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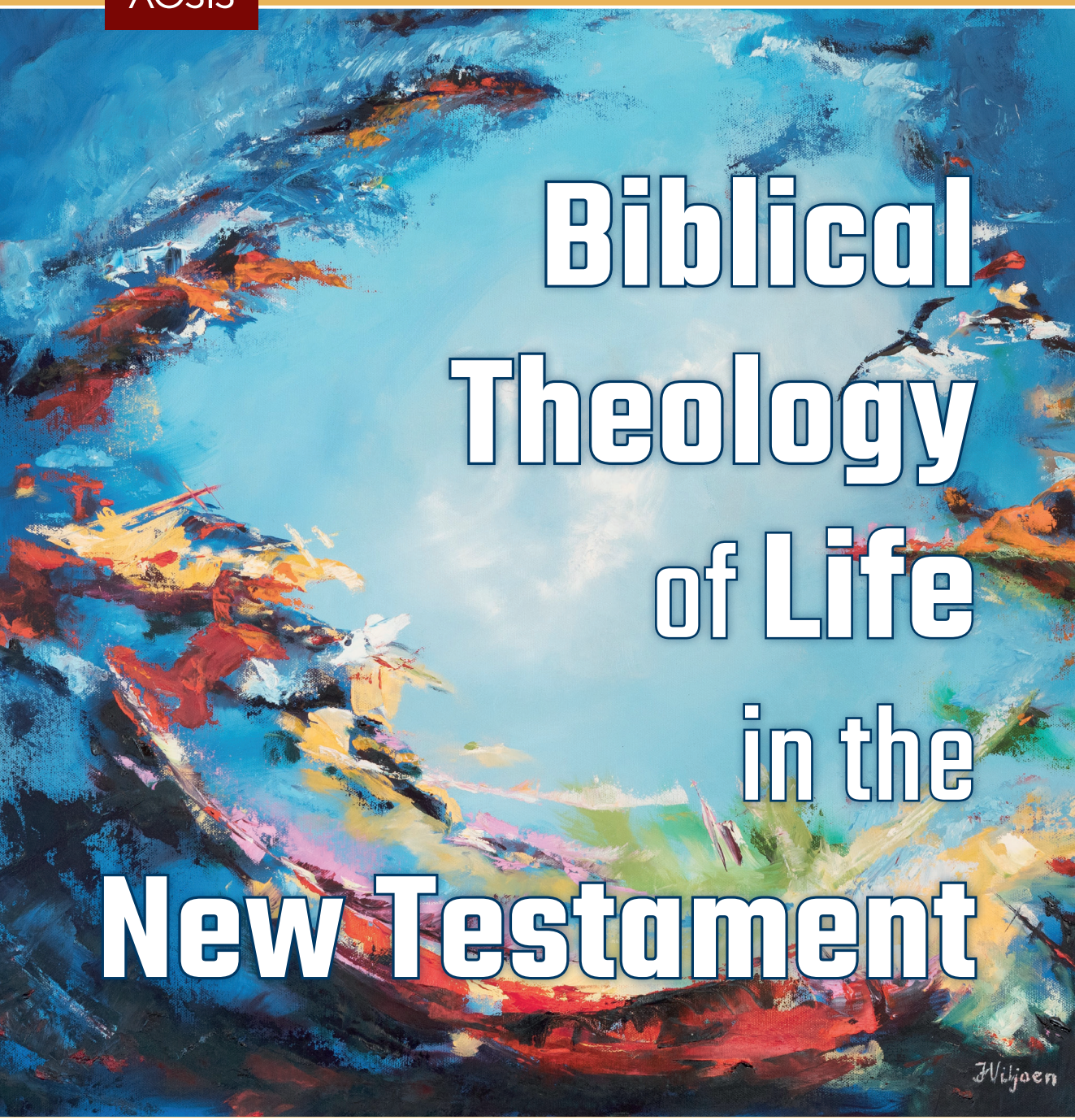

Edited by

Francois P. Viljoen
& Albert J. Coetsee

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Biblical Theology of Life in the New Testament

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Biblical Theology of Life in the New Testament

EDITORS
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Peer review declaration

The publisher (AOSIS) endorses the South African 'National Scholarly Book Publishers Forum Best Practice for Peer Review of Scholarly Books'. The manuscript was subjected to rigorous two-step peer review prior to publication, with the identities of the reviewers not revealed to the author(s). The reviewers were independent of the publisher and/or authors in question. The reviewers commented positively on the scholarly merits of the manuscript and recommended that the manuscript be published. Where the reviewers recommended revision and/or improvements to the manuscript, the authors responded adequately to such recommendations.

Research Justification

This publication deals with 'A Biblical Theology of Life' based on the New Testament. It forms the second of a two-volume publication on *A Biblical Theology of Life*. These two volumes trace the concept of life throughout the Protestant canon, working with the final form of the biblical books in Hebrew and Greek Scripture. This is done by providing the reader with a book-by-book overview of the concept of life. The introductory chapter of the first volume elucidates the scope for this two-volume publication followed by 12 chapters dealing with Old Testament corpora. The second volume proceeds with 10 chapters dealing with New Testament corpora. This volume concludes with a final chapter synthesising the findings of the respective investigations of the Old and New Testament corpora in order to provide a summative theological perspective of the development of the concept of life through Scripture.

Although much has been published on the concept of life in the biblical text, it seems that up to date no comprehensive biblical theology in which the concept of life is traced throughout the different corpora of the Old and New Testament has been published. The current publication intends to fill this research gap. It is assumed that such an approach can provide a valuable contribution to the theological discourse on life and related concepts. From this investigation, it is clear that life forms a central and continuous theme throughout the biblical text. The theme begins with the living God who creates life but is shortly followed by death that threatens life. Despite this threat, God sustains life and awakens life from death. The text concludes with the consummation depicting eternal life in the new heaven and earth.

