical by Roman Catholics. Ben Sirach is a Hebrew composition that was

¹²⁶ This use of σάρκινος is found in direct quotations from the LXX in Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26.

¹²⁷ BDAG, 934.

¹²⁸ Not all of the Psalms are regarded as belonging to the Wisdom tradition.

translated into Greek in Alexandria around 130 BC. The Wisdom of Solomon was originally written in Greek, but its date is contested.

The author of Job sums up what is at the heart of this wisdom tradition with the phrase: “The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom” (Job 28:28a).¹²⁹ Wisdom in the Jewish tradition is often personified, accompanying God in all creation. According to N.T. Wright, “[T]hese books speak of Israel’s calling and destiny in language borrowed from the traditions about the creation of the world and humankind. YHWH’s ‘wisdom’ was the means by which he created the world.”¹³⁰ Wright elaborates further in his book *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*: “To speak of this ‘wisdom’ is ... to speak of the creator God as good, wise, fruitful, utterly and beautifully creative and inventive, unveiling creation as the theatre of his spectacular and harmonious work.”¹³¹

It is also important to consider the way God acts in creation. Wright suggests that if human beings are the means by which God acts in the world, and God only acts through wisdom, then it is very important to acquire such wisdom in order to be God’s obedient agents, thereby becoming truly human.¹³² Acquiring wisdom was a strong emphasis in the intertestamental period, but with the focus of wisdom turned toward Torah. Wright comments, “In the intertestamental period *‘Wisdom’ was identified with*

¹²⁹ The phrase “fear of the Lord” occurs in the Old Testament twenty times. Job 28:28 might be the most significant occurrence of the phrase, even though it is the only occurrence in Job. Job 28 is a chapter devoted completely to understanding God’s wisdom, which for humankind begins by understanding that it comes from God and therefore one’s posture toward God should be one of receptivity and respect (i.e. “fear of the Lord”). Three times this phrase is used in psalm lyrics, and another ten times in Proverbs. Isaiah picks up this phrase on three occasions and there are also three occurrences in 2 Chronicles. The only New Testament occurrence is in Acts 9:31, a summary statement of the peace that was enjoyed after Paul’s conversion. The usage of the corresponding verb φοβέομαι is also significant to understand the “fear of the Lord” (see Col. 3:22; cf. Ex. 1:17-21; 14:31).

¹³⁰ Wright, *God’s People*, 264.

¹³¹ Wright, *Paul*, 671.

¹³² Wright, *God’s People*, 265.

Torah. Those who possessed and tried to keep Torah were therefore the true humanity: it was they who would be exalted to the place where humanity belonged, under the creator and over the creation.”¹³³

It is not difficult to see why some in Corinth had an inflated view of wisdom because of the empowering presence of the Spirit in their lives. The association of Wisdom and πνεῦμα is already seen in Stoic writings. Wright argues that “it draws on Platonic and Stoic ideas in order to present the figure of ‘Wisdom’ as occupying the place in the divinely created and ordered cosmos which in the Stoics was taken by the *logos* or the *pneuma*.”¹³⁴ This then plays out in the lives of those pursuing Wisdom, even if for all the wrong reasons. Wright concludes, “And, exactly as in Stoicism, ‘ethics’ follows naturally: what humans need is precisely this ‘wisdom’, in order to know the secrets of how the world works and so to develop the consequent life of virtue.”¹³⁵ This is why wisdom speaks to the identity of God’s people, because it is their vocation, their very purpose, to be agents of God’s wise acts in the world. Those who were associated with wisdom would then be regarded as people with the secret knowledge of God.¹³⁶

The other association for the term σοφία is the Sophistic tradition of ancient Greece, beginning around the second half of the fifth century B.C. Somewhat distinct from philosophy, sophists applied σοφία in their teaching of technique and skill in rhetoric. This application of wisdom became suspect for some, such as Socrates and Plato, because these sophists not only received payment for their services, which the

¹³³ Wright, *People of God*, 265.

¹³⁴ Wright, *The Faithfulness of God*, 239.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Already in the 3rd century BC the LXX connects the Torah with wisdom and understanding. This is demonstrated for example in Deut. 4:6, “Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

philosophers did not, but there seemed to be an emphasis placed on the best teachers and because of this some sophists began to increase their rates. This controversy is especially noted regarding Aristotle as a paid tutor for Alexander the Great.

Bruce Winter offers strong evidence in his book *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists* that the rise of the Second Sophistic did not begin in late first century, or even second century AD, as some have supposed, but in the early part of the first century.¹³⁷ Presenting six primary sources from the first century, including the Corinthian letters, Winter demonstrates that what came to be known as the Second Sophistic was “already flowering if not flourishing” in the first half of the first century.¹³⁸

The title of sophist, or σοφιστής, referred to an ancient wise man, but by the first century AD, as Winter notes, “it was used to designate those rhetoricians whose ability in oratory was such that they could both secure a public following and attract students to their schools.”¹³⁹ Under the tutelage and training of the sophists, students became experts in law, politics, language, culture, mathematics, and several other spheres of life. Winter states, “[T]hey trained the next generation of the social elite to argue in the criminal and civil courts and debate in the secular assemblies as they did.”¹⁴⁰

The sophists were then both highly regarded debaters and declaimers in the city and sought-after teachers for the sons of the elite. Winter notes:

Parents expected the sophist to make public speakers of their sons, for they judged that this form of education was most useful in producing leaders accomplished in the great art of persuasion whether it be in the legal courts or the council or political assembly of their city.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 1-2.

¹³⁸ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 4.

¹³⁹ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 3-4.

¹⁴⁰ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 33.

¹⁴¹ Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 5.

Winter also demonstrates how competitive these sophists were, and thus the undivided loyalty expected of their students to boast in their teacher, thus inflating their reputation. Arguments, debates, and much jealousy characterized this movement, creating division, pride, and a striving for status among the elite. One does not have to work hard to make the connections of this association of wisdom to the concerns in Corinth.

Paul's critique of the σοφία that caused quarrels and jealousy begins in 1 Corinthians 1:10 and comes to a point of thesis in verse seventeen, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Cor. 1:17). Following verse seventeen Paul challenges the wisdom of both Jews and Greeks to match wits with the message of a crucified Messiah. Thus his approach to both of these potential influences is the same. Thiselton writes:

Both traditions and both critiques, therefore, come together in v. 17 as a transitional verse which introduces the main contrast between the 'power' or operative effects of the cross and the 'weakness' or inoperative attempts generated by 'wisdom' on the part of the Gentiles 'Greeks' and the Jews (1:18-31).¹⁴²

What is most important, then, for the purposes of this project is to recognize the that term σοφία (*wisdom*) is not only referring to being a wise person, but also refers to a status symbol within the community. Some in Corinth, who had certain expressive χαρίσματα (*grace bestowed, or spiritual gifts*), seemed to view this "possession" as self-achievement which earned them a πνευματικός status in the community as it related to σοφία. Paul confronted this arrogant and elitist mentality head on with the gospel of a

¹⁴² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 145.

crucified Messiah, and demonstrated a different approach to wisdom, as will be shown in chapter four of this project.

2.6 Summary of πνευματικός and other related Greek terms

Establishing the meaning of πνευματικός and of various related terms, especially in the Pauline corpus, helps us to understand the context of Paul's usage of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians. In the following chapters, especially chapter four, it will become more evident how each of these terms and the way that Paul used them to convey meaning to the Corinthians is integral to understanding Paul's reason for writing 1 Corinthians, and more importantly for this study, the reasons for the repeated use of the term πνευματικός in the letter.

What is important to restate in this summary is that πνευματικός is a derivative Greek adjective from the noun πνεῦμα and is best understood in the New Testament as “pertaining to the πνεῦμα.” Most occurrences of the term πνεῦμα in the New Testament refer to the Spirit of God, although there are occasions when this is not the case. The same is true for the term πνευματικός.

CHAPTER THREE: The term *πνευματικός* in Greek literature

The meaning of the Greek adjective *πνευματικός* and the specific way Paul used it in the letter of 1 Corinthians is the primary focus of this project.¹⁴³ The term *πνευματικός* does not occur at all in the Septuagint (LXX), but there are sixty-four occurrences of *πνευματικός* that predate the New Testament, including eight occurrences in Philo. There are also numerous occurrences of *πνευματικός* in first and second century non-canonical writings including the Apostolic Fathers.

This chapter will survey the occurrences of *πνευματικός* in Greek writings, starting with literature predating the New Testament. It will examine all twenty-six occurrences of *πνευματικός* in the New Testament (with only brief comments at this point about the occurrences in 1 Corinthians), and also look at some of the occurrences in the writings of the Early Church Fathers. The usage of *πνευματικός* in all of these passages will then be compared to the working definition that was established in chapter two.

3.1 Occurrences of πνευματικός in writings predating the New Testament

There are sixty-four occurrences of *πνευματικός* in Greek literature predating the writings of the New Testament. Most of these occurrences use the term *πνευματικός* to describe something about the effect of wind or the function of breath.

The first four recorded occurrences of *πνευματικός* in Greek literature date back to the sixth and fifth centuries BC in the following pre-Socratic philosophers:

¹⁴³ Rom. 1:11; 7:14; 15:27; 1 Cor. 2:13 (x2), 15; 3:1; 9:11; 10:3, 4 (x2); 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44 (x2), 46 (x2); Gal. 6:1; Eph. 1:3; 5:19; 6:12; Col. 1:9; 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:5 (x2). See Appendix A on page 167 for full chart of all twenty-six occurrences of *πνευματικός* in the New Testament.

Anaximenes, Diogenes, Empedocles, and Democritus. Of these four philosophers, only some of the work of Empedocles has survived; the other three we learn about in other writings. Where Empedocles uses the term πνευματικός is in reference to the lifeblood and “breath” in animals. All four pre-Socratic uses of the term πνευματικός refer to elemental forces such as breath, wind, and water.

Aristotle uses the term πνευματικός seventeen times in the fourth century BC.¹⁴⁴ In one of these fragments the author writes, ὁ τε δὴ χθμὸς καὶ κρᾶσις ἢ τῆς μελαίνης χολῆς πνευματικά ἐστιν (“Now both the juice of the grape and the atrabilious temperament are full of breath”).¹⁴⁵ Here the author uses the term πνευματικός to describe the swelling of the grape, presumably noting the increase of air, or movement of air, that causes expansion in the juice of the grape in the fermentation process.

In Aristotle’s *Generation of Animals*, he writes about the τῷ πνευματικῷ μορίῳ (“the part that is concerned with the *pneuma*”).¹⁴⁶ Here Aristotle describes how the action of breathing interferes with hearing, especially breathing out or yawning. The term πνευματικός is used to describe what is central to the concern for Aristotle, being the movement of air. In this translation, the gloss provided is simply “concerned with the *pneuma*” and seems to be more of a reference to the effect of breath than the breath itself.

Theophrastus, a favourite student of Aristotle, also uses the term πνευματικός in his work, much of which has to do with plants and animals. For example, the first of two occurrences of πνευματικός in *De Causis Plantarum* reads, καὶ εἰ τοιαύτη τοῦ ἀέρος ἢ

¹⁴⁴ Eleven of those fourteen occurrences are in the works called “Problems” which are sometimes called pseudo-Aristotelian because of questions surrounding its authenticity.

¹⁴⁵ T.E. Page, ed., *Aristotle, Problems II*, Translated by W.S. Hett (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 158-159.

¹⁴⁶ G.P. Goold, ed., *Aristotle, Generation of Animals*, Translated by A.L. Peck (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 506-507.

ψυχρότης ὥστε ἔνυδρός τις εἶναι καὶ μὴ πνευματική (“again the seeds are more stubborn when the coldness of the air is of a damp sort and not windy”).¹⁴⁷ Here we see πνευματικός translated “windy” in the context of describing damp air, as opposed to the dryness that comes with wind.

The second occurrence in *De Causis Plantarum* is found in the context of fragrance and the changes in the flavour of fruit due to πνευματική (translated by K.K. Link as simply “*pneuma*,” with a footnote, “The *pneuma* accounts for expansion and volatility ... it accounts for the distension (and dropping) of the unripe fig”).¹⁴⁸ The author here uses πνευματικός to demonstrate the process and effect swelling (or ripening) has on the flavour of fruit, not unlike the way Aristotle did before him.¹⁴⁹

The term πνευματικός is used only eight times in the works of Philo. In his work *On the Creation* in section 67, line 11, Philo uses the term πνευματικός to describe that which can produce breath: τὴν δὲ πνευματικὴν εἰς τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεις (“the substance of life-breath to the faculties of the soul”).¹⁵⁰ By using πνευματικός in this way, especially as the English translation is given in the Loeb Classical Library, the reader should understand that the operation, or enablement, of the ψυχή is given by πνεῦμα, or the substance “of the πνεῦμα.” Philo does not quote from Genesis 2:7 in this text (as he does in *Questions and Answers on Genesis*) but certainly similar thoughts emerge in relation to spirit and soul. That is, if “soul” refers here to the “person” (as opposed to the

¹⁴⁷ G.P. Goold, ed., *Theophrastus, De Causis Plantarum*, Book IV, Translated by Benedict Einarson and George K.K. Link, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 318-319.

¹⁴⁸ G.P. Goold, ed., *Theophrastus, De Causis Plantarum*, Book VI, Translated by Benedict Einarson and George K.K. Link, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 396-297.

¹⁴⁹ T.E. Page, ed., *Aristotle, Problems II*, 158-159.

¹⁵⁰ G.P. Goold, ed., *Philo*, Volume I, Translated by F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 53.

“spirit” of the person) as it seems to do in Gen. 2:7, then Philo is simply using the term πνευματικός in the same way Greek writers did before him.

The occurrence of πνευματικός in *Who is the Heir of Divine Things* in section 242, line 6, Philo writes, τῶν πνευματικῶν τόνων (“currents of spirit force”).¹⁵¹ Not unlike the first occurrence, Philo is primarily using the term πνευματικός to describe breath, but in a way that gives it the significance of sustaining life (force or agency). This is the first of three occasions for Philo to use πνευματικός to describe τόνος, meaning, “stretching tension, force, lasting quality.”¹⁵² The first of two occurrences of πνευματικός in *On the Eternity of the World* is in section 86, line 3, where Philo writes, ὁ τρόπων ἔξωος πνευματικῆς, translated “a sort of permeating current” in Goold.¹⁵³ Philo uses πνευματικός to describe a habit, or state of being, which refers to the source of fuel in his illustration of how to understand fire. Philo’s use of πνευματικός appears to be “wind” which lies in wait before a flame is ignited. In this way, Philo is consistently using πνευματικός in the context of the πνεῦμα, or having to do with forces or energy such as wind.

In his work *On Abraham* Philo describes Abraham’s experience of visitors announcing to him that his wife Sarah was going to have a child. Philo comments on Sarah’s understanding of a “different and grander aspect” of these visitors (as prophets or angels), μεταβαλόντων ἀπὸ πνευματικῆς καὶ ψυχοειδοῦς οὐσίας εἰς ἀνθρωπόμορφον ἰδέαν (“transformed from their spiritual and soul-like nature into human shape”).¹⁵⁴ Here

¹⁵¹ G.P. Goold, ed., *Philo*, Volume IV, 405.

¹⁵² BDAG, 1010. Τόνος is not used in the New Testament and only once in the Septuagint, describing the muscles of an old man whose muscles had become flabby (4Mac. 7:13). The other two occasions are in “On rewards and Punishments” (section 48, line 3) and “On the Eternity of the World” (section 125, line 4).

¹⁵³ G.P. Goold, ed., *Philo*, Volume IX, 244-246.

¹⁵⁴ G.P. Goold, ed., *Philo*, Volume VI, 58-59.

Philo's use of πνευματικός describes the immaterial nature of these beings before becoming visible to Abraham and Sarah.

The last two occurrences of πνευματικός in Philo are in Book One and Two of *Questions and Answers on Genesis*. Whereas the occurrence in Book Two simply references and describes a “living being” (Book II, section 12d, line 4), the occurrence in Book One uses the term πνευματικός to describe the difference between the form of an angel and the form of a woman. Philo writes, Πνευματική δὲ ἡ τῶν ἀγγέλων οὐσία, (“But the substance of angels is spiritual”).¹⁵⁵ Here the occurrence of the English gloss ‘spiritual’ is not helpful because it may give the impression that Philo is referring to the substance of an angel when he could be referring to the realm in which it resides. An alternative translation could be, “the substance of angels pertains to the ‘spirit’ realm.” Depending on translation, Philo could be using the term πνευματικός to describe the form of an angel or he could be using it to describe the realm the angel pertains to.

The samples examined above, from all known occurrences of πνευματικός that predate the New Testament, show the adjective being used in relation to the noun πνεῦμα, having a general definition “of the πνεῦμα.”¹⁵⁶ The majority of these occasions are contexts of breathing or describing the effect of elemental forces such as the wind or fermentation. Philo uses the term πνευματικός to describe elemental forces but there are a few occasions where he uses it to describe the form of a being that is not “fleshy.” Philo does not appear to be referring explicitly to the involvement of deity in his use of πνευματικός, but more to the nonphysical form of a being in contrast to the physical.

¹⁵⁵ G.P. Goold, ed., *Philo*, Supplement I, 61.

¹⁵⁶ The search for all known occurrences of πνευματικός has included online searches of papyri and inscriptions.

3.2 Occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament

The following section will review all of the occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament. This will include the fifteen occurrences in 1 Corinthians that will also be further elaborated in chapter four where the project takes a turn to explicitly examine the context of the argument in which these fifteen occurrences are found. What this section will demonstrate is the significant shift in the usage of the term πνευματικός to specifically refer to that which pertains to the Spirit of God, as opposed to simply, or more generically, “pertaining to the πνεῦμα.”

Πνευματικός in Galatians

There is only one occurrence of πνευματικός in Galatians, but it is a good place to start this survey because of the consensus among many scholars that Galatians is Paul’s earliest letter. There is virtually no debate among scholars regarding the Pauline authorship of Galatians.¹⁵⁷ There is significant debate about when Paul wrote this letter and for whom it was intended. These arguments are usually referred to as the North and South Galatian Hypotheses.¹⁵⁸ Although neither hypothesis confirms the date Galatians was written, the North Galatian Hypothesis would allow for a later date of composition than the South Galatian Hypothesis, which causes some to suggest that Galatians was written after 1 Corinthians.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* [Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 41] (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), lvii.

¹⁵⁸ Longenecker lays out a thorough analysis of this debate in the introduction of his commentary on Galatians. Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxiii.

¹⁵⁹ As indicated in chapter one, the estimated date of 1 Corinthians is AD 54-55, based on Paul’s first arrival in Corinth in AD 50-51 according to the archaeological evidence from the Gallio Inscription. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *St. Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, Third Revised and Expanded Edition (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 161-164.

While the importance of these two debates are peripheral to the purposes of this project, the dating of Galatians does have some bearing on the study of the term *πνευματικός*. Even if it is determined that Galatians was written at a later time, most scholars would suggest it was written prior to Paul's third missionary journey, and several others suggest it was written even before the Council of Jerusalem.¹⁶⁰ Holding to these opinions of scholars, the first time the term *πνευματικός* occurs in Pauline writings that survive is in the letter to the Galatians. This is an important factor in this project because it will be suggested that the repeated use of *πνευματικός* in 1 Corinthians is directly connected to how some people in Corinth were using this term to describe themselves, and thus the focus is not simply Paul's use of the term but his re-use of the term in light of how the Corinthians used it. If the letter to the Galatians, which addresses similar issues of gospel and apostolic authority, was written prior to the letter of 1 Corinthians, and it is very likely that it was, then Paul used the term *πνευματικός* prior to the Corinthian correspondence. This would then demonstrate that Paul's use of the term *πνευματικός* did not originate because of the Corinthian misunderstanding, but was a term that Paul was already using to describe the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The one occurrence of *πνευματικός* in Galatians comes at the beginning of chapter six, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). In this text the English phrase "you who live by the Spirit" is translated from *πνευματικός*. The 1984 edition of the NIV simply translates, "you who are spiritual," displaying the common term "spiritual" as the English equivalent of

¹⁶⁰ Longenecker, lxxxviii.

πνευματικός. Here the term is plural nominative (πνευματικοὶ), which mimics the form the Corinthians would have used in their self-declaration as “Spirit-people.”

The instruction for οἱ πνευματικοὶ to restore others who are caught in sin should not be understood as Paul addressing only some of the people in the Galatian churches. The assumption for Paul is that all Christians in Galatia are making effort to live by the Spirit, and thus collectively are οἱ πνευματικοὶ, the “ones who live by the Spirit” as defined in Galatians 5. Donald Guthrie comments, “There is no question here of an exclusive group of believers more spiritual than others. This quality of spirituality is meant for all Christians.”¹⁶¹ J. Louis Martyn adds, “‘The spiritual ones’ (*hoi pneumatikoi*) is a designation for the *whole* of the church, a community free of hierarchical distinctions. The Spirit leads members of the church to help one another, not to stand apart from one another in the feeling of superiority.”¹⁶² Martyn understands πνευματικός as a description for all Christians, not just the few who see themselves as superior to others.

F.F. Bruce points out that the context of restoring someone with a “spirit of gentleness” (Gal. 6:1) is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This means that “those who live by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25; 6:1) restore others ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος (“in the Spirit of gentleness”) because they manifest the fruit of God’s Spirit in their lives. Paul is not conceding that only some will emerge within the community to be οἱ πνευματικοὶ but that all who confess Christ would become the kind of Spirit-people who are ready to help others in gentleness. Bruce concludes:

If there were in the Galatian churches, as in the church of Corinth, some who regarded themselves as pneumatikoi in a superior sense (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15; 3:1;

¹⁶¹ Donald Guthrie, *Galatians* [The New Century Bible Commentary] (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 142.

¹⁶² Louise J. Martyn, *Galatians* [The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries] (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 546.

14:37)— ‘whoever feels himself a *Pneumatiker*’ (H. Lietzmann, *An die Galater*, 38)—Paul impresses on them that one test of true spirituality is a readiness to set those who stumble by the wayside on the right road again in a sympathetic and uncensorious spirit.¹⁶³

Richard Longenecker also agrees that Paul is not encouraging a hierarchy within the community but inviting both the libertine and legalistic Galatian believers to consider themselves οἱ πνευματικοὶ on the basis of being in Christ. Longenecker comments:

There is, therefore, no reason to doubt and abundant reason to believe that Paul here uses this designation with approval in speaking about all his converts in Galatia. They are, despite their legal and libertine enticements, ‘the true spirituals’ simply because being ‘in Christ’ they have become the recipients of God’s Spirit.¹⁶⁴

While Paul’s vision for all Christians is to be influenced by the Spirit’s agency, his practical exhortation in Galatians 6:1 for οἱ πνευματικοὶ to restore those caught in sin is found in the context of a letter dominated with tension between πνεῦμα and σὰρξ (Gal. 5:17).¹⁶⁵ Paul uses σὰρξ in Galatians to refer both to the pursuit of Torah, which has a literal “flesh” application (Gal. 2:19-21; 3:2-3; 5:2-6), and the worldly pursuits of the libertine believers (Gal. 5:13-21) who seek to indulge the pleasures of the flesh.¹⁶⁶ Paul’s

¹⁶³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC-13; Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 260. This posture is consistent with Jesus’ discussion about restoration and humility in Matthew 18.

¹⁶⁴ Longenecker concludes, “So by reminding his converts of their status as πνευματικοί Paul calls on them to live up to that status.” Longenecker, *Galatians*, 273. James Dunn disagrees, noting it is unlikely that Paul would expect the whole church to respond to the person caught in transgression. Dunn also adds that if Paul in fact had a specific group in mind, he may have fallen “into a trap of over-emphasizing manifest experience or overt displays of the Spirit as a mark of maturity ... and it could be that he learned only by later experience how badly wrong such an emphasis could go (1 Cor. ii.13-iii.1).” James Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 319. But it is unlikely that Paul was naïve to this danger, thus Dunn’s further suggestion that Paul was generally referring to the whole church as οἱ πνευματικοὶ but each responding in their own context relationally, not everyone responding to every situation.

¹⁶⁵ There are no occurrences of other corresponding terms such as ψυχικός, σαρκικός/σάρκινος, γνῶσις, χάρισμα, or τέλειος in Galatians as there are in 1 Corinthians.

¹⁶⁶ These texts are not neatly divided to address two groups of people specifically, and as Fee notes, “he is reminding the Galatians that *both categories of “work”* (religious observance and sins of the flesh)

answer to both groups is to no longer be Torah-centered but Spirit-centered people, living in obedience not to the law but to the Spirit of God. As people who already have God's Spirit, they are instructed to keep in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).

Paul repeatedly refers to the Galatian Christians as possessed by and in possession of the Spirit of God (cf. 3:2-5, 14; 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16-18, 22-23, 25; 6:8). It is evident that Paul's single use of the adjective πνευματικός in Galatians is consistent with his constant use of the noun πνεῦμα to describe activity pertaining to the Holy Spirit, and thus an influence of the Spirit of God.

Πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians

The first four occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians are found in chapters two and three.¹⁶⁷ These occurrences are all a part of Paul's argument against the Corinthian claim to wisdom that has become their boast, but which is dividing them through quarrels (1:11; 3:3) and exposing their immaturity as Christians (3:1-2). The first two of these four occurrences are found next to each other in 2:13, creating a complicated phrase that is translated in the NIV, "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, *explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words*" (italics mine). This end phrase is translated from πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες (2:13). The verb συγκρίνοντες means "to combine" (to bring things together so as to form a unit) or "to compare" (to draw a conclusion by comparing) or "to explain, interpret" ("to clarify on the basis of a compatible relationship").¹⁶⁸ The term

belong to the past for those who are in Christ and now walk by the Spirit." Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 441.

