


# PAUL'S ACCOUNT OF CHANGE AT THE RESURRECTION IN 1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-44A

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**Abstract:** The following article discusses Paul's conception of change regarding the resurrection body in 1 Cor 15:42-44a. Our thesis is that Paul uses a popular Hellenistic cosmology and account of change to explain how the transformation of the body is possible. He uses seed imagery to contrast the pre-and-post-resurrection bodies ... the mortal and immortal bodies. Using rhetorical accommodation techniques, he resolves the Corinthian confusion regarding physical resurrection using popular Hellenistic ideas. Whereas some interpreters think that the resurrection body is terrestrial, others find a rarefied extraction of matter like the Stoic material soul or a holistic transformation into a rarefied and/or celestial element fitted to a polarized heavenly environment. Our interpretation is characterized by material continuity and integrative rather than absolute polarity. Though Paul conceives of material continuity, he says nothing of rarefied bodies or their natural habitat. Jesus's resurrection and anticipated return suggest a transformation of the 'flesh' into a body capable of traversing both heavenly-earthly spheres. Some think this view is incoherent, because it combines two incompatible conceptions of resurrection. Paul's solution seems to be that the resurrection body changes its properties as needed, depending on its environment. Hence, it never exemplifies incompatible properties at the same time.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Paul presents his conception of the resurrection body's eschatological transformation in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44a. Our thesis is that Paul uses popular Hellenistic cosmology and an Aristotelian account of change to explain the transformation for Greek converts. He uses seed imagery to contrast the pre- and post-resurrection body... the earthly mortal and heavenly immortal body. He resolves the Corinthian confusion regarding resurrection with rhetorical accommodation techniques, using their metaphors, cosmology, and philosophical ideas. Some scholars continue to support a robust conception of physical and terrestrial resurrection, but these interpretations minimise the relevance of Paul's celestial language. Modern trends interpret the resurrection body as a rarefied extraction of matter like the Stoic material soul, or a holistic body transformation into a rarefied and/or celestial element fitted to a polarised heavenly environment. Our analysis suggests that the resurrection body is characterised by material continuity and integrative rather than absolute polarity. Even though Paul conceives of material continuity and says nothing of rarefied bodies, he is silent about the body's natural habitat. Jesus's resurrection and anticipated return suggest a resurrection and transformation of the 'flesh' into a body capable of traversing both heavenly and earthly spheres. Some charge this view with being incoherent because it conjoins two

incompatible conceptions of resurrection. Theoretically, and admittedly speculatively, Paul may have resolved this problem by conceiving of bodies that change their properties as needed. If they never exemplify incompatible properties at the same time, Paul did not need to address the conceptual problems further.

Section II explains our methodological approach to the question of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15. Section III summarises our structural-formal assessment of the chapter, providing a framework for our discussion of resurrection transformation. Section IV explains Paul's Hellenistic account of change in vv. 42-44a, considers alternative interpretations of the resurrection body, raises objections, and then presents our interpretation with supportive reasoning. Section V summarises our findings.

## II. THE CORINTHIAN CONTROVERSY AND THE 'OPponents FIRST' APPROACH

Several theories about the nature of Paul's 'opponents' have been developed: those sympathetic to Greek philosophy and the soul's immortality,<sup>1</sup> Gnostics,<sup>2</sup> Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom Mystics,<sup>3</sup> deniers of an afterlife such as the Sadducees,<sup>4</sup> etc.<sup>5</sup> Each provides different explanations of the problems and Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 15.

According to the conventional Greek position drawing on Plato, the Corinthians rejected the idea of a physical resurrection in favour of the soul's immortality. Some hold that Paul maintained physical resurrection in response, whereas others theorise that he accepted the soul's immortality in Hebraic-Greek terminology. According to the Gnostic position, the Corinthians believed in a spiritual resurrection at conversion, and denigrated matters of the body and the eschatological resurrection. In response, Paul affirms the futurity of physical resurrection against realised eschatology. According to the Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom position, the

<sup>1</sup>Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther III*, HNT (Germany: J.C.B. Mohr Siebeck, 1949), 49. Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, Second Edition, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1971), 329. D.B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (Yale University Press, 1995), 104-136.

<sup>2</sup>Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard C. Kee, Revised English Edition (TN: Abingdon Press, 1973, 1975, 1984), 274 cf. 17. A.T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, SNTSMS 43 (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 35. Additional listing in J.R. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, HUT 42 (Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 32-33 cf. 4.

<sup>3</sup>B.A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*, SBLDS 12 (1973). Gerhard Sellin, *Der Streit um die Auferstehung der Toten: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung von 1 Korinther 15*, FRLANT 138 (Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986). M.C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death*, JSNTSup 22 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 97-105. Joost Holleman, *Resurrection & Parousia*, NovTSup 84 (E.J. Brill, 1996).

<sup>4</sup>Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (NY: Seabury Press, 1931), 93-99.

<sup>5</sup>For discussion of reasons for the Corinthians' denial of the resurrection, see R.J. Sider, 'St. Paul's Understanding of the Nature and Significance of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV 1-19', *Novum Testamentum* 10, no. 2 (1977): 124-141, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1560542>. D.Ø. Endsjø, 'Immortal Bodies, before Christ: Bodily Continuity in Ancient Greece and 1 Corinthians', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30, no. 4 (2008): 417-436, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X08091442>. K.R. Harriman, 'A Synthetic Proposal about the Corinthian Resurrection Deniers', *Novum Testamentum* 62, no. 2 (2020): 180-200, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685365-12341663>.

Corinthians similarly believed in a spiritual resurrection at conversion. Still, they related this to transforming the mortal soul into an immortal spirit (Philo's 'Two Souls' doctrine).<sup>6</sup> In response, Paul agrees that the resurrection involves a transformation of the mortal soul into an immortal spirit, but this must be an eschatological event in the future, producing a 'spiritual body' (the resurrection 'body' does not involve the material corpse). This brief survey shows that there is no consensus regarding the ideology of Paul's 'opponents', and the approach leads to different views of Paul's resurrection doctrine.

There are specific problems with these reconstructions of Paul's 'opponents'. For instance, the immortality of the soul position is uninformative. It does not directly address Paul's teaching in the text and permits many interpretations, so its impact on Paul's resurrection doctrine is hard to measure. There is also no evidence of Gnosticism in Corinth from the time. The emergence of Gnosticism is typically dated around the second century CE with the first Gnostic texts. Hence, it arose too late to identify the Corinthian ideology. There are also no traces of anti-Judaic polemics in 1 Corinthians, so the fashionable Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom position is unlikely, despite common intertexts in Gen. 2:7 (1 Cor. 15:45 and *Opif.* 135; *Leg.* 3.161, etc.) and a parallel with Philo's doctrine of Two Adams (1 Cor. 15:45-49 and *QG.* 1.4; *Conf.* 14.61-64). Citations of Jewish (non-biblical) traditions from the Pseudepigrapha and Wisdom traditions no more suggest a Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom audience than does Paul's citation of Isaiah (1 Cor. 15:54 = Isa. 25:8) and Hosea (1 Cor. 15:55 = Hos. 13:14) suggest a Jewish one. Deniers of the resurrection, such as the Sadducees, are also unlikely since Paul is addressing Christians in general. This means they probably accepted Jesus's resurrection at some point, but the pre-Pauline Creed in 1 Cor. 15:3-11 says nothing of a future resurrection. So, they probably accepted Jesus's but not their future resurrection.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to specific problems, Asher lists three general problems with the causal orientation of the 'opponents first' approach.<sup>8</sup> First, Paul's language is ambiguous in places, so its meaning cannot be convincingly identified with those of his 'opponents'. Second, the number of phrases is too limited to identify their usage with his 'opponents convincingly'. Third, rhetorical analysis shows that Paul's approach is not polemical or antagonistic against outsiders or 'enemies', but this would be expected if Paul were arguing with 'opponents'. In summary, diverse interpretations arise from the 'opponents first' approach because of the various ways in which advocates of each position relate Paul's vocabulary to the imagined ideologies of his 'opponents'. Each position equally explains the data logically and coherently based on the previously constructed hypothetical ideologies. The meaning of specialised terms and vocabulary in this approach appears subjective, however, so the available empirical data underdetermines a firm judgement about the ideologies themselves. Therefore, the 'opponents first' approach renders the interpretation of Paul's resurrection doctrine indeterminate. These problems suffice to reject the 'opponents first' approach in our analysis.

Owing to specific and general problems with the 'opponents first' approaches, our analysis adopts a functional approach and begins by considering some of Paul's rhetorical strategies in 1 Corinthians. Instead of asking: 'What is the ideology of Paul's opponents?', our method begins by asking: 'How does Paul's rhetoric function within the letter?' According to Mitchell's work, Paul's

<sup>6</sup>Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*.

<sup>7</sup>Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 54-55. D.Ø. Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 147-148.