A biblical–theological investigation is chosen as the methodology. It entails a thematic approach as it investigates the concept of life, with contextual foci on what individual books of Scripture teach about life, joined diachronically with an investigation of the progressive use of the concept of life in Scripture, while providing a theology of Scripture as a whole investigating the concept of life in all 66 books of the Protestant canon.

No empirical research was conducted, and it does not pose ethical risks. The book is written by scholars for scholars. The target audience is peers and researchers.

Except for a portion in Chapter 6, which represents a substantial reworking of the author's PhD thesis, all chapters are original investigations with original results and were cleared from possible plagiarism by iThenticate.

Prof. Francois P. Viljoen, Unit for Reformed Theology and the Development of the South African Society, Sub-Programme Bibliological Perspectives, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

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Abbreviations, Figures and Tables Appearing in the Text and Notes

List of Abbreviations

ESV	English Standard Version
LBM	Letter-body-middle
LBO	Letter-body-opening
TGPA	Text-generated Persuasion Analysis
TSP	Theological School in Potchefstroom

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Chapter 1

Life in the Synoptic Gospels

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Introduction

This chapter investigates the concept of 'life' in the Synoptic Gospels from a biblical–theological perspective. The approach is to make an exegetical study of 'life' words, namely, βίος, ζωή, ζάω, ψυχή and ἡλικία, as they are employed in the Synoptic Gospels. Based on the investigation of these words, conclusions are drawn about the meanings of each of these words within their different contexts. The chapter concludes by synthesising the findings from which theological perspectives on the meaning of 'life' in the Synoptic Gospels are drawn. Obviously, a study on a concept entails more than an investigation of the meanings of words within texts, although such an approach should form a firm basis for theological reflection on the meaning of 'life' in these Gospels.

'Life' words in the Synoptic Gospels

As this study focusses on 'life' words in the Synoptic Gospels, only brief introductory remarks are given about the general meanings of these words in classical Greek, Hellenistic Judaism, the LXX and other related writings to

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provide a context of the usage of these words in the Synoptic Gospels. With the investigation of these words in specific passages in the Synoptic Gospels, further reference is made to similar meanings of these words in related documents.

Βίος (and βιόω)

In classical Greek, 'life of this world' manifests in βίος. It can denote character, duration of earthly life and livelihood (Bultmann 1978a:835; Link 1976a:475). In the LXX, βίος refers to the duration of life, wealth and food. It is only in the Hagiographa and Apocrypha that it developed moral and religious meanings (Bertram 1978:851).

The noun βίος is rarely used in the New Testament, occurring only 11 times. Six of these occur in the Synoptic Gospels as recorded in Table 1.1, while the verb βίος occurs only once, but not in the Synoptic Gospels.[1]

In Mark 12:44 and Luke 21:4, Jesus reflects on the poor widow who put two little coins of the least value in the treasury. He contrasts her modest offering with the huge amounts of money that rich people gave. Jesus states that the rich people gave out of abundance, while the poor widow figuratively gave ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς; πάντα τὸν βίον [her whole life; all the life that she had], in the sense of life and the activity associated with it (Collins 2007:590). Luke explains this even further by adding 'what she had' to 'all her life'. He regards

TABLE 1.1: Βίος in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Mark 12:44	'αὕτη δὲ ἐκ τῆς ὑστερήσεως αὐτῆς πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν ἔβαλεν, ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς'	But she, out of her poverty, put in all she had, her whole '*life*'.
Luke 21:4	αὕτη δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ὑστερήματος αὐτῆς πάντα τὸν βίον ὃν εἶχεν ἔβαλεν'	But she, out of her poverty, put in all her '*life*' that she had.
Luke 8:14[2]	καὶ ὑπὸ μεριμνῶν καὶ πλούτου καὶ ἡδονῶν τοῦ βίου πορευόμενοι συμπνίγονται καὶ οὐ τελεσφοροῦσιν	And as they go on their way, they are choked by the worries, riches and pleasures of '*life*', and they do not mature.
Luke 8:43[3]	ἰατροῖς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον	She (the woman suffering of haemorrhage) spent her whole '*life*' on physicians.
Luke 15:12	ὁ δὲ διεῖλεν αὐτοῖς τὸν βίον	He (the father) divided his '*life*' between them.
Luke 15:30	ὁ καταφαγών σου τὸν βίον μετὰ πορνῶν	The one (prodigal son) who has wasted your '*life*' with prostitutes.

1. Besides in the Synoptic Gospels, this noun also occurs in 1 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:4; 1 John 2:16; 3:17. The verb βιόω occurs only once, and that is in 1 Peter 4:2.

2. The parallel phrase in Mark 4:19 reads: but the worries of this age (τοῦ αἰῶνος), the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

3. The words 'ἰατροῖς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον' do not appear in all manuscripts.

her two coins as everything she had, her whole livelihood, everything she needed to sustain her life. The result is that she had nothing left to live on.

A physical use of βίος life is found in Luke 8:14, where it is used in the context of worries, riches and pleasures that this life, or being alive, offers. Luke replaces Mark's 'αἰών' ('this age' – Mk 4:19) with βίος [life].

In Luke 8:43, a similar figurative use of the word is found as in Mark 12:44 and Luke 21:4. This time, it was the woman who suffered from haemorrhage who spent her ὅλον τὸν βίον (whole life) on physicians to be healed. She had to spend on physicians all the resources she actually needed to sustain her life.