¹⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 2:13 (x2), 15; 3:1.

¹⁶⁸ BDAG, 953.

συγκρίνοντες is used only another two times in the New Testament, both in 2 Corinthians and both clearly meaning “compare” (2 Cor. 10:12). Although some have argued for its classical sense of “combining,” the context of Paul’s explanation, most notably the juxtaposition of πνεῦμα in 1 Cor.2:12, favours the third definition in BDAG as “explain” or “interpret.”¹⁶⁹

The difficulty is the occurrence of πνευματικός in the dative plural (πνευματικοῖς), which can be either neuter or masculine. If interpreted in light of what follows with a comparison of the ψυχικός person, it may seem right to translate this as masculine and therefore the “spiritual realities” are being explained to “spiritual people.” But if it is interpreted with what precedes it, namely “words taught by the Spirit,” then translating it as neuter is a better option. The dative is then understood as an instrumental dative, and πνευματικά “spiritual realities” are explained by πνευματικοῖς “spiritual words” (or “truths”). By stating in the previous verse that the πνεῦμα is ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, Paul is already providing the context by which he wants his readers to understand the derived adjective. Thiselton states that, “this is a decisive indication that Paul wishes the adjectival form πνευματικός to be understood as meaning **of the Spirit** (of God).”¹⁷⁰ One might translate more simply “*of the Spirit explaining of the Spirit*” to highlight Paul’s emphasis that revelation *about God* is *from God*. Understanding πνευματικός in this context then is, as Fee states in his 1 Corinthians commentary, “The Spirit is thus the key to everything.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 104-105. Thiselton notes, “Everything depends on judgments about the contextual flow of the argument, the situation at Corinth which shapes how Paul would consider his language to be perceived and received, and not least on Paul’s own theology of revelation and communication and of the Holy Spirit.” Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 265.

¹⁷⁰ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 265.

¹⁷¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 122.

Paul then addresses the person who is πνευματικός (2:15), who is able to make judgments about the things of God that the ψυχικός person (“person without the Spirit”) is not able to. Although some English New Testaments translate ψυχικός as “unspiritual,” the better choice is “natural” or as the NIV states, “person without the Spirit.” As Thiselton explains, “...the term becomes negative rather than conveying the more value-neutral nuances of *ordinary person* or **person who lives on an entirely human level.**”¹⁷² In this text, the ψυχικός person is the opposite to the πνευματικός person only by distinction of the residing Spirit.

The other two occurrences of πνευματικός are in 1 Cor. 2:15 and 3:1. The NIV translates πνευματικός in 2:15 as “person with the Spirit” and in 3:1 as “people who live by the Spirit,” clearly demonstrating the committee’s understanding of πνευματικός as “belonging to the Spirit.” The difference between “with” in 2:15 and “live by” in 3:1 is minor but demonstrates the range in which “belonging to the Spirit” can be applied. The translation of πνευματικός as “person with the Spirit” in 2:15 is in the context of comparing the πνευματικός person and the ψυχικός person to establish how revelation works and thus how one attains σοφία. The translation of πνευματικός as “people who live by the Spirit” in 3:1 is in the context of Paul’s *application* of attaining σοφία, where Paul rebukes the Corinthians for being νήπιος, currently unable to understand σοφία. Paul is not telling the Corinthians they do not have the Spirit, but that he could not address them “as” (ὥς) πνευματικοῖς. By this it is evident that πνευματικός can be used both to

¹⁷² Thiselton is careful to acknowledge that “ordinary” can also be problematic for those reading with gnostic lenses and therefore understanding Paul in the exact opposite way he intended. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 268. Also, one needs to be careful that “entirely human level” is not understood as completely neutral in a world that is captivated by sin. The emphasis on “neutral” is not “innocent” so much as it is a reference to the ordinary human self without the Spirit, which of course is also a human self that is influenced by sin.

indicate that a person has the Spirit and to describe the person who is living according to the Spirit (or in this case “not living by the Spirit”).

There are two observations regarding these four uses of πνευματικός that help the reader understand how Paul is using this term. First, we must understand the significance of the πνευματικός-ψυχικός pairing language. Although it is not completely accurate to regard these terms as opposites, Paul is definitely using one in contrast to the other. By using these two terms together to establish the basis of his argument regarding God’s revelation, the meaning Paul intended is made clearer. Paul demonstrates to the Corinthians that the πνευματικός person is not someone who has *achieved* something, but *received* something, namely the Spirit of God. This is in opposition to the ψυχικός person who has not received the Spirit of God.

The second observation is to understand that Paul is primarily referring to the work of God’s Spirit in the context of revelation. Because it is the Spirit of God that is the key to understanding God’s revelation to humanity, we can conclude that Paul’s vision of a πνευματικός person, or his vision of the Christian identity, is demonstrated by their reception of divine wisdom, which is made accessible by the presence of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷³

Paul makes a shift in the development of 1 Corinthians after chapter four to deal with a few ethical and moral issues in chapters 5-10.¹⁷⁴ While chapters five to ten provide an important context that will be considered in chapter four of this project, it is only

¹⁷³ It may also be helpful to make note of the adverb πνευματικῶς which is used only here in 2:14 and in Rev. 11:8. The adverb πνευματικῶς can function in a similar way to πνευματικός as a description of Spirit activity, or pertaining to the Spirit, but less evidence is available regarding the full use of this term in Paul’s time. John seems to use it in Revelation to mean “figuratively” as the NIV has translated it. It would be difficult to explain Rev. 11:8 if πνευματικῶς meant the work or the activity of the Spirit.

¹⁷⁴ Most scholars would agree this section of the letter does not end with chapter 10 but actually ends in 11:1.

chapters nine (once) and ten (three times) that have occurrences of the term πνευματικός. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 9:11, “If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?” Not only is πνευματικός used here in a seemingly different way than in chapters two and three, but the reoccurrence of the contrasting σαρκικός is also somewhat puzzling.

Paul’s use of σαρκικός in chapter three is negative, implying that the Corinthians were living according to the flesh even though they had access to the Spirit. Yet in 1 Corinthians 9:11, in reference to supplying Paul with physical resources required to continue his work of preaching the gospel, σαρκικός is used in a positive way as the good result of “sowing” πνευματικός.¹⁷⁵ Although this appears to be an entirely different way of using the term πνευματικός, one might ask in what other way could πνευματικός be understood here other than the agency or activity of God’s Spirit? If πνευματικός in 9:11 is anything less than the agency of the Spirit, then Paul’s insistence that his preaching was by the Spirit’s power, not his own (2:4-5), was a false claim.¹⁷⁶

In chapter 10 we see the first three uses of the adjective πνευματικός with accompanying nouns. All three nouns that Paul describes as πνευματικός (food, drink, and rock) are taken from Israel’s history of wanderings in the desert. Gordon Fee suggests Paul needed a word that was essentially going to accomplish two things at the same time: refer to these desert provisions as a reminder of the supernatural way that God provided for his people, and to help the Corinthians see these as a “type” for the Lord’s Supper.¹⁷⁷ Historically, Paul could not be referring to a non-physical substance or a non-

¹⁷⁵ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 689.

¹⁷⁶ Paul will use both πνευματικός and σαρκικός in a comparable way in Romans 15:27, which will be discussed below.

¹⁷⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 493.

visible substance, nor could he be suggesting a mere moral designation or achievement. The difficulty is explaining that food, drink, and a rock can be animated by the Spirit in the same way that a person might be. The term πνευματικός, then, is best understood as God making provision, as Thiselton notes, "...with all the 'hallmarks' of what is regarded as a miraculous provision."¹⁷⁸ Paul is explicitly referring to the miraculous provision of manna for the Israelites in the desert. The term πνευματικός, then, is not making a figurative argument but a miraculous argument.¹⁷⁹

The next three occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians are found in chapters twelve and fourteen where Paul is instructing the Corinthians about the activity of the Spirit when the church comes together. In 1 Cor. 12:1, Paul begins with Περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν (*Now concerning the activity of the Spirit*).¹⁸⁰ The adjective πνευματικῶν is substantive in this text, so most English New Testaments add the noun "gifts" ("spiritual gifts"). This is the only genitive plural form of πνευματικός in the New Testament and can be understood as either masculine ("spiritual people") or neuter ("spiritual things").¹⁸¹ In this case, the neuter gender is preferred because it appears Paul is talking about "things" versus "people" as most translations suggest with the insertion of the noun "gifts."

The difficulty with glossing this substantival adjective with "gifts" in 12:1 is that Paul outlines three ways which the Spirit is manifested (12:7) through Christians in the

¹⁷⁸ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 726. This understanding also aligns with the BDAG definition of "pertaining to the Spirit," noted in chapter one.

¹⁷⁹ It should also be noted that this miraculous provision was not merely to meet physical needs but to also reveal divine wisdom to Israel in order to build their faith. In this way the usage of the term πνευματικός in chapter ten is consistent with what has already been seen in chapters two and three.

¹⁸⁰ Translation mine. Most English translations assume Paul means "gifts" here, which distorts the direction Paul takes in the subsequent sentences.

¹⁸¹ Technically it could also be feminine, but where nouns of mixed gender are the presumed referent, a neuter form would be expected normally.

church in 12:4-6: χαρισμάτων (*gifts or graces*), διακονιῶν (*services or ministries*), and ἐνεργημάτων (*workings or operations*). Although “gifts” is not necessarily a wrong choice for 12:1, it could be too limiting as it appears that Paul meant to include other kinds of manifestations of the Spirit besides “gifts” (i.e. “services” and “workings”) to understand how the Spirit is active in Christians (or “in the church”).¹⁸² Furthermore, although 12:2-3 is not easily understood, at least not fully, it appears Paul is following his opening statement with an explanation of the kinds of utterances one can expect of those who are animated by the Spirit of God.¹⁸³ What seems conclusive is that Paul is using πνευματικός in 12:1 specifically to refer to the activity of the Spirit.¹⁸⁴

In chapter fourteen Paul returns to the subject of the activity of the Spirit after making his most important point about the work of the Spirit: it is all about love (13:1-13). Paul writes in 14:1, Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά (“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit”). The neuter gender of the adjective πνευματικός means Paul is not referring to spiritual “persons” but “things.” Similar to 12:1, most English New Testaments translate this as “spiritual gifts” or “gifts of the Spirit.” By suggesting or insisting that “gifts” is what Paul meant to accompany πνευματικά, it logically follows to translate the verb προφητεύετε (*to prophesy*) as a noun *prophecy* in the second part of the sentence to maintain the subject of “gifts” (or the

¹⁸² Fee suggests, “Paul’s immediate – and overall – concern has to do with what comes from ‘the Spirit of God’ (v. 3).” Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 638.

¹⁸³ “You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:2-3, NIV).

¹⁸⁴ Because the adjective πνευματικῶν can be understood as masculine as well as neuter, there is also a possibility that Paul meant to be more specific about not being ignorant of the way the Spirit is active in people. This is given further significance because Paul is clearly referring to people in verses two and three. Although Paul is addressing the church and perhaps some in the church more specifically, understanding the opening statement as a neuter plural (*things*) is preferred because the greater emphasis in this part of the letter is how the activity of the Spirit is manifested in the church.

possession of gifts). As will be demonstrated below, this decision is potentially reversing Paul's entire argument regarding some in Corinth who were eager to possess the most excellent gifts.

If one does not impose the noun “gifts” on this verse, and simply translates the subjunctive verb προφητεύετε as a verb, it might read something closer to: “Pursue love and eagerly desire the Spirit's activity in you, especially so that you may prophesy.” The result is that Paul is instructing the Corinthians to have an eager desire for the activity of God's Spirit in their lives as opposed to eagerly desiring the possession of gifts. One result of this activity of the Spirit is prophetic speech in the church's gatherings, especially the gift of prophecy.¹⁸⁵ Similar to the way Paul began chapter twelve, this approach has Paul addressing the way the Spirit is at work in the church instead of addressing the gifts the Corinthians possess. If this is correct, translating Paul's instructions as “gifts” is the exact opposite point he is trying to make as the Corinthians were eagerly competing with each other in all that they possessed.

The last of the three occurrences of πνευματικός in chapters eleven to fourteen is found in 14:37, “If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command” (14:37). Here again the NIV adds “gifted” in order to bring clarity to the substantive adjective πνευματικός. Although “gifted” is not necessarily wrong it is perhaps slightly limiting as it appears Paul's emphasis is not on what someone “has” as much as he is emphasizing where a prophetic word originates, as Paul writes in 14:36, “Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?” It is evident in

¹⁸⁵ Once again the result of the Spirit's agency in the lives of believers offers divine wisdom, this time in the form of prophetic speech.

Paul's instruction for the Corinthians to eagerly desire πνευματικά and again to eagerly desire to prophesy (14:39) that in all three passages Paul uses πνευματικός consistently to refer to the activity of the Spirit.

The last four occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians are found in chapter 15 in verses 44 and 46. In chapter fifteen, Paul is making his ultimate argument regarding the resurrection of the dead by first arguing that Jesus was raised from the dead (15:1-34), and then he moves the argument toward the resurrection body (15:35-49). In order to make his case regarding the resurrection body, Paul returns to the πνευματικός-ψυχικός language from 1 Corinthians 2, the only two known places in all of Greek literature that these words are found together.

All four occurrences of the adjective πνευματικός in 1 Cor. 15:44-46 modify the noun σῶμα, although the noun actually only appears in verse 44. Theologically, the difficulty for the Corinthians was not a σῶμα ψυχικόν (*natural body*) but a σῶμα πνευματικόν (*spiritual body*). The σῶμα ψυχικόν would have been the only "body" the Corinthians could grasp. They would have thought about their πνευματικός status as above or apart from their physical body, and they would not have included bodily existence in their eschatology.

The key to understanding what kind of body Paul had in mind must be the πνευματικός-ψυχικός language that Paul first used in 1 Corinthians 2 regarding the πνευματικός person versus the ψυχικός person. Paul's somatic theology would mean that a πνευματικός body does not need to be non-physical or non-visible, but completely reliant on the agency of the Spirit of God, or a body that is suited for the immaterial realm of the Spirit.

Although the fifteen occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians vary in context, two things remain consistent in how Paul uses this term. First, Paul always uses this term to speak directly or indirectly about the influence, and thus the agency, of the Spirit of God. Paul's eschatological approach to pneumatology means that the believer already begins to live in the realm of the Spirit upon receiving the Spirit, and is all the more "pertaining to the Spirit" in resurrection. Living in the realm of the Spirit means accessing resources, wisdom and provision of the Spirit in many different ways, including the provision of a resurrection body that is suited for the eternal realm of the Spirit. Second, and what will become the focus in the following chapters of this project, is that Paul uses the term πνευματικός repeatedly in 1 Corinthians. In doing so, Paul did not propose a change of the meaning of πνευματικός, but his application of this term in 1 Corinthians targeted a particular misunderstanding in the church in Corinth, thus the repeated occurrences in his letter to them.

Πνευματικός in Romans

There are three occurrences of πνευματικός in Romans, Paul's letter to the church in Rome written from Corinth on his third and last visit to the Corinthian church.¹⁸⁶ The first occurrence of the term in Romans 1:11 reads: ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν

¹⁸⁶ In Romans 16:1-2 Paul commends Phoebe to the church in Rome. Phoebe was a deacon and most likely a house church leader in Cenchreae. It seems probable that Phoebe will carry the letter and be Paul's envoy to the church in Rome. Paul also indicates in Romans 16:23 that he is currently enjoying the hospitality of Gaius, one of the men that Paul baptized (1 Cor. 1:14), and possibly also known as Gaius Titius Justus, in whose home the church began after the Jews rejected Paul's teaching in the synagogue (Acts 18:7). As Paul uses the term πνευματικός while dictating this letter to Rome (Rom. 16:22), he does so having overcome the problems with those in Corinth who had misunderstood or had a twisted view of being spiritual people, cf. E.J. Goodspeed, "Gaius Titus Justus," JBL 69 (1950), pp. 382-383; F.F. Bruce, *Acts*, 350.

πνευματικὸν (*so that I might share some grace resource of the Spirit with you*).¹⁸⁷ The word order here helps the reader see the connection Paul makes between grace and Spirit, as he will do again in Romans 8. The NIV renders this “that I may impart to you some spiritual gift,” which obscures χάρισμα as simply a gift that requires πνευματικὸν to make it “spiritual.” Although there are two other occasions in the New Testament where πνευματικός is translated as “spiritual gifts” or “gifts of the Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:1 and 14:1), as indicated above, both occurrences of πνευματικός in those contexts are substantive and are not associated with a noun.¹⁸⁸ In Romans 1:11, however, Paul includes the noun χάρισμα (*grace bestowed*) alongside πνευματικός, the only place in the New Testament where this happens.¹⁸⁹

James Dunn insists that πνευματικά is synonymous with χαρίσματα in 1 Corinthians 12:1 and 14:1 and says the redundancy in Rom. 1:11 is added for emphasis: “a truly spiritual gift.”¹⁹⁰ But there is no precedent for this nor is there any reason for Paul to add emphasis to χαρίσματα. What he does try to do is clarify how these χαρίσματα are manifested or expressed in the faith community.¹⁹¹ In fact, it appears that Paul goes out of

¹⁸⁷ Translation mine.

¹⁸⁸ In both cases it is generally understood that Paul is addressing gifts of the Spirit and so most English translations add the noun “gifts” so that it makes sense to the modern reader. Unfortunately, this is a simplification or reduction of what Paul is really addressing, which is understanding the way the Spirit is active in the community of believers.

¹⁸⁹ The term χάρισμα derives from χάρις, meaning “grace.” Funk, Van Voorst and Robertson all indicate that the significance of the suffix -μα is “the result of an activity” and therefore the more abstract noun χάρις translated as “grace” takes a more concrete form in χάρισμα, translated “gift” or “gift of grace.” Funk, Blass and Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1961), 59; Van Voorst, 7; Robertson, 350.

¹⁹⁰ Dunn writes, “The use of πνευματικόν, “spiritual” (that is, belonging to the Spirit, embodying or manifesting Spirit) is striking, since in 1 Cor 12:1 and 14:1 πνευματικά = χαρίσματα.” Although Dunn gets the definition of πνευματικὸν correct, 1 Cor. 12:1 and 14:1 are not both πνευματικά (12:1 is τῶν πνευματικῶν), nor is it obvious that πνευματικά = χαρίσματα. James Dunn, *Romans 1-8*. [Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 38A] (Milton Keynes, UK: Word Publishing, 1988), 30.

¹⁹¹ Dunn may not have considered the word order here, ignoring the priority of χάρισμα as already something provided by God.

his way to avoid using πνευματικός when he wants to narrowly talk about “gifts” because of how the Corinthians were confusing the matter. Ernst Käsemann suggests that “[in] his stance against enthusiasm Paul scrupulously avoids the latter term whenever he can and replaces it with the former.”¹⁹² Käsemann is not suggesting these terms are synonyms but simply indicate Paul’s preference of vocabulary to avoid misunderstanding. Käsemann correctly suggests, “all charismata are πνευματικά.”¹⁹³ Although these two words have some relation to each other, πνευματικά is an adjective that describes the agency of the Spirit in relation to a person or thing, whereas χαρίσματα is a noun that is something received by grace. What is explicit in the term πνευματικός is only implicit in χαρίσματα: it is by the Spirit of God that people receive God’s resources.

The specific wording of Paul sharing a gift in Romans 1:11 is odd for modern ears. Distribution of gifts or “manifestations of the Spirit” is an activity of the Spirit, not of people (1 Cor. 12:7). Thomas Schreiner discounts Cranfield’s understanding of this gift in Rom. 1:11 as a “general blessing” as well as Moo’s understanding of it as an “insight or ability” and states, “Rather, Fee observes rightly that the gift mentioned here relates directly to the purpose of the Roman letter.”¹⁹⁴ Fee was not the first nor the only New Testament scholar to suggest this meaning, but in his book *God’s Empowering Presence* he states, “In its present context, and especially in light of the letter as a whole, the ‘Spirit gift’ that he most likely wishes to share with them is his understanding of the gospel that in Christ Jesus God has created from among Jews and Gentiles one people for himself, apart from Torah.”¹⁹⁵ Fee says that in this way the letter itself has become a

¹⁹² Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1980), 19.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 54.

¹⁹⁵ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 488.

Spirit-gifting to the Romans, in place of, or perhaps preceding, a personal visit wherein which they will be able to partake of this gospel together (Rom. 1:12).

What is most important to identify for the purposes of this project is that Paul had the Spirit of God in mind when he wrote about a “gift” that he wanted to share with the church in Rome. Paul’s use of the adjective πνευματικός was to demonstrate the *initiative* or *working* or *power* that the Spirit produces. God’s *grace* (χάρις) and his *grace bestowed* (χάρισμα) to the church are animated and manifested by his Spirit. If part of what Paul had in mind was to impart the gift by instruction, that is to share the “deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10), then Paul’s usage in Romans 1:11 fits well with how Paul has used πνευματικός in previous letters.

The second occurrence of πνευματικός in Romans is found in the well-known “I” passage in Romans 7. Paul writes, “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin” (Rom. 7:14). In this text Paul refers to the law (ὁ νόμος) as πνευματικός. In his commentary on Romans, John E. Toews states simply why Paul chose to use πνευματικός to describe the law: “it comes from and embodies the Spirit of God,” which is a consistent view of understanding the adjective πνευματικός.¹⁹⁶ Here the law represents the wisdom revealed from God to his people, and this revealing was primarily through the agency of the Spirit.

Richard Longenecker writes that it is “highly appropriate” for Paul to call the law “spiritual” (πνευματικός) because the divine origin is God’s Spirit, its authority expresses God’s will for humanity, and is only understood and practiced rightly by the enablement

¹⁹⁶ John E. Toews, *Romans* [Believers Church Bible Commentary] (Scottsdale, PA.: Herald Press), 201.

of the Spirit.¹⁹⁷ But more than that, the law is πνευματικός because it is from within the workings of God that the law emerged, and in this way it is of the realm of the Spirit. Fitzmyer notes, “As *pneumatikos*, the law belongs to the sphere of God, to the sphere of the Spirit of God; it is an expression of God’s will,” and as such, “it is opposed to what is *sarkinos*, ‘carnal, belonging to the sphere of the flesh.’”¹⁹⁸

Paul’s description of the law as spiritual must be understood within his dualistic framework: the law is spiritual, but he is unspiritual (Rom. 7:14). The word translated “unspiritual” is σάρκινος, often used as a synonym of σαρκικός in the New Testament. Paul’s dualism here is not nonphysical versus physical, but having to do with origins, “from God” rather than “from the world.”¹⁹⁹

The third occurrence of πνευματικός in Romans is found near the end of the letter in Romans 15:27, “They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.” In his closing words, Paul tells the church in Rome that he plans to visit them on his way to Spain, right after delivering the collection to Jerusalem that was taken up in Macedonia and Achaia (15:26).²⁰⁰ Paul’s case to the Gentiles in these regions was that the Gentiles have received what is “of the Spirit” through the Jews, and an appropriate response is to at least share with the Jews material wealth as an act of reciprocity. This text is a parallel to 1 Cor. 9:11 where Paul reasons with the Corinthians

¹⁹⁷ Richard Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT] (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 661.

¹⁹⁸ Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians*, 473.

¹⁹⁹ Paul’s dualism here is difficult because “the world” is also “from God.”

²⁰⁰ Perhaps this is also Paul’s way of preparing the church in Rome for the support he will need to complete his next journey.

regarding his right to share in their σαρκικός harvest because of the πνευματικός seeds he had planted.

Paul uses the term σαρκικός in these contexts not with reference to a “worldly” way, but to an earthly way. The semantic spectrum of σαρκικός is broad, as was established in chapter two. It means “pertaining to creation,” or “that which is created,” or “of the world.” In some cases that seems to be neutral and in other cases it seems to be characterized by evil desires or lust.

The word “blessings” in the NIV is added to both Greek adjectives that are otherwise substantive in the Greek text (without a noun to modify) in Romans 15:27.²⁰¹ The word “blessings” is certainly not a bad choice, nonetheless it does generalize what the Gentiles received from the Jews, which is not simply a blessing but the new revelation of God through the Messiah in its entirety, which came to them spiritually: by the work of the Spirit of God.²⁰² One might wonder if this comment also relates to Paul’s usage of πνευματικός in Rom. 1:11, suggesting they support him financially and in other ways in exchange for the gift he brings to them from God.

Πνευματικός in Ephesians and Colossians

There are three occurrences of πνευματικός in Ephesians and two in Colossians. The first occurrence is in Ephesians 1:3, describing εὐλογία (*blessing*) in Christ. Unlike the occurrence of πνευματικός in Romans 15:27 where English translations supply the

²⁰¹ The KJV simply adds “things” as to not add interpretation to the text.

²⁰² Käsemann describes this as “heavenly gifts effected by the Spirit” and rendering their thanks with “earthly support.” Käsemann, 399.

noun “blessings,” Paul is more explicit here by providing the noun εὐλογία.²⁰³ The term εὐλογία is used for both human and divine blessings in the New Testament, but in Eph. 1:3 it is clear Paul is referring to something that comes from God. As the context of the passage demonstrates, Paul is describing a blessing “of the Spirit” that ultimately has an eschatological allusion, as vv. 1:9b-10 make clear: “to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ” (Eph. 1:9b-10).