<sup>8</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians*, 36.

rhetoric is deliberative and reconciliatory.<sup>9</sup> The tone of the letter makes this clear because Paul nowhere identifies 'opponents' or 'enemies', and presents himself in a self-deprecating manner (1 Cor. 15:8, Paul was an 'abortion'). Meekness is not expected of polemical rhetoric aimed towards outsiders or enemies. Paul's deliberative rhetoric in 1 Corinthians is also made clear by comparison with 2 Cor. 2:14-7:4; 10-13. In 2 Corinthians, Paul appeals to the Christian community against his opponents (in contrast to 1 Cor. 15:12, 'some among you').<sup>10</sup> Hence, while disagreement and confusion arose about the nature of the resurrection, Paul's tone in 1 Corinthians shows that the dissenters were not viewed as 'opponents' understood as outsiders or enemies.<sup>11</sup>

The disagreement about resurrection probably arose naturally among Greek converts attempting to harmonise their newfound Jewish beliefs with their popular Hellenistic cosmological-philosophical beliefs. The remaining unethical behaviour is easily explained as a misunderstanding of Paul's teaching on the Christians' 'freedom in Christ' (1 Cor. 10:23-30). Paul merely aims to provide doctrinal correction and guidance to Christians in Corinth, which extends to prohibiting certain behaviours. In this regard, his style is didactic. Therefore, the appellation 'opponents' of Paul is a misnomer.

### III. TURNING TO THE TEXT: DIVISIONS AND MAIN ARGUMENTS

Scholars propose different structural reconstructions of 1 Cor. 15, but most identify a two- or threefold division. Many scholars follow Lightfoot's division with slight variations.<sup>12</sup>

#### A Evidence for the Resurrection of the Dead (15:1-34)

<sup>9</sup>M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991). For a detailed rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians 15, see T.J. Christian, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15 As Insinuatio*, *Biblical Interpretation* 205 (Brill, 2022); and 'The Historical Approach to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism: A Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 15' *Religions* 15, no. 1: 88 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010088>.

<sup>10</sup>Tuckett raises two main criticisms in a critical review of Asher's work and the functional approach. First, the distinction is, in the end, unhelpful, since even Asher attributes some ideology to Paul's detractors. Second, the length of discourse in 1 Cor. 15 suggests a polemical tone. Christopher Tuckett, 'Reviewed Works: Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15 by Jeffrey R. Asher', *Journal of Religion* 82, no. 3 (2002): 433-434, <https://doi.org/10.1086/491111>. However, these criticisms are based on misunderstandings. The problem does not arise from attempts to identify Paul's detractors' beliefs. Rather, the problem arises when identifying vague terms with their ideology and then using this framework to interpret Paul. There may be evidence of overly realised eschatology in 1 Cor. 4:8, for instance, but there is no reason to think that this is the problem with which Paul is concerned. As Martin argues, if Paul were focusing on realised eschatology, then his teaching that they already have knowledge 'and, indeed "all things" (1 Cor. 1:5)' is precarious (Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 106). Paul is not speaking in a vacuum, though. Hence, some conclusions about the ideology of the Corinthian converts with whom Paul is concerned are unavoidable. The question regards the order in which their beliefs are identified and related to Paul's teaching. Regarding the length of 1 Cor. 15, Tuckett commits a categorical fallacy of reasoning, since length is not synonymous with tone. The tone of Paul's discussion demonstrates the depth of his compassion for his Christian brothers and sisters in Corinth, and nothing in the text rises to the level of polemics geared to outsiders or enemies despite clear diatribes and polemical tone in places.

<sup>11</sup>This conclusion is also supported by Paul's work building *ethos* with the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 15:1-11, establishing a friendly rapport. Christian, 'The Historical Approach to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism', 12-13.

<sup>12</sup>Listed in Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 286 cf. 562. All NT Greek from NA28, and all English citations are from the NRSV, our translation, or cited authors.

- a Testimony to Christ's Resurrection (vv. 1-11)
- b Christ's Resurrection Involves Man's Resurrection (vv. 12-28)
- c Testimony of Human Conduct to a Belief in the Resurrection.  
Baptism for the dead.  
Sufferings of the Apostles (vv. 29-34)

- B Difficulty as to the Manner of the Resurrection (15:35-49)
- C Triumph of Life Over Death (15:50-58)

Others focus on a twofold division for the main argument with further subdivisions throughout:

- A Argument for the Eschatological Resurrection (15:1-34)
- B Bodily Character of the Eschatological Resurrection (15:35-58)

Our assessment follows Asher's twofold division and identifies the primary division in v. 35:<sup>13</sup>

- A Didactic Argument of Inconsistency (15:1-34)
  - a Kerygma and Agreement on Jesus's Resurrection (vv. 1-11)
  - b Negative Syllogistic Argument (*modus tollens*) – Acceptance of Kerygma Inconsistent with Denial of Resurrection (vv. 12-19)
  - c Positive Argument for Christ's Resurrection and Future Resurrection (vv. 20-28)
  - d Negative Argument Switch to *ad hominem*, Points to Inconsistencies (vv. 29-34)
    - 1. Vicarious Baptism Inconsistent with Denial of Resurrection (v. 29)
    - 2. Paul's Hardships Inconsistent with Denial of Resurrection (vv. 30-32)
    - 3. Moral Imperatives Inconsistent with Denial of Resurrection (vv. 33-34)
- B Didactic Argument of Accommodation and Correction (15:35-57)
  - a Didactic Argument of Correction (35-38)
    - 1. Preparation for Correction: Dialectical Formula (vv. 35-36a)
      - (i) First Dialectical Question (v. 35a)
      - (ii) Second Dialectical Question (v. 35b)
      - (iii) Correction of the Foolish Student (v. 36a)
    - 2. Correcting the Dissenters: Illustration of the Seed and Plant (vv. 36b-38)
  - b Didactic Argument of Accommodation (vv. 39-49)
  - c Solution to the Dilemma (vv. 50-57)

This division is also recognised in most of the other structural/rhetorical analyses, and advocates of both the threefold and twofold sequencing agree on other divisions but variously

<sup>13</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 59-89.

locate them in their schemes. So, *mutatis mutandis*, our findings are consistent with other reconstructions.

By example, Greco-Roman deliberative rhetoric typically has five components: 1. *Exordium* (introduction), 2. *Narratio* (narration or factual statement), 3. *Propositio* (thesis statement), 4. *Probatio* (proofs or arguments supporting thesis; either *confirmatio*/confirms the *propositio* or *refutatio*/refutes objections against it), and 5. *Peroratio* (conclusion). These parts could also be arranged differently. Applied to 1 Cor. 15, analysts divide the text in something like the following way.<sup>14</sup>

- Exordium (15:1–2)
- Narratio (15:3–11)
- Propositio 1 (15:12)
- Refutatio 1 (15:13–19)
- Confirmatio 1a (15:20–28)
- Confirmatio 1b (15:29–34)
- Propositio 2 (15:35)
- Refutatio 2 (15:36–44a)
- Confirmatio 2a (15:44b–49)
- Confirmatio 2b (15:50–57)
- Peroratio (15:58)

The presentation contains two propositions as well as both refutation and confirmation sections for each, and an important division is marked at v. 35.

Our analysis focuses on 1 Cor. 15:35-57, where Paul describes the resurrection body. First, it is crucial to understand the close relationship between *Propositio 1* and 2 in vv. 1-34 and 35-57 because the first unit plays a vital role in Paul's argument in the second unit. In vv. 1-34, Paul uses a didactic technique, arguing against the denial of the resurrection based on inconsistency with the tradition received. After introducing the tradition regarding Jesus's resurrection in vv. 1-11, Paul organises the following sequence with an A:B:A' structure:<sup>15</sup>

A: Negative Argument from Inconsistency (vv. 12-19)

B: Positive Affirmation for Jesus's Resurrection and Consequences (vv. 20-28)

A': Negative Argument on Theme of Inconsistency (vv. 29-34)

Paul begins this sequence with a negative propositional-like argument in vv. 12-19. Fee and Holleman identify a *modus tollens*.<sup>16</sup> The argument can be formulated as follows. Let p = Christ is raised from the dead, and q = the dead are raised.

<sup>14</sup>Christian, 'The Historical Approach to New Testament Rhetorical Criticism', 11-12. Similar reconstructions in B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Fortress Press, 1990); D.F. Watson, 'Paul's Rhetorical Strategy in 1 Corinthians 15' in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht (JSOT Press, 1993), 231-249; Insawn Saw, *Paul's Rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 15: An Analysis Utilizing the Theories of Classical Rhetoric* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1995); Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (MI: Eerdmans, 1995); Anders Eriksson, *Traditions as Rhetorical Proof: Pauline Argumentation in 1 Corinthians*, ConBNT 29 (Almqvist & Wiksell, 1998); Mark Wegener, 'The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Corinthians 15', *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (2004): 438-455.

<sup>15</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 61 cf. 101.