A related but slightly different use of the word βίος is used in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The father divided τὸν βίον [life] between them (Lk 15:12), and the Prodigal Son wasted his (life) on prostitutes (Lk 15:30). In this parable, 'life' has also to do with resources by which life is sustained and as means of existence. It carries the connotation of wealth and property.

Summary

The Synoptic Gospels rarely use βίος. When the word occurs, it is used predominantly with the figurative meaning of livelihood, means of living and wealth. It is once used with a physical meaning of the course of one's physical life, a physical life that threatens faith.

Ζωή

A 'life' word much more commonly used as βίος in the Synoptic Gospels is the noun ζωή. It occurs 135 times in the New Testament, of which 16 times in the Synoptic Gospels.

In classical Greek, the word denotes the physical activity of organic beings, such as humans, animals and plants. Ζωή transcends an individual and distributes itself in bodies [σῶματα]. However, it does not belong to the other world in a religious sense. In Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism, the word is understood as an underlying force that triumphs over obstacles. It is a divine vitality that manifests in organic beings to give them life. The dualism of Gnosticism regards the σῶμα as something that contains the ζωή and hampers it. Humans should therefore be taught how to liberate themselves from their σῶματα to fully conceive ζωή (Bultmann 1978a:832–843; Link 1976b:477).

The LXX uses ζωή 130 times. It means the duration of life but also developed into a value concept referring to vitality in the distinction of death and sickness. In Job 19:25, eternal ζωή is noted. Ζωή does not only refer to natural life but as a saving benefit that extends beyond the earthly sphere (Bertram 1978:854; Link 1976b:480).

In Hellenistic Judaism, ζωή is commonly used to denote eternal life. While in Palestinian Judaism, the idea of resurrection was well established, Hellenistic Judaism replaced this with the immortality of the soul based on a dualistic anthropology. Ζωή is regarded as the vital force of ψυχὴ and is inhibited by the σῶμα (Bultmann 1978b:855–860).

Table 1.2 records the use of ζωή in the Synoptic Gospels.

TABLE 1.2: Ζωή in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Matthew 7:13–14[4]	Εἰσέλθατε διὰ τῆς στενῆς πύλης·ὅτι πλατεῖα ἡ πύλη καὶ εὐρύχωρος ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν, καὶ πολλοί εἰσιν οἱ εἰσερχόμενοι δι' αὐτῆς ὅτι στενὴ ἡ πύλη καὶ τεθλιμμένη ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ζωήν, καὶ ὀλίγοι εἰσὶν οἱ εὑρίσκοντες αὐτήν.	Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. For small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to *life*, and only a few find it.
Mark 9:43	καλόν ἐστίν σε κυλλὸν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ἢ τὰς δύο χεῖρας ἔχοντα ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον.[5]	It is better that you enter '*life*' maimed, than having two hands and go into hell, into the ever-burning fire.
Mark 9:45	καλόν ἐστίν σε εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν χωλὸν, ἢ τοὺς δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν.[6]	It is better that you enter '*life*' crippled, than having two feet being thrown into hell.
Mark 9:47	καὶ ἐὰν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου σκανδαλίζῃ σε, ἔκβαλε αὐτόν· καλόν σέ ἐστιν μονόφθαλμον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν,	And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.
Mark 9:48	ὅπου 'Ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται'.	Where 'the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched'.
Matthew 18:8	καλόν σοί ἐστιν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν κυλλὸν ἢ χωλόν ἢ δύο χεῖρας ἢ δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον.	It is better for you to enter '*life*' maimed or crippled, than having two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.
Matthew 18:9	καλόν σοί ἐστιν μονόφθαλμον εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν, ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός.	It is better for you to enter '*life*' with one eye, than having two eyes and be thrown into the hell of fire.
Mark 10:17	'τί ποιήσω ἵνα ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω';	What must I (the rich youngman) do so that I may inherit 'aeonean' '*life*?'
Matthew 19:16	τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω ἵνα σχῶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον	What good do I (the rich young man) have to do so that I may have 'aeonean' '*life*'.
Matthew 19:17	εἰ δὲ θέλεις εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν, τήρει τὰς ἐντολάς.	If you want to enter into '*life*', keep the commandments.
Luke 18:18	τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;	(A certain ruler asked Jesus) what must I have done to inherit 'aeonean' '*life*'?

Table 1.2 continues on the next page→

4. Matthew 7:13–14 has a similar passage as in Luke 13:23–24, although the parallel is not all clear as the differences between these two texts are considerable.

5. Some less reliable manuscripts add the passage: ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται (where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched) (Mk 9:44), the same words of Mark 9:48).

6. Some less reliable manuscripts once again add the passage: ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται. (where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched) (Mk 9:46).

TABLE 1.2(Continues...): Ζωή in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Mark 10:30	ἐὰν μὴ λάβῃ ἑκατονταπλασίονα νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ … καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.	No one (who has left belongings or family for Jesus and the gospel's sake) will fail to receive hundredfold now in this time [...] and in the aeon to come 'aeonean' '*life*'.
Matthew 19:29	πολλαπλασίονα λήμψεται καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσει.	Everyone (who leaves his belongings or family for Jesus' sake) will receive hundredfold and inherit 'aeonean' '*life*'.
Luke 18:30	ὃς οὐχὶ μὴ λάβῃ πολλαπλασίονα ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.	No one (who has left his/her belongings or family for the sake of the Kingdom of God) will not receive manifold more in this time and in the aeon to come, 'aeonean' '*life*'.
Matthew 25:46	Καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.	And these (evil ones) will go away to 'aeonean' punishment, but the righteous ones to 'aeonean' '*life*'.
Luke 10:25	'Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω';	(The expert of the law asks Jesus) Teacher, what must I have done to inherit 'aeonean' '*life*?'
Luke 12:15	'οὐκ ἐν τῷ περισσεύειν τινὶ ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ'.	Someone's '*life*' does not consist of an abundance of his possessions.
Luke 16:25	ἀπέλαβες τὰ ἀγαθά σου ἐν τῇ ζωῇ σου.	(Abraham replied to the rich man) you received your good things in your '*life*'.