The “blessing” is described as πνευματικός because it is a blessing that is from or that is implemented by the Spirit. This is not to be confused with a person’s inner life that is hidden (i.e. one’s *spirit*), but as something “in the heavenly realms” and “in Christ.” Although the blessing may affect the inner self (spirit), the source of the blessing is from another realm and is a part of God’s saving activity.²⁰⁴ As Andrew Lincoln states, “The blessing consists of God’s saving activity in Christ and this fullness of divine blessing can be described as “spiritual” ... because it is bound up with the Holy Spirit.”²⁰⁵ The use of πνευματικός in 1:3 is then consistent with the remaining two occurrences of πνευματικός in Ephesians, namely 5:19; 6:12, as nicely summarized by Lincoln: “This sense of ‘spiritual,’ as resulting from the presence and work of the Spirit, is to be found in 5:19 (cf. also Col. 1:9; 3:16), and the last two verses of the eulogy, vv. 13, 14, indicate

²⁰³ In one sentence, Paul refers to “blessing” three times in three different forms: adjective (εὐλογητός), verb (εὐλογέω), and noun (εὐλογία).

²⁰⁴ Markus Barth, *Ephesians* [Anchor Bible, Vol. 34] (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1974), 101.

²⁰⁵ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* [Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 42] (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1990), 19-20. Markus Barth explains the meaning of πνευματικός in the Anchor Bible Commentary of Ephesians and concludes, “Above all, those things or events are called “spiritual” that are a result and evidence of the presence of the Spirit.” Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, 101.

that present appropriation of the blessing of the inheritance occurs through participation in the Spirit.”²⁰⁶

The second occurrence of πνευματικός in Ephesians describes the plural noun ᾠδαῖς (*songs*) in Eph. 5:19, which is a close parallel to Col. 3:16, also the second occurrence of πνευματικός in Colossians. Paul’s instruction to speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs of the Spirit in Ephesians comes immediately after an exhortation to not be drunk with wine but to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Although the feminine plural ending πνευματικαῖς is specifically modifying only ᾠδαῖς (*songs*), the imperative πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι that precedes “psalms and hymns, and songs from the Spirit” indicates a view that it is the filling of the Spirit that results in these kinds of faith expressions.²⁰⁷

Lincoln points out that these three terms are the most common ways for speaking about religious songs in the Septuagint, used interchangeably with one another. Listing all three in Eph. 5:19 (and Col. 3:16) has more to do with repeated emphasis than three distinct styles of song.²⁰⁸ And as all three terms are placed in the context of being filled with the Spirit, it appears plain that all three are “belonging to the Spirit” in some way.

Furthermore, in both occurrences of πνευματικός (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) the author refers to the heart. In Eph. 5:19 it is a reference to making music from the heart to the Lord, and in Col. 3:16 it is singing to God with gratitude in the heart. Similar to the

²⁰⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 19-20.

²⁰⁷ Ben Witherington notes, “The Spirit is both the means and the substance of the filling, and v. 19 tells what sort of response the Spirit prompts in the believer.” Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians*, 312.

²⁰⁸ Lincoln explains, “Their synonymity makes it all the more likely that the adjective πνευματικαῖς, “spiritual,” although agreeing in gender with only the last in the series, embraces all three terms.” Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 19-20.

blessing text of Eph. 1:3, the inner self (e.g., “heart”) is where the Spirit of God dwells, and where Christ is present. Lincoln states:

Believers who are filled with the Spirit delight to sing the praise of Christ, and such praise comes not just from the lips but from the individual’s innermost being, from the heart, where the Spirit himself resides (cf. 3:16, 17, where the Spirit in the inner person is equivalent to Christ in the heart).²⁰⁹

The third occurrence of πνευματικός in Ephesians describes πονηρίας (*evil*), and it is translated in many English New Testaments as “forces of evil” (Eph. 6:12). Here again the author’s fondness for repetition is seen in the five-times repeated accusative πρὸς, “For our struggle is not *against* flesh and blood, but *against* the rulers, *against* the authorities, *against* the powers of this dark world and *against* the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12, italics mine). The contrastive ἀλλὰ separating “flesh and blood” from the remaining four is a clear indicator that the author is making a distinction between physical and nonphysical, which is a slight departure in the use of πνευματικός. While remaining consistent with the general meaning of “pertaining to the πνεῦμα,” here it is obvious that it is not referring to God’s Spirit, but to “spirits of evil” or perhaps the “spirits in the realm of evil.”²¹⁰

The remaining occurrence of πνευματικός in Ephesians and Colossians is in Col. 1:9, “We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives” (Col. 1:9b). The author here articulates a filling of the knowledge of God’s will that comes from God and accomplishing this “filling” through a πνευματικός wisdom and understanding (the dative πνευματικῇ

²⁰⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 19-20.

²¹⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 444. If Paul meant “spirits of evil” in Eph. 6:12, why not just write τὰ πνεύματα τῆς πονηρίας? Paul may simply be referring to the unseen forces he has already mentioned in the earlier part of Eph. 6:12, and then using πνευματικός to characterize these evil forces as a part of the realm of evil.

relating to both dative nouns). It is quite clear in this text that the role of πνευματικός is to describe a wisdom and understanding from God that accomplishes the filling of the knowledge of God's will, similar to what Paul wrote in chapters two and three of 1 Corinthians.

What is demonstrated in the occurrences of πνευματικός in Ephesians and Colossians is that “pertaining to the Spirit” has broad application. Something can pertain to the Spirit because it is *from* God, it can pertain to the Spirit because it is *about* God, it can pertain to the Spirit because it *belongs to* God, and it also can pertain to that which is *against* God (evil forces, or spiritual beings opposing God).

Πνευματικός in 1 Peter

There are only two occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament not found in Paul's letters, and both are found in 1 Peter 2:5. The author writes, “You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

The adjective πνευματικός is used twice within the same sentence to describe both a house/household (singular) and sacrifices (plural) that are acceptable to God.²¹¹ The nouns “house” (or “household”) and “sacrifices” both function metaphorically as the

²¹¹ The term οἶκος can mean “house” as in a physical structure, but it can also mean “household” as in a family unit or those who occupy the house. Elliott says in the case of polyvalent terms one must look at the context. The difficulty is that the context bears both the imagery of a physical temple and also a people, a royal lineage. Elliott writes, “Whereas King David had planned to build God a house (*oikos*, i.e., a temple), God countered his intention by promising to build him a house (*oikos*, i.e., royal lineage) that would last forever.” John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, The Anchor Bible, (New York, NY: Doubleday), 414. While Elliott favours “household” in 2:5, J. Ramsey Michaels indicates that the preference of “house” (or “household”) over “temple” is less significant than Elliott contends, arguing that, “the ‘spiritual house’ of which Peter speaks is immediately said to be ‘for the holy priesthood,’ and it is difficult to imagine a house intended for priesthood as being anything other than a temple of some sort.” J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter* [Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 49] (Waco, TX: Word Publisher, 1988), 100.

author creates a picture of how the people of God come together in a new way in Jesus, bearing the imagery of the temple in Jerusalem in both structure and practice. In the same way they are a household, a royal priesthood, offering sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. By using this cultic imagery as metaphor, the author of 1 Peter is able to describe the Christian life in eschatological terms that is sourced in and enabled by the Spirit.²¹²

The author of 1 Peter uses the term *πνευματικός* specifically to make a point about the nature of the church, and he does so using rich imagery from Israel's past. The point the author makes here takes on greater significance in the broader context of the entire letter, which contains revelatory insight by the Holy Spirit in 1:11-12, the transforming work by the Spirit in 3:18 and 4:6, and sanctifying comments in 1:2 and 4:14.²¹³ The use of *πνευματικός* in 1 Peter, then, is to indicate or signify identity as belonging to God through the Spirit. The author describes the house(hold) and sacrifices as “of the Spirit” (*πνευματικός*) in the context of a letter that indicates both belonging and agency of the Spirit.

3.3 Occurrences of πνευματικός in the Apostolic Fathers

The term *πνευματικός* occurs nineteen times in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.²¹⁴ All three occurrences of *πνευματικός* in 2 Clement describe the *ἐκκλησία* (*church*), but it is not entirely clear in his explanation what the author wants his reader to

²¹² John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, The Anchor Bible (New York, NY: Doubleday), 422. Elliot notes in his commentary on 1 Peter that Paul also used cultic metaphor regarding his own ministry: “He further employed the cultic metaphor in speaking of his ministry as a “priestly serving” (*hierourgounta*) of the gospel of God and of the Gentiles as his ‘offering’ (*prophora*) to God (15:16; cf. Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6).”

²¹³ The author of 1 Peter uses the term *πνεῦμα* eight times in the letter in chapters 1, 3, and 4.

²¹⁴ 2 Clement (x3); Letter of Barnabas (x3); Ignatius (x12); and the Didache (x1).

understand about the church. The first occurrence of πνευματικός is found in 2 Clement 14:1, Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί, ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν θεοῦ ἐσόμεθα ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς πρώτης, τῆς πνευματικῆς, τῆς πρὸ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης ἐκτισμένης (“So then, my brothers, if we do the will of God our Father we will belong to the first church, the spiritual church, the church that was created before the sun and moon”).²¹⁵ The author states that before the creation of the sun and moon, the “first church” was “created.” There is no indication here if “church” is to refer to an assembly or if it is otherwise symbolic of something. If it refers to an assembly, one might wonder if the author described God as having the church in mind prior to material creation.

The second occurrence of πνευματικός clarifies the first in 2 Clement 14:2, καὶ ἔτι τὰ βιβλία καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν οὐ νῦν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ ἄνωθεν. ἦν γὰρ πνευματικὴ, ὥς καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἡμῶν (“the Bible [*Or: the books*] and the apostles indicate that the church has not come into being just now, but has existed from the beginning. For it existed spiritually, as did our Jesus”).²¹⁶ The author’s claim is that the Books of the Apostles declare a “church” that existed from the beginning because the church is πνευματικὴ, meaning the assembly “of the Spirit.” For Clement, πνευματικός describes the essence of that which is of the Spirit, before the creation of the material world, and therefore “from the beginning” in the same way that Jesus also existed before creation.

The third occurrence of πνευματικός in 2 Clement 14:3 is the most difficult to understand, yet it contains another helpful clue to Clement’s use of πνευματικός: ἡ ἐκκλησία δὲ πνευματικὴ οὗσα ἐφανερώθη ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ Χριστοῦ (“And even though the

²¹⁵ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, Translated by Bart D. Ehrman (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 187.

²¹⁶ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, 187.

church was spiritual, it became manifest in Christ's flesh").²¹⁷ Clement clearly describes the church as πνευματικός as a way to explain its origin before its manifestation in the flesh. He adds, "flesh is the counterpart and copy of the spirit."²¹⁸ For Clement, the term πνευματικός is a way of describing something opposite, or a counterpart, to flesh, or perhaps the essence of something that is later manifested in the flesh. His view of creation is an example of this, as all things material originate in the realm of the Spirit.

The term πνευματικός occurs three times in the Letter of Barnabas. The first occurrence is in Barnabas 1:2 where it modifies the noun δωρεᾶς, meaning "gift": οὕτως ἔμφυτον τῆς δωρεᾶς πνευματικῆς χάριν εἰλήφατε ("For you have received such a measure of his grace planted within you, the spiritual gift!").²¹⁹ Of all the occurrences in Greek literature in which the term πνευματικός is translated in English as "spiritual gift," this is one of only two where the noun is provided in the Greek text.²²⁰ The author clarifies his intent in 1:3 with, "for truly I see that, in your midst, the Spirit has been poured out upon you from the abundance of the lord's fountain."²²¹ The "gift" then is the Spirit, describing the nature of the grace they received from God. Thus, the term πνευματικός is used directly to refer to the Spirit, God's gift to them in his grace.

The second occurrence is in Barnabas 4:11, stating, Γενώμεθα πνευματικοί, γενώμεθα ναὸς τέλειος τῷ θεῷ ("We should be spiritual; we should be a perfect temple to

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ One might consider if the translation of πνεύματι should be capitalized, referring then to the Spirit of God specifically as something counterpart to the σαρκί (*flesh*).

²¹⁹ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume II, Translated by Bart D. Ehrman (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 13. Robert Kraft translates the last phrase, "such an implantation of the pneumatic gift!", a gloss that attempts to capture the essence of πνευματικός without some of difficulties of the English word "spiritual". Jack Sparks, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1978), 268.

²²⁰ Here in Barnabas 1:2 the term πνευματικός modifies δωρεᾶς. The other occurrence is in Romans 1:11 where πνευματικός modifies χάρισμα.

²²¹ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume II, 13.

God”).²²² The author begins by quoting Isaiah 5:21, “*Woe to those who have understanding in themselves and are knowledgeable before their own eyes,*”²²³ and then declaring the opposite of human σοφία, the author exhorts his readers to be πνευματικός, which he explains by repeating the subjunctive “we should be” with the metaphor of the temple, which is another way of talking about the place of the Spirit of God. Here the author is signalling the meaning of πνευματικός as something “of the Spirit” or “where the Spirit is located.”

The third occurrence of πνευματικός in Barnabas is found in 16:10, Τοῦτέστιν πνευματικός ναὸς οἰκοδομούμενος τῷ κυρίῳ (“This is the spiritual temple built for the Lord”).²²⁴ The author precedes this by instructing that those who desire to be saved will look not to another man, but to Him that dwells inside and speaks from within. For the author of Barnabas, the term πνευματικός is used to describe a reality that one must recognize as the agency of the Spirit, just as God’s presence is realized in the temple.²²⁵

In the seven letters attributed to Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, there are twelve occurrences of πνευματικός in four different letters. The first six occurrences are in the letter to the Ephesians. The first occurrence in 5:1 compares πνευματικός with the adjective ἀνθρώπινος, which Jeremias defines as “a part of the created world ... where it signifies human as distinct from animal nature.”²²⁶ Jeremias elaborates on the context of 1 Cor. 2:13 and says ἀνθρώπινος is the antithesis of πνεῦμα (or God’s wisdom), which indicates that the term ἀνθρώπινος can function as a synonym of σαρκικός.²²⁷

²²² Ibid., 25.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid., 75. This appears to be echoes of temple language from 1 Cor. 3 or 1 Peter 2.

²²⁵ This is perhaps an echo of what Peter was after in his letter (1 Peter 2:5).

²²⁶ J. Jeremias, *TDNT*, Vol. 1, 366. *BDAG* defines ἀνθρώπινος as pertaining to being of person, *human*; also in contrast to animal and in contrast to the divine, 80.

²²⁷ J. Jeremias, *TDNT*, Vol. 1, 366-367.

The next four occurrences in 7:2 and 8:2 (repeated thrice) use πνευματικός paired with σαρκικός as a comparison of flesh and Spirit. Not unlike Paul's usage of these terms, Ignatius refers to the part of the human self that pertains to the Spirit. Of specific interest are the three occurrences in 8:2 as Ignatius seems to indicate not only a fierce incompatibility of flesh and Spirit, but referring to "spiritual" as the agency of Jesus Christ:

Those who belong to the flesh cannot do **spiritual things**, nor can those who **belong to the spirit** do fleshly things; so too, faith cannot do what is faithless nor can faithlessness do what is faithful. But even what you do according to the flesh **is spiritual**, for you do all things in Jesus Christ.²²⁸

The language in 8:2 resembles 1 Corinthians 2:12-15 where Paul states that human understanding of God is only possible by the agency of the Spirit. It should be noted that the terms πνευματικός and σαρκικός here are not to characterize the physical world as bad, but inadequate without the Spirit of God.

The sixth occurrence of πνευματικός in the letter to the Ephesians is in 11:2, Χωρὶς τούτου μηδὲν ὑμῖν πρεπέτω, ἐν ᾧ τὰ δεσμὰ περιφέρω, τοὺς πνευματικοὺς μαργαρίτας ("Apart from him nothing should seem right to you. In him I am bearing my chains, which are spiritual pearls").²²⁹ Ignatius describes his commitment to Jesus Christ as chains, perhaps normally something imposed and unwanted, but he describes them as πνευματικός pearls, or one might render this as "jewels of the Spirit." The term πνευματικός is being used here to describe something that has come from God or that originates with God.

²²⁸ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, 227-229. Ehrman's translation contains a lower case "s" for "spirit" indicating a neutrality regarding whether the author was intending a human reference or deity (bold and underline mine for three English translations of πνευματικός).

²²⁹ Ibid., 231.

The letter Ignatius sent to the Magnesians contains two occurrences of πνευματικός in 13:1 and 13:2. Here Ignatius is emphasizing the importance of obedience to church leadership and providing a context of how that obedience fits into the entire cosmos under the Trinity. In 13:1 Ignatius describes a wreath circlet (or crown) of the local church leaders as πνευματικός, ἀξιοπλόκου πνευματικοῦ στεφάνου (“which is a spiritual crown worthily woven”).²³⁰ The term πνευματικός here is a designation of something that is established by God’s Spirit, or has the Spirit’s blessing upon it.

In 13:2, there is a common comparison of πνευματικός and σαρκικός, ἵνα ἔνωσις ᾗ σαρκική τε καὶ πνευματική (“so that there may be unity in both flesh and spirit”).²³¹ The comparison is not good versus bad, nor merely physical versus non-physical (although it is not completely separate from this idea), but it is to describe the union, or unity, of creation and the Creator. His use of the term πνευματικός here refers directly to the Spirit of God, or the realm belonging to the Spirit.

There are two occurrences of πνευματικός in Ignatius’ letter to the Smyrnians (12:2; 13:1), both paired with σαρκικός. The first, in 12:2, refers to Jesus in his resurrection as both corporeal (σαρκικός) and spiritual (πνευματικός), πάθει τε καὶ ἀναστάσει σαρκικῇ τε καὶ πνευματικῇ ἐνότητι θεοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν (“in his passion and resurrection, which pertains to both flesh and spirit, in unity with God and with you”).²³² Although it would be consistent to interpret this simply as the author indicating that Jesus was both of flesh (material) and of spirit (non-material), it is difficult to escape what “of the spirit” might mean for Jesus other than “of the Spirit.”²³³ The second occurrence is in

²³⁰ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, 253.

²³¹ Ibid., 255.

²³² Ibid., 309.

²³³ Similar to 1 Peter 3:17-18, “...He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.”

13:1, Ἀσπάζομαι τὸν οἶκον Ταουίας, ἣν εὐχομαι ἐδρᾶσθαι πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ σαρκικῇ τε καὶ πνευματικῇ (“I greet the household of Tavia, whom I pray will be firm in faith and in a love that pertains to both flesh and spirit”).²³⁴ Coming at the end of the letter, his salutation extends to the house of Tavia, expressing through prayer that it will be received in faith and love, both “of the flesh” and “of the spirit.” The term πνευματικός could easily be understood here as noncorporeal, yet it may not be too far to suggest “in the Spirit” given the context of Christian faith and love.

The last two occurrences of πνευματικός in the letters from Ignatius are in his letter to Polycarp (1:2; 2:2). In the first occurrence Ignatius writes, Ἐκδίκησον τὸν τόπον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιμελείᾳ σαρκικῇ τε καὶ πνευματικῇ (“Vindicate your position [*Or: office*] with all fleshly and spiritual diligence”).²³⁵ The word translated “vindicate” here might be better translated “maintain” as the point that Ignatius is making is to live out the true appointment to care for the church with discipline of both body and spirit. In the second occurrence Ignatius writes, Διὰ τοῦτο σαρκικός εἶ καὶ πνευματικός, ἵνα τὰ φαινόμενά σου εἰς πρόσωπον κολακεύῃς (“You are fleshly and spiritual for this reason, that you may deal gently with what is visible before you”).²³⁶ Interestingly, here Ignatius echoes Galatians 6:1 as Paul instructed those who are πνευματικοὶ to gently restore others who are caught in sin. Ignatius is not explicitly clear that he is using the term πνευματικός to refer to the activity of the Spirit, but it would seem odd that that the reason for being non-physical also is to deal with people in a gentle way. That is, it seems to make more sense that Ignatius was referring to the activity of the Spirit in helping them

²³⁴ Bart D. Ehrman, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, 309.

²³⁵ Ibid., 311.

²³⁶ Ibid., 313.

deal gently with what is visible before them.

The Didache contains only one occurrence of πνευματικός in 10:3, ἡμῖν δὲ ἐχαρίσω πνευματικὴν τροφήν καὶ ποτὸν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδὸς σου (“And you graciously provided us with spiritual food and drink, and eternal life through Jesus, your child/servant”). The term πνευματικός is used here in a prayer of thanksgiving for the Lord’s Supper, explaining that food and drink were given for enjoyment, yet through God’s child/servant (Jesus Christ) πνευματικός food and drink was given graciously, and thus having significance beyond their material qualities (“spiritual” significance). This is a very close parallel to 1 Corinthians 10:3-4, describing the food and drink as that which came from God through the Spirit.

3.4 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter has been to use the working definition of the term πνευματικός from chapter two and to test it by surveying the occurrences of πνευματικός in both canonical and non-canonical Greek writings. The following are four summary paragraphs that will conclude this comparison and confirm the meaning of πνευματικός and set the stage for a thorough study of how Paul uses the term in 1 Corinthians in chapter four of this project.

First, the Greek term πνευματικός is a derivative adjective from the noun πνεῦμα, and therefore the general understanding of this term in all Greek literature is “pertaining to the πνεῦμα.” The noun πνεῦμα was used prior to the New Testament as not simply “air” but the “movement of air,” like *breath* or *wind*, and almost always with emphasis on the effect of such movement. On rare occasions πνεῦμα was also used to refer to the inner

self of a person, in some cases synonymously with ψυχή, but always in opposition to σάρξ. This includes Philo's usage as he occasionally used the term πνευματικός in opposition to "fleshy" forms of beings. Likewise, πνευματικός is used in opposition to σαρκικός to describe a person or thing that is "pertaining to the πνεῦμα."

Second, the term πνευματικός used in Christian writing, beginning in the New Testament, reflects a significant change from previous usage, as did the use of the noun πνεῦμα in the LXX and New Testament. It is not as though πνεῦμα always means the Spirit of God in the LXX and New Testament, but it often does.²³⁷ Likewise, the adjective πνευματικός predominantly was used to describe the influence of the Spirit of God in a variety of effects and actions, including revelation, personal transformation, resources, and the eschatological realm in which believers now exist.

Third, it is evident from Galatians 6:1 that Paul used the term πνευματικός prior to his correspondence with the Corinthians. In fact, one might even wonder how the term πνευματικός was used in Paul's preaching and teaching, even to the extent that some in Corinth may have heard it from him and developed further conclusions apart from Paul's contribution or oversight. Although some of these insights cannot be tested, the fact remains that Paul used the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians more than anywhere else and it appears from this usage that Paul is sending a message about how the Corinthians are misunderstanding the term. Moreover, Paul's use of the term demonstrates that the Corinthians not only needed fine tuning regarding the meaning of the term πνευματικός, but also an adjustment regarding their understanding of God's Spirit and what it means to

²³⁷ The term πνεῦμα is used for evil or unclean spirits in the New Testament, but primarily in the Gospels and Acts. For example, "For with shrieks, **impure spirits** came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed" (Acts 8:7, bold mine).

have a Christian identity.

Last, given the evidence from this chapter of the general definition as well as the specifically Christian usage of πνευματικός, it can be concluded that Paul uses the term is to describe the agency of the Spirit of God, or the impact (influence) of this agency. This does not preclude πνευματικός from referencing non-corporeal realities or describing esteemed characteristics, but only points to the immanent or primary meaning of God's activity within people or things by the Spirit. In other words, Paul did not have in mind some bland version of whatever people mean by the English gloss "spiritual," but the majority of the time Paul would have used the term πνευματικός to refer to the influence of the πνεῦμα, and more specifically, τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ. In this he reveals his theology of the Spirit in relation to the mission of Jesus and its implementation in reference to the *ekklesia*, as well as the eschatological realities that the Spirit's presence implies.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Greek term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians

Chapter one of this project provided the background of the Corinthian problem and the context for the Apostle Paul's ongoing correspondence with the church he started in Corinth. The thesis stated for this project is to demonstrate that the Apostle Paul's usage of the Greek adjective πνευματικός in the letter of 1 Corinthians is a corrective response to the distorted pneumatology of some in the Corinthian church. Chapter two observed and analyzed the formation of derivative Greek adjectives and interacted with proposed meanings of πνευματικός expressed in various grammar books, theological dictionaries and biblical commentaries. Chapter three has examined the way the adjective πνευματικός was used in literature predating the New Testament, as well as all twenty-six occurrences in the New Testament, and a selection of occurrences in the Apostolic Fathers. The goal was to test the working definition of πνευματικός that was established in chapter two with the way authors used it in Greek literature.

The fourth chapter, leading to the conclusion of this project, will now provide an exegetical basis of the fifteen occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians in order to determine the specific reasons Paul used it so often within this one letter.²³⁸ This chapter will analyze each of these fifteen occurrences in four different portions of 1 Corinthians in order to fully understand the context and intentions in this letter.²³⁹ The focus here is to assess specifically how the term πνευματικός is used in this letter to address the concerns Paul had regarding the Corinthians based on the reports that he received while in

²³⁸ Of the twenty-six occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament, the group of fifteen in 1 Corinthians is over half. Of the twenty-four Pauline occurrences of πνευματικός, the fifteen in 1 Corinthians is almost two-thirds.

²³⁹ The four portions are chs. 1-4, 5-10, 11-14, and 15. Chapter 16 will not be discussed in this project other than in a few references.

Ephesus. This chapter will not only demonstrate Paul's consistent usage of the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians, but it will also thoroughly investigate Pauline pneumatology, without which it would be impossible to define πνευματικός in a way that aligns with Paul's theological framework.