<sup>16</sup>G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 740. Holleman, *Resurrection & Parousia*, 41-42 cf. 5.

$$\sim q \supset \sim p$$

$$p$$

$$\therefore q$$

Next, Paul introduces the positive argument regarding Jesus's resurrection in vv. 20-28. Rather than expound on additional arguments, Paul falls back on the creedal testimony of eye-witnesses to resurrection appearances in vv. 1-11 and the apocalyptic timeframe for eschatological resurrection. Resurrection is an eschatological event in Second Temple Judaism, connecting Jesus's resurrection with the general resurrection. However, Jesus's resurrection occurs before the general one, so Paul distinguishes between two phases. Accordingly, Jesus is 'the first fruits'.

Paul returns to the negative argument from inconsistency in vv. 29-34 with *ad hominem*, a feature of diatribes from the time. He points to three specific examples of inconsistency in vv. 29; 30-32a; and 32b-34. With these points and techniques, Paul instructs his Corinthian 'students' on the resurrection.<sup>17</sup> In considering the objectors' question beginning at v. 35, Paul begins a new section and aims to answer the question through the rhetorical technique of accommodation and correction.<sup>18</sup> He accommodates the deniers' position and corrects it, showing how commonly accepted beliefs present no obstacles to his conception of eschatological resurrection. This technique fits into *Refutatio 2* of the common analysis of Paul's rhetorical structure in 1 Cor. 15.

#### IV. PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF RESURRECTION: 1 COR. 15:42-44A

##### *Summary of the first seed illustration and cosmic diagram: 1 Cor. 15:35-41*

Having established grounds for the resurrection, Paul's account of change features in his didactic argument of accommodation and correction beginning at v. 35. His strategy is to explain how resurrection is possible against the background of popular Greek cosmology and philosophy.

Paul rebukes the dissenters' objection, 'fool', in v. 36a. The appellative ἄφρων reflects both Hebrew literature, one who misunderstands God (Ps 13:1 LXX), as well as Greek diatribe (μωρῆ in Epictetus), recalling the image of a teacher correcting a foolish student. The term functions on two levels: it dismisses the objection of the foolish student; and it anticipates the following argument of creation in vv. 36b-38. Since Paul moves from a concrete situation in v. 12, 'you', to a general one with the indefinite pronoun in v. 35, 'someone', the appellative in v. 36 is pedagogical and not polemical against outsiders or enemies.<sup>19</sup> He reminds the Corinthians of God's creative

<sup>17</sup>Asher emphasises the Corinthians' role as students to distance them from 'opponents', whereas Christian devalues the Corinthians' role as students to underscore the gravity of denying the resurrection and Paul's refutation in 1 Cor. 15. Our view is a synthesis of both readings, because Paul can correct students in grave error through rhetorical refutation. Ultimately, the severity of the denial and Paul's rhetoric does not identify the Corinthian Christian deniers of resurrection as Paul's enemies or outsiders, though they could not continue to identify as Christians if they persisted in denying the resurrection. Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 2, 30-39. Christian, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Resurrection*, 195-196.

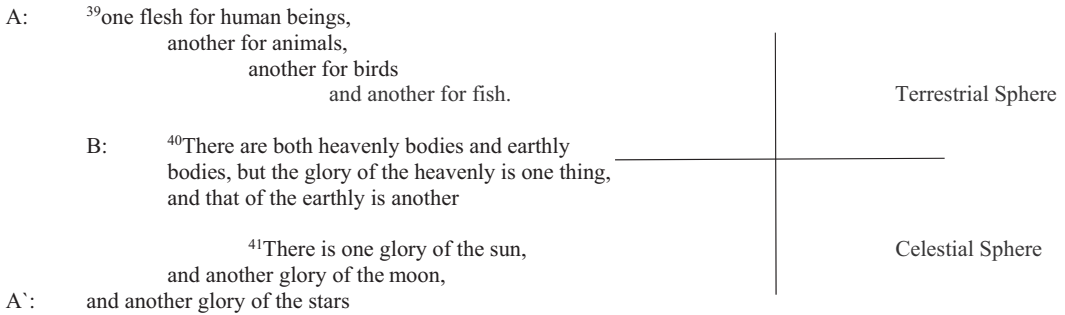
<sup>18</sup>A common technique of Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman philosophers, e.g., Plato, *Cratylus*; Cicero, *Acad. Pr.* 2.38.119; Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus*; Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 10.31; Plutarch, *How to Study Poetry*, 36D; Teles the Cynic, *Teles*, 20-33; Diog. Laert., 10.121; Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.12.5-6, etc. For further details, see Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 83-88.

<sup>19</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 77-78. L.L. Welborn theorises that Paul uses 'fool' in a comic-philosophical tradition in 1 Cor. 1-4 in *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, LNTS (T&T Clark, 2005).

work in the generation of life. The emphasis on God's creative power in the seed illustration shows that it is not a strict analogy for resurrection.<sup>20</sup> It points to God's will and power in appointing bodies of all types, not merely resurrection bodies. However, since the seed imagery focuses on God's role in creation, the imagery probably subsumes resurrection as God's act of new creation.

Paul picks up the notion of God's creative power in v. 38 and a cosmic distribution of bodies in vv. 39-41. 'By doing so', explains Asher, 'he accommodates the premise of the Corinthian objection, supplements it with additional considerations, and reverses their conclusion'.<sup>21</sup>

By accommodation, Paul uses *chiasmus* to order different body types.



Horizontally, Paul refers to four different types of σάρξ in the terrestrial and three different types of δόξα in the celestial spheres. However, both spheres are also related vertically by 'bodies'. He accommodates the dissenters' objection based on cosmic polarity and responds with something like Aristotle's theory of change.<sup>22</sup>

*Paul's account of change and the second seed illustration: Four antithetical parallels, 1 Cor. 15:42-44a*

Paul next introduces his solution to the problem of polarity, a transformation conceived by exchanging opposing properties.

- <sup>42</sup>Οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ
- <sup>43</sup>σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει.
- <sup>44a</sup>σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

<sup>42</sup>So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.

<sup>43</sup>It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

<sup>44a</sup>It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.

<sup>20</sup>J.R. Asher, 'Σπείρεται: Paul's Anthropogenic Metaphor in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120, no. 1 (2001): 101-122, 104, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3268595>.

<sup>21</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 82-83. Per Aristotle's popular cosmology, the Corinthian dissenters seem to have rejected the idea that terrestrial matter could change into celestial matter. They may also have envisioned a resurrection like that of Lazarus (John 11:38-44). Similarly, Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity*, 150-151. Endsjø further theorises that the Corinthian converts objected to the idea of a general resurrection based on its denial of physical continuity with those whose bodies were destroyed. This last explanation is unlikely because Paul would probably have addressed it explicitly.

<sup>22</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 99; 146-157; 177-179.



He uses a linear method of classification subsuming four opposites under two verbal headings:<sup>23</sup>

σπείρεται	ἐγείρεται
ἐν φθορᾷ	ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ
ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ	ἐν δόξῃ
ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ	ἐν δυνάμει
σῶμα ψυχικόν	σῶμα πνευματικόν

The verbs σπείρω-ἐγείρω refer to the previous seed illustration in vv. 35-38 and somatic division in v. 40, and the four antitheses are subsumed under the σώματα ἐπιγεια-ἐπουράνια headings.

Scholars continue to debate the interpretation of ‘sowing-raising’ and the four antitheses in vv. 42-44a. A common reading follows a resurrection analogy for the first seed illustration in vv. 35-38 and applies it to the seed imagery of vv. 42-44a. The following can be adduced in support: 1. the presence of ‘death’ in v. 36; 2. details of the agricultural analogy in vv. 36-38 and vv. 42-44a (resurrection was associated with crop cycles in mythology);<sup>24</sup> and 3. the implied singular subject of ‘it is sown-raised’.<sup>25</sup> This is a natural interpretation since Paul mentions the resurrection of the dead in vv. 12, 36-38. The sowing refers to burial, the first set of four prepositional phrases refers to the corpse, the raising refers to the resurrection, and the second set of four prepositional phrases refers to the resurrection body.<sup>26</sup> Others interpret the imagery anthropogenically because it seemingly draws on the metaphor of sowing seeds for terrestrial generation (Stoicism).<sup>27</sup> Asher argues that the use of σπείρω-ἐγείρω cannot pick back up with the previous seed illustration since the adjectival parallels have nothing to do with seeds. Rather, Paul uses similar imagery to refer to the classification of bodies in the cosmic diagram.<sup>28</sup> However, all metaphors ultimately break from their words’ literal meanings. The second seed illustration is thematically related to the first by God’s creation of life and resurrection as a new creation. As Brodeur explains, vv. 42-44a likely combines the temporal and contrasting purposes of each illustration.<sup>29</sup>

Asher raises several arguments against the corpse interpretation:

1. The seed imagery is not an analogy for the resurrection, referring to bodies more generally, so it cannot refer to burial.

<sup>23</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 134.

<sup>24</sup>Listed in Asher, ‘Σπείρεται: Paul’s Anthropogenic Metaphor in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44’, 101-102.