In Matthew 7:13–14, Jesus mentions in two perfectly balanced lines two ways leading to two opposite destinations: one to destruction [εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν] and the other to life [εἰς τὴν ζωήν]. The theme of two ways is set in Jewish moral tradition, as is apparent in passages from the First Testament, for example, in Psalm 1:6, Psalm 119:29–32 and Proverbs 28:6, 18. Jewish texts, especially those with eschatological orientations (Keener 1999:250), also refer to two ways. The Second Book of Enoch, a pseudepigraphic text in the apocalyptic genre dating from the first century AD, tells that God showed Adam 'the two ways, the light and the darkness, and God told him: "this is good and that is bad"' (2 En 30:15). The Berakot, a Babylonian tractate of the Mishnah and Talmud, composed by the end of the Mishnaic period (*c*. 200 AD), also refers to two ways: 'There are two ways before me, one leading to Paradise and the other to Gehinnom' (b. Ber. 28b). The Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, which reflects Scriptural exegesis in Judaism, interprets Exodus 14:28 by stating that God put before Adam 'two ways, the way of life and the way of death' (Mek. Ex. 14:28).[7] In line with these traditions, Jesus in Matthew 7:13–14 exhorts his listeners to enter through the small gate and to follow the narrow road in order to reach eschatological life, in contrast to the wide gate

7. Besides these Jewish writings, the image of two paths in life is also often employed in Greek and Latin literature, for example by Seneca (4 BC–65 AD) in Epistles to Lucilius 8.3 and Diogenes (412 BC or 404 BC–323 BC) to Hicetas 30, as well as two paths after death, for example by Virgil (70 BC–14 BC) in Aeneid 6.540–543 and Cicero (106 BC–43 BC) in Tusculanae Disputationes 1.30.72.

and broad road that leads to eschatological destruction.[8] To enter life requires commitment and difficulty, and only a few do so. On the other hand, the road leading to destruction is attractive and is followed by many. These words of Jesus form part of his Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7). To live by the words of this sermon is not easy, but by doing so, one reaches eternal life.

A similar meaning of life is found in other passages from the Synoptic Gospels, each context adding more dimensions to its meaning. In a carefully crafted parallelism, Mark 9:43–45 contrasts the place of 'life' [ἡ ζωή] with the hell [ἡ γέεννα], a place of eternal punishment with its 'unquenchable fire' [τό πῦρ τό ἄσβεστος], a clause that alludes to Isaiah 66:24 (LXX). Matthew 18:8–9[9] contrasts 'life' [ἡ ζωή] with 'the aeonean fire' [τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον] and 'the hell of fire' [ἡ γέεννα τοῦ πυρός].[10] In a further elaboration of the theme, Mark places 'the life' [ἡ ζωή] (Mk 9:43) parallel to 'the Kingdom of God' [ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ] (Mk 9:47). Life entails the full manifestation of the reign of God that is to come. This implies that a human can fully participate in the life to come in God's reign. These passages deal with the relation between a person's present actions and the future life, also depicted as the Kingdom of God. Every obstacle that could hinder one to enter 'life' has to be eliminated, despite the personal cost. Language of the loosing of limbs was the language used for martyrs in the intertestamental times who had to pay the extreme price for their devotion to God.[11] Maccabean books (2 Macc 7) refer to such martyrdom:

> After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, 'Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?' (v. 11)[12]

Further, 'gladly, for the sake of God, we let our bodily members be mutilated' (4 Macc 10:20).[13] While Judaism abhorred self-mutilation, this image of the cost provides a stark image of how one needs to avoid hell at any price and

8. The building of a house on sand which suffers the eschatological storm, while the house built on stone endures this storm (Mt 7:24–27) forms a functional equivalent to entering the wide gate that leads to destruction and the narrow gate that leads towards life (Mt 13–14) (Davies & Allison 2004a:697).

9. Matthew 18:8–9 forms a doublet of Matthew 5:29–30.

10. ἡ γέεννα is the Greek form of the Semitic Valley of Hinnom. It has been identified as the Wadi er-Rababeh that circles the Old City of Jerusalem on the south and west. Jeremiah 7:30–34 and 19:1–13 refer to it as the valley of slaughter and prophesied that it would be filled with corpses which would become food for birds and wild animals during the destruction of Jerusalem. Jewish apocalyptic literature describes it as a place of eternal punishment of the wicked (2 Esdr 7:36, 4 Ez 203, 221; 2 Bar 59:10; 85:13) (Collins 2007:453).

11. The punishment of cutting of a hand occurs once in Deuteronomy 25:11–12: 'If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts, you shall cut off her hand'.

12. 2 Maccabees is a deutero-canonical book which describes the Maccabean Revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

13. 4 Maccabees is a philosophic discourse praising the supremacy of pious reason over passion.

the cost one must be willing to pay for entering the life of the coming age (Keener 1999:450).