The following four sections in this chapter are divided up according to the general themes that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians. The first section of 1 Corinthians 1-4 is a more concentrated focus on Paul's appeal to end factionalism, even though that motif extends throughout the entire letter to some extent. The second section of 1 Corinthians 5-10 is marked by a sudden shift in 5:1 where Paul's focus changes from factionalism to an issue of sexual immorality. This is followed by other moral and ethical issues having to do with lawcourts, prostitution, marriage and divorce, and participating in the temple feast. The third section of 1 Corinthians 11-14 is shift from the everyday moral and ethical issues to a focus on the church gatherings where Paul addresses their dress during their gatherings, their practice of the Lord' Supper, and their general view of the activity of the Spirit and their behaviour as a result. The fourth section of 1 Corinthians 15 is a shift from the practical instruction of their gatherings to a focus on what they believe about death and resurrection, with a specific focus on the resurrected body. Although chapter sixteen is important to the letter, it will not be explored in this project other than a couple of references.

4.1 Πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 1-4

The focus in this first section of chapter four will be on how Paul used the term πνευματικός in the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians. The main focus is Paul's appeal

for the church in Corinth to stop the quarreling and jealousy that has created divisions within the church.²⁴⁰ The impetus for this appeal came from an oral report that came to him from Chloe's people (1 Cor. 1:11). The report highlighted the emerging divisions in the church through slogan-type statements of following or belonging to certain leaders in opposition to others. The quarrels among the church members in Corinth were centered around σοφία (*wisdom*), which in the context of Corinth in the first century meant far more than possessing wisdom or being a wise person.²⁴¹ As their pursuit of wisdom had more to do with their status in the community and less with knowing God and living well, Paul needed to show them what constitutes real wisdom, and how it is applied to their lives. Real wisdom originating with the Spirit will produce unity, not *division* (see 1 Cor. 1:10; 11:18; 12:25). He does this by claiming that God's wisdom is revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ, and people engage with this wisdom in only one way: as people who receive and live by the Spirit. The three occurrences of πνευματικός in chapters two and three not only correct the Corinthian point of view but reinforce a life by the Spirit lived in unity.

The issue Paul identifies

The main appeal that sets the agenda for at least the first four chapters of the letter (and perhaps the entire letter) is 1 Cor. 1:10-17.²⁴² Paul begins in verse ten with his

²⁴⁰ It is difficult to know how great these divisions had become at this point. Perhaps the quarrels and jealousy were showing signs of divisions and Paul's letter was intended to address the emerging quarrels before actual divisions occurred. In either case, it was an ever-present reality that became the main focus for Paul in the opening of the letter of 1 Corinthians.

²⁴¹ See chapter two for the meaning of σοφία in 1 Corinthians. Although the divisions in Corinth were centred around σοφία and appeared to be about leadership rivalries, much of this emerged because certain church members had challenged Paul's claims to apostolic authority. This is demonstrated most clearly in chapters four and nine of 1 Corinthians and the entire letter of 2 Corinthians.

²⁴² Margaret Mitchell, Ben Witherington III and Richard Hays all make an argument for 1 Cor.

appeal: Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”). The term παρακαλέω is also translated “comfort” and “encourage” in the New Testament and is used by Paul intensively in 2 Corinthians.²⁴³ In the opening appeal in 1 Cor. 1:10, παρακαλέω is clearly an appeal with some urgency.²⁴⁴

The rest of 1 Cor. 1:10 includes three phrases of instruction. The first is, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες (“that all of you agree with one another in what you say”). Although in a word-for-word translation this may appear to be instruction for uniformity, it would be a mistake not to identify this idiomatic phrase as an appeal to unity in their diverse thoughts. Witherington mentions J. B. Lightfoot’s insight, “that this clause (*to auto legete*) is a classical expression connoting ‘to make up difference’ between individuals or groups or even ‘to be at peace’ (cf. Thucydides 4.20; Aristotle Politics, 2.3.3).”²⁴⁵

The second phrase is καὶ μὴ ᾗ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα (“and that there be no divisions among you”). The term σχίσματα means “tears” or “divisions” and is used to describe physical tears such as cloth (Matt. 9:16; Mark 2:21), and also divisions such as conflict between people (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19).²⁴⁶ Twice more Paul uses the term σχίσμα in 1

1:10 to stand as a thesis statement not only for the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, but for the entire letter. For Mitchell, the entire letter “is throughout an argument for ecclesial unity as centred in the πρόθεσις or thesis statement of the argument in 1:10.” Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 1. Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 94. Richard Hays, 21. The church in Corinth was experiencing division, or perhaps what might have been the beginning of division, and unity is the main focus for Paul’s appeal in this letter.

²⁴³ BDAG, 764-765. The term παρακαλέω occurs in the New Testament 109 times, eighteen of which are in 2 Corinthians (the first six appearing in chapters one and two).

²⁴⁴ Witherington suggests that παρακαλέω is used by Paul as proclamation of the gospel, here especially in regards to the unity in the gospel. Paul employs a rhetorical strategy to overcome the divisions but does so in the context of the gospel he preached. Witherington, 95.

²⁴⁵ Witherington, 96.

²⁴⁶ BDAG, 981. These five occurrences of σχίσμα in the Gospels, together with the three in 1 Corinthians, are the only occurrences of σχίσμα in the New Testament. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 116.

Corinthians. In chapter eleven Paul writes to the Corinthians, “In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are *divisions* among you, and to some extent I believe it” (1 Cor. 11:18). This is written in the context of the Lord’s Supper where Paul confronts those who were eating all of the food, leaving nothing for poorer members of the church and drinking all the wine to the extent of getting drunk (1 Cor. 11:21). In so doing they disregard the “spiritual” significance of this food in relationship to Jesus’ death and the creation of the church. In the context of the Lord’s Supper, the divisions seem to be socio-economic, although the only thing that is clearly stated is that “some” are going hungry.²⁴⁷

Then in chapter twelve Paul writes, “But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no *division* in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other” (1 Cor. 12:24b-25). This is written in the context of their gatherings where Paul instructs them to embrace diversity and to pay special attention to what they may see as “weak” parts of the body. Paul’s hope is to prevent the natural divisions that take place when groups exclude one another because of elitism, and in the context of chapter twelve it had to do with their expressions of divine utterance.²⁴⁸

The third phrase in Paul’s opening appeal is, ἥτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῷ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ (“but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought”). The term καταρτίζω (“perfectly united”) is used thirteen times in the New Testament, but this is the

²⁴⁷ Thiselton notes the context of an honour-shame culture and the social norms for the wealthy to participate among the elite in high class dinner parties as a way of understanding the potential divisions among the church along socio-economic lines. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 861-864.

²⁴⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 681. For Paul, unity is not optional for the church. Unity is at the very heart of the gospel, demonstrating the truth about Jesus Christ as the one who breaks down the barriers so that the two might be one (Eph. 2:14-18).

only occasion (in all English translations) where it is translated “perfectly united” (in fact, the concept of “unity” never shows up in translation of καταρτίζω in the New Testament, although perhaps implied). It is more common to understand this word as “to restore” or “to prepare.”²⁴⁹ The root is ἄρτιος, only occurring once in the New Testament in Paul’s letter to Timothy, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be *thoroughly equipped* for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, italics mine).²⁵⁰ Paul’s appeal then, in 1 Cor. 1:10, is to be a community that is *mended together* for the purpose for which it was created, and not to continue tearing themselves from each other.²⁵¹ Paul’s desire is for the Corinthians to live in a “mended” state by stating “be restored.” The perfect participle form κατηρτισμένοι in the periphrasis indicates a state or condition to be desired, and it is better translated “but be *restored* with each other by having the same mind-set” (1 Cor. 1:10).

The divisions may have manifested themselves in various ways but as Richard Hays notes, “Paul’s remarks here suggest that the emergent factions may be created more by personal allegiance to particular leaders than by clearly defined theological differences.”²⁵² Paul tells the Corinthians that Chloe’s people reported back to him (1

²⁴⁹ BDAG, 526. The cognate noun καταρτισμός, occurring only once in the New Testament (Eph. 4:12), has a similar meaning and is used in Ephesians to denote the idea of “equip” rather than “restore.” Here the term καταρτίζω is in perfect passive participle form, a verbal adjective with a completed action received. Paul indicates that the mending he recommends for them has something to do with the original call that brought them together in the first place. In other words, Paul is imploring the Corinthians to “be” as they once were, and therefore restored to that condition.

²⁵⁰ The NIV attempts to highlight Paul’s double emphasis on being equipped in 2 Timothy 3:17 by translating the verb ἐξηρτισμένος together with the adjective ἄρτιος as “thoroughly equipped.”

²⁵¹ Fee and Thiselton note the meaning of καταρτίζω as “putting into proper condition” and “knitting together” and “mending” or “restoring” kind of imagery. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 54-55. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 115.

²⁵² Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, 22. It is difficult to separate form and content completely, but it appears the divisions were more about the way certain leaders presented themselves rather than the actual

Cor. 1:11) and so it appears that the Corinthians know Chloe. He mentions her so that they know he has a report that is valid. The report that he was given was: ἐριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν (“there are quarrels among you”).

The Greek term ἔρις means “engagement in rivalry, especially with reference to positions taken in a matter, strife, discord, contention.”²⁵³ The term ἔρις is used nine times in the New Testament and only by the Apostle Paul.²⁵⁴ Paul consistently used the term ἔρις in negative ways, instructing that this is something the community of believers should avoid (Gal. 5:19-20; Titus 3:9).

There are two occurrences of ἔρις in 1 Corinthians. The first one is in 1 Cor. 1:11 as Paul confronts them regarding divisions and then explains what he means by writing, “What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ”” (1 Cor. 1:12). Paul’s explanation of their leader-fixation slogans clarifies that his use of ἔρις was a reference to more than “quarrels” but something closer to “rivalries.”²⁵⁵

The second occurrence of ἔρις in 1 Corinthians is in chapter three where Paul concludes that he could not address the Corinthians as πνευματικοῖς because they were behaving in a worldly manner (σάρκινος), and the reason for their worldliness was quarrels (ἔρις). They were behaving no different than the other men in Corinth who were

content they presented. The allegiance that Hays refers to is best understood in terms of preference regarding a leader’s rhetorical skill rather than the instruction itself.

²⁵³ BDAG, 392.

²⁵⁴ The term ἔρις is used in the New Testament only by the Apostle Paul in the following nine references: Rom. 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9

²⁵⁵ Bruce Winter indicates how the relationship of sophists Philostratus and Favorinus were well documented and consistently described using the term ἔρις. Winter notes, “Philo of Alexandria, Paul’s contemporary, like other first century writers, including Plutarch, used it and a cognate, ἐριστικός, to describe the rivalry and contention among sophists.” Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 38.

ζήλος (*zeal* or *jealousy*, 1 Cor. 3:3) and were living in the same competitive way as the men in Corinth who rivaled each other in σοφία.²⁵⁶

The ἔριδες (“professional quarrels” according to Bowersock) in the Corinthian church contributed to the factions that seemed to form around leaders, even though the leaders did not promote such following.²⁵⁷ Paul’s appeal lists the three main leaders as Paul, Apollos and Cephas, and he adds a fourth group who claim Christ for themselves (1 Cor. 1:12). While the NIV translates the Corinthian slogans in 1 Cor. 1:12 as “I follow” and the NRSV as “I belong,” the Greek text simply has a repeated ἐγὼ δὲ followed by the genitive proper noun, rendering quite literally, “I am *of* Paul, and I am *of* Apollos ...” Paul repeats this phrase in 1 Cor. 3:4 after accusing them of “worldliness” (σαρκικός) and “walking like *mere* humans” (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε;). The word “mere” is added to emphasize the ordinariness of their behaviour, as though they were no different than the people of Corinth.²⁵⁸ Bruce Winter explains, “The concept of walking was used as a metaphor for ‘living’ or ‘acting’, and the phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον refers to the fact that they were operating in the same way as the rest of Corinthian society.”²⁵⁹

Winter’s argument is that some of the Christians in the Corinthian church were

²⁵⁶ Bruce Winter states that students of sophists were “encouraged to be extremely zealous (ζήλος) in demonstrating their loyalty to their teacher, promoting his professional attributes as an orator and his educative prowess.” Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 39. The English word “zeal” may not communicate the underlying loyalty that appears to be a part of Paul’s context. Perhaps “misplaced loyalty” or even “misplaced enthusiasm” may be better English equivalents.

²⁵⁷ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 38. Relating the term ἔρις to how the sophists used it in the first century, Winter makes the case that this word should be understood in terms of rivalry and contention among sophists. Here, we might want to use the word “strife” to generalize the contention but to increase the intensity from “quarrels” (NIV).

²⁵⁸ The Greek text here (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον) does not necessarily indicate the need to add “mere,” but the context of Paul’s use of σαρκικός leaves room for some sort of qualifier to indicate that Paul is not simply telling them that they are acting like not just any humans, but acting like a certain kind of human that resembles the attitudes and behaviours of other humans in Corinth who were caught up in rivalries and jealousy. Generally speaking, this refers to following human ways of thinking and behaving, ignoring the wisdom that comes from God for human decisions and actions.

²⁵⁹ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 40.

viewing church leaders in a similar way as they viewed the sophists. Winter states, “In [Paul’s] day the term ‘sophist’ was not a pejorative one but was used of those virtuoso orators who possessed a large public following and participated in the secular assembly (ἐκκλησία) of the city.”²⁶⁰ A follower of these sophists would have been called μαθητής (*disciple*).²⁶¹

Paul does not use the noun μαθητής (*disciple*) or the verb μαθητεύω (*to disciple*) in the Corinthian correspondence or any of his letters in the New Testament.²⁶² As Bruce Winter notes, the word μαθητής was not a term Jews or Christians came up with, but was a common term to refer to “a pupil of a teacher.”²⁶³ He counts one hundred and ninety-eight occurrences in the rise of the First Sophistic movement of the fifth century B.C., with the majority in Plato and Isocrates.²⁶⁴ Although there is a gap in the century or two before Christ, the occurrences of μαθητής in first century AD literature increase with the rise of the Second Sophistic.²⁶⁵

A student who enrolled in the various elitist schools of wisdom in the first century was called a μαθητής (*disciple*) and the understanding was that they were a student or learner of a certain σόφος (*teacher*). According to Dio Crysostom, the μαθητής

²⁶⁰ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 32. Winter provides research from G.W. Bowersock to understand the professionalization of sophists in Paul’s day that differed from how sophists may have been viewed by Plato and others during a previous era.

²⁶¹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 101.

²⁶² The term μαθητής is used exclusively in the gospels and Acts two hundred and sixty-one times. The term μαθητεύω is used exclusively in the gospels and Acts four times, usually understood as “to be a disciple” or “to act like a disciple.” However, the cognate μανθάνω (“to learn”) is used twenty-five times in the New Testament, sixteen of which are found in the Pauline corpus.

²⁶³ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 32.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Winter does not comment on the use of μαθητής in the gospels a decade or two later. The use of μαθητής in the gospels may suggest it as a more acceptable term for Hellenistic Judaism. It is likely Jesus did not refer to the Twelve as μαθητής but perhaps used *talmid*, the Aramaic and Hebrew word for “scholar” which might be the term (or concept) that later translated into μαθητής in the gospel writings (see 1 Chronicles 25:8 for a comparison with μανθάνω (“to learn”).

was ζηλωτής (passionately loyal). This is also confirmed in K.H. Rengstorf's research in TDNT, noting the significance of μιμεῖσθαι (*imitate*) as a way of explaining the relationship between student and teacher.²⁶⁶

Although Paul includes Cephas as a third teacher, the two principally in view were Paul and Apollos, whom Paul continues to mention throughout his argument.²⁶⁷ Apollos is described by Luke as a 'man of learning' (ἀνὴρ λόγιος, Acts 18:24) and an able speaker and public debater (Acts 18:28). Paul was unimpressive in the eyes of certain Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:1-5; 2 Cor. 10:10).²⁶⁸ Preference for Apollos is seen more clearly in 1 Cor. 16:12 as it appears some in the church were asking for Apollos to return to Corinth.

If Apollos' ministry in Corinth was consistent with Luke's description that he "taught about Jesus accurately" (Acts 18:25), then there is no reason to believe that the preference that some people in Corinth had for Apollos over Paul was theological in nature. And because Apollos spoke with fervor and spoke boldly in the synagogue (Acts 18:24-25), there is good reason to believe that preference was given to Apollos because of his ability to speak, and not the subject matter itself.²⁶⁹

Apollos was most likely ignorant of these divisions (or at least the full extent of the divisions) and may have learned of them at the same time Paul did when Chloe's people returned to Ephesus and gave Paul a report. But Paul makes it very clear that both he and Apollos are not participating in the Corinthian quarrels and jealousy. Paul refers to

²⁶⁶ K. H. Rengstorf, μαθητής, *TDNT*, IV, 417.

²⁶⁷ The name Apollos is used seven times in 1 Corinthians, six of those in the first four chapters where Paul is arguing against the divisions in the church (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4, 5, 6, 22; 4:6; 16:12).

²⁶⁸ Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 41.

²⁶⁹ The potential connection Apollos may have had with Philo in Alexandria may also have contributed to a skilled rhetoric that may have given him favour with some in Corinth.

Apollos as a co-worker in 1 Cor. 3:9, and after he makes a case for the Corinthians to view him and Apollos as stewards in chapter four, he writes, “I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit” (1 Cor. 4:6).²⁷⁰ In chapter sixteen, Paul raises the question the Corinthians have of when Apollos will return to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:12). With what seems to express no competitive spirit, Paul urges Apollos to return. But it is Apollos who is hesitant. It is not said why Apollos did not want to return, but it is reasonable to think he wanted more time to pass before entering this church again under these conditions.

One of the ways the divisions were reinforced by the Corinthians is by claiming to belong to the leader by whom they were baptized.²⁷¹ It appears some in the Corinthian church began using their baptism experience as leverage for belonging to the best leader, or perhaps in their view the only rightful leader.²⁷² Paul’s lack of clarity of whom he baptized and whom he did not baptize might even suggest his frustration over what he would view as trivial (1 Cor. 1:14-16). Paul states he is glad that he did not baptize many of them because he does not want them to follow him in that way. Later Paul will exhort them to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1) and so the problem is not that Paul did not want them to do as he did or believe what he believed. The problem is that Paul wanted them to identify their allegiance to a crucified Christ (1 Cor. 1:23), which would lead them into unity, instead of separating from each other further by insisting on belonging to a human

²⁷⁰ Gordon Fee adds that there is no indication that the leaders mentioned in the Corinthians’ slogans are party to this favouritism, especially noting Apollos’ reluctance to return. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 57.

²⁷¹ Later in this letter, Paul links baptism with Spirit (10:2 and 12:13) and notes further some confusion about baptism among the Corinthians in chapter 15. One might wonder if baptism was also a misunderstood way of gaining access to wisdom and Spirit in the context of their leader preferences.

²⁷² Gordon Fee rightly concludes that the Corinthian slogan “into the name of” refers to allegiance, “and thus entered into an enduring relationship with, the one *into* whose name one has been baptized.” Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 63.

leader.

Although Paul elsewhere promotes Christian baptism, in Corinth it became a source of division and he concludes the opening appeal in chapter one with, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (1 Cor. 1:17). This is the first of seventeen occurrences of σοφία (*wisdom*) in 1 Corinthians, fifteen of which appear in chapters one and two.²⁷³ Nowhere else is wisdom addressed as thoroughly in the New Testament as 1 Corinthians. But Paul does not address wisdom because he thought it was a good time to nail down his view of wisdom from a Christian point of view. Paul addresses wisdom because he needed to correct a distorted view of wisdom that had taken root in the Corinthian church.

In order to fully confront the wisdom the Corinthians were enthused about, Paul began by separating his own ministry from the Corinthian’s current view of what σοφία entailed. Ben Witherington writes, “Paul came to Corinth with an anti-Sophistic strategy because of what he saw to be the character of the gospel and the role of Christ’s called agent.”²⁷⁴ This is why the thesis statement of the letter ends with a front against σοφία λόγου. Paul makes certain in his initial preaching ministry to not promote a following of Paul, nor to rest on σοφία, but on God’s power (1 Cor. 2:5).

²⁷³ The NIV’s phrase “not with wisdom and eloquence” is translated from οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, that might otherwise be translated “not in wisdom of word” (or “sophisticated speech”), meaning Paul did not see himself as a competing rhetor in Corinth. Bruce Winter translates this phrase as “without rhetorical skill” because he interprets Paul’s emphasis completely resting on the influence of the sophists, and so “wisdom” has everything to do with form as opposed to the content in which Paul is preaching. Bruce Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 187.

²⁷⁴ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 101.

Paul's approach to correct the issue

The appeal to stop the divisions and be “perfectly united” in 1 Cor. 1:10 combined with the repeated slogan-type statements of belonging to certain leaders in 1 Cor. 1:12 and 3:4 are not the problem in the church at Corinth, but the symptom of the problem that was made known to Paul. The problem has more to do with a pursuit of status within the community, and this pursuit was motivated by σοφία (*wisdom*). The results of this pursuit produced competition, preferences, and ultimately behaviours that were elitist and exclusionary which created rivalries. Paul’s charge, according to Winter, was “that they had replicated in the Christian community the secular elitist educational model which was promoted by the sophists.”²⁷⁵ There was also a Jewish influence in the pursuit for σοφία and so with a variety of contributing factors in Corinth Paul confronts the Corinthians on their pursuit of “human wisdom” and points them toward a crucified Messiah to understand what he will call “God’s wisdom.”

The first approach Paul takes to further appeal to the Corinthians to stop dividing is to explain the inadequacy of human wisdom, which Paul refers to as μωρία (*foolishness*). The noun μωρία occurs only five times in the New Testament, all five in the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians.²⁷⁶ The explanation Paul gives is in three parts: the foolishness of the message (1 Cor. 1:18-25), the foolishness of the recipients of the message (1 Cor. 1:26-31); and the foolishness of the messenger (1 Cor. 2:1-5).²⁷⁷ Each

²⁷⁵ Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 43.

²⁷⁶ The five occurrences of μωρία are 1 Cor. 1:18, 21, 23; 2:14; 3:19. Related to the noun μωρία is the cognate adjective μωρός (*foolish*) which is where we get our English term “moron.” The term μωρός occurs twelve times in the New Testament, including four in 1 Corinthians (1:25, 27; 3:18; 4:10). The cognate verb μωραίνω (*make foolish*) occurs in the New Testament four times (Matt. 5:13; Luke 14:34; Rom. 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:20).

²⁷⁷ Fee provides a similar outline of 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, noting that each part “is predicated on the same reality, namely that the message of the cross is not something to which one may add human wisdom,

part builds toward Paul's ultimate focus, that God's wisdom is expressed in the cross of Jesus Christ, and this wisdom can only be known through the power of the Spirit. The Corinthians would agree with Paul that access to this wisdom is through the Spirit, but their version of power and understanding of the significance of the cross was misconstrued.

Paul begins with an opening statement that the message of the cross is μωρία to those who are perishing, but this same message is the power of God to those being saved (1 Cor. 1:18). Paul challenges them to bring forward their σοφός (*wise person*), their γραμματεὺς (*Jewish scribe or scholar*), and their συζητητής (*Greek sophist*).²⁷⁸ In the context of the Second Sophistic, Paul is calling for the best leaders, both Jew and Greek, in the practice of declamation. His challenge to them is not simply to engage in empty rhetoric. Paul actually believes that through the crucified Messiah God has made the world's wisdom foolish, concluding that it is this Messiah who is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24).

Paul continues in 1 Cor. 1:26 by shifting the focus onto the Corinthians themselves, the recipients of this "foolish" gospel message. Although there have been healthy debates regarding the socio-economic demographics of Paul's converts in Corinth, recent research has shown that they were not all poor, that there were some in the church in Corinth who were wealthy, even though not many. In fact, Paul makes plain that "not many of them" were σοφοί (and Paul adds κατὰ σάρκα to make clear he is

in any form, and thereby make it superior; rather, the cross stands in absolute, uncompromising contradiction to merely human wisdom." Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 69.

²⁷⁸ Bruce Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 188. The third term συζητητής occurs only here in the New Testament. Although somewhat difficult to specify the meaning, Winter agrees with H.A.W. Meyer, E.A. Judge and Héring that it refers to orators or sophists. Winter states that Meyer "suggested that ὁ συζητητής described those engaged in sophistic disputes, citing in support Xenophon's observation that συζήτης was in vogue among the sophists." Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 189.

referring to human wisdom), not many were δυνατοί, and not many were εὐγενεῖς.²⁷⁹ A straightforward reading would leave us with an understanding that not many of the Corinthians who converted to Christianity during Paul's first visit to Corinth were wise, influential or of noble birth, obviously referring to the social elite of Corinth.²⁸⁰ His admonition then is to help the Corinthians understand that it was not something natural within them that gained their access to God, but a gift of grace from God. By explicitly referring to their own callings, Paul demonstrates that σοφία is not primarily a human project.²⁸¹

In 1 Cor. 2:1, Paul finally turns the focus to himself as the foolish bearer of the gospel message, “And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God” (2:1). Paul places himself among the foolish recipients as one who was chosen for the proclamation of this message. He admits he didn't come to them with eloquent words as to appear wise. In fact, he came with fear and trembling, and he concludes, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power” (1 Cor. 2:4-5). Paul brings this initial argument of a foolish gospel, presented with no sophistication, to a close here with the kind of preaching he initially

²⁷⁹ This is perhaps how Paul might have described all of the churches he began in those years, at least as they were originally formed.

²⁸⁰ Bruce Winter argues, based on the findings in Munck's research, that the σοφοί that Paul is referring to are the sophist students whose parents are the δυνατοί and εὐγενεῖς of Corinth. If Munck is correct, the sophist is not just a student of wisdom (or rhetoric) but a privileged child of the wealthy class, placed in the best schools of wisdom because of the influence of their parents. Bruce Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 190-191.