<sup>25</sup>R.H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology* (MI: Zondervan, 1987), 176 cf. 1. Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2010), 405 cf. 421. James Ware, ‘Paul’s Understanding of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:36-54’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 4 (2014): 821-824, <https://doi.org/10.15699/jbibl.133.4.809>.

<sup>26</sup>N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 341. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 404-405, 405-406 cf. 421.

<sup>27</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 138 cf. 118.

<sup>28</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 107.

<sup>29</sup>Scott Brodeur, *The Holy Spirit’s Agency in the Resurrection of the Dead*, Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia 14 (Roma, 2004), 77.

2. The broader context of singular events (creation of Adam in vv. 45-47, the resurrection of believers in vv. 49, 51-52, and resurrection of Christ in vv. 45-48) and parallelism (the *ἐγείρεται* in vv. 42-44 is a singular event, the general resurrection) suggests a singular event for the *σπείρεται* in vv. 42-43.
3. The prepositional predicates of *σπείρεται* in vv. 42-43 do not precisely describe a corpse and burial (*ἀσθενεία* and *ψυχικόν* are inappropriate for individual corpses), and the noun object of *σπείρεται* in vv. 44 (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*) suggests an anthropogenic metaphor.
4. The contrast between the creation of Adam and the resurrection of Christ and believers in vv. 45-49 indicates an anthropogenic interpretation of *σπείρεται*.
5. The clause of 42a functions as a title for the discussion and not a description of the content of the argument.<sup>30</sup>
6. Paul would likely appeal to familiar seed imagery from Greek anthropogenies and philosophical literature with the Corinthians (Anaxagoras, Plato *Tim.* 41; Stoicism, Zeno SVF 1.124; Philo *Vit. Mos.* 279; *Leg All.* 3.40).
7. The use of divine passives for 'it is sown-raised' suggests that God is the one who does the sowing and raising, but God is nowhere said to bury anyone.<sup>31</sup>

However, there are plausible responses to each argument, and the anthropogenic interpretation appears intractable. First, regarding responses:

1. While the first seed illustration is not a strict analogy for resurrection, resurrection is likely subsumed as God's act of new creation. Gillman relates *σπείρεται* to God's act of creation in the process of birth (see Ps. 139:13-14),<sup>32</sup> and the reference can be formed in the singular without implying one complete action in time (God is the author of life).
2. Paul does not think of the general resurrection as a singular event since it has already begun with Jesus's resurrection ahead of time, 'the first fruits' in v. 23.
3. The first set of predicates applies to the mortal body after birth so that the body can be described as weak, *etc.*
4. The contrast between Adam's creation and Jesus's resurrection in vv. 45-48 just as easily contrasts bodies with different properties.
5. Introductory titles can indicate the content of argumentation.
6. Paul draws from Jewish (*b.Sanh.* 90b) and early Christian tradition (Gal. 6:7-10; 2 Cor. 9:9-10; John 12:24; 1 Clem. 24) for sowing and seed metaphors, so he would probably adapt traditional uses in discussion with Greek converts. Paul can use Greek themes without carrying over precise content, as demonstrated by his innovative use of the Hellenistic account of change.
7. The divine passives refer to God's acts of creation-new creation.

The anthropogenic interpretation runs into problems such as the corpse-burial interpretation because it introduces questionable divisions not explicit in the text.<sup>33</sup> It begins with Adam's creation but then refers to Adam's progeny. Afterwards, the second set of phrases applies to

<sup>30</sup>Asher, 'Σπείρεται: Paul's Anthropogenic Metaphor in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44', 107-111.

<sup>31</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 138 cf. 118.

<sup>32</sup>John Gillman, 'Transformation in 1 Cor. 15,50-53', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 58 (1982): 309-33, 327. Brodeur, *The Holy Spirit's Agency in the Resurrection of the Dead*, 77-78. Ironically, Gillman rejects the continuity thesis between the antithetical references in vv. 42-44a for different reasons.

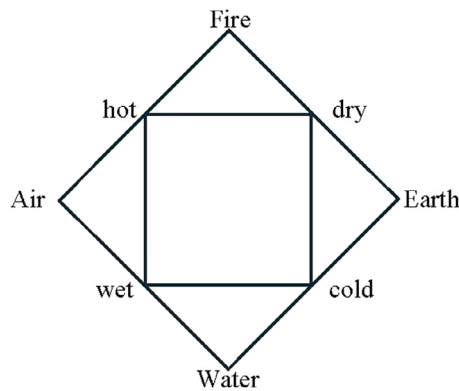
<sup>33</sup>For detailed critique of the theory of Stoic influence, see J.G. Cook, 'A Naked Seed: Platonism, Stoicism, or Agriculture in 1 Cor. 15:37?', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 111, no. 2 (2020): 289-309, <https://doi.org/10.1515/znw-2020-0012>.

those of Adam's body type and their transformation. However, the text does not clearly distinguish between Adam and his progeny. It is simpler and more natural to identify the same reference for 'it is sown-raised'.

In popular Greek cosmology, the matter of the terrestrial-celestial spheres exemplifies incommensurable properties. This dis/similarity is best explained by Aristotle's distinction between the four terrestrial elements—earth, water, air, and fire—and the fifth celestial element, the aether, from which the planets and stars are made (*Cael.*). Each of the four terrestrial elements is a body with material substrates containing two properties: 1. earth (dry and cold); 2. water (cold and wet); 3. air (wet and hot); and 4. fire (hot and dry) (A binary account with two qualities per element in *Gen. corr.* II 1, 329a26-27; 3, 330a30-b5; *Phys.* I.6-9; a singular account with only one quality per element in *Gen. corr.* II 5, 331a3-5). The material substrate persists through the change process or exchange of opposing properties, such as when water (cold and wet) changes into air (wet and hot) by exchanging 'cold' for 'hot' and remains 'wet' in evaporation.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Aristotle's process of change has three tiers.

Element	Earth	Water	Air	Fire
Properties	(dry and cold)	(cold and wet)	(wet and hot)	(hot and dry)
Substrate	Prime Matter ...			

Ball provides a useful illustration of Aristotle's elemental quartet.<sup>35</sup>



Similarly, the four antithetical parallels in 1 Cor. 15:42-44a indicate an exchange of opposing properties. The process also assumes a body of continuous matter and follows three tiers, using the earthly versus heavenly contrast in vv. 39-41 and the Adam-Christ typology in vv. 45-49.

<sup>34</sup>For Aristotle's prime matter, see H.M. Robinson, 'Prime Matter in Aristotle', *Phronesis* 19, no. 2 (1974): 168-188, especially 176-177. S.M. Cohen, 'Alteration and Persistence: Form and Matter in the *Physics* and *De Generatione et Corruptione*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, ed. Christopher Shields (Oxford Academic: Online Edition, 2012), 205-226, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195187489.013.0009>. Christopher Byrne, 'The Material Elements and Prime Matter', *Aristotle's Science of Matter and Motion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 50-58.

<sup>35</sup>Philip Ball, *The Elements: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.

Body Type	Earthly - Like Adam [ψυχή]	Heavenly - Like Christ [πνεῦμα]
Properties (σπείρεται/ ἐγείρεται)	ἐν φθορᾷ ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ	ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν δυνάμει
Substrate	ψυχικόν σῶμα	πνευματικόν σῶμα

Paul focuses generally on the eschatological transformation, and the emerging spiritual body retains the matter of its material substrate. The mortal body of σάρξ is characterised by the properties ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ. In this sense, the mortal body is a σῶμα ψυχικόν. On the contrary, the resurrection body of δόξα is characterised by the properties ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, ἐν δόξῃ, ἐν δυνάμει. In this sense, it is a σῶμα πνευματικόν.

Paul thus explains how the eschatological transformation fits with Aristotle's theory of change as an exchange of opposing properties. Whereas the four terrestrial elements change and perish, permitting substantial and qualitative generation and corruption, the fifth celestial element is unchanging and imperishable, a property not permitting any generation or corruption (*Cael.* I 3.269b-270a). Assuming the common principle of contrariety, 'the existence of one opposite demands the existence of its counterpart', Paul explains how to conceive of the eschatological change in understandable terms. He exploits the opposing properties of elemental change for the four terrestrial elements and changelessness for the celestial element using the principle of contrariety to show how the resurrection transformation is conceivable.