In Mark and Matthew, the rich young man (Mk 10:17; Mt19:16–17) and, in Luke, a certain ἄρχων [ruler] (Lk 18:18)[14] seek 'aeonian life' [ζωὴν αἰώνιον]. In these passages, 'life' is specified as belonging to the 'aeon' [αἰώνιον]. In Mark and Luke, this man asks how he can inherit [κληρονομήσω] this life.[15] A similar request is posed by the expert of the Law in Luke 10:25.[16] In the Hebrew Bible, 'inheritance' referred to the possession of land, usually the Promised Land. In many of these texts, inheritance refers to an eschatological expectation (Collins 2007:476). The Second Temple Period text, the Psalms of Solomon, states that the devout will inherit life in happiness and warns that the sinners will inherit Hades and destruction (Ps. Sol. 14:9–10). The apocalyptic religious text also from the Second Temple period, ascribed by tradition to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah, speaks of the angel with his responsibility for the repentance to hope for those who will inherit eternal life (1 En 40:9). In Matthew, the rich young man's question seems to be more naive as he asks what he could do to obtain [σχῶ] aeonian life. Jesus responds and replaces the rich man's σχῶ [I obtain] with εἰσελθεῖν [to enter]. Jesus transfers this rich man from the marketplace to the road (Bruner 1990:289). Instead of trying to purchase life, he needs to go on a pilgrimage (Davies & Allison 2004c:43). The man leaves the scene disappointed as he preferred to keep his treasure on earth (Mk 10:22; Mt 19:22; Lk 18:23).

Once the rich young man (Mark and Luke) or ruler (Luke) leaves, Jesus speaks to his disciples (Mk 10:22–31; Mt 19:23–30; Lk 18:24–30). Jesus warns that his followers will experience rejection, estrangement and all different forms of persecutions and will have to leave belongings and family behind that might be dear to them. Significantly, Jesus in Mark and Luke promises that those who are willing to pay this price will already 'now in this time' [νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ] receive hundredfold (Mark) or manifold (Luke) back. While Jesus' followers can expect to be rejected even by their families, they can expect to be accommodated within the community of believers.[17] Yet 'in the aeon to come' [ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ], they will receive even more, namely, aeonian life [ζωὴν αἰώνιον]. Earlier in his text, Mark uses 'aeon' for 'this time' as well, when he associates the 'aeon' [αἰών] with 'worries' and 'deceitfulness' (Mk 4:19). The notion of the current time or 'aeon' and the 'aeon to come' is

14. The Pharisaic movement used ἄρχων to refer to their own 'ruler', namely the ruler of the Sanhedrin or one of the leaders of their movement. It seems that Luke was proud to indicate that some of the most prominent persons were willing to consult Jesus (Bovon 2013:566).

15. In Jewish tradition it was a common to ask a religious leader the question how to obtain eternal life (e.g. Berakot 28b and Tamid 32a, tractates from the Talmud from the Mishnaic period).

16. The expert of the Law is more interested in testing Jesus than to know how to inherit 'aeonean life'.

17. This probably refers to the persecuted church.

common in Jewish apocalyptic and rabbinic literature. 1 Enoch contrasts the 'age of the unrighteous' with the 'the age that will come' (1 En 48:7; 71:15). The apocalyptic book, 4 Ezra, ascribed to Ezra of the 5th century BC, although modern scholarship places its composition between 70 AD and 218 AD, describes 'this aeon' as temporal and 'the aeon to come' as eternal. The 'life of the aeon' [ζωὴ αἰώνιος] is the eschatological reward that the loyal followers of Jesus will receive (Collins 2007:483). Other than that in Mark and Luke, Jesus in Matthew does not explicitly specify that the 'hundredfold' or 'manifold' will be received already 'now in this life' [νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ], although it could be implied. While Jesus in Mark and Luke uses the verb 'receive' [λάβῃ] to specify how his followers will obtain aeonian life [ζωὴν αἰώνιον], in Matthew, Jesus uses the verb 'inherit' [κληρονομήσει]. This reference to inheritance relates to the question of the rich young man in the previous scene in the Markan and Lukan version. Matthew continues to describe the honour that will be bestowed in the aeon to come on those who stay loyal to him. While absent in Mark and Luke, Matthew 19:28 states that when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, those (the 12 disciples) will also sit on 12 thrones judging those who have rejected them in this time.[18]

Matthew 25:46 forms the concluding statement about the coming of Jesus as Son of Man who will come in glory to judge between the wicked and the righteous. Jesus is associated with the Son of Man in Daniel 7. In this concluding statement, Jesus contrasts the 'aeonian punishment' [κόλασιν αἰώνιον] of the wicked with the 'aeonian life' [ζωὴν αἰώνιον] of the righteous ones. 'Aeonian punishment' only appears here in Matthew, while 'aeonian life' also appears in Matthew 19:16 and 29. This antithetical parallelism alludes to Daniel 12:2–3[19] (LXX) according to which some will rise to 'aeonian' life and others to dispersion and 'aeonian' shame.

In the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:13–21),[20] Jesus warns against all kinds of greed, as one's life [ζωὴ] does not consist of an abundance of one's possessions (Lk 12:15). The mistaken conviction is that the value of someone's life depends on the pleasures one's possessions provide. Life is more than enjoying the pleasures of abundance. Wealth does not maintain or guarantee the persistence of one's life as it can be taken away from a person at any time. The parable concludes that a person who seeks life in abundance loses it, in

18. Ancient Mediterranean people would understand how the fate of clients could rest on the position of their patrons. When a patron achieved political success, he would reward those who supported him while he was in his humble state, while punishing those who rejected him (Keener 1999:479).