²⁸¹ One might note that Paul could not necessarily describe himself in this same way, as we see in his own description of himself in Phil. 3:4-6. Yet, even here, Paul considers these qualities garbage in comparison to the gift of God's grace.

brought to Corinth. Winter states, “1 Corinthians 2.4 should be seen as an explication of 1.17.”²⁸² Paul was aware that they had a different view of power (δύναμις) than he did, and this is made plain in his desire for them to see that it was not through power of persuasive speech that they first turned their hearts toward the Lord, but through the power of the Spirit. Winter summarizes, “His oratory and the contents of his message lacked the persuasive tricks and sophisticated proofs of the sophists because he was not in search of disciples to follow him. He wanted their confidence to rest not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (2:1-5).”²⁸³ Paul’s claim is that the nature of the gospel cannot be made appealing to humans through rhetorical devices or clever speaking – that it can only be accessed by demonstration of the power of the Spirit.

The second approach Paul uses to further appeal to the Corinthians to stop dividing is to shift from being a critic of wisdom to speaking positively about wisdom. Paul writes, “We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing” (1 Cor. 2:6). Paul now insists that he does speak a message of σοφία, but only to the τέλειος (*spiritual adults*), which, of course, is Paul’s subtle way of telling the Corinthians that they are not among the τέλειος, even though this certainly could have been the way some in Corinth viewed themselves.²⁸⁴

Paul’s reference to the τέλειος (*spiritual adults*) in 1 Cor. 2:6 forms an *inclusio* with his admonishing use of the term νήπιος (*infant*) in 1 Cor. 3:1, although one must

²⁸² Bruce Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 188.

²⁸³ Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 42.

²⁸⁴ The term τέλειος (*mature*) has the connotation of being an adult, someone who is ready to be a contributing member of the group versus a dependent member. One should not understand Paul as establishing his own system of status within the community, but simply referring to “growing up” so that they can address the community without quarrel or jealousy.

read 1 Cor. 3:1-4 to understand the context of Paul's use of νήπιος in verse one. Although Paul already acknowledged a difference in God's wisdom and human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24-25), everything in the letter preceding 1 Cor. 2:6 is negative toward σοφία, as though Paul were taking a stance against any kind of wisdom in favour of foolishness before God. His change of direction clarifies his intent and presents a twist of irony all at once.

At the end of chapter two, Paul quotes from Isaiah 40:13 to make a final pronouncement in this part of the argument, "The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, 'Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:15-16). His conclusion is essentially that the Spirit is the key to becoming a "spiritual adult" who is given divine wisdom by revelation, and thus such individuals are no longer relying on human wisdom only as others who are without the Spirit. What Paul clarifies in chapter three is that "spiritual adults" do not find themselves in fits of jealousy and quarrels with each other, behaviours that demonstrate that although the Spirit is present, it was not the way these Corinthians were living.

There are two observations to make regarding Paul's quotation from Isaiah. The first observation is to note that Paul quotes Isaiah from the LXX which has translated the Hebrew *ruach* (*spirit*) as νοῦς (*mind*), instead of πνεῦμα (*spirit*). Although πνεῦμα and νοῦς were often used interchangeably, Paul is obviously following the LXX and further may want the Corinthians to understand that having the "same mind" (1 Cor. 1:10) may have something to do with Christ. The second observation to note is Paul's shift from "mind of the Lord" to "mind of Christ." Fee notes that for the purposes of this argument

it may not be a significant point, but it certainly does reveal something about Paul's Christology: "For him Christ is Lord; therefore when the OT speaks of the Lord, he sees in such language references to Christ himself."²⁸⁵

Paul's assessment of the Corinthians, then, is that they in fact are not τέλειος (1 Cor. 2:6), which will have functioned as a critique of their σοφία.²⁸⁶ His assessment that they are νήπιος in 3:1 is clarified by referring to their quarrels and jealousy in their pursuit to compete with each other, just like all of the other men in Corinth compete under the influence of σοφία. This is the childish and "worldly" (σάρκικος) posture which keeps them from being πνευματικός, or that keeps Paul from addressing them as πνευματικός.²⁸⁷ In this context πνευματικός does not function as the goal of maturity but the necessary condition for maturity, which is a Christian identity that contains the fullness of the Spirit's work.²⁸⁸

The third approach Paul takes to further appeal to the Corinthians to stop dividing is to help them see how leadership should function in the church and therefore how they as a church should view their leaders. Paul uses three metaphors in 1 Cor. 3:5-17 to illustrate various things that he hopes will correct their understanding of leadership.²⁸⁹ The reason Paul goes to such lengths to instruct the Corinthians about a proper view of apostles or church leadership in general is to separate this role or task from that of the

²⁸⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 127.

²⁸⁶ Pearson is clear on this point, "We note here that the idea of perfection, maturity, is tied to the achievement of σοφία." Pearson, 28.

²⁸⁷ Not unlike the parable of the spoiled children Jesus tells in Matthew 11:16ff and then connects it to those having human wisdom, who have been kept from seeing the truth (Matt. 11:25).

²⁸⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 134.

²⁸⁹ The three metaphors are agricultural (1 Cor. 3:5-9); architectural (1 Cor. 3:10-15); and the temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17). The temple metaphor could be understood as the continuation of the architectural metaphor or perhaps its result. Space limitations in this project do not permit a full explanation of what these metaphors represent.

sophists, who did not see taking responsibility for other people as a part of their work (3:8), who were not “coworkers” (3:9), and who were not careful about how they “build” (3:10). These prevailing attitudes of the sophists which influence their students is what Paul is challenging for those who are in the church and confess Jesus as Christ.

In 1 Cor. 3:18-23, the text that follows Paul’s leadership metaphors in 1 Cor. 3:5-17, and in all of chapter four, Paul reaches the climax of his argument against the influence of σοφία and the divisive consequences of their quarreling and jealousy with, “So then, no more boasting about human leaders!” (1 Cor. 3:21), and, “Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other” (1 Cor. 4:6b). Paul’s argument stays true through all four chapters and concludes with a more passionate plea in chapter four to bring an end to the divisions and to confront the rejection of his own apostleship.

Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός

The Apostle Paul uses the term πνευματικός in chapters two and three to describe the persons who are *living by the Spirit*. Of the four portions of 1 Corinthians that chapter four of this project will examine, this first one is the most crucial for understanding the term πνευματικός in regards to being a person under the influence *of the Spirit*. Amidst the divisions within the church caused by quarrels and jealousy expressed for a preferred leader, and in the context of a competing status in the community that was being influenced by the sophistic culture in the city of Corinth, Paul turns their understanding on its head and cancels their boast with the exhortation *to live by the Spirit* (πνευματικός). The Spirit is at the centre of Christian life, but not for self-seeking leverage. Below are

conclusions from Paul's use of the term πνευματικός in these opening few chapters of 1 Corinthians.

The first conclusion regarding Paul's use of the term πνευματικός is that the meaning of πνευματικός is made clear in chapters two and three of 1 Corinthians, probably more than any other occurrence of πνευματικός in the New Testament, primarily because of the explicit pairing with both ψυχικός and σαρκικός (and σάρκινος).²⁹⁰ As has already been stated in chapter two of this project, ψυχικός (*pertaining to the ψυχή*) is not a negative adjective.²⁹¹ It is a neutral one that pertains to the nature of humanity, but one specifically without the indwelling of the Spirit of God, which leaves a deficient understanding of human life and moral decisions. The term σαρκικός (*pertaining to the σάρξ*) can be used as a negative adjective, describing a person who chooses to live from natural (*fleshy*) desires instead of, or contrary to, living according to the Spirit. The adjective πνευματικός then refers to persons who have the indwelling Spirit of God, and even more so, are living in accordance to the agency of the Spirit, and thereby are participants in God's great eschatological movement – the people of God.

The second conclusion regarding Paul's use of the term πνευματικός is that he uses it to describe the person who is able to be in touch with God's wisdom, which Paul indicated was the crucified Messiah (1 Cor. 1:24). Paul's illustration of requiring someone to tell you their thoughts in order to know their thoughts applies to God as well

²⁹⁰ Gordon Fee notes Paul's use of πνευματικός in 1 Cor. 2:13 "anticipates the antithesis" in Paul's use of ψυχικός, "here referring simply to any human being without the Divine Spirit (v. 14)." Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 123.

²⁹¹ Thiselton clarifies that "ψυχή stands for the principle of life in the sense of any human existence animated by the power of *life* which sustains it." Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 267.

(1 Cor. 2:11). In this particular context, “God’s thoughts” refer to Messiah Jesus who was crucified, and it is only by God’s Spirit that a person can receive understanding of the crucified Messiah as revelation from God (v. 12). For Paul, God can only be revealed by God, and so πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες (*explaining things of the Spirit with words by the Spirit*, 1 Cor. 2:13) is Paul’s instruction on how revelation works. It is not by human achievement, but by the Spirit who is active within the believer (πνευματικός). Paul’s Isaiah quote at the end of chapter two both confirms this argument by stating the believer has the mind of Christ and further pronounces his appeal in chapter three to use this mind in their daily living. Paul’s opponents may agree with this in principle, clarifying that the degree of access would differ from person to person. In this way their arrogance and elitism might be justified, as they perceived themselves more available for the Spirit’s work. Paul’s conclusion will demonstrate that behaviour is what finally reveals who has been available to the Spirit.

The third conclusion regarding Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός is that, in his estimation, the Corinthians (or at least some in Corinth) could not be described this way (1 Cor. 3:1).²⁹² This is not to conclude that some in the church were without the Spirit, but as the NIV has translated it, they were not “living by the Spirit.”²⁹³ The term πνευματικός, then, meaning “pertaining to the Spirit,” can also be used to insinuate a human response to the activity of the Spirit.²⁹⁴ Some in Corinth understood πνευματικός

²⁹² Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 288. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 130.

²⁹³ Fee writes, “Paul, of course, does not mean to say they do not have the Spirit. They do; and that’s the problem, because they are thinking and behaving otherwise.” Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 131.

²⁹⁴ Gordon Fee argues that Paul’s use of πνευματικός in 1 Cor. 3:1 is not a statement about the presence of the Spirit, but a statement about the Corinthians’ response to the Spirit, “because they are thinking and living just like those who live outside the household of faith, people who know nothing of the

as a badge of honour or a symbol of their advanced wisdom, used to promote their status in the community as those who had “arrived” or had achieved full maturity (τέλειος – 1 Cor. 2:6). Paul’s use of πνευματικός indicates a dynamic interplay between Spirit activity and the human response, resulting in conduct and behaviours akin to God’s kingdom that emerge from the Spirit’s activity in and through the believer. His understanding of πνευματικός results in people becoming “spiritual adults” capable of contributing to the community.²⁹⁵

The Corinthians’ frame of reference was still the status-seeking culture of Roman Corinth, no doubt modeled by the schools of wisdom which establishes the teacher as a guru. What kept the divisions and the rivalry alive was their boast. Paul labelled their boast φυσιώω (*puffed up*) and indicated that this ζήλος (*misplaced loyalty*) toward leadership is inappropriate for the church (1 Cor. 4:6). Paul confronts the factions that have formed in the church at Corinth, the people who are “puffed up” and lending themselves to something akin to personality cults, challenging the quarrels and declaring that this wisdom they have achieved is not, in fact, the wisdom of God. Alongside this appeal and admonition Paul uses the term πνευματικός to refocus the Corinthians to an identity in Christ that is marked by the Spirit and not by the human leader they belong to, which lends itself to all of the quarrels and strife that occurred as a result of these competing postures.²⁹⁶

Holy Spirit.” Eventually one might consider if a person’s behaviour is throwing into question whether the Spirit is in fact indwelling the person. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 132.

²⁹⁵ See footnote 77.

²⁹⁶ “So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

The term πνευματικός, then, is Paul's way of describing the eschatological work of the Spirit in a person's life, the process of sanctification, and the pursuit of holiness as the believer lives now in the realm of the Spirit's influence, contributing to the development of the people of God. The characteristics, or fruit, of "living by the Spirit" will be demonstrated when people are able to resolve and move past their rivalries and jealousy that emerge from selfishness, pride, and exclusivity, as was seen in the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3). Paul's hope was to help the Corinthians understand that the human goal is not a transcendent mind but the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), which comes about by the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 2:11). Only then can people align their lives with God and receive the knowledge of God. It is by the Spirit of God alone that one comes into relationship with God through Christ. Paul turns the Corinthians' understanding of the word πνευματικός upside-down as well as their understanding of what it means to be a Spirit-person. He helps them to see that the Spirit-life is one that brings the church into unity and leads people away from rivalry which causes division.

4.2 Πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 5-10

The focus in this second section will show how Paul used the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 5-10. In these chapters Paul addresses a number of issues in the church, the key themes being sexuality and marriage (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 6:12-20; 7:1-40), the court system (1 Cor. 6:1-11), and eating idol meat bought in the marketplaces and celebrated in the pagan temples (1 Cor. 8-10). The main focus in these six chapters is Christian freedom and how the Corinthians misunderstood this idea of freedom as license to live however they wanted, or as their Roman citizenship permitted (an example of human

wisdom), instead of what is good for all the believers (an example of divine wisdom).

The only occurrences of the term πνευματικός in this section are in chapters nine and ten.

While the one occurrence in chapter nine is interesting, the three occurrences of πνευματικός in chapter ten will be the primary focus and will demonstrate Paul's warning against the misbehaviours of the Corinthians and will demonstrate his understanding of the activity of the Spirit in the church.

The issue Paul identifies

After Paul concludes the matter of divisions in the church in 1 Corinthians 1-4, he signals a change in focus by referring back to the report that Chloe's people brought him in Ephesus (1 Cor 1:11). He writes, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you" (1 Cor. 5:1a). With the introduction of πορνεία (*sexual immorality*) Paul moves on from divisions in the church to confront the Corinthians on a few moral issues that had emerged.

Even though there is a shift in focus at 1 Cor. 5:1, there is also some continuity. The continuity is identified by the attitude of some in the Corinthian church that Paul identifies as φουσιώω (*pride*).²⁹⁷ The term φουσιώω only occurs seven times in the New Testament, six of which are in 1 Corinthians.²⁹⁸ The first three of the six occurrences in 1 Corinthians are in chapter four, as Paul uses this term to challenge their "pride" in judging his apostleship as the final argument against the divisions emerging in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 4:6, 18, 19). The fourth occurrence at the beginning of chapter

²⁹⁷ The term φουσιώω is defined as "to cause to have an exaggerated self-conception, *puffed up*, make proud." It is noted that this term is largely limited to Christian literature. BDAG, 1069.

²⁹⁸ The term φουσιώω occurs in the New Testament seven times, once in Col. 2:18, and the remaining six in 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).

five applies to the tolerance the church has for a man who is sleeping with his father's wife (1 Cor. 5:1-2). Although the topic being addressed has changed from chapters four to five, the challenge of the Corinthians' prideful behaviour has stayed the same.

Paul will use the term *φυσιόω* twice more in this letter. The fifth occurrence is in 1 Cor. 8:1 as Paul clarifies his approach to *γνώσις* (*knowledge*) in the context of love. The sixth occurrence is in chapter thirteen as Paul comes to the apex of his vision for Spirit activity in the church with a great poem on the centrality of love, exclaiming that there is no *φυσιόω* in love (1 Cor. 13:4).²⁹⁹ Paul is clear about his consistent negative use of *φυσιόω* and considers it an attitude incompatible with love, and as will be demonstrated, incompatible with the activity of the Holy Spirit.

The first issue of *φυσιόω* that Paul identifies in this section is a man who is sleeping with his father's wife. As Gordon Fee points out, the Greek text simply states that he "has" his father's wife, which obviously is a euphemism for sex.³⁰⁰ This euphemism is also used today, but it usually means a "one-night stand" scenario of sex. In the first century, this implied an ongoing intimate relationship.³⁰¹ The description of "father's wife" probably refers to a stepmother, meaning that the man's biological mother had been divorced or passed away. The stepmother in this situation was not a part of the church as Paul only addresses the actions of the man, who clearly was a member of the church in Corinth.

²⁹⁹ There is also a significant shift in topic from chapter ten into chapters eleven through fourteen, yet, Paul's final conclusion about *φυσιόω* that he begins in chapters four and five is only seen in chapter thirteen. This is a good reminder that this is a letter that has many layers to it and is not so easily partitioned for theological purposes.

³⁰⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 219.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

Yet, Paul does not address the incestuous man directly but the whole church, perhaps especially those who took leadership responsibility. Although this incestuous relationship would have been sin in Paul's understanding, it is his exhortation to the church for tolerating this sin that is Paul's primary focus, a sexual union that not even the Romans tolerate.³⁰² Paul is not exercising authority over this man directly, but exhorting the church to exercise authority over him.³⁰³ In Paul's view, this is a sin that has been unchecked and tolerated because of *φυσιώω*.³⁰⁴

The second issue of *φυσιώω* Paul identifies in this section is the practice of some in Corinth of taking fellow church members to court to resolve disputes. Paul does not repeat the term *φυσιώω* here, but the prevailing attitude continues as Paul writes, "The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already" (1 Cor. 6:7). As Paul called for their *σοφός* (*wise person*) in chapter one (1 Cor. 1:20), he now asks again, "Is it possible that there is nobody among you *wise* (*σοφός*) enough to judge a dispute between believers?" (1 Cor. 6:5b).³⁰⁵

What highlights the Corinthian's pride in this text, even without the direct use of the term *φυσιώω*, is Paul's alternative action for them in opposition to using the courts:

³⁰² The Greek phrase translated "that even pagans do not tolerate" is simply ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, which might be more literally understand as "that is not even among the Gentiles." There is no "tolerate" word in this text, but the emphasis that this kind of sexual immorality is "not among the Gentiles" is another way of talking about what the Gentiles tolerate.

³⁰³ Three times Paul commands the church to remove the incestuous man from fellowship: "hand this man over to Satan" (5:5); "Get rid of the old yeast" (5:7); and, "Expel the wicked person from among you" (5:13).

³⁰⁴ A key to help understand Paul's use of *φυσιώω* is the illustration of the Passover festival (5:6-8). In this illustration, Paul compares *φυσιώω* to leaven which not only permeates the whole, but "puffs up" the whole. To "keep" the festival is not only to affirm the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, but also to wipe clear the leaven in order to be an unleavened batch of dough.

³⁰⁵ Paul is presumably using the term *σοφός* here in a positive sense, or in reference to God's wisdom or way of thinking, as opposed to the deficient human wisdom he has confronted in earlier chapters.

διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθε διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀποστερεῖσθε (1 Cor. 6:7).³⁰⁶ Paul's invitation is for those who are wealthy enough to make use of the courts to “swallow their pride” and choose instead to be wronged or cheated, thus sacrificing what may, in fact, be rightfully owed to them. This invitation is a double-edged sword as Paul reverses it in verse eight with: ἀλλὰ ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε καὶ ἀποστερεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ἀδελφούς (*instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters*), which may indicate that, at least on occasion, they were using the courts to cheat, or act unjustly toward other people instead of bringing equity to their relationships.

The third issue of φουσιόω Paul identifies in this section is the men who were going to the prostitutes. The term πορνεία (*sexual immorality*) narrowly meant “prostitution” in ancient Greek times but had come to refer broadly to many things considered sexually immoral.³⁰⁷ In this case, Paul explicitly refers to prostitution, which is almost certainly a rebuke exclusively to the men.³⁰⁸

The ideology that Paul uncovers as he identifies the issue of πορνεία is a physical-nonphysical dualism where the physical body is not the real self but the temporary receptacle of the real self. The body then is not of eternal value or not a part of what constitutes a relationship with God, and therefore its limitations and fleshy desires do not count against one's relationship with God. Paul challenges an anti-somatic theology by affirming the body as something God created, that was “bought” through the sacrifice of Jesus, and that will be redeemed (ultimately through a bodily resurrection, 1 Cor. 15).

³⁰⁶ “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?”

³⁰⁷ BDAG, 854. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott [compiled], *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1450.

³⁰⁸ Paul does not make an explicit connection with the issue of prostitution and the sexual abstinence in 1 Cor. 7:1-7, but there is a possibility the two have some connection.

This dualistic ideology also appears in chapter seven as Paul addresses individuals (probably married women?) who are abstaining from sexual intercourse with their spouses for what appears to be ascetic ideals.³⁰⁹

The fourth issue of φουσιώ in this section is that some from the church in Corinth were eating idol meat (εἰδωλόθυτος). The issue addresses eating idol meat both in the pagan temples and in their homes after purchasing the meat in the marketplace. Paul directly addresses the issue of idol meat and temple participation in chapters eight and ten. In chapter nine, Paul demonstrates the heart of the issue of idol meat and temple participation with a lengthy three-part homily to illustrate the need to abandon their so-called rights.

To fully understand the Corinthian “pride” as it emerged in the context of eating idol meat, it is important to see the relationship it has to γνῶσις (*knowledge*).³¹⁰ Although the term γνῶσις is common, Paul is using it here primarily to refer to the reasons some in the Corinthian church have justified their attendance at the temple festivals. The first reason mentioned in the text is that idols are really nothing and there are no other gods other than the one true God, who they now know through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8:4-6). The second reason in the text is that people are not made unclean by the food they eat. Paul writes, “food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no

³⁰⁹ Paul addresses a number of different scenarios in chapter seven ranging from some who are considering a divorce because their spouse is not a Christian, to single men who are wondering whether they should go through with the marriage that was already planned. But most of the issues Paul addresses in chapter seven are not directly related to φουσιώ and will not have much or any bearing on Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός.

³¹⁰ BDAG, 203. The term γνῶσις means “knowledge” and is used in the New Testament twenty-nine times, ten of which appear in 1 Corinthians. Although there is a general sense to the term γνῶσις that all believers may share in what can be known about God through revelation, most of the time Paul is using this term in 1 Corinthians it refers more specifically to a χάρισμα (1 Cor. 12:8).

better if we do” (1 Cor. 8:8).³¹¹ Paul tells the Corinthians that their γνώσις leads them to φυσιώω, and in so doing, they actually do not know what they think they know (1 Cor. 8:2).

The issue of eating idol meat is then argued until the end of chapter ten, with Paul concluding that they should not take part in the temple festivities. The problem identified is not only for those who were participating in the temples and eating the idol meat, but for others in the church whose consciences were bothered by this, to the point of Paul indicating that someone’s faith had the potential to be destroyed (1 Cor. 8:11). The issue then was not simply an individual one, but one that had consequences for the unity of the church community.

Paul’s approach to correct the issue

The issues identified in 1 Corinthians 5-10 are moral issues and certainly Paul would want the Corinthians to learn to behave in ways that align with the Messiah’s ideals of sexuality, marriage, and decisions about entertainment and leisure. But Paul’s approach addresses more than just the moral issue at hand, because he challenges the attitude and posture that lie beneath the surface of these moral issues. For Paul, all moral issues are theological issues. Paul’s approach to correct the issue is demonstrated in three main ways: his responses to the slogans in chapters six and ten, his appeal to set knowledge aside in favour of love, and finally his challenge to guard their fellowship.³¹²

³¹¹ This teaching is certainly an echo from Jesus’ teachings about food and what makes someone unclean (Mark 7:1-23).

³¹² There are, of course, many things that Paul does in these chapters to confront the issues at hand. The three chosen are among the major turns in Paul’s argument and will highlight Paul’s theological approach and will also help reveal Paul’s pneumatology, especially in respect to his use of the term πνευματικός. The word “fellowship” is a reference to Paul’s use of the word κοινωνία translated as “participation” in 1 Cor. 10:16 (NIV). As Paul brings this part of his argument to a close in chapter ten, his

The first approach that will be examined here is Paul's attempt to confront the slogan-type rhetoric the Corinthians used to strengthen their resolve and justify their actions regarding prostitution, and then later temple festivities. Paul hinges his response to the slogans with *ἀλλά*. Paul's response is not to argue against but to offer alternative ways of thinking, which is why *ἀλλά* is best translated as "yet" or "rather" as opposed to "but."³¹³ In response to the Corinthian slogan, *Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν* (*I have the right to do anything*), Paul writes, *ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει* (*yet not everything is beneficial*), and *ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό τινος* (*yet I will not be mastered by anything*). This is repeated quite similarly in 1 Cor. 10:23, although Paul changes the second response from "yet I will not be mastered (*ἐξουσιάζω*) by anything" to "yet not everything is constructive (*οὐκοδομέω*)," which will be explained further below.

The verb *ἔξεστιν* means "to be authorized to do something," and is often translated "it is right" or "it is permitted."³¹⁴ It occurs in the New Testament thirty-one times, but in Paul's letters only five times.³¹⁵ Four of those five occurrences of *ἔξεστιν* in Paul are the twice-repeated slogans above (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). This repetitive usage of a word that Paul does not normally use is further evidence that Paul was quoting these statements as slogans or aphorisms from some in the church in Corinth.

Instead of telling them they are wrong in their individual permissions, Paul points them toward the community, and writes, "and yet not everything is *beneficial*." Here the

focus is on the shared table of the Lord and thus the shared life in Christ that should be guarded. More explanation on this term and Paul's final point will be given in the following pages.

³¹³ This does not mean the idea expressed is not adversative, but that the tone is slightly different. In this context Paul is not opposing their rights, he is opposing their choice to live within their rights. BDAG, 44.

³¹⁴ BDAG, 348.