#### *Alternative interpretations of the resurrection body and objections*

Paul's use of the phrase σῶμα πνευματικόν is rare, and it has caused much confusion in critical discussion by exegetes. Some interpreters think Paul refers to an immaterial body of spirit. However, Licona surveyed the phrase σῶμα πνευματικόν across eleven centuries of Greek (sixth century BCE—fourth century CE) and, with the possibility of one exception, found that it never refers to a body made of immaterial spirit.<sup>36</sup> Historically, the phrase rarely occurs before Paul. It is used by Democritus (fifth century BCE),<sup>37</sup> Chrysippus (third century BCE),<sup>38</sup> and Straton (third century BCE).<sup>39</sup>

According to Luria, both Democritus and Straton hold a doctrine of σῶμα πνευματικόν.<sup>40</sup>

523. D.D.A. 140). Aet. V, 4, 2-3 (Dox. 417-418: Πυθαγόρας, Πλάτων, Ἀριστοτέλης ἀσώματου μὲν εἶναι τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ σπέρματος, ὥσπερ νοῦν τὸν κινουῦντα, σωματικὴν δὲ τὴν ὕλην τὴν προχομένην, Στράτων καὶ Δ. καὶ τὴν δύναμιν σῶμα πνευματικὴ γὰρ.

Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle [hold] that the power of the sperm is incorporeal, being as it were the mind that initiates change, but that the matter ejected is corporeal, however, Strato and Democritus [hold] that the power is [corporeal] as well, because it is spirit-(breath)-like

<sup>36</sup>Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 407-408.

<sup>37</sup>*Testimonia*, 140.2.

<sup>38</sup>*Fragmenta Logica et Physica*, 1054.

<sup>39</sup>*Fragmenta* 94.2. *Die Schule Des Aristoteles, Heft V* (Schwabe & Co., 1969), 32.

<sup>40</sup>S. Y. Luria, *Democritus* (Nauka Publishers, 1970), 130.

Democritus was a materialist famous for his theory of atomism. In his view, tiny seeds comprise everything. He explained the distinctive functions of living things by appealing to their ψυχή, but he theorised that the soul is composed of fire atoms. Life is associated with heat because heat can cause motion. The physical body comprises body atoms, which do not consist of fire, and soul atoms, which are fire.

Straton was a Peripatetic and the third director of Aristotle's Lyceum. Like the atomistic materialists, he theorised that everything in the universe was composed of matter and energy, and that all matter was composed of tiny particles. Thus, he heightened the naturalistic character of Aristotle's philosophy. He also found a unique role for the πνεῦμα in the soul's function. Beginning with the head, the spirit extends throughout and controls the body's functions.<sup>41</sup>

Chrysippus was a Stoic philosopher, and the relevant textual digest may reflect Stoicism's philosophical ideas. However, the passage is from Origen's (185-253 CE) commentary on John 13:21 where Origen reflects on John's phrase, 'in the spirit', and materialist concepts of spirit.<sup>42</sup>

Εἰ δὲ πᾶν σῶμα ὑλικὴν ἔχει φύσιν, τῷ ἰδίῳ λόγῳ ἄποιοι τυγχάνουσι, τρεπτὴν δὲ καὶ ἀλλοιωτὴν καὶ δι' ὄλων μεταβλητὴν καὶ ποιότητας χωροῦσαν, ἃς ἂν βούληται αὐτῇ περιτιθέναι ὁδημιουργός, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν θεὸν ὑλικὸν ὄντα τρεπτὸν εἶναι καὶ ἀλλοιωτὸν καὶ μεταβλητόν. Καὶ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὐκ αἰδοῦνται λέγειν, ὅτι καὶ φθαρτός ἐστι σῶμα ὧν, σῶμα δὲ πνευματικόν καὶ αἰθερωδὲς μάλιστα κατὰ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν αὐτοῦ· φθαρτὸν δὲ ὄντα μὴ φθείρεσθαι τῷ μὴ εἶναι τὸν φθείροντα αὐτὸν λέγουσιν

But if every body has a material nature, being, on that same account, without quality, but capable of being varied and altered and completely transformed, and with capacity for whatever qualities the craftsman may wish to deck it out, then necessarily God as a material being must be capable of being varied, altered and transformed. And they are not at all embarrassed to claim that he is even perishable, since he is a body, albeit a spiritual and ether-like body (particularly with respect to his guiding intelligence); however they say that although he is perishable, he never perishes, because there is no one to destroy him.

Since Origen refers to Stoics as 'they' throughout, it is not clear whether God's or the spirit's perishability reflects the views of Chrysippus or later Stoics.<sup>43</sup> Thus, at the most, the passage expresses a strong materialist understanding of spirit dating to the second-third century CE.

Discussion of the spirit's perishability relates to materialist conceptions of the soul. According to the monistic physics of Stoicism, God and the soul are spiritual yet corporeal. Specifically, the soul is identified with πνεῦμα at a certain degree of 'tensility', and it causally interacts with its animated body. It is more rarified than πνεῦμα's 'tenor', which is responsible for the coherence of solid objects.<sup>44</sup> On this general account, bodies of πνεῦμα come in degrees of density, 'tenor', and 'tensility.'

<sup>41</sup>David Furley, *From Aristotle to Augustine*, Vol. 2 (Routledge, 2003), 162-163.

<sup>42</sup>Chrysippus, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, Vol. 2. von Arnim, ed. Hans Friedrich August (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903 [1964 printing]). Retrieved from: <https://scaife.perseus.org/reader/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg1264.tlg001.1st1K-grc1:1054/?q=%CF%80%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C%CE%BD&qk=form>.

<sup>43</sup>Licona is unsure whether the text reflects the views of Chrysippus, and Cook rejects it as Origen's corruption because the phrase occurs nowhere else in Stoic literature. J.G. Cook, *Empty Tomb, Resurrection, Apotheosis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 581-583.

<sup>44</sup>Marion Durand, 'Stoicism', in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2023). Retrieved from: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/>. R.W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics* (Routledge: 2014), 67.

The occurrences of *σῶμα πνευματικόν* before Paul's time refer to a material body, characterising the material soul in ancient materialistic metaphysics. On this background, some interpret Paul's usage as like the antecedent atomism-Stoicism. For example, Martin presents a materialist-trichotomy position whereby the present body is composed of material *σάρξ*, *ψυχή*, and *πνεῦμα*. At the resurrection, the *σάρξ* and *ψυχή* are discarded, leaving only the body of *πνεῦμα* to ascend to the heavens.<sup>45</sup> Engberg-Pedersen interprets Paul's conception of 'substantial' change holistically, producing a material body made of *πνεῦμα*.<sup>46</sup>

Martin and Engberg-Pedersen probably parallel the atomists-Stoics too closely. *Contra* Martin, the rarefied material soul is a natural part of the living body and diffused throughout it. In contrast, Paul's language of *the* body's transformation suggests a transformation of the *entire* body. Since he does not mention bodily increments in the cosmic diagram, does not mention rarefied extractions from the terrestrial to the celestial sphere in the cited examples of bodies of flesh and glory, and stresses transformation of *the* body—'it is sown-raised'—there is no reason to think that the spiritual body is a rarefied extraction like atomism-Stoicism.

Critiquing Engberg-Pedersen's holistic pneumatic-body resurrection, Levison shows that Stoic categories are misapplied: 1. the chosen Stoic models do not adequately explain Paul's pneumatology; 2. they ignore contradictory models to Engberg-Pedersen's conception of *πνεῦμα*; and 3. they ignore Paul's Jewish heritage (Hebrew Bible, LXX, and the Dead Sea Scrolls).<sup>47</sup> Additionally, the Stoic-inspired reading ignores Paul's omission of the fiery element in the cosmic diagram at 1 Cor. 15:39-41.

Paul's anthropology is also probably not materialistic. He reads more like an anthropological dualist, 'the normative view of first century Judaism' (the standard reading on 'nakedness' in 2 Cor. 5:3; out-of-body experiences in 2 Cor. 12:2-4, *etc.*).<sup>48</sup> To avoid confusion, an explicit explanation of materialism is expected somewhere.

Traditionally, most exegetes like Lincoln interpret *ψυχικόν-πνευματικόν* as a modification of the physical body's orientation.<sup>49</sup> They point to Paul's similar usage in 1 Cor. 2:13-15 for support, and claim that adjectives ending in *ινος* refer to composition, whereas adjectives ending in *ικος* refer to modes-characteristics.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>13</sup>And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things [*πνευματικὰ*] to those who are spiritual [*πνευματικοίς*]. <sup>14</sup>Those who are unspiritual [*ψυχικός*] do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually [*πνευματικῶς*]

<sup>45</sup>Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 123-130.

<sup>46</sup>T. Engberg-Pedersen, 'Complete and Incomplete Transformation in Paul – a Philosophical Reading of Paul on Body and Spirit', *Metamorphoses*, Ekstasis 1 (Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 126.

<sup>47</sup>J.R. Levison, 'Paul in the *Stoa Poecile*: A Response to Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford, 2010)', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33, no. 4 (2011): 415-432, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X11408003>.

<sup>48</sup>W.L. Craig, 'Paul's Dilemma in 2 Corinthians 5:1-10: A "Catch-22"?', *New Testament Studies* 34, no. 1 (1988): 145-147, 147 cf. 2, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688500022281>. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology*, 135-156. J.W. Cooper, *Body, Soul & Life Everlasting* (MI: Eerdmans, 1989, 2000), 134-157.

<sup>49</sup>Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, 35. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 282-283, 347-354.