19. Daniel 12:2–3 (LXX): 'καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν καθευδόντων ἐν τῷ πλάτει τῆς γῆς ἀναστήσονται, οἱ μὲν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ εἰς ὀνειδισμόν, οἱ δὲ εἰς διασποράν καὶ αἰσχύνην αἰώνιον...' [And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will rise, some to 'aeonian life', some to reproach and some to dispersion and 'aeonean' shame].

20. The parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:13–21) is the first of three 'rich man' parables. The others are the rich man's manager (Lk 16:1–9) and the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19–31).

contrast to one who is rich towards God [εἰς θεὸν πλουτῶν] (Lk 12:21). Being rich towards God guarantees life instead.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19–31) plays off in the afterlife. The good things that the rich man enjoyed during his life [ἐν τῇ ζωῇ] before his death (Lk 16:25) are contrasted with the extreme agony he experiences after his death. On the other hand, Lazarus is comforted after his death, as he received bad things before his death.

Summary

The use of the noun ζωή [life] in the Synoptic Gospels signifies significant perspectives on life.

Life is viewed as consisting of two aeons. The first is temporal and the second is eternal. During the temporal aeon, people lived with the eschatological expectation of the eternal aeon. Two ways exist during the temporal aeon: one is easy to follow and the other is difficult to follow. The difficult road requires one to live according to the will of God. One of the two ways a human chooses determines his/her inheritance in the eternal aeon. The easy way leads towards aeonian destruction and punishment which is depicted as the ever-burning fire, as hell. Hell is described in terms of the valley of Hinnom, a valley of slaughter filled with corpses that would become food for birds and wild animals. On the other hand, those who follow the narrow road will inherit aeonean life, which is regarded as the Kingdom of God. That is to experience life with the full manifestation of the reign of God. True life is therefore totally different from what people usually regard as life, namely, the pleasures of having possessions in abundance during the temporary aeon.

Ζάω

Related to the noun ζωή [life], the verb ζάω is also used quite often in the Synoptic Gospels. In classical Greek, it refers to the ability to be alive and to do things, as the opposite of being dead. Being alive has a limited extension of time (Bultmann 1978b:861–862).

Table 1.3 records the use of this verb in the Synoptic Gospels.

In Luke 2:36, the verb ζήσασα [lived] is used to refer to the seven years the prophetess Anna physically lived with her husband, indicating how long they were married before he passed away.

In the temptation narratives (Mt 4:1–11; Lk 4:1–13), a further dimension is added to the meaning of being physically alive. Jesus responds to the devil's temptations to turn a stone into bread, with a quotation from Deuternomy 8:3 that a man does not 'live' [ζήσεται] on bread alone, but on every word that

TABLE 1.3: Ζάω in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Luke 2:36	ζήσασα μετὰ ἀνδρὸς ἔτη ἑπτὰ ἀπὸ τῆς παρθενίας αὐτῆς	She had '*lived*' with her husband seven years after her marriage.
Matthew 4:4	'Οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος, Ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος Θεοῦ	A man does not '*live*' on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.
Luke 4:4	Οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος	A man does not '*live*' on bread alone.
Mark 5:23	Τὸ θυγάτριόν μου ἐσχάτως ἔχει, ἵνα ἐλθὼν ἐπιθῇς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῇ, ἵνα σωθῇ καὶ ζήσῃ	My little daughter is at her last. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be saved and '*live*'.
Matthew 9:18	Ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν· ἀλλὰ ἐλθὼν ἐπίθες τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐπ' αὐτήν, καὶ ζήσεται	My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she '*will live*'.
Luke 10:28	τοῦτο ποίει καὶ ζήσῃ	Do this and you will '*live*'.
Luke 15:13	ἐκεῖ διεσκόρπισεν τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ ζῶν ἀσώτως	There he squandered his wealth with wasteful '*living*'.
Luke 15:24	οὗτος ὁ υἱός μου νεκρὸς ἦν καὶ ἀνέζησεν, ἦν ἀπολωλὼς καὶ εὑρέθη	This son of mine was dead and is '*alive again*'; he was lost and is found.'
Luke 15:32	ὁ ἀδελφός σου οὗτος νεκρὸς ἦν καὶ ἔζησεν, καὶ ἀπολωλὼς καὶ εὑρέθη	This brother of yours was dead and is '*alive*'; he was lost and is found.
Matthew 16:16	Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος	You are the Christ, the son of the '*living*' God.
Mark 12:27	οὐκ ἔστιν Θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων	He is not God of the dead but of the '*living*'.
Matthew 22:32	οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων	He is not the God of the dead but of the '*living*'.
Luke 20:38	Θεὸς δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων· πάντες γὰρ αὐτῷ ζῶσιν	He is not the God of the dead, but of the '*living*', for to him all are '*alive*'.
Matthew 26:63	Ἐξορκίζω σε κατὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος	I charge you under oath by the '*living*' God.
Matthew 27:63	ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν 'Μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι'	While he was still '*alive*' that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again'.
Mark 16:11[a]	κἀκεῖνοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ζῇ καὶ ἐθεάθη ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἠπίστησαν	While they heard that he was '*alive*' and that had been seen by her, they did not believe.
Luke 24:5	Τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν;	Why do you search for the '*living*' among the dead?.
Luke 24:23[a]	οἳ λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ζῆν	They said he was '*alive*'.

[a], The most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9–20.

comes from the mouth of God (Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4). Although Luke omits the second part of the quotation, it is assumed. Jesus draws on the tradition that God nourished and sustained his people during their 40 years of wandering in the desert. Food alone is not enough to keep a person alive. One also needs God's word. Jesus remains obedient to God, as he acknowledges that it is God who sustains life with bread and his word.