³¹⁵ The term *ἔξεστιν* occurs in 1 Cor. 6:12 twice, 10:23 twice, and once in 2 Cor. 12:4. All other occurrences of *ἔξεστιν* in the New Testament are in Acts and the Gospels.

term συμφέρω (*beneficial*) is used to invite the Corinthians to consider how their actions affect other people. The verb συμφέρω occurs in the New Testament fifteen times and of those fifteen, Paul's only five uses occur in the Corinthian correspondence, three of which occur in 1 Corinthians.³¹⁶ It is a compound word that modifies φέρω (“to bear” or “to bring forward”) with the prefix σύν (“together” or “with”) to describe “mutual benefit” or “common good.”³¹⁷ The third and final occurrence of συμφέρω in 1 Corinthians is in chapter twelve where Paul indicates that the goal of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the church through gifts, services, and workings is that everyone would benefit (1 Cor. 12:7).

As Paul develops his case against the Corinthian pursuit of freedom through γνῶσις, he chooses to use the noun ἐξουσία (*authority, right*) instead of the cognate verb ἔξεστιν (*it is permitted*), which was the slogan word the Corinthians were using. ἐξουσία is a noun that occurs in the New Testament one hundred and two times, ten of which can be found in 1 Corinthians, most of those in chapter nine. We see the verb form of ἐξουσία in 1 Cor. 6:13 as Paul responds to their slogan “I have the right to do anything” with “I will not be *mastered* by anything” (ἐξουσιάζω).³¹⁸ For Paul, to abandon his right to something (ἐξουσία) is to guard against being mastered by that thing (ἐξουσιάζω).

Although the first occurrence of ἐξουσία is in chapter seven having to do with marriage (7:37), it seems unlikely that Paul was using it here to signal the issue of

³¹⁶ The verb συμφέρω occurs in 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23; 12:7; and 2 Cor. 8:10; 12:1. The cognate adjective σύμφορος, meaning “advantage” or “profitable” occurs in 1 Corinthians 7:35 and 10:33, the only two occurrences of σύμφορος in the New Testament. Mitchell argues these five occurrences in 1 Corinthians in various forms, along with other terms describing “advantage” (μισθός in 9:18; κερδαίνειν in 9:20; ὠφελεῖν in 13:3; 14:6; ὄφελος in 15:32) “are all ways of expressing the deliberative appeal to advantage.” Mitchell, 33.

³¹⁷ BDAG, 960

³¹⁸ The verb form of ἐξουσία is ἐξουσιάζω, and it occurs in the New Testament four times: Luke 22:25; 1 Cor. 6:12; 7:4 (2x).

freedom in the Christian life. The next occurrence is in chapter eight and the bulk of occurrences are in chapter nine, all of which are precisely targeting the issue of freedom.

In 1 Cor. 8:9 Paul writes, “Be careful, however, that *the exercise of your rights* does not become a stumbling block to the weak.” The NIV adds “exercise” to elaborate that the term ἐξουσία here is not just referring to the fact that these rights exist but to the actual implementation of these rights that are having an effect on fellow Christians. It is precisely the exercising of the rights that Paul addresses as something they are in control of and can moderate. In other words, they are not required to follow through with what is permitted to them. It is simply their right and they have chosen to indulge in that right.³¹⁹ Paul is recommending, and modelling, that the Corinthians abandon their rights, or perhaps employ their rights *wisely* (i.e., guided by the Spirit). For Paul, the responsibility to love and care for each other is more important than expressing one’s freedom and rights.

His second set of responses when he repeats the slogan in 1 Cor. 10:23 begins in the same way but the second response is changed to ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ (*yet not everything is constructive*). The verb οἰκοδομέω means “to build up” or “to strengthen” and is used five other times in 1 Corinthians, certainly making the case for one of the main messages Paul has for the Corinthians.³²⁰ This emphasis to build each other up begins in this section and will increase in emphasis in chapter fourteen, moving further the central theme of unity in the body as the work of God’s Spirit.

³¹⁹ Thiselton asserts that it is precisely an issue of choice in this text as opposed to the “overworn issue of ‘conscience’.” Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 649.

³²⁰ Paul includes a significant emphasis on “building” in this letter, including a few references to “temple.” Paul uses the verb “to build” (οἰκοδομέω) and the noun “building” (οἰκοδομή) six times in chapter fourteen to make clear that the point of their gatherings should be to build each other up (as opposed to the “tearing” (σχίσμα) that had been reported).

The second approach Paul uses to confront the φουσιώω in the Corinthian church is the way he addressed how their φουσιώω emerged as γνῶσις, which did not lead them to compassion but to self-seeking liberty. Paul first uses the term γνῶσις in the opening salutation, “I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all *knowledge* — God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you” (1 Cor. 1:4-6).³²¹

In chapter eight Paul first responds to the issue of idol meat by restating a Corinthian slogan regarding γνῶσις: “we all possess knowledge” (1 Cor. 8:1b). Paul does not disagree with some of the conclusions they have in their knowledge: there is only one God (8:6) and food does not make a person unclean (8:8). Paul disagrees that “all” of them possess such knowledge (1 Cor. 8:7). Paul also challenges the manner in which they conduct themselves in the community regarding this knowledge (1 Cor. 8:2). His analysis in the opening three verses of chapter eight is that γνῶσις incites φουσιώω, while the effect of ἀγάπη is οἰκοδομέω (*build up*). Paul will use the terms γνῶσις and ἀγάπη together again in chapter thirteen, exclaiming, “If I have ... all *knowledge*, ... but do not have *love*, I am nothing” (1 Cor. 13:2). In both cases Paul is not indicating that knowledge is wrong, but simply that it does no good if there is no love.

Three more times Paul uses the term γνῶσις to caution the Corinthians: not everyone has γνῶσις (8:7); against attending temple meals with all of their γνῶσις (8:10); and against destroying a brother or sister by your γνῶσις (8:11). The problem that emerges from this group in Corinth who expressed liberty because of their γνῶσις is that

³²¹ The remaining nine occurrences of γνῶσις in 1 Corinthians are in the latter part of the letter beginning with five occurrences in chapter eight.

others whose conscience were not as strong were being influenced back into idol worship, thus having their newly formed faith destroyed (1 Cor. 8:9-11).

At the heart of Paul's rebuke are the opposing forces of γνώσις and ἀγάπη. Paul is not against knowledge or against knowing things. In fact, he agrees with the Christians who seem to have greater knowledge concerning the mythical nature of the Greek and Roman gods and the idols that are worshiped in their name (1 Cor. 8:4). He agrees with these Corinthians about eating food freely (1 Cor. 8:8). But this kind of knowledge applied without love will lead to an arrogance that may have devastating effects on other believers.

The third approach Paul uses to confront φυσιώ employs stories from the Torah as “examples” (τύπος, pl. τύποι) of how things can go wrong, even when the Spirit is present. Paul begins in the first five verses of chapter ten by recounting Israel's wanderings in the desert with provisions “by the Spirit” (πνευματικός) in the form of food, water, and the rock.³²² Not only were these provisions from God, but as the context of “knowledge” might suggest, the Israelites knew these things came from God (in this way they had divine wisdom). However, in this case the revelatory advantage proved of little to no benefit.

Paul then recounts four specific stories from the Torah in 1 Cor. 10:6-11, all of which had to do with idolatry, most of which had something to do with either food, sexual immorality, or both!³²³ He concludes this first part of the argument in 1 Cor.

³²² Here Paul indicates that the “rock” was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

³²³ Verse 7 recounts the story of Aaron's golden calf in Ex. 32; verse 8 recounts the story of leaders in Israel's camp that ate food sacrificed to idols after having sex with Moabite women in Num. 25; verse 9 recounts the story of snake bites in the Israelite camp which had to do with complaining about the food in Num. 21; and verse 10 recounts a story of more grumbling, taken from either Num. 14 or Num. 16.

10:12-13, which is a direct warning that the Corinthians could “fall” just as these Israelites fell, even while having the presence of Christ and the provision of the Spirit.³²⁴

The beginning thirteen verses in chapter ten provide the basis by which Paul then can continue in the next section to challenge their attendance at the pagan temples, forbidding all temple participation (1 Cor. 10:14-22) and exhorting the Corinthians to remain faithful to the “Lord’s table” and forego the “table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:21). Here Paul makes use of the term *κοινωνία* (*fellowship* or *shared participation*) in 1 Cor. 10:20, declaring that he does not want the Corinthians to “participate” (*κοινωνία*) with demons.³²⁵ Just as the activity of the Spirit gives people the mind of the Lord (1 Cor. 2:16), here it is the activity of the Spirit that leads to participation with Yahweh and with Yahweh’s people (1 Cor. 10:20-21).

Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός

Paul’s use of the term *πνευματικός* in this section of the letter is in the context of pride (*φυσίω*) that emerged in the moral issues of tolerated sexual immorality, courtroom litigation, and participation in temple festivities which included eating idol

³²⁴ It is worth noting the difficulty of understanding “falling” in this particular context of idolatry. Is Paul referring to eternal salvation as Fee suggests (Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 507)? Did the Israelites who were wandering in the desert “fall” out of God’s grace for eternity? Does Paul go into “strict training” to keep from a misstep that might disqualify him from his eternal prize of salvation (1 Cor. 9:24-27)? While this part of Paul’s warning cannot be completely ignored, it might also be worth exploring what else believers might be disqualified from because of their idolatrous actions. Might *vocation* be a part of understanding this dynamic, as the narrative of Israel in the desert so clearly illustrates: *this group no longer were adequate to represent God’s people in the new land* (Num. 14:20-25; Heb. 3:18-19). Surely Paul’s “race” was not one of keeping his salvation intact, but staying capable and reputable for God’s mission (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Paul’s warning of “falling” then is always a good reminder of our soteriological focus and also our vocational responsibilities.

³²⁵ BDAG, 552. Paul uses the term *κοινωνία* twice in 1 Corinthians: on this occasion in chapter ten and also at the end of the salutation in chapter one, where Paul spells out their identity in Christ: “God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9).

meat.³²⁶ As Paul comes to the pinnacle of this entire argument, doing what he can to address their arrogance in the many ways it has expressed itself, his argument culminates in the warnings of chapter ten, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Cor. 10:12). In this section Paul uses the term πνευματικός three times in the context of a dramatic warning for the Corinthians to not fall into the same trap that the Israelites fell into before them. Along with observations made of the single occurrence of πνευματικός in chapter nine, the following then are a few conclusions regarding the term πνευματικός from this section.

The first conclusion regarding the use of the term πνευματικός in this section is that it can simply be used in reference to the message of the gospel, which is a message that comes by the Spirit. Paul writes in chapter nine about not receiving payment for preaching the gospel in Corinth in order to illustrate to the Corinthians how one might abandon a right for the sake of the gospel. His argument is that he had every right to accept financial support from the Corinthians but he chose to not place this burden on them. His illustration is not a guilt trip to ask for money, but to demonstrate that he had every right to receive money. Paul writes, “If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?” (1 Cor. 9:11). Not unlike what he wrote in Rom. 15:27, Paul uses πνευματικός as the opposite of σάρκιος, but in a completely different way than in 1 Cor. 3:1.³²⁷ In these two cases, Paul is not using σάρκιος to refer to bad choices or bad motivation, but simply “of the physical realm,”

³²⁶ One might wonder if Paul’s earlier statement that they collectively are the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17) and that individually they also should make decisions about their bodies as though temples of God’s Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20) provides an implicit criticism of those choosing to participate in the pagan temples.

³²⁷ “For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings” (Rom. 15:27).

which means he intends πνευματικός to simply mean “of the heavenly realm” or “of the realm of God.”³²⁸

The second conclusion regarding the use of the term πνευματικός in this section is the implicit connection between the words πνευματικός (how the Corinthians perceived themselves) and φυσióω (how Paul perceived the Corinthians). Both of these words share the notion of “movement of air” and can be used to indicate animation or agency. Paul never makes this comparison explicit in the text, but the warning in chapter ten to not let their confidence leave them vulnerable to temptations, even with the Spirit’s provisions, speaks to their arrogance and pride. This pride, as already demonstrated, was expressed in their tolerance of πορνεία, their litigation practices, and their liberated mindset when participating in the temple festivities. The translation of φυσióω as “puffed up” and Paul’s accompanying leaven illustration in chapter five demonstrate the “rise” or “swell” action of this word.

The conclusion is not recognizing the implicit connection of these two words, but in understanding that Paul recognized the inflated impression some of the Corinthians had of themselves. This allows Paul to use the term πνευματικός as a warning for the Corinthians to engage with the Spirit instead of using the truth of the Spirit’s presence as leverage for their self-sufficiency. In all of these matters the church was not able to hold each other accountable or they simply preferred not to hold each other accountable. Paul desired for this community to discern and make judgments within the body for the health

³²⁸ The term σαρκικός occurs in the New Testament seven times, the two neutral or positive occasions (1 Cor. 9:11; Rom. 15:27) and five times in negative ways 1 Cor. 3:3 (2x); 2 Cor. 1:12; 10:4, 1 Pet. 2:11.

of the body.³²⁹ In chapters five through seven we see Paul referring these matters to the Spirit of God eight times.³³⁰

The third conclusion is to see Paul's unique way of using the term *πνευματικός* to describe the inanimate objects of water, food, and the rock in 1 Corinthians 10:3-4. Not only are these occurrences of *πνευματικός* unique because Paul supplies a noun in each case, but these nouns are inanimate. As already stated in chapter three in this project, the "animating" aspect here is in the act of providing resources. Here we see the term *πνευματικός* used to describe the role of God's Spirit in supplying what was needed. This form of divine revelation demonstrated to the Israelites (and now to the Corinthians) the benefit of the activity of the Spirit

The term *πνευματικός*, then, is Paul's way of describing the provision of the Spirit for the people of the Spirit, and therefore the invitation to live according to the Spirit. Paul uses the term *πνευματικός* to indicate the active presence of the Spirit for people to respond to in humility, not so that people can revel in self-assurance. Paul's use of the term *κοινωνία* helps the reader understand that in the context of the Spirit's provision, people will make choices of allegiance that will bond them to a certain reality. The Spirit's invitation is for people to develop a fellowship around Christ alone. In this invitation there is no room for pride, for over-confidence, nor for exclusive attitudes regarding their possession of the Spirit, as will also be made evident in the next section of chapters eleven through fourteen.

³²⁹ Among several other more indirect ways that Paul encouraged the Corinthians to make better decisions, he also explicitly calls for them to "judge for themselves" (1 Cor. 10:15; 11:13) as a way to invite them into exercising discernment for the good of everyone.

³³⁰ The eight times Paul refers to the Spirit of God in 1 Corinthians 5-7 are 1 Cor. 5:3, 4, 5; 6:11, 17, 19; 7:34, 40.

4.3 Πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 11-14

In this third section of chapter four the focus will be on the three occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, found in the wider context of 1 Corinthians 11-14 where Paul addresses issues of the church's behaviour during their gatherings. These four chapters in 1 Corinthians are framed by the use of the word συνέρχομαι, which means “to come together.”³³¹ What is unknown is if συνέρχομαι was meant to be understood as each house church gathering or all of the house churches gathering in one large location.³³² Although the issues of head coverings and the Lord's Supper in chapter eleven are important subjects in their gatherings that deserve study in their own right, for the purposes of this project the focus will go immediately to chapter twelve where Paul begins to explicitly address the activity of the Spirit.

Chapters twelve through fourteen are essentially one argument to correct the misuse of γλῶσσαι (*tongues*) in the assembly at Corinth.³³³ The first three verses in chapter twelve state Paul's intent and the rest of the chapter demonstrates Paul's vision for the Christian church, using the metaphor of the body.³³⁴ Paul emphasizes the activity of the Spirit (πνευματικός) in order to provide a better understanding of “grace bestowed”

³³¹ BDAG, 969. Paul only uses the term συνέρχομαι seven times, all of which occur in this letter, and only in chapters eleven and fourteen (1 Cor. 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:23, 26). The Textus Receptus also has an occurrence of συνέρχομαι in 1 Cor. 7:5 where it refers to uniting in an intimate relationship.

³³² The difficulty with imagining one large gathering is that the total number could have at this time exceeded the capacity of the houses owned by even the wealthiest of citizens in Corinth. This is especially difficult when Paul adds “the *whole* church comes together” in 1 Cor. 14:23. In either case, Paul's emphasis is on the gathered church and the manner in which they “come together” and this reinforces the central theme of unity in 1 Corinthians.

³³³ The term γλῶσσα means “tongue.” Many of the occurrences of γλῶσσα in the New Testament refer to language. Depending on how one understands Luke's usage of γλῶσσα in Acts 2, it is only Paul in 1 Cor. 12-14 that uses the term γλῶσσα as a χάρισμα, referring to mysteries of knowledge or prayer spoken in unknown languages, which requires interpretation. BDAG, 201.

³³⁴ Gordon Fee states, “Paul's immediate – and overall – concern has to do with what comes from ‘the Spirit of God.’” Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Revised Edition, 638.

(χαρίσματα). Gordon Fee suggests that Paul’s opening three verses in chapter twelve help the reader understand the main point of chapters 12-14.³³⁵ For Fee, the whole argument is about the activity of the Spirit of God. Paul is not saying they should stop being ignorant about spiritual gifts (12:1), but that they should stop being ignorant about the Spirit (or *things of the Spirit*). For Paul it is not one single χάρισμα that demonstrates the presence of the Spirit in the gathered community, but the multitude of expressions or manifestations given by the Spirit of God. Using the term πνευματικός, Paul demonstrates his vision for a Spirit-animated assembly that forms a unified expression of the body of Christ.

The issue Paul identifies

Chapter twelve begins with the fourth Περί δὲ (*Now concerning*) of the letter, signalling that Paul is addressing an issue from the letter that some in Corinth had sent to Paul while he was in Ephesus.³³⁶ Paul writes, Περί δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν (“Now concerning *things* of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant”).³³⁷ Many, if not most, English translations of the Bible add the word “gifts” here to render it either “spiritual gifts” or “gifts of the Spirit.”³³⁸ As πνευματικός is a substantive adjective, there was no need for Paul to include a Greek noun, but English translations prefer to supply a noun for clarification. Unfortunately, in this case, adding the word “gifts” may distract the reader from Paul’s real purpose.

³³⁵ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Revised Edition, 638.

³³⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 637-638. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 909.

³³⁷ English rendering of 1 Cor. 12:1 is the author’s translation.

³³⁸ Four translations that used the generic “things” instead of “gifts” are *The Message*, the *World English Bible*, *Young’s Literal Translation*, and the *Jubilee Bible 2000*.

The term πνευματικός does not mean “gift” and is never used together with any of the Greek words that explicitly mean “gift” in the New Testament.³³⁹ But Paul does seem to use the terms πνευματικός and χάρισμα in a complementary way.³⁴⁰ Although some have suggested these are synonyms, as shown through English translations of the New Testament, these two terms require some distinction. Gordon Fee points out that the emphasis in each of these words reflects the root word (πνεῦμα = *Spirit* and χάρις = *grace*). Fee states:

When the emphasis is on the manifestation, the ‘gift’ as such, Paul speaks of *charismata*; when the emphasis is on the Spirit, he speaks of *pneumatika*. If so, then both here and later (14:1) the better translation might be ‘the things of the Spirit,’ which would refer primarily to Spirit manifestations, from the perspective of the Spirit’s endowment; at the same time it would point toward those who are so endowed.³⁴¹

The term χάρισμα means “that which is freely and graciously given, *favor bestowed, gift*.”³⁴² With 1 Corinthians being the earliest letter in which the term χάρισμα appears, it is difficult to know if this was a regular part of Paul’s teaching and preaching prior to addressing the misuse or misunderstanding in Corinth. Yet in Paul’s opening address in this letter (1 Cor. 1:7) he writes: ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χάρισματι (*Therefore you do not lack any grace resources*). One might say the explanation of these χάρισματa is found two verses earlier as Paul commends them for

³³⁹ The Greek words in the New Testament translated “gift” are: χάρισμα, δῶρημα, δωρεά, δῶρον (the last three related to the verb δίδωμι, “I give”).

³⁴⁰ Although χάρισμα is often translated “gift” in English New Testaments, it should be noted that its usage is more nuanced than that, often being used for God’s provision. See the following paragraphs for further insights into how this term is distinguished from other Greek terms often translated “gift.”

³⁴¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 638.

³⁴² BDAG, 1081. From the word χάρις, meaning “grace” (BDAG, 1079), the term χάρισμα (plural χάρισματa) with a -μα suffix is to express a more concrete or tangible expression of grace, often translated “gift” (with the idea that it is an unmerited gift or a divine gift; *gift from above*). The term χάρισμα occurs in the New Testament seventeen times: Romans (6x), 1 Corinthians (7x), 2 Corinthians (1x), 1 Timothy (1x), 2 Timothy (1x), and 1 Peter (1x). Whereas the noun χάρις is used 155 times in the New Testament, χάρισμα only 17 times, and mostly in Paul.

being enriched in every way, “with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge” (1 Cor. 1:5). Paul does not appear to be introducing a new term or new idea to them, but simply reminding and encouraging them, which suggests a confidence that *χαρίσματα* was a part of Paul’s teaching in Corinth on his first visit.

The competitive attitude among the Corinthians can be seen no clearer than in their exercise of *χαρίσματα*, the tangible expression of God’s grace (“grace bestowed”).³⁴³ The irony is thick because these are “divine resources” (“gifts”) given freely by God, yet they are being used for self-promotion and exclusion of others who do not appear to have the same ability.³⁴⁴ Their approach to understanding how the Spirit is manifested in the community is narrowly understood through divine utterance. This narrow approach is made known through Paul’s opening address in 1 Cor. 12:1-3 and also through the entire argument of chapter twelve, emphasizing unity expressed in the application of God’s various, gracious provisions/resources for the health of the entire body.

There are two things that should be noted in order to identify the issue as Paul understood and expressed it in chapter twelve. The first is that Paul wanted to expand their understanding of how the Spirit worked within the church beyond the exercise of the *χαρίσματα*. For Paul, there is only one source for *χαρίσματα* (i.e., the Spirit), but there are a variety of manifestations of *πνευματικά* (i.e., not just *χαρίσματα*), which are all expressed more specifically in the context of love (see 1 Cor. 13). This is why in 1 Cor.

³⁴³ As stated earlier in this project, the term *χαρίσματα* is often translated as “gifts” or “spiritual gifts” in English New Testaments, but is better thought of more generally as divine resources freely given, or “grace bestowed.”

³⁴⁴ Paul alludes to this already in chapter four when he writes, “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

12:4-6 he adds two other kinds of expressions to *χαρίσματα*: *διακονία* (*service*) and *ἐνέργημα* (*working*). Paul's view of the Spirit manifesting in the body of believers is bigger than what is normally referred to as "spiritual gifts."

The second thing that should be noted is that Paul does not write that the Spirit gives "gifts" to the church, but *manifestations* of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7).³⁴⁵ Here Paul intends for his hearers to see another revelatory aspect of the activity of Spirit, as he indicates that what is given is disclosure through the Spirit. Verses 8-11 elaborate on the variety of these manifestations. The point is that Paul is helping them understand these abilities and moments they have experienced as ways that the Spirit shows or expresses God's self to the community, not abilities that the Corinthians possess for their own desires or purposes.

At the centre of Paul's concern for the Corinthians is the lack or absence of love they had for each other, even while gathered and empowered by the Holy Spirit with great expressions of *χαρίσματα*. The occurrence of the term *χαρίσμα* in 1 Cor. 12:31 introduces Paul's love poem that plays a central role in his argument regarding *χαρίσματα*. While Paul does not use the term *χαρίσμα* in this most central part of his argument, he no doubt is challenging the Corinthians to examine their practice of *χαρίσμα* on the basis of love, which he seems to refer to as "the most excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31b).

Finally, it appears from Paul's argumentation in chapter fourteen that some of the Corinthians were so caught up with tongue speaking that they ignored and did not notice

³⁴⁵ The word *φανερωσις* only occurs in the New Testament twice, 1 Cor. 12:7 and 2 Cor. 4:2. It means *disclosure, announcement*. BDAG, 1048. Here is another way for Paul to argue for wisdom that is received by revelation as opposed to the self-achieved wisdom the Corinthians appeared to be promoting.

that people were not edified because they did not understand what was being said. It appears that more than one person was speaking at a time during their gatherings and the chaos that ensued was anything but orderly. While in chapter twelve Paul identifies the theological key to the Corinthian's misunderstanding of how the Spirit works, chapter fourteen is more practical as to how these misunderstandings work themselves out in the gathering.

Paul's approach to correct the issue

Just as Paul did not fundamentally disagree with the Corinthians for having knowledge and a desire to live according to that knowledge, Paul also did not disagree with the Corinthians' desire for and eagerness to express χάρισμα in their gatherings, including the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:39). But as knowledge led them to be "puffed up" without love, tongue speaking also led them to behaviours such as "exclusive χαρίσματα" that were unhelpful in the community because of their lack of love. Paul's task is to affirm their enthusiasm and eagerness to be people who are animated by the Spirit of God, but to also direct them to the true nature of the activity of the Spirit by helping them understand the results they should anticipate from such activity.

The first approach that Paul used to correct the issue of exclusive χαρίσματα is to clarify that there is one Spirit and the manifestations of the one Spirit are unified but diverse (1 Cor. 12:12-14). It is not as though the Corinthians believed there was more than one Spirit, but there was confusion about the identity of some in the church who did not exhibit the same manifestations as others, namely divine utterance. This confusion only has a few outcomes, including coming to the conclusion that some in the church

were not yet born of the Spirit. While some in Corinth had a narrow, or perhaps singular way of understanding the work of the Spirit, Paul's correction helps them to see the diversity in the work and activity of the Spirit within the community.