<sup>50</sup>A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1276.

discerned.<sup>15</sup> Those who are spiritual [πνευματικός] discern all things, but they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

The idea is that the resurrection body will be holy and governed by God's spirit.

Asher raises two problems with using 1 Cor. 2:13-15 to interpret ψυχικόν-πνευματικόν in 15:44: firstly, in 2:13-15, the antithesis is between ψυχικός-πνευματικός ἄνθρωπος, not σῶμα as with 15:44-45; and secondly, in 2:13-15, the antithesis is between those who can/not discern God's wisdom, but wisdom is not a concern in 15:44-45.<sup>51</sup> The different contexts of 2:13-15 and 15:44-45 suggest other uses for the ψυχικόν-πνευματικόν adjectives. The point about stem endings is also indeterminate. As demonstrated, ancient Greek materialists used the phrase 'spiritual body' before and after Paul's time and while this may be thought to reinforce the claim about the distinction between substantial and characteristic usage, adjectival modification may be compositionally relevant. This point does not mean that the bodies are composed of soul or spirit, but rather that the phrasing may carry an ontological dimension. For example, a glass 'filled' with water. Similarly, the adjectives may indicate a σῶμα filled with ψυχή and πνεῦμα.

Alternatively, some exegetes argue that Paul did not conceive of continuity throughout the 'sowing-raising' of 1 Cor. 15:42-44a. Instead, they point to Paul's use of 'impersonal passives' to support the idea of discontinuity.<sup>52</sup> The Greek construction permits different subjects because the grammatical subject is only implied: σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, etc. The verbs are 'sown' and 'raised', but following the preposition ἐν, the nouns are in the dative for indirect reference, φθορά, ἀφθαρσία, etc. This permits a translation such as, 'there is a sowing'/'there is a raising' or 'sowing is done'/'raising is brought about'. In application to the σῶμα ψυχικόν and πνευματικόν of v. 44, the suggestion reads something like 'the thing that is sown is a natural body, the thing that is raised is a spiritual body'. This translation is consistent with separate references for what is sown and raised.

However, as Ware shows, distinguishing between the subject of sown/raised is based on a misunderstanding of Greek syntax.<sup>53</sup> There are no finite verbs that lack a subject in ancient Greek. Instead, lexical and contextual factors indicate an implied subject in their settings; in 1 Pet. 4:6, the implied subject of εὐηγγελίσθη is τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. Similarly, arguments for different subjects from the elliptical construction of 1 Cor. 15:42-44 are also based on a misunderstanding of Greek syntax. Apart from introducing a new subject, such constructions refer to the same subject as the preceding verb: Matt. 6:26, 16:21; Mk. 4:32; 1 Cor. 13:5-7, 15:3-4. Exceptions to this rule are indicated by syntactic and contextual factors absent in 1 Cor. 15:42-44.<sup>54</sup>

Asher's anthropogenic interpretation supports the same discontinuous reading at vv. 42-44a,<sup>55</sup> and several of its problems have already been identified. He further reads the σῶμα

<sup>51</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 113 cf. 49.

<sup>52</sup>M.E. Thrall, 'Paul's Understanding of Continuity Between the Present Life and the Life of the Resurrection', in *Resurrection in the New Testament*, BETL 165 (Leuven University Press, 2002), 290.

<sup>53</sup>Ware, 'Paul's Understanding of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:36-54', 821-822. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 405-406 cf. 421. For similar criticism, see A.W. Pitts, 'Paul's Concept of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58', in *Paul and Gnosis*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and David Yoons, PAST 9 (Brill, 2016), 44-58.

<sup>54</sup>Ware, 'Paul's Understanding of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:36-54', 823-824.

<sup>55</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 98. He reasons that the bodies in the cosmic diagram are co-existent, so the change in vv. 42-44a is not temporal. This is as fallacious as arguing that a temporal process of change from mortality to immortality by the power of God cannot be described since God is already immortal. Again, according to Brodeur, Paul more likely combines the earlier seed-cosmic illustrations (*The Holy Spirit's Agency in the Resurrection of the Dead*, 77). The natural body that is born is the same as the one transformed at the resurrection.

πνευματικόν in v. 44 as a substantive describing the stuff of the entire body, like the ancient conception of πνεῦμα as a less dense substance than solids (the πνεῦμα cannot be seen, grasped, or touched).<sup>56</sup> This interpretation is probably mistaken, though. It would also show that the σῶμα ψυχικόν is a body made of ψυχή.<sup>57</sup> Instead, the contrast more likely involves mortal and resurrection bodies in vv. 42-44a and not bodies made of soul-spirit stuff.

Ironically, even Aristotle equates 'perceptible with tangible' (*Gen. corr.* II 2 329<sup>b</sup>), so the heavenly bodies must be tangible on this account. For example, linked thematically with the visibility of Jesus's resurrection appearances in 1 Cor. 15:5-8, each earthly and heavenly body listed by Paul in the *chiastic* cosmic diagram in vv. 39-41 is also visible: humans, animals, birds, fish, the Sun, Moon, and stars. In this diagram, Asher *et al.* think that Paul is merely describing elemental change following an ascending order of more rarefied elements, from earth to water, air, fire, and aether (Aristotle), or from earth to water, air, and fire (Stoicism). On the contrary, citing the role of rarefaction in commonplace Greek cosmologies for support is of no avail because Paul is not a through-and-through Greek philosopher.<sup>58</sup> Stars and planets are often tangible in these cosmologies anyway. For instance, in Aristotle's view, the planets are more tangible than the aethereal spheres that move them along (*Cael.*). In Stoicism, the planets' πνεῦμα comes in graded quantities, 'tenor', accounting for greater tangibility than the material soul's more rarefied tensility.

In context, Paul applies the theory of change to bodies in different environments. Air is less tangible than water, and water is less tangible than earth, but birds and fish are no less tangible than humans. This suggests that the heavenly bodies are also no less tangible than the earthly. This interpretation is supported by differences between Paul's Jewish cosmological hierarchy, and the Aristotelian and Stoic sequences. First, the sequence in 1 Cor. 15:39—land animals, birds, and then fish—reverses the order of Genesis: fish (1:20a), birds (20b), and then land animals (v. 24-31). The resulting sequence orders the terrestrial elements differently, a countdown to a new creation, so Paul is not considering increasing rarefaction. Second, in classical Jewish cosmology, the firmament separates the earth, sky, and water below from the water above. Water is the highest element (Gen. 1:6-8), not air, fire, or aether.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Paul's use of δόξα in 1 Cor. 15:41 does not imply less tangible materials for the heavenly bodies, since it is used for both heavenly and earthly bodies in v. 40.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, Asher and the general inference ignores Greek cosmological accounts of the resur-

<sup>56</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 153-154 cf. 17.

<sup>57</sup>Ware, 'Paul's Understanding of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:36-54', 832-833. F.S. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, Early Christian Literature 19 (GA: SBL Press, 2016), 117 cf. 74.

<sup>58</sup>Importantly, scholars explain how otherwise conflicting cosmologies were combined in the Second Temple period. The older mythical three-tier cosmology was combined with the new geocentric cosmology, and conflicting conceptions of the afterlife were conjoined without resolving the tensions. Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans* (NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), 92-110; and Lux Perpetua (Paris: Geuthner, 1949), 142-288. M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte Der Griechischen Religion, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft Zweite* (Germany: C.H. Beck, 1961), 490/470. According to M. Hengel, this looks to be the case in Dan. 12 and 1 En. 22, where two views of resurrection are juxtaposed. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism, Vol. 1* (OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1974, 2003), 196-200. A similar combination is found in the Similitudes at 1 En. 62:14-16, where the resurrection reads like angelomorphic transformation as in 'garments of glory'. Yet, people are said to eat, sleep, and rise with the Son of Man on earth forever. Paul appears similarly to combine the two conceptions, whereas later apocalyptic writers at the end of the first century CE harmonised them temporally: Revelation, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch.

<sup>59</sup>E. Lewis, 'Heaven', in *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1952, 1961), 248-249.

<sup>60</sup>Lynn Elvin Boliek, *The Resurrection of the Flesh: A Study of a Confessional Phrase* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), 95.



rection of the flesh or physical apotheosis, catasterism, *etc.*, not requiring rarefaction;<sup>61</sup> the tangibility and visibility of planetary bodies in Greek cosmologies; the Old Testament background of souls in Sheol (in the Earth and not the heavens); the synthesis of Jewish and Greek concepts; the Old Testament and New Testament accounts of tangible and embodied angels visiting the Earth; and Paul's specific application of change to bodies in each environment and not merely the elements.