In Mark 5:23, a ruler of the synagogue, named Jairus, pleaded with Jesus to put his hands on his daughter who is at the point of death 'so that she will be saved and live' [ἵνα σωθῇ καὶ ζήσῃ]. Once Jesus arrives at the daughter, she has already died, but Jesus resurrects her to be physically alive again. Here and frequently in Mark (e.g. Mk 3:4; 5:23, 28, 34; 6:56; 10:52), the verb 'save' [σῴζω] is used in the sense of saving a person from physical ailment and death (Collins 2007:279). In this case, 'save' results in the daughter regaining physical life, but in some other cases, 'save' results in eternal life (e.g. Mk 8:35; 10:26; 13:13) (Viljoen 2014:461). In the parallel passage in Matthew 9:18, the ruler is unnamed and he knelt before Jesus as his daughter has just died. He pleads with Jesus to come and put his hand on her 'and she will live' [καὶ ζήσεται]. The verb 'save' is not mentioned. Jesus adheres to his plead and heals his daughter.

In Luke 10:25, an expert of the Law asks Jesus what he has to do to inherit ζωὴν αἰώνιον [aeonean/eternal life]. Jesus sends him back to Scripture, 'what is written in the Law [...] how do you read it?' (Lk 10:26). The expert of the Law answers with the double love commandment, 'love God' (Dt 6:5) and 'love your neighbour' (Lv 19:18). Jesus acknowledges that his answer is correct and that he needs to put this love in practice in order to inherit the 'aeonian' life (Lk 10:28). Jesus here emphasises that proper relationships are required. The idea that 'aeonian' life is a gift from God does not annihilate human responsibility. God expects from those he loves earnest reciprocity and undivided loyalty[21] (Bovon 2013:55).

In the parable of the lost son, the wrong of the younger son is described as squandering the inheritance from his father with ζῶν ἀσώτως [wasteful living] (Lk 15:13). The adverb ἀσώτια had a strong moral connotation at that time (Bovon 2013:425). Once the son has returned in misery, his father welcomes him gladly stating that his son was dead, but he is alive again [ἀνέζησεν]; he was lost and is found (Lk 15:24). These words depict salvation and restored life, redemption and resurrection. In Hellenistic Judaism, the contrast between death and life referred to conversion, and in early Christianity to baptism and new life in Christ (Bovon 2013:428). When the older son resents the way the father welcomes back his younger son, the father repeats his statement that his brother who was dead is alive [ἔζησεν], he was lost and is found (Lk 15:32). The father speaks in figurative terms. The verbs 'was dead' [νεκρὸς ἦν] and 'alive again' [ἀνέζησεν][22], and 'was lost' [ἦν ἀπολωλὼς] and 'was found' [εὑρέθη] speak of the passage from death to life and from perdition to salvation.

21. Even Paul links eternal life with human action (Rm 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10 and Gl 3:12) even though eternal life is a divine gift.

22. The verb ἀναζάω [become alive again] does not occur in the LXX or Hellenistic Jewish literature. It is rarely used in the New Testament, only once to denote Christ's resurrection (Rm 14:9) and the resurrection of the dead (Rv 20:5).

It repeats the theme with which the previous two parables of the trilogy conclude (Lk 15:7, 10).

In answer to Jesus' question on the disciples' opinion about the 'Son of Man', Peter answers on behalf of the disciples. Peter repeats what the disciples in principle already have said in the boat, 'Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς εἶ' [Truly you are the Son of God] (Mt 14:33), but formulated more fully and solemnly, 'Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος' [You are the Christ, the Son of the living God] (Mt 16:16).[23] The designation 'living God' became important in Greek-speaking Judaism as can be seen in several of their writings (2 Macc 7:33; 15:4; 3 Macc 6:28; Job 37.2; Abr. 17.1). It is used approximately 15 times in the LXX (e.g. Ps 41:3; Is 37:4, 17; Ho 2:1). It also occurs frequently in the New Testament (Ac 14:15; Rm 9:26; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16; 1 Th 1:9; 1 Tm 4:10; Heb 3:12; Rv 7:2), especially in missionary proclamation (Luz 2001:361). The God of Israel is contrasted with dead gentile idols. He has life in and of himself, and he alone gives it to others (Meier 1979:109). He is a real God who acts in history. In the context of Matthew 16:16, God shares this quality of living as Jesus promises that the powers of death will not conquer his followers. Death has lost its power over them because they will be protected by the 'living God' (Davies & Allison 2004b:621).

In Mark 12:27 (Mt 22:32; Lk 20:38), Jesus responds to the Sadducees in Verse 18 (Mt 22:23; Lk 20:27) who do not believe in the resurrection. Jesus responds by alluding to Exodus 3:6.[24] As God is not a God of the dead but of the living, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must still be living now (or will live in the future) (Collins 2007:562; Hagner 2002:106). The argument implies a continued state of existence of the patriarchs, even though they were deceased. The present tense is used, God is [ἔστιν] the God of the living, not 'was'. That God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was one of Israel's basic convictions and a well-known formula. He entered into a covenant relationship with them with the implication that he would protect them (Davies & Allison 2004c:231). If God protected the patriarchs and cares for his people, he will not stop doing so, even after their death. Consequently, he will not abandon them in Sheol (Bovon 2012:71). In Judaism of the day, it was taken for granted that Israel's patriarchs were presently living with God and interceding for Israel (Keener 1999:529). They trusted God as the God of the covenant who would redeem Israel (Luz 2005:72). Jesus' argument corresponds with rabbinic understandings of resurrection. In the Mishnah Sanhedrin, it is stated that all

23. The wording 'the son of the living God' is unique to Matthew. Peter in Mark 8:29 only states 'you are the Christ', while Peter in Luke 9:20 states 'you are the Christ of God'.