Paul's primary way of expressing this was to use the imagery of a human body to explain the different parts of the body that make up the church, each part representing an expression of the Spirit of God at work in the body (1 Cor. 12:12-31). In this way, the Corinthians who thought about the activity of the Spirit narrowly through the gift of tongues were able to see that all of the parts (manifestations of the Spirit) are necessary and that these resources demonstrate how the Spirit works in diversity for the good of the entire body in its unity.

The second approach for Paul to correct the issue of exclusive *χαρίσματα* is to reinforce the purpose, or end goal, for the manifestations of the Spirit. It is not clear what the Corinthians thought the purpose of Spirit activity was in their lives, other than to conclude the opposite of what Paul writes. Paul says it a number of different ways, but the first clear statement comes in 1 Cor. 12:7 where Paul writes, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). The term *συμφέρω* means "to bring together into a heap" and "to be advantageous, *help, confer a benefit*."³⁴⁶ Paul has already used this term twice in the letter as a rebuttal against their slogans to exercise their rights (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23). It is not *beneficial* or *advantageous* in any way for some in the community to behave without considering what is good for

³⁴⁶ BDAG, 960. Anthony Thiselton and Margaret Mitchell emphasize that *συμφέρω* must mean more than "common good" as Paul is clearly using it here, and in 6:12 and 10:23, "where building up constitutes the common advantage." Thiselton writes, "[T]he Spirit is at work where the public manifestation serves the common advantage of others, and not merely self-affirmation, self-fulfillment, or individual status." Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 936. Margaret Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 146.

others. This third and last time Paul uses this term in chapter twelve it is used positively, as a guiding vision for how the Corinthians should think about the way the community should be building itself up because of how the Spirit is at work in the community. Paul will continue on in chapter fourteen making his case that the goal for the activity of the Spirit in the gathered church is none other than the edification of others (1 Cor. 14:5, 12). In other words, the goal of the Spirit's work in the community of believers is unity, which is achieved through the benefit or *advantage* the whole community receives through the *manifestation* of the Spirit (given to each one).

The third approach that Paul takes in this section is to give the Corinthians very specific instructions about how to guide tongue-speaking and the utterance of prophetic word while the church is gathered together. Nowhere else in Pauline letters do we find such explicit instruction for speech in the gathered church, which is one clue that this instruction has more to do with what was happening in Corinth as opposed to a rigid formula of how the church should always operate. Two principles are seen clearly in Paul's concluding words in chapter fourteen. The first principle for tongue-speaking is that words spoken in the church gathering should be intelligible, or understandable. Paul writes, "So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air" (1 Cor. 14:9). Paul believes that words ought to instruct, not leave people confused. Paul's instruction takes on extra emphasis for the foreigner in their midst, writing, "If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker

is a foreigner to me.” (1 Cor. 14:11).³⁴⁷ Paul concludes his point with a very clear rationale for why it is important for people to hear and understand:

So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!” (1 Cor. 14:23-25).

The second principle for tongue-speaking that Paul outlines for the Corinthians is that when there is some sort of divine utterance in the church gathering, it should be orderly. Paul’s theological reasons for the church to conduct itself in an orderly way is that God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33). When two people speak at one time it is not clear whom the people should listen to. These environments are susceptible to a competitive spirit where the louder voice is the voice that is heard. Paul gives explicit instruction for one person to speak at a time and if another person has a word for the congregation the one who is currently speaking should stop (1 Cor. 14:30).

With these three approaches to confront the issue of exclusive *χαρίσματα*, Paul demonstrates that the gathered community is not about competition or about a certain group that is more privileged. The goal is the unity of the body for the good of all. And he accomplishes this by demonstrating the nature of how the Spirit of God is at work.

³⁴⁷ Paul’s brilliance in this statement in 1 Cor. 14:9 is lost in most English translations. The term he uses is *βάρβαρος*, only used six times in the New Testament, and the 2011 NIV translates it “Islander” in Acts 28:2, 4, “Non-Greek” in Rom. 1:14, “foreigner” in 1 Cor. 14:11(2x), and “Barbarian” in Col. 3:11. The KJV consistently translates “Barbarian” (or “barbarous”) on all six occasions. Greeks gave this name to foreigners whose language was difficult, as though they were just babbling, thus the derogatory “bar-bar” reference becoming a way to describe the foreigner in their midst. By explaining to the Corinthians that a *βάρβαρος* cannot understand them was to turn the table on their logic of intelligent or sophisticated speech. On a side note, Paul seems to actually expect a “foreigner” to occasionally show up for the gathering of the church to check things out!

Paul's use of the term πνευματικός

The Apostle Paul's three uses of the term πνευματικός in chapters twelve and fourteen are not to present a case for gifts of the Spirit, but to argue that the activity of the Spirit should not be limited to certain gifts or be exclusive to only a few people. The main gift that is in focus is the gift of tongues, which was experienced by some in the church at Corinth as the template or the exclusive criteria to demonstrate the activity of the Spirit. Paul's use of the term πνευματικός in chapters twelve and fourteen counters this mentality.

The first conclusion regarding the use of the term πνευματικός in this section is that Paul does not see the activity of the Spirit as inaccessible. Paul begins by stating that he does not want them to be “ignorant” (ἄγνοέω) about πνευματικός. Paul only uses the term ἄγνοέω four times in 1 Corinthians. The first is in chapter ten in the warning to be careful of flirting with idolatry. The second is our current text of 1 Cor. 12:1. The other two are found at the close of the argument, where Paul uses it twice within the same sentence, “But if anyone *ignores* this, they will themselves be *ignored*” (1 Cor. 14:38). The individuals Paul was directing this instruction to did not think the Spirit was inaccessible to them, but it appears they did feel like they had special access, inferring limited or no access for some of the others. Paul's focus here, then, is to demonstrate the revelation of the Spirit and therefore the accessibility of the activity of the Spirit beyond their limited criteria.³⁴⁸

The second conclusion regarding the use of the term πνευματικός in this section is that Paul does not automatically mean “spiritual gift” when he uses the term πνευματικός.

³⁴⁸ This, of course, presumes that Paul had the wisdom from the Spirit by which to inform their ignorance.

In fact, Paul never uses the term πνευματικός and usually uses terms like χάρισμα and δωρεά when he wants to refer to “spiritual gifts.”³⁴⁹ Paul goes to great lengths to describe the variety of ways χαρίσματα is expressed, or should be expressed, in the church. He uses the term διαίρεσις (*variety, difference*) three times in 1 Cor. 12:4-6 to describe the diversity of God’s activity in the church.³⁵⁰ He illustrates how diversity should work by describing each person within the church as a part of a human body. Each person is a unique expression of God’s Spirit as each part of the body is different and has a significant contribution to make to the body. Yet there is one body, and so this diversity of “parts” functions within unity so that the whole body should gain benefit. This argumentation that takes up the majority of chapter twelve, including explanations of how some parts need more attention, or adornment, because they will otherwise go unseen or perhaps will be seen in unhelpful ways (1 Cor. 12:22-25), are clues to the exclusive behaviour that some in Corinth were promoting regarding their narrow views of the evidence of the Spirit in the church. While the Corinthians’ issue was specifically χαρίσματα, Paul’s approach to correct it was to help them see the broader activity of the Spirit (πνευματικός) in the church.

The third conclusion regarding the use of the term πνευματικός in this section is that Paul’s command to those who are zealous for πνευματικός (*things of the Spirit*) is to pursue love (1 Cor. 14:1). Most of the χαρίσματα Paul mentions in 1 Cor. 13:1-3, that he emphatically states amount to nothing without love, are the very same χαρίσματα that he has explicitly stated are enabled by the Spirit in chapter twelve. One might reach the

³⁴⁹ Paul uses δωρεά in Rom. 5:15, 17; Eph. 3:7; 4:7.

³⁵⁰ These are the only three occasions for the term διαίρεσις in the New Testament. The verb διαίρῃω is also rare, only occurring in Luke 15:12 and 1 Cor. 12:11.

conclusion that without love the activity of the Spirit leads to nothing, or at least nothing good. One could also interpret Paul's love poem as the full (τέλος) demonstration of the results of the activity of the Spirit within receptive and obedient believers, which is "faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

Paul's critique of their emphasis on speaking in tongues is not a critique on tongues itself, but a critique on how this narrow focus prevents them from doing what they are purposed to do when they gather, which is to build each other up. Paul's exhortation to favour prophetic word over tongue speaking is not to create a new hierarchy of Spirit expressions, but to reframe all of the Spirit expressions under the purpose for which they have been given, namely, for *the advantage of each one gathered* (συμφέρω).

The term πνευματικός in chapters twelve and fourteen is misunderstood when it is simply translated "spiritual gifts," which completely ignores Paul's focus which was to challenge the limited and exclusive ways the Corinthians were exercising their gifts in the church gathering. Paul encouraged χαρίσματα but he also encouraged διακονία (*service*) and ἐνέργημα (*working*) because these were all ways that in which Spirit was manifested in the community for the common good (συμφέρω). Paul's use of the adjective πνευματικός is to help the Corinthians see a more broad and inclusive way the Spirit works and expresses the presence of God in the community of faith.

4.4 Πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 15

In this last section the focus will be on the four occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 15. Chapter fifteen constitutes a slight shift from the behavioural issues of the

first fourteen chapters to a more purely theological issue.³⁵¹ The entire focus of chapter fifteen is resurrection from the dead, and it appears that the most critical question coming from Corinth was the nature of the resurrection body, although Paul takes this opportunity to address a few other aspects of resurrection as well.

While the topic of resurrection in chapter fifteen is clearly a shift from the argument in chapters twelve through fourteen regarding *χαρίσματα* when the believers “come together” (*συνέρχομαι*), Paul’s argument about resurrection is not completely unhinged from his appeal regarding their gatherings.³⁵² The key is to recognize the challenge Paul leaves the Corinthians in chapters 12-14 to not be ignorant (*ἀγνοέω*).³⁵³ The emphasis here is both a stab at their arrogance as people who prided themselves in their knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1-3) and also a sobering question of whether they actually know what they claim to know. Thus, Paul begins chapter fifteen with, *Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν* (*But I make known to you, brothers and sisters, the gospel which I preached to you*). After Paul challenges them to not be ignorant (*not-knowing*) about the way the Spirit works in the church in chapters twelve through fourteen, he continues in chapter fifteen by *reminding them* of the gospel he has already preached to them earlier. As Gordon Fee states, “Now he ‘makes known’ to them what they already know, but seem to have forgotten.”³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ All ethical and behavioural issues are theological issues, and certainly the belief in a bodily resurrection has ethical implications. The distinction is made in order to identify the shift in Paul’s focus to the kind of issue Paul addresses in chapter fifteen.

³⁵² Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 799.

³⁵³ Paul only uses the term *ἀγνοέω* four times in 1 Corinthians. The first is in chapter ten in the warning to be careful of flirting with idolatry. The second occurrence is 1 Cor. 12:1 as Paul launches into his argument regarding *χαρίσματα*. The other two are found at the close of this argument, where Paul uses the term *ἀγνοέω* twice within the same sentence, “But if anyone *ignores* this, they will themselves be *ignored*” (1 Cor. 14:38).

³⁵⁴ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 799.

Chapter fifteen of 1 Corinthians can be divided into four sections. In the first section (1 Cor. 15:1-11) Paul lays the foundation for resurrection within the gospel narrative. The second section of Paul's argument (1 Cor. 15:12-34) explains how the resurrection of Jesus is the essential event that resolves the problem of sin and death for humanity. Here Paul concludes that there is no human resurrection without the resurrection of Jesus as the firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). The third section of Paul's argument (1 Cor. 15:35-49) addresses the kind of body that resurrection entails. In this section the term *πνευματικός* appears four times to describe the nature of the resurrection body and will be the main emphasis of this part of the project. The fourth section of Paul's argument (1 Cor. 15:50-58) is the conclusion in which Paul writes a final word about the victory over death that is possible only because of the resurrection of Jesus.

The issue Paul identifies

The issue that was introduced at the beginning of 1 Corinthians and that can be seen throughout the entire letter is that of factionalism. Although Paul was not always as explicit throughout the letter as he was in the first few chapters regarding the divisions in the church, it is still evident that Paul is correcting ethical and theological perspectives amidst a people who live with internal strife.³⁵⁵ In chapter fifteen it was not just that there was a theological problem regarding a correct understanding of the resurrection of Jesus. It was that the Corinthians were quarreling about it and dividing themselves apart from each other because of it.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Mitchell, 283.

³⁵⁶ Margaret Mitchell argues for a point of view that every issue within the letter of 1 Corinthians is in some way a part of Paul's overall argument which has its thesis in 1 Cor. 1:10, the divisions in the church. Mitchell, 65-68.

The theological core of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15 is against at least some people (1 Cor. 15:12, 34, 35) in the church at Corinth that have not quite grasped the full implications of the resurrection of Jesus, including the nature of a *bodily* resurrection.³⁵⁷ The issue on a surface level reading is that some of the Corinthian Christians were not completely aware of the full implications of resurrection, and therefore the effects of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Beneath this surface reading are issues of misunderstanding how the resurrection of Jesus provides victory over death, how the resurrection of Jesus has direct implications for the resurrection of humanity, and how the *bodily* resurrection of Jesus is a prototype of the kind of *bodily* resurrection awaiting all humanity.

Although the bulk of 1 Corinthians 15 has to do with the resurrection, Paul begins with a word of clarity around the core of the gospel message, signalling that the eschatological views the Corinthians were expressing and perhaps even arguing about were not cosmetic distortions, but fundamental errors. The root of their problem was a misunderstanding of the central tenets of the gospel message.³⁵⁸

In 1 Corinthians 15:26 Paul clarifies that the last enemy to be defeated is death.³⁵⁹ There were at least some in Corinth who were not quite informed about how God was providing victory over death through resurrection. The issue is not that the Corinthians

³⁵⁷ As N.T. Wright makes clear, "The overall structure and logic of the chapter thus confirms what we would have guessed from the direction in which the rest of the letter points that this is intended by Paul as a long argument in favour of a future *bodily* resurrection." N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God, Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. III* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 314.

³⁵⁸ It is difficult to know if this misunderstanding of the gospel message was the whole church or just a select few. As with other issues in his letter, Paul often writes to the whole church instead of identifying people by name. It is reasonable to think, given the rivalries and factions, that this could represent one of the groups within the church more directly.

³⁵⁹ Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 288. Paul will declare later to the Romans that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

rejected eternal life, but that they did not fully understand how God was overcoming death, or perhaps it did not really occur to them until later to consider how people who had already died were included in the eternal life that they had now received.

One of the reasons the Corinthians were confused about their ideas of eternal life is that people in their community continued to die after Paul left. We see a hint of this when Paul comments about some who have “fallen asleep” in 1 Cor. 11:30b.³⁶⁰ Paul’s comment here tells us that some were dying in the community and the church did not have an answer for this reality, as though it was expected there would be no more physical death because of their belief in the resurrection of Jesus. And then in 1 Cor. 15:29 Paul makes a comment about an activity of the Corinthians baptizing each other on behalf of the dead. There is no precedent in Christian, Jewish or pagan history for this activity and we simply do not have enough information to know what was going on.³⁶¹ What puzzles scholars is that Paul does not take the time to reject such a practice. It appears Paul simply brings it up, obviously knowing it was happening, and uses it to show them that they do in fact believe something about the resurrection of the dead, even if they were still somewhat confused by it all.

What is crucial to recognize is that this confusion or misunderstanding of what will become of those who have already died is fundamental to the gospel itself. As N.T. Wright states, “The creator’s answer to death cannot be to reach some kind of agreement or compromise,” and, “Anything other than some kind of bodily resurrection, therefore, is simply unthinkable, not only at the level of the meaning of individual verses and phrases

³⁶⁰ The term κοιμάω means “to sleep” and is also used euphemistically for death. For example, Paul instructs the Corinthians that if a woman’s husband *dies* (κοιμάω) she is free to marry again (1 Cor. 7:39).

³⁶¹ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 844-850.

but at the level of the chapter's argument as a whole."³⁶² What Wright highlights is that the issue of understanding resurrection is not just another of the many problems the church in Corinth was facing, it was the fundamental problem. Margaret Mitchell adds, "For the Christian there can be only one final goal of one's actions: the ultimate victory in the resurrection in which all should hope and for which all should strive against the common enemy, death."³⁶³ For at least some in the Corinthian church, the gospel was unclear, and so they were out of touch with how God was saving the world by providing victory over death. This development can seem quite astonishing given the fact that Paul was preaching and teaching in Corinth for at least eighteen months when he first planted the church (Acts 18:11).

The Corinthian's confusion is further demonstrated in 1 Cor. 15:12-13 where Paul begins by stating that if there is no resurrection from the dead then it must also be true that Jesus was not raised from the dead. The Corinthians were not knowingly rejecting the resurrection of Jesus, but their rejection, or at least confusion, about resurrection suggests they had not completely thought through the explicit correlation of the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of humanity.

The argument in 1 Corinthians 15 culminates in Paul's explanation of the nature of the resurrection body, which is a clue that one of the major issues with Corinthians' understanding of resurrection had to do with dead bodies coming back to life. As Gordon Fee states it:

The problem for the Corinthians is with *the dead* and their *rising*, that the dead have a future existence in some somatic form – probably from their point of view

³⁶² N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 314.

³⁶³ Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 283-284.

taken literally to mean reanimation of a corpse to continue bodily existence in its *present* bodily form.³⁶⁴

The mindset of the Corinthians would have been largely influenced by Platonic dualistic theology. Not only would they have viewed a person as both body and soul (material and nonmaterial), but they would have regarded the material, or physical, as the lesser part of the person. Paul has already uncovered this theological view when he argued against the use of prostitutes in chapter six, repeating the slogan that appears to have summarized Corinthian thought regarding the worth of their bodies: “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both” (1 Cor. 6:13). Paul’s instruction that the human body is a temple for the Spirit of God would have come as a surprise to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6:19). His admonition to honour God with their bodies would have been met with astonishment (1 Cor. 6:20). Regarding Paul’s instruction to honour God with their body, Gordon Fee states, “This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the pneumatics’ view that the body is destined for destruction and therefore has no present or eternal significance.”³⁶⁵ Pearson states, “By far the most probable assumption is that they affirmed a doctrine of immortality and regarded a resurrection of the body as superfluous, if not altogether repugnant.”³⁶⁶ The Corinthians had a low view of the human body and this was at the heart of their misunderstanding of resurrection.³⁶⁷ Why would God bring back to life something that was never intended for eternal living? With this kind of noncorporeal eschatology, the Corinthians were caught between rejecting the

³⁶⁴ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 821.

³⁶⁵ Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 291.

³⁶⁶ Pearson, 16.

³⁶⁷ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 463.

bodily resurrection of Jesus and not having a good answer for why members among them were still dying.

Paul's approach to correct the issue

The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians functions both as a stand-alone argument about the resurrection of Jesus and of all believers, and also as the culmination of the entire argument of the letter of 1 Corinthians. Although it is not explicit in the text, implicitly the reader is once again seeing Paul defend the gospel message to a divided people.³⁶⁸ This resurrection chapter also brings clarity to Paul's "Christ crucified" perspective of God's wisdom and power (1 Cor. 1:24). In so doing, Paul is able to clarify that a cruciform posture of discipleship is how we enter the struggle of life, and it is in resurrection that full vindication of wrongs (i.e., sins) is brought about (1 Cor. 15:56-57).

Paul begins his defense of resurrection by restating the gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1-11). Paul's main strategy in these first eleven verses is to re-establish the tradition of the gospel of Jesus Christ: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve" (1 Cor. 3b-5). Paul then explains that Jesus appeared to over 500 people and in this he expands the scope and impact of the gospel by God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10). In so doing, Paul explicitly connects the gospel to an actual event, not simply an allegorical account that symbolized the resurrection of Christian

³⁶⁸ The entire fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is apologetic in nature. Paul is arguing with those whose beliefs about resurrection were incorrect or misguided, according to the tradition that he had received. Furthermore, we learn in 1 Cor. 15:12 that "some" in the church in Corinth did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. What may be implied here is that "others" may have disagreed.

hope.³⁶⁹ And Paul's interest here is not to give them (or remind them of) his own perspective or interpretation of this event, but to pass on the revelation as it was originally given to him. Gordon Fee states, "For all the shaping that Christian theology underwent in his hands, the basic elements were there before and after him. This is what he 'received' and what he 'passed on.'"³⁷⁰

Twice in this gospel summary, in 1 Cor. 15:3-4, Paul uses the phrase: κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς (*according to the Scriptures*). Most scholars agree that Paul is not quoting any Old Testament passage specifically here but referring generally to the grand story of the scriptures that testifies to Jesus. N.T. Wright comments, "There are of course several scripture passages which point in this direction, including some of the Psalms and several parts of Isaiah 40-55; but Paul is primarily concerned with the entire sweep of biblical narrative."³⁷¹ Paul did not present his own idea of who Jesus is; rather, he declared what had been given to him by the Apostles. In so doing, as Mitchell aptly explains, "Paul calls them to unity in their common traditions (1 Cor. 15:1; cf. 11:2, 23), and in their future eschatological destiny (a further extension of the σῶμα argument; 15:35-49)."³⁷²

What should be of particular interest in Paul's gospel summary is the perfect passive ἐγῆγεῖται (from ἐγείρω, meaning "to raise"). Fee states, "In distinction from the two previous lines, the verb in this instance is a perfect passive ('he has been raised'), implying that he was both raised and still lives."³⁷³ The perfect passive is repeated

³⁶⁹ N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 317.

³⁷⁰ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 801. Regarding its form, N.T. Wright remarks, "It was probably formulated within the first two or three years after Easter itself, since it was already in formulaic form when Paul 'received' it. We are here in touch with the earliest Christian tradition, with something that was being said two decades or more before Paul wrote this letter." N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 319

³⁷¹ N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 320-321.

³⁷² Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 176.

³⁷³ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 806.

throughout the chapter when referring to Christ (vv. 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 20), demonstrating Paul's conviction that the resurrection of Jesus does in fact have continual implications for the future.

After reminding the Corinthians of the foundation of the gospel message in the first eleven verses, Paul moves on to describe how the resurrection of Jesus has implications for the resurrection of believers (1 Cor. 15:12-34). Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that the resurrection of Jesus is not an isolated event from human history, but the *ἀπαρχή* (*firstfruits*, 1 Cor. 15:20) of what is yet to come. Paul's point is this: there will be a resurrection of the dead because Jesus was raised from the dead. Margaret Mitchell states that Paul's point is to, "prove the necessary consequence of Christ's resurrection – the resurrection of believers – as against 'some' Corinthians who deny that there is a resurrection of the dead."³⁷⁴ Commenting on the nature of the argument, Wright states that this is *reductio ad absurdum*, "showing that those who deny the future resurrection are cutting off the branch they are sitting on."³⁷⁵ Ultimately, Paul demonstrates how their current position regarding resurrection denies their own future because it rejects the fundamental premise in which all eternal life is based: the resurrection of Jesus.

Paul continues from his initial questions in 1 Cor. 15:12-13 and plays out the consequences of holding to a view of no resurrection (vss. 14-19) and then he returns to his convictions regarding the actual resurrection of Jesus and how it is not only the means by which all are saved, but that it also establishes the pattern by which all believers find confidence in their own future (vss. 20-28). Wright clarifies, "The argument of chapter

³⁷⁴ Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 288.

³⁷⁵ N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 332.

15, then, runs as follows: what the creator god did for Jesus is both the *model* and the *means* of what he will do for all Jesus' people."³⁷⁶ It is the "means" part of the equation that the Corinthians had not fully accepted.

Paul's gospel approach to this entire chapter on resurrection culminates in 1 Cor. 15:28 as he declares, "When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all." Borrowing from Psalm 8:6, Paul envisions everything being brought under the reign of Jesus, and then when this has been completed, everything will be set right under God so that God might be "all in all." What is crucial to understand at this point for the purposes of understanding Paul's overall argument is that God cannot be supreme if death is not defeated. As Fee states, "These sentences are crucial to the whole argument: Christ's resurrection demands our resurrection; otherwise death is never defeated and God cannot be 'all in all.'"³⁷⁷ And so not only is Jesus not raised from the dead if there is no resurrection, but also God cannot be supreme if there is no resurrection.

Then Paul moves on to address the nature of the resurrection body, which could be understood as the primary focus for Paul in this section of the letter. The astute reader would have already picked up clues that some in the church in Corinth had views about the human body that differed from Paul's view (1 Cor. 6:12-20). Many in Corinth would have had a Platonic dualistic lens by which they viewed their bodies and logically it is also the lens by which they held to some sort of bodiless resurrection.

Paul presupposes a scenario where someone might ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" (1 Cor. 15:35). In the following verses Paul

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 316.

³⁷⁷ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 828.

goes on to explain the continuity and discontinuity with bodies that change in form but not in essence. He does this in two different ways. First, Paul uses an analogy of a seed that produces a body of the same kind. Paul's logic here is that a seed planted in the ground will grow and yield a plant of its same kind, although the plant will be different in body (form) than the seed which was planted (1 Cor. 15:37-38). Second, Paul also indicates that the kind of bodies in the world are many, and distinct one from the other (1 Cor. 15:39-41). Paul uses this logic to finally explain that there is distinction of heavenly (ἐπουράνιος) bodies and earthly (ἐπίγειος) bodies, which he introduces in 1 Cor. 15:40 and returns to in 1 Cor. 15:48-49 (although Paul changes his "earthly" language from ἐπίγειος to χοϊκός).³⁷⁸

Paul then writes, "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:42). With more agricultural imagery, Paul explains the process of sowing into the ground and being raised with four different comparisons, culminating in the difference of ψυχικός and πνευματικός.³⁷⁹ In 1 Cor. 15:44-46, Paul returns to the πνευματικός-ψυχικός association from 1 Corinthians 2:13-14. However, here he is not describing how a person receives revelation but how the resurrection body functions.