Again, the scarcity of the *σῶμα ψυχικόν-πνευματικόν* terminology raises a question about their origin. Since the only three uses of *ψυχικόν*<sup>62</sup> and fifteen out of nineteen uses of *πνευματικόν* are in 1 Corinthians,<sup>63</sup> many find their origin in Paul's detractors.<sup>64</sup> However, *hapax legomena* are no indicators of tradition. Shakespeare's writings contain numerous *hapaxes*, but this does not show that Shakespeare is not their author. Instead, unique, rare, and concentrated uses of words, themes, *etc.*, represent creativity and innovation. Hence, explaining the vocabulary by Paul's creativity, the topics he treats, and the space devoted to them is simpler.<sup>65</sup> His use of *πνευματικόν* probably draws from known usage but not that of his specific detractors in Corinth since they would then have no reason to deny physical resurrection. In Romans, he uses *πνευματικόν* in contrast with *σάρκιος* (7:14) or *σαρκικός* (15:27), and the different use of *ψυχικόν* in 15:44-45 is best explained by his use of the LXX of Gen. 2:7, 'ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν Ζῶσαν'.<sup>66</sup> He cites Gen. 2:7 at 1 Cor. 15:45, and this intertext explains the unique Pauline conjunction of *σῶμα ψυχικόν*. Paul is probably drawing on common Jewish uses of the adjective *ψυχικός*—James 3:15; Jude 19. Particularly significant for Paul's use is Jude 19 because the *ψυχοί* do not possess the *πνεῦμα*. Paul is also probably familiar with Jewish interpretations of Gen. 2:7, but this source is perhaps a common tradition and not specifically a Two Souls interpretation.<sup>67</sup>

#### *Our interpretation with support reasoning*

Charting *via media* between the intangible substantial 'spirit body' of atomism/Stoicism/Asher and the non-substantial adjectival modification of Lincoln *et al.*, our proposal is that the *ψυχή* of the material *σῶμα*, conceived analogously with the nutritive soul by Aristotle, is replaced by the divine *πνεῦμα*.<sup>68</sup> This exchange communicates divine properties to the *σῶμα*, producing an

<sup>61</sup>See the bulk of Endsjø's work, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity*.

<sup>62</sup>1 Corinthians (2:14; 15:44, 46). Eduard Schweizer 'ψυχικός', *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 9, 661-663. BAGD, 894.

<sup>63</sup>Three times in Romans (1:11; 7:14; 15:27); fifteen times in 1 Corinthians (2:13 [2x]; 15; 3:1; 9:11; 10:3, 4 [2x]; 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44 [2x], 46 [2x]); and once in Galatians (6:1). Eduard Schweizer, 'πνεῦμα, πνευματικός', *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 6, 436-437. BAGD, 678-679.

<sup>64</sup>Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*.

<sup>65</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians* 15, 112 cf. 48.

<sup>66</sup>All LXX citations from Rahlfs-Hanhart Revised Edition, 2020.

<sup>67</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians* 15, 112 cf. 48.

<sup>68</sup>The word *ψυχή* has a range of meaning in the first century CE. Schweizer, 'ψυχή, κτλ', *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 9, 648-649. BAGD, 893-894. Paul uses it eleven times, also with a range in meaning: two times in 1 Thessalonians (2:8; 5:23); two times in Philippians (1:27; 2:30); once in 1 Corinthians (15:45); two times in 2 Corinthians (1:23; 12:15); and four times in Romans (2:9; 11:3; 13:1; 16:4). The most common interpretation of Paul's *ψυχή* among German exegetes is that it refers to the 'self', but it commonly has an anthropological use in ancient Greco-Roman cultures. In our humble estimation, Paul's antitheses and other factors suggest an ontological or substantial role. The closest idea seems to be the ancient conception of the nutritive soul, though Paul's conception may differ to some extent. This reading comports well with anthropological dualism, the leading assessment of Pauline anthropology.

imperishable resurrection body. Further support for this interpretation draws on the ontological use of ψυχή in Gen. 2:7 (cited at 1 Cor. 15:45) and the Jewish idea that blood is the source of life and the seat of the ψυχή (Gen. 4:10; 9:7).<sup>69</sup> This understanding is also mentioned in the context of eschatological judgement in the Book of the Watchers (1 En. 22:5-7)<sup>70</sup> and corresponds to Paul's statement that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' in 1 Cor. 15:50. The blood and nutritive soul, the natural source of bodily life, must be replaced by God's life-giving spirit, Gen. 2:7, *vis-à-vis* Jesus, the new life-giving spirit, 1 Cor. 15:45. This process explains how the perishable inherits the imperishable. For Paul, whereas 'flesh and blood' cannot, 'flesh and πνεῦμα' can inherit the kingdom (the 'flesh' is resurrected but transformed).<sup>71</sup>

Admittedly, most scholars interpret Paul's 'flesh and blood' in reference to the frail nature of human beings (perhaps a Jewish idiom).<sup>72</sup> However, as Gillman shows, the phrase may connote both materiality and the 'I' of the person in abstraction. In v. 50, he acknowledges the emphasis on 'materiality', because Paul uses σάρξ in a neutral sense for physicality in v. 39 and vv. 47-48 emphasises Adam's physical creation out of 'dust'. Also, both Paul's use of τοῦτο in reference to the body in vv. 53-54 and ἡ φθορά in reference to the body's 'perishability' in v. 50c do not refer to a nature in abstraction, and this suggests a material dimension to 'flesh and blood' in v. 50.<sup>73</sup> A reference to the body's flesh and blood naturally explains the perishability of 'flesh and blood'.

In support of our interpretation, the case for somatic continuity is strongest because it is likely presupposed by Paul's contextual use of σῶμα in the cosmic diagram of 1 Cor. 15:38-41 in conjunction with the final antithesis in v. 44, by his proclamation of Jesus's resurrection,<sup>74</sup> by the likely basis of his detractors' objection,<sup>75</sup> by his conception of change,<sup>76</sup> and by his emphasis that 'this' (τοῦτο) 'perishable, mortal' body must put on 'imperishability, immortality' in vv. 53-54.<sup>77</sup> Regarding the first point, since Paul both contrasts the properties of different σώματα in the cosmic diagram in the context before the sequence of antithetical parallels, and even ends the parallels with a contrast of σῶμα, the σῶμα itself is the likeliest candidate for numerical continuity across the process of change in vv. 42-44a.

Paul's whole argument also presupposes continuity, as his appeal to Jesus's resurrection demonstrates. He likely believed in the empty tomb, though he does not mention it, because of his technical use of ἐγείρω and ἀνίστημι throughout his discussions of resurrection. Physical

<sup>69</sup>B. Kedar-Kopfstein and J. Bergman, 'דָּם (dām)', *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 3, 234-250.

<sup>70</sup>G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, Hermeneia (MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 305-306.

<sup>71</sup>Endsjø mistakenly reasons that Paul rejects a numerical resurrection of the flesh (*Greek Resurrection Beliefs and the Success of Christianity*, 141-147). However, Paul claims that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom'. His conception of change suggests the resurrection of the flesh, but not like Lazarus's raising. The flesh is raised because it is part of the continuous material substrate but is transformed. Speculation whether it is a new kind of flesh is unnecessary, because the point relates to its numerical continuity.

<sup>72</sup>W.L. Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus* (OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002, 2023), 102. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 417-418.

<sup>73</sup>Gillman, 'Transformation in 1 Cor. 15,50-53', 311, 318-319. Gillman holds a hybrid view combining reference to the perishable nature of the material and perishable human body.

<sup>74</sup>Cook, *Empty Tomb, Resurrection, Apotheosis*, 584.

<sup>75</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 166.

<sup>76</sup>Asher, *Polarity and Change in 1 Corinthians 15*, 179. Mariusz Rosik, 'In Christ All Will be Made Alive' (*1 Cor 15:12-58*), *European Studies in Theology, Philosophy and History of Religions* 6 (Peter Lang Edition, 2013), 199.

<sup>77</sup>Gillman, 'Transformation in 1 Cor. 15,50-53', 311.

continuity is also presupposed by the repeated contextual use of ὄφθη for the ‘corporeal visibility’ of Jesus’s appearances, because the context assumes a similar visible sighting for Jesus’s death and burial.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, the appeal to Jesus’s resurrection would lose evidentiary value in his argument if Jesus’s corpse had remained in the grave.<sup>79</sup>

The Corinthian detractors probably objected to the possibility of continuous transformation based on their ideas of cosmic polarity. Earthly and heavenly elements are considered vastly different in their popular Aristotelian cosmology-philosophy, so one cannot change into another. Apparently, they did not accept the implication of their scepticism for Jesus’s resurrection. This reconstruction explains the form of Paul’s *modus tollens* argument in 1 Cor. 15:12-19 and the structure of 1 Cor. 15 in general. In correction, Paul reminds his detractors of the physical continuity between the body of Jesus and his resurrection, and its implications for their future resurrection ‘transformation’. This strategy explains Paul’s theory of change, where the base matter of the body is the substrate for opposing properties (following Aristotle’s solution to Parmenides’s problem of change). Once the opposing properties exchange, the body is transformed. The physical substrate remains continuous throughout the process, so the case for material continuity fits Paul’s language better than discontinuity. His use of the seed illustration also implies it.<sup>80</sup>

Is the pre-post-resurrection body made of the same type of matter? Paul’s diagrammatic classification of the earthly and heavenly spheres in 1 Cor. 15:39-41 and his Aristotelian-inspired account of change suggest identical material substrates with different properties. Some exegetes reason that the heavenly matter is something like a popular Greek conception, aethereal, fiery, pneumatic. Still, as Licona points out, Paul does not use the word ἀόρατος (invisible) to describe the resurrection body, but he uses the term elsewhere in Rom. 1:20.<sup>81</sup> He also does not use the word αἰθήρ to describe the resurrection body. These omissions look intentional since 1 Cor. 15 is the most fitting place where Paul could explain the body in such terms were it his conception.

Some infer from Paul’s comments in 1 Thess. 4:17— ‘Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever’—that the destination of the resurrected is a heavenly environment.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, they find an implicit change to celestial matter. However, Paul’s use of παρουσία in v. 15 probably draws on the Hellenistic usage where it describes the visitation of a ruler to a city (Suetonius *Aug.* 53.1; *Calig.* 4.1; and *Ner.* 25:1-3),<sup>83</sup> a pattern further coloured with apocalyptic themes (resurrection).<sup>84</sup> The Lord will descend with his angels, and the dead in Christ

<sup>78</sup>J. Delobel, ‘The Corinthians’ (Un-)Belief in the Resurrection’, in *Resurrection in the New Testament*, ed. R. Bieringer, V. Koperski & B. Lataire (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 348.

<sup>79</sup>On Paul’s knowledge of the empty tomb and 1 Cor. 15:3-11, see Craig, *Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, 63-84, 255-274. G.R. Habermas, *On the Resurrection*, Vol. 1 (TN: B&H Academic, 2024), 615-618.

<sup>80</sup>Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford University Press, 2015), 54-55.

<sup>81</sup>Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 415.

<sup>82</sup>John Gillman, ‘Signals of Transformation in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18’, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1985): 263-281. Joseph Plevnik ‘The Taking Up of the Faithful and the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18’, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1984): 274-283. Joseph Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation* (MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 89-90.

<sup>83</sup>Helmut Koester, ‘Imperial Ideology and Paul’s Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians’, in *Paul and Empire* (Trinity Press International, 1997), 158-159.

<sup>84</sup>R.F. Collins, *The Power and Images in Paul* (MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 26-37. Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, 61-62.

will rise and be the first to greet the Lord. Next, those who are alive will be transformed and meet the Lord in the air. Advocates of celestial retreat point out that Paul does not describe Jesus's landing on the earth. However, this argument cuts both ways since Paul does not mention a heavenly return either. Since Jesus *καταβήσεται ἀπ οὐρανοῦ* in v. 16, the destination is left unidentified as everyone is left *εἰς ἄερα* in v. 17.

Instructive are Paul's comments about God's eschatological transformation of creation in Rom. 8:18-23 and 1 Cor. 7:31, analogous to the new heavens and new earth expectations in Rev. 21:1 and 2 Pet. 3:13. It is doubtful that Paul envisions a heavenly retreat since God's kingdom includes all re-creation at the eschaton. In our reading, Paul leaves the meeting place 'in the air', between heaven and earth, because it allows him to range the natural place of resurrection habitation over both spheres. The imagery implies that everyone may return to earth, just as the population would return to their city after greeting the official. Still, it also allows a heavenly sojourn as Jesus comes to greet Christians from 'God's right hand' (Rom. 8:34). So, the appeal to sky imagery does not resolve the question in favour of celestial matter.

Paul's Aristotelian-inspired theory of change presupposes an identical material substrate for the mortal and immortal body. Through the exchange of opposing properties, the body changes instantaneously. It appears that Paul envisioned a material transformation in 1 Cor. 15, but he does not state explicitly whether this involves a change from terrestrial to celestial matter. As with Jesus's return in 1 Thess. 4:17 and 1 Cor. 15:23, the resurrection body can move from the celestial to the terrestrial sphere. Why anticipate Jesus's return if resurrection only involved heavenly retreat? Hence, Paul seems to think of the future resurrection body on the analogy of Jesus's resurrection body; a body with the power to traverse the spheres like angels. If this is correct, something like Tappenden's alternative account of polarity may be helpful. Rather than consider polarity as absolute and incommensurable, involving terrestrial versus celestial matter, it is more accurate to think of the spheres as interconnected and integrated into a one-world model. The realms are permeable and permit travel.<sup>85</sup>

On Tappenden's model, though transformed and fitted to a heavenly environment, the resurrected could still visit Earth, just like the resurrected Jesus in the gospels. We propose that Paul seems to think that there is one basic/underlying type of matter, albeit fitted to different environments, and that eschatological transformation brings the power to change physical properties in the afterlife.<sup>86</sup> What is changeless can be changed and what is perish-

<sup>85</sup>Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul*, 102. Tappenden classifies Paul's use of 'body' as a gestalt, organisational term, or empty container, referring to the whole as more than the sum of its parts. More fitting is the Aristotelian account of change, according to which material continuity is maintained in the material substrate.

<sup>86</sup>Brodeur emphasises discontinuity through substantial generation and corruption. He reasons that matter must be substantially changed from terrestrial to celestial because of incommensurate properties; terrestrial matter is essentially 'changeable' whereas celestial matter is 'unchangeable' (*The Holy Spirit's Agency in the Resurrection of the Dead*, 77). This interpretation replaces one body with another, not explaining how one changes into another, pushing the Aristotelian reading too far. It looks unlikely since the Corinthians could easily conceive of terrestrial-celestial discontinuity. 'The erring Corinthians would gladly have accepted the idea that some phenomenon, which might be called a "body," would be raised, but that certainly would not be *this body of flesh*.' (J.A. Schep, *The Nature of the Resurrection Body* [MI: Eerdmans, 1964], 200) In our judgement, Paul uses the material substrate of Aristotle's theory of elemental change to identify continuous material through the resurrection. In Aristotle's theory, the material substrate can survive both qualitative (changing colour) and substantial changes such as corruption and generation (the matter of the corpse remains after death). Of course, matter may not survive all types of substantial corruption (if the matter is destroyed). Focusing on continuity, Paul reasons that the material substrate remains continuous when a human body is corrupted, a human corpse is generated, and a resurrection body is generated. Paul's emphasis on continuity between the corpse/living body and the resurrection body is unnecessary if Paul conceived of discontinuous matter. The resurrection no more suggests a discontinuous material substrate than elemental change from earth to water, air, or fire.

able can be made imperishable by God.<sup>87</sup> Some object that this interpretation involves Paul in contradiction, or is incoherent because the two conceptions of resurrection bodies have incompatible properties.<sup>88</sup> Paul may have been unaware of any conceptual difficulty, but he may have resolved the problem by supposing that the body exemplifies some properties contingently depending on its sphere of occupation. For instance, if Paul conceives of the resurrection body as weightless in heaven, the body could take on weight when visiting Earth, like Jesus's Parousia. So long as the properties of 'weightless' and 'weighted' are not exemplified simultaneously, Paul's view need not involve him in contradiction or incoherence. In our estimation, it is more likely that Paul resolved the conceptual difficulties in his mind, because other roughly contemporaneous texts similarly resolved the difficulty through chronological ordering (Revelation; 4 Ezra; 2 Baruch). The difference is that Paul did not make his harmony explicitly clear. For this reason, our suggestion is only an inference based on details in 1 Cor. 15 supporting both conceptions.

## V. CONCLUSION

In summary, functional analysis of Paul's resurrection doctrine in 1 Cor. 15:35-57 provides stabler grounds for reconstructing and interpreting Paul's argument about the eschatological resurrection than does the 'opponents first' approach. The tone of his rhetorical presentation is reconciliatory and not polemical or acerbic against outsiders or enemies, though he does use literary qualities of diatribe at times. He didactically uses Hellenistic rhetorical techniques, cosmological categories, and philosophical concepts to teach the Greek Corinthian Christians how to think about the body's transformation at the eschatological resurrection. He uses a seed illustration to contrast different body types, mortal and immortal, and he uses a popular Greek conception of change, understood as the exchange of opposing properties, to explain the process of transformation in terms they understand. The appropriation of this account of change allows him to resolve their objection against resurrection based on the problem of polarity or the incompatibility of bodies across the terrestrial and celestial spheres.

<sup>87</sup>Ultimately, whether terrestrial and celestial matter was conceived as one or two types, Paul seems to think that the base or prime matter remains numerically continuous throughout the process of eschatological transformation.

<sup>88</sup>This same objection is raised against Augustine's interpretation of Paul's conception of resurrection by C.B. Walker, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*, Lectures on the History of Religions, New Series, No. 15 (NY: Columbia University Press, 1995), 94-104. Also, postulating two inconsistent views for different stages in Augustine's thought, R.M. Grant, 'The Resurrection of the Body [continued]', *Journal of Religion* 28, no. 3 (1948): 207-208.