For Paul the difference between πνευματικός and ψυχικός is not about physicality or visibility. The debate of supposed influence of Gnosticism in this text in Thiselton's

³⁷⁸ The term ἐπίγειος means "pertaining to what is characteristic of the earth as opposed to heavenly, *earthly*." BDAG, 368. There are seven occurrences of ἐπίγειος in the New Testament. The term χοϊκός means "*made of earth/dust, earthly*." BDAG, 1086. There are only four occurrences of χοϊκός and they are all located in 1 Cor. 15:47-49. These terms are essentially synonymous, yet Paul makes a shift in terminology and uses a word in this text that he and others use in no other place in the New Testament. What is conclusive is that Paul wants his readers to understand the contrast of the body that came from and was sustained by that which is of creation. The resurrected body will be sustained by the Spirit.

³⁷⁹ The first three comparisons are perishable to imperishable, dishonour to glory, and weakness to power. The last two resemble language Paul uses at the beginning of his letter to demonstrate the kind of recipients of the gospel the Corinthians were in opposition to their self-proclaimed status (1 Cor. 1:26-31; 4:10-11).

view is outdated and no longer needs any attention.³⁸⁰ Pearson also rejects Gnosticism as the answer and simply states that the Corinthians would have understood a bodiless existence based on their reading of Genesis 2:7 in the Septuagint.³⁸¹ In either case, it appears from the argument that the Corinthians were not passive in their understanding of their eschatological state. Using the term πνευματικός, Paul demonstrates his vision for a Spirit-animated resurrection body that reaffirms the resurrection of Christ.

In 1 Cor. 15:47 Paul introduces the term χοϊκός (*earthly*) to emphasize the distinction of the natural body and spiritual body. Although Paul's argument does not promote physical resurrection, it does promote a bodily resurrection. "The fundamental leap of imagination that Paul is asking the puzzled Corinthians to make is to a body which cannot and will not decay or die: something permanent, established, not transient or temporary."³⁸²

Finally, Paul brings the entire argument to a conclusion by declaring victory through an explanation of how the resurrection of Jesus nullifies the penalty of death. Here Paul not only brings his argument to a climax, but his argument is the climax of his gospel message. In eschatological form, Paul declares the future breaking into the present day. Fee states, "That is, he recognized that in those events God had set in motion the events of the End in such a way that they must of divine necessity be brought to consummation."³⁸³ So sure of God's victory over death through the resurrection of Jesus, Paul quotes from Isaiah 25:8 and declares that death has been swallowed up in victory (1

³⁸⁰ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1174.

³⁸¹ Pearson, 24. Pearson argues that the Corinthians' understanding of Gen. 2:7 placed the importance on God's in-breathing of Adam. Therefore, it is currently the "in-breathing" of the Spirit that is of importance, not the physical body. This does not explain what the Corinthians believed about the afterlife, only how they currently viewed the body.

³⁸² Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 347.

³⁸³ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 827.

Cor. 15:54). Then borrowing from Hosea, he takes a seemingly gloomy prophetic word of plagues, destruction, death and the grave, and he converts it into an affront against death itself: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55). For Paul, death has altogether been defeated already save the final demonstration: the resurrection of all believers.

In the last few verses of 1 Corinthians 15 Paul explains how this victory is won. He tells the Corinthians that the beginning of all of this downward spiral that leads to death is sin, and what gives sin its power or its ability to hold people accountable for their wrongdoing is the law (1 Cor. 15:56). Then Paul concludes with thanksgiving that Jesus has provided victory, implying that his death and resurrection resolved the claim of death that sin had on human life (1 Cor. 15:57). Gordon Fee states, “Thus for Paul there is a divine necessity to the resurrection of the dead, since that alone is the evidence of the final overthrow of the last enemy, death itself.”³⁸⁴ Then finally Paul concludes with a benediction that charges the Corinthians to labour for the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός

The Apostle Paul’s use of the term πνευματικός in chapter fifteen was primarily in response to a view of an eternal bodiless existence. Some in Corinth rejected the idea of a resurrection because the only possible conceptualization of resurrection is an eternity in a body of flesh, which would have sounded repulsive to them. Two conclusions need to be made regarding the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 15.

The first conclusion regarding the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 15 is similar

³⁸⁴ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 827.

to the conclusion drawn from Paul's use of πνευματικός in chapter two of 1 Corinthians. In both of these chapters, the term πνευματικός is best understood in relation to ψυχικός. Not only is there clarity around the distinction between these two adjectives in the presence or agency of the Spirit, but we also gain clarity regarding the word πνευματικός in relation to how Paul handles material and immaterial dualism. Wright clarifies that "The adjective describes, not what something is *composed of*, but what it is *animated by*."³⁸⁵ Unlike the choice the NRSV made to translate ψυχικός as "physical," we must maintain that ψυχικός cannot mean "physical" because it forces πνευματικός to then mean "non-physical," and then Paul's logic and argument that our resurrection bodies will be like the resurrection body of Jesus is left untrue.³⁸⁶

The conclusion regarding the πνευματικός-ψυχικός pairing in chapter two of the thesis distinguished between the person who lives by the Spirit and the person who lives without the Spirit, especially in the context of receiving wisdom from God. In so doing, we understand that πνευματικός is not referring primarily to invisible or nonmaterial qualities (although the Spirit is both of these) but referring instead to the activity or agency of the Spirit in the believer, which is another way God reveals himself. The activity of God's Spirit in the believer is God's self-revelation to the believer.

As Paul uses this same πνευματικός-ψυχικός pairing in chapter fifteen to describe the difference between the human body prior to resurrection and the resurrected body, the distinction is not the substance or appearance of the body, but that which animates the

³⁸⁵ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 352.

³⁸⁶ As noted in chapter two of this project, the Greek term ψυχικός is best understood as "pertaining to the ψυχή." While the term ψυχή is used a few different ways in the New Testament, it generally refers to life, or the natural human life or life-force that animates human life. To describe someone as ψυχικός is to describe their natural life that is without the resources of the Spirit, as one who is πνευματικός. Translation of ψυχικός could be "natural" or "without the Spirit," but each context in which it is used will require some further explanation.

body or gives it life. In other words, Paul's use of ψυχικός to describe the human body is not to describe physicality, but the natural created elements that gives a body of flesh life. Using this logic, Paul is now using the term πνευματικός to describe a body that is animated by the Spirit, or perhaps it is a body that operates in the realm of the Spirit.³⁸⁷ The πνευματικός-ψυχικός pairing here further develops Paul's usage of the term πνευματικός as "pertaining to the πνεῦμα."

The second conclusion regarding the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians 15 is observed through the reflection on Genesis 2:7 and the association Paul is making between resurrection and new creation.³⁸⁸ For Paul, the difference between the ψυχικός person and the πνευματικός person in the context of resurrection is marked by a new age. As Pearson notes, "To the opponents' view that a πνευματικός element in man's soul is that which guarantees his continuity after death, Paul must answer that man both in body and soul, as a ψυχικὸν σῶμα, belongs still to the old Adam through whom sin and death came into the world."³⁸⁹ Pearson argues that Paul uses the reference to Genesis 2:7 to refute the idea that it was in creation that God put the πνευματικός element in man's soul. In other words, Genesis 2:7 does not explain the πνευματικός person, but the ψυχικός person. Paul's comparison then lies in the second Adam, as Pearson concludes, "Man's full spiritual existence as a πνευματικὸν σῶμα lies in the future with the resurrection, it is an eschatological hope."³⁹⁰ N.T. Wright summarizes this well:

Genesis 2.7 is thus not so much a proof-text, more a part of the larger story which

³⁸⁷ Pearson concludes, "Man's existence in the resurrection, however, will be characterized by a πνευματικὸν σῶμα (= τὸ σῶμα τὸ γενησόμενον v. 37), to which will belong the attributes of ἀφθαρσία, δόξα, δύναμις, etc. Then man – i.e., man ἐν Χριστῷ -- will belong entirely to the new aeon of life, to the Man through whom is the ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν (15.21) and who himself as the resurrected one is the ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων (15.20)." Pearson, 26.

³⁸⁸ καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶαν ("and the man became a living being").

³⁸⁹ Pearson, 25.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

the Christian, looking at Jesus' resurrection, can now tell; and the good news which emerges from this is that Jesus has pioneered the way into the long-awaited future, the new age which the creator has planned (verse 46). The *pneumatikos* state is not simply an original idea in the mind of the creator, from which the human race fell sadly away; this model of humanity is the future reality, the reality which will swallow up and replace merely *psychikos* life.³⁹¹

The eschatological nature of this resurrection chapter establishes a context by which the term πνευματικός is seen as the Spirit's work for life eternal. Resurrection marks the transition from the present age to the age to come. This resurrection, according to Paul, is characterized by the work and activity of the Spirit.

³⁹¹ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 355.

5. CONCLUSION

The initial interest of this study emerged from a few observations based upon 1 Corinthians 3:1-4. It was noted that Paul was using the terms *πνευματικός* and *σαρκικός* in an interesting way to confront the Corinthians on their divisive behaviours and to demonstrate to them that their self-assessment was misguided. A word study of *πνευματικός* showed that this word was mostly used by Paul in the New Testament and that fifteen out of the twenty-four times Paul used it was in 1 Corinthians. A question was asked: *Why does Paul repeatedly use the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians?* What emerged was a project that has now established an understanding and meaning of the term *πνευματικός* in 1 Corinthians and some implications for the church today.

5.1 The meaning of πνευματικός in the letter of 1 Corinthians

In chapter one of this project, it was identified that factions in the church in Ancient Corinth was the key problem that precipitated Paul's response by letter. The factions were the result of competing interests among a church congregation, some who had not abandoned all of the secular ethics from their past and these resulted in certain behaviours that challenged their Christian formation.

The letter of 1 Corinthians is one of numerous interactions Paul and those of his travelling team had with the church in Corinth. Paul's methodology of correction in 1 Corinthians was to occasionally repeat key words or phrases to signal to his audience that he was indeed referring to their stated beliefs and practices (called "slogans" in this project) that he had heard about from various sources. Among these repeated words and phrases was the Greek term *πνευματικός*, a word repeated fifteen times in this letter. The

question was asked: *Why does Paul repeatedly use the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians?* And the following hypothesis was formulated: **The thesis of this project will demonstrate that the Apostle Paul’s usage of the Greek adjective πνευματικός in the letter of 1 Corinthians is a corrective response to the distorted pneumatology of some in the Corinthian church.**

The term “slogan” is used by several scholars, among other terms such as aphorism and maxim, to refer to the words or phrases that the Corinthians used to state or to justify their conduct and behavior around certain actions. Some of these became divisive features in the church community and these slogans appear in 1 Corinthians because Paul wants to address the underlying issues revealed in the terminology used by these factions. While πνευματικός is not a slogan in the typical sense, what this project has demonstrated is that some in the church in Corinth were referring to themselves as advanced over others in various ways, and the term πνευματικός became a way for them to label that advantage. This is one of the unique features that distinguishes the use of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians from other occurrences in the New Testament.

In chapter two of this project, the Greek term πνευματικός was identified as a derivative adjective belonging to a group of adjectives with suffixes *-ικός* and *-ινος* that emerged during the classical period. These Greek adjectives carry the sense of “pertaining to” and it was concluded that the fundamental meaning of πνευματικός in the New Testament is “pertaining to the πνεῦμα.” It is agreed that most of the time this adjective is used in reference to the Holy Spirit, though the clear exception to this is Ephesians 6:12. Other associated terms used alongside πνευματικός, such as ψυχικός and

σαρκικός (and σάρκινος), give particular clarity to how Paul understood and used the term πνευματικός in the letter of 1 Corinthians.

In chapter three of this project, the term πνευματικός was examined in Greek literature predating the New Testament as well as all of the occurrences in the New Testament and those appearing in the Apostolic Fathers. The analysis of these occurrences demonstrated a major shift in how Paul understood and used the term πνευματικός as compared to the occurrences that predate the New Testament, related to the shift in meaning for the term πνεῦμα in the LXX and New Testament. It is not as though πνεῦμα and πνευματικός always refers to the Spirit of God in the New Testament, but they often do.

In chapter four of this project, all four major sections of 1 Corinthians were analyzed in order to understand the specific context of each occurrence of πνευματικός. Here the reader can clearly see not only Paul's theological acumen for a more precise pneumatology than what the Corinthians had shown, but also Paul's pastoral leadership as the letter clearly demonstrates Paul's care and concern for these people. Paul not only instructed the Corinthians accurately about the activity of the Spirit, but he also did so while inviting the Corinthians to view church leadership than the current social culture of Corinth had taught them.

This part of the project also demonstrated Paul's consistent use of the term πνευματικός as "pertaining to the πνεῦμα" in the context of 1 Corinthians. Although the fifteen occurrences of πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians differed in context in the four major sections of the letter, the following common threads were identified:

In all fifteen occurrences Paul clearly had the agency of the Spirit in mind when using the term πνευματικός. This main emphasis of agency does not necessarily exclude πνευματικός from elsewhere referring to invisible or nonmaterial qualities, but simply brings emphasis to Paul's main concern: the term πνευματικός primarily refers to agency of the Spirit of God.

In all fifteen occurrences Paul seemed to be referring to some sort of revelation by the Spirit, even if that revelation had more to do with resources than wisdom or insight. It is by God's Spirit that people can know God and have the mind of Christ; that they are supplied with heavenly resources; that they can utter the things of God; and that they become fully a part of the new creation through resurrection.

In all fifteen occurrences Paul understood and used the term πνευματικός in the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ. From beginning to end, the letter of 1 Corinthians is all about the message of the crucified and resurrected Christ. While the last section clearly points to the resurrection and consummation of life in the realm of the Spirit, Paul also points to the Spirit in the search for wisdom, in leadership (evident in his apostolic defense), in the use of knowledge, and in the shared life of the gathered church.

5.2 The implications of this study for the church today

This project has demonstrated that the term πνευματικός was used repeatedly throughout the letter of 1 Corinthians in a consistent manner as Paul brought attention to the misuse of the term πνευματικός in Corinth and the misunderstanding of how the Spirit works in the church in general. The conclusions of this study shown above should help the reader of 1 Corinthians identify the problem in Corinth and Paul's pastoral solution,

as well as give insight into the key term πνευματικός and how it is used in the New Testament. In addition to these conclusions that have been brought forward from each of the four previous chapters of this project, the following three points may further the implications regarding Paul's use of the term πνευματικός in the church and in Christian discipleship today.

First, the church in its approximately two thousand years has always experienced the difficulty of quarrelling and divisions in various ways, including some that resemble the divisions in the church at Corinth. There are multiple reasons why churches are unable to resolve internal conflicts and why more and more new churches are formed because of disagreement and division in existing churches, but the irony in every single case is that the fruit of the Spirit should be unity, not division. One might suggest that at the heart of every church split is a substantial misunderstanding of the activity of the Spirit of God in the church. This is not to imply that the Spirit of God is not active in the church today or that some churches operate without the leading and work of the Holy Spirit. But just as the Corinthians had the Spirit but did not live according to the Spirit (πνευματικός, 1 Cor. 3:1), the church constantly faces the challenge to not give in to worldly postures (σαρκικός, 1 Cor. 3:3).³⁹²

In Corinth it was not the leaders (i.e., apostles) who incited the divisions, but some of the people in the church who proclaimed in slogan-like fashion a certain kind of belonging to leaders. Paul demonstrates that he was absolutely opposed to this kind of competition. He instead directed them to stop dividing themselves and to be like-minded

³⁹² The challenges today are not limited to internal choices of how to navigate difference of opinion among believers, but also include the external dangers that impose on the church, including forces of evil that Paul refers to as principalities and powers, the rulers of this age, and spiritual beings.

and unified. In doing this, Paul's message of "pertaining to the πνεῦμα" is in effect an appeal to unity where competition among leaders has no place. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Richard Hays pastorally writes:

Whenever there are cults of personality in the church, Paul's indictment hits home. When the charisma and ambition of the preacher begin to loom larger than the gospel of the cross, something is dreadfully wrong. When the faithful start to align and define themselves in terms of one particular leader, a red flag should go up.³⁹³

To be clear, the problem of personality cults sometimes has as much to do with bad behaviours and wrong motivations in congregations as it has with such features in the leaders themselves. This was Paul's experience and it appears this is also true for Apollos. The activity of the Spirit, if received well, will guide both congregation and leader to resolve differences, to learn to live with diversity, and to resist rivalries and the pride that usually accompanies.

Second, the church today would be wise to pay attention to the choice of words when it comes to describing things that are important to understanding God. Too often the adjective "spiritual" is used in ways that blur what is really meant. As some of the Corinthians considered themselves "the spiritual ones" (οἱ πνευματικοί), the response from Paul was the very opposite. Just as Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that the term πνευματικός was not one to boast in or to use to promote their status in the community, the church today should be careful with the English adjective "spiritual." Paul's main goal was to steer the Corinthians away from status and achievement and to help them pay attention to the activity of the Spirit of God. As Thiselton noted:

We believe that this is a decisive indication that Paul wishes the adjectival form πνευματικός to be understood as meaning of the Spirit (of God), and not as the

³⁹³ Richard Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 25.

more bland *spiritual*, which allows for the very misunderstanding which Paul wishes to exclude.³⁹⁴

Modern English translations would do well to look for creative alternatives to translate the term πνευματικός in order to avoid the confusion of what is meant by the word “spiritual.” For example, in 1 Cor. 3:1 the NIV translates the term πνευματικός as “people who live by the Spirit” instead of “spiritual people” (New Living Translation). This is one example of a few places where the NIV has been more explicit about the Spirit as a way of translating and thus articulating the meaning of the term πνευματικός more accurately.

Third, the church today should be awakened to the eschatological emphasis in Paul’s language to the Corinthians. The pouring out and indwelling of God’s Spirit is “last days” kind of language. This is now imbedded in Paul’s understanding of revelation and wisdom, of knowledge and expressing the things of God in the gathering of the church, and the consummation of all things through bodily resurrection, which Paul refers to as “bodies pertaining to the Spirit” (πνευματικὸν σῶμα). This eschatological approach to understanding life in the Spirit brings urgency and immediacy for the church to live according to the Spirit through obedience and following the Lord Jesus daily. Paul is not calling the church to live in panic, but to recognize that new creation has already begun with the work of the Spirit in the church. Paul’s repeated use of the term πνευματικός in 1 Corinthians was ultimately to inform and point the Corinthian believers, and thus to the church today, to Spirit life, fully living in obedience to Christ, and fully contributing to the community.

³⁹⁴ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 265.

Appendix A All 26 occurrences of πνευματικός in the New Testament

Book	Ref.	Inflection	Parse	Gr. Noun	NIV
Galatians	6:1	πνευματικοί	masc pl nom	-	you who live by the Spirit
1 Corinthians	2:13	πνευματικοῖς	n/m pl dat	-	explaining spiritual realities
1 Corinthians	2:13	πνευματικά	neut pl acc	-	Spirit-taught words
1 Corinthians	2:15	πνευματικός	masc sg nom	-	The person with the Spirit
1 Corinthians	3:1	πνευματικοῖς	masc pl dat	-	people who live by the Spirit
1 Corinthians	9:11	πνευματικά	neut pl acc	-	spiritual seed
1 Corinthians	10:3	πνευματικόν	neut sg nom	βρῶμα	spiritual food
1 Corinthians	10:4	πνευματικόν	neut sg nom	ἔπιον	spiritual drink
1 Corinthians	10:4	πνευματικῆς	fem sg gen	πέτρας	spiritual rock
1 Corinthians	12:1	πνευματικῶν	n/m pl gen	-	spiritual gifts
1 Corinthians	14:1	πνευματικά	neut pl acc	-	gifts of the Spirit
1 Corinthians	14:37	πνευματικός	masc sg nom	-	gifted by the Spirit
1 Corinthians	15:44	πνευματικόν	neut sg nom	σῶμα	a spiritual body
1 Corinthians	15:44	πνευματικόν	neut sg nom	-	a spiritual body
1 Corinthians	15:46	πνευματικόν	neut sg nom	-	the spiritual
1 Corinthians	15:46	πνευματικόν	neut sg nom	-	the spiritual
Romans	1:11	πνευματικόν	neut sg acc	-	spiritual gift
Romans	7:14	πνευματικόν	masc sg nom	ὁ νόμος	the law is spiritual
Romans	15:27	πνευματικοῖς	neut pl dat	-	the Jews' spiritual blessings
Ephesians	1:3	πνευματικῇ	fem sg dat	ἐυλογία	spiritual blessing
Ephesians	5:19	πνευματικαῖς	fem pl dat	ὥδαῖς	songs from the Spirit
Ephesians	6:12	πνευματικά	neut pl acc	-	spiritual forces
Colossians	1:9	πνευματικῇ	fem sg dat	σοφία συνέσει	wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives
Colossians	3:16	πνευματικαῖς	fem pl dat	ὥδαῖς	songs from the Spirit
1 Peter	2:5	πνευματικός	masc sg nom	οἶκος	spiritual house
1 Peter	2:5	πνευματικάς	fem pl acc	θυσίας	spiritual sacrifices

Appendix B Corinthian Slogans

The following are some specific criteria for identifying and isolating Corinthian slogans in 1 Corinthians (Jay Smith, “Slogans in 1 Corinthians,” 2010, pp.84-86).

1. Explicit introductory formulae such as the recitative OTI (e.g., 8:1, 4; cf. 7:1).
2. A brief, pithy, and often elliptical statement or generalization in the present tense, that is, a proverb, maxim, catch-phrase, or motto (e.g., “all things are lawful,” 6:12).
3. Rhetorical features and parallel structures that enhance memorability (e.g., the chiasm in 6:13: food-stomach-stomach-food).
4. Repetition elsewhere in the letter that suggests common currency and/or a formulaic pattern (e.g., “all things are lawful” occurs four times, twice in 6:12 and twice in 10:23).
5. Diatribal features that suggest “imaginary” dialogue (e.g., 6:12-20).
6. Vocabulary, syntax, or ideas foreign to or inconsistent with Paul (or not normally used for certain concepts) (e.g., 7:1b expresses asceticism foreign to Paul; cf. 9:19-22; 10:25-26, 29b-30; Eph. 5:22-33).
7. Contextual or syntactical dislocation (a statement that is inserted abruptly or “point blank,” change of addressees, shifts in vocabulary) (e.g., change of addressee occurs from 8:7 to 8:8).
8. A sharp counterattack (including a severe qualification or total rejection) or point-counterpoint argumentation (e.g., 6:13: “Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food . . . Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body”).
9. Vocabulary or theology that other contexts suggest is exclusively or characteristically Corinthian (e.g., the presence of the Corinthian “buzz word” GNOSIS, “knowledge,” 8:1).

Three Additional Tests

1. Contextual congruency: Does identifying and isolating a slogan make the best sense of the immediate context?
2. Confirmation by others in the history of exegesis (the mature reflection and collective wisdom of “the interpretive community”).
3. Convergence of multiple strands of evidence.

Appendix C Theological Definition of Πνευματικός

Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

(comparison from all three editions)

FIRST EDITION: BAG

(Pre-Socr. +, mostly in the sense ‘pertaining to the wind or breath’; Strabo 1, 3, 5; Cleomedes [II AD] 1, 8 p. 84, 22 HZiegler ’91; Vett. Val. P. 1, 11; 231, 20; PGM 5, 25; Philo) predom. in Paul in our lit. (elsewh. only 1 Pt, 2 Cl, B, Ign., D) *pertaining to the spirit, spiritual*.

1. referring to the inner life of a human being; stands in contrast to σωματικόν
2. in the great majority of cases it refers to the divine πνεῦμα; *caused by or filled with the (divine) Spirit, pertaining or corresponding to the (divine) Spirit*
3. *pertaining to (evil) spirits*

SECOND EDITION: BAGD

(Pre-Socr. +, mostly in the sense ‘pertaining to the wind or breath’; Strabo 1, 3, 5; Cleomedes [II AD] 1, 8 p. 84, 22 HZiegler ’91; Vett. Val. P. 1, 11; 231, 20; PGM 5, 25; Philo) predom. in Paul in our lit. (elsewh. only 1 Pt, 2 Cl, B, Ign., D) *pertaining to the spirit, spiritual*.

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3. *pertaining to (evil) spirits*

THIRD EDITION: BDAG

(Pre-Socr. +, mostly in the sense ‘pertaining to the wind or breath’; Strabo 1, 3, 5; Cleomedes [II AD] 1, 8 p. 84, 22 HZiegler ’91; Vett. Val. P. 1, 11; 231, 20; PLond I, 46, 25 p.66 [IV AD?]; PGM 5, 25; GrBar 13:4 [π. πατέρας]; Philo; Just.; Tat. 15, 3) predom. in Paul in our lit. (elsewh. only 1 Pt, 2 Cl, B, Ign., D) *pertaining to the spirit, spiritual*.

1. pert. to spirit as inner life of a human being, *spiritual*; stands in contrast to σωματικόν
2. in the great majority of cases in ref. to the divine πνεῦμα; having to do with the (divine) spirit, *caused by or filled with the (divine) spirit, pert./corresponding to the (divine) spirit*
3. *pert. to (evil) spirits*

1 Pt = 1 Peter

2 Cl = 2 Clement (Bihlmeyer 71-81) 14:1, 2, 3

B = Barnabas (the Letter of) 1:2; 4:11

Ign. = Ignatius (Ephesians) 5:1; 7:2; 8:2 (x3); 10:3; 11:2 (Magnesians) 13:1, 2 (Smyrniens) 3:3; 12:2; 13:2 (Polycarp) 1:2; 2:2

D = Didache 10:3

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