24. Exodus 3:6: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'.

Israelites will share in the world to come, while the unrighteous will not (m. Sanh. 10.1).[25] The Parables of Enoch speaks[26] about (1 En 70):

> [7]he first fathers and the righteous, who were dwelling [...] from of old in the place to which Enoch was taken up when he was removed, without dying, from among human beings. This place is probably Paradise. (v. 4)

According to the Testament of Isaac 2:1–6, Isaac was taken to the heavens to be with his father Abraham and all the saints, and Jacob would join them when he dies.[27] Jesus' argument is therefore that as the patriarchs experience resurrection, resurrection is real yet spiritual because those who are resurrected 'will be like the angels in heaven' (Mk 12:25; Mt 22:30; Lk 20:36)[28] (Collins 2007:564), and according to the Enoch tradition, angels do not die (1 En 15:6–7). Particularly striking is the first and second 'berakah' of the 'Shemoneh Esreh' (Eighteen Benedictions), which developed in the Mishnaic period both before and after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. It forms the central prayer in Jewish liturgy. In the first 'berakah' (blessing), God is addressed as 'YHWH, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob' and in the second 'berakah', YHWH is praised as the one 'who makes the dead alive' (Luz 2005:72). Jesus' argument is clear: The God of the patriarchs is a God of the living, and he would raise the dead. There will be a continuity of life, although there will also be features of discontinuity. Jesus states that at the resurrection, people will be like the angels in the heaven [ὡς ἄγγελοι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ] (Mk 12:25; Mt 22:30; Lk 20:36). In the life after resurrection, humans will be like angels to no longer engage in marriage. Luke gives further information: 'And they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection' (Lk 20:36).[29] This implies that the eschatological future will be something transcendental, a time and place where the boundaries between heaven and earth will not be definite anymore (Davies & Allison 2004c:233).

25. The Mishnah Sanhedrin which contains the oral traditions of the Pharisees of the Second Temple Period focuses on questions of jurisdiction, criminal law and punishments. The tenth tractate stipulates crimes meriting capital punishment by strangulation.

26. Chapters 37–71 of the Book of Enoch are referred to as the Book of Parables. It deals with the final judgement and eschatology, and the destiny of the righteous and the evil.

27. This Testament tells that an angel took Isaac to heaven, where he first observed the torture of sinners, after which he met the deceased Abraham. Isaac then returns to the earth and on instruction of Abraham writes down his Testament. When Isaac eventually dies he returns to heaven in a flying chariot like Abraham did according to his Testament.

28. Enoch's Similitudes declare that the righteous would dwell with the angels after their death (1 En 39:5), and that God originally created humans to be like angels (1 En 69:11) (Keener 1999:527).

29. This corresponds with the hope of the prophets: 'But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy' (Is 26:19).

During his hearing of Jesus, Caiaphas, the high priest charges Jesus to take an oath by τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος [the living God] (Mt 26:63).[30] This calling on God corresponds with regulations described in the Mishnah Shevu'ot for the taking of an oath (m. Sevu. 4:13).[31] Passages from the Old Testament also refer to such practice when taking an oath (Gn 24:3; 1 Ki 2:42; 2 Ch 36:13) (Luz 2005:428). The appellation 'living' God is found earlier in Matthew 16:16. God is alive, he acts in history and will punish false testimony.

In Matthew 27:63, the chief priests and Pharisees go to Pilate and maliciously request that Jesus' tomb be guarded. They label Jesus a 'deceiver' who claimed while he was still alive that he would rise again after three days. This accusation refers back to Matthew 12:38. On that occasion, the Pharisees and the scribes demanded a miraculous sign from Jesus, but Jesus only gave them the sign of Jonah. The sign is then explained (Mt 12):

> For Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (v. 40)

The chief priests and Pharisees regard Jesus' death as definitive and request Pilate to guard the tomb until the third day in order to prevent that the corpse be removed with the consequent claim that he has risen from the dead. However, the narrative turns out to be very ironic. Matthew 28 reports how God ruins these security measures. He actually uses these measures so that Jesus' resurrection could be verified.

According to Mark 16:11, the disciples did not believe Mary Magdalene who told them that Jesus was alive [ζῇ] again. This verse, which is not found in the most reliable early manuscripts, is probably dependant on Luke 24:11.

The women who went to Jesus' tomb are met by two heavenly beings. The heavenly beings ask the women why they search [ζητεῖτε] for the living [τὸν ζῶντα] amongst the dead [μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν] (Lk 24:5). The living and the dead are depicted as two opposing states of existence. Jesus' resurrection constitutes a new order of life that irrefutably demonstrates the end of death (Hagner 2002:119). To be living defines the condition of one who is risen as used in Luke 24:23.[32] Earlier in Luke, Jesus has said that God is not the God of the dead [νεκρῶν], but of the living [ζώντων] (Lk 20:38; Mk 12:27; Mt 22:32). The participle τὸν with ζῶντα probably implies more than merely being alive so that it should be read as a title, 'The Living One'.[33] The use of the verb 'search'

30. Because Matthew has 'son of the living God' as part of Peter's confession (Mt 16:16), Matthew's audience would recall that passage in the high priest's demand (Keener 1999:649).

31. The Shevu'ot has eight chapters and deals with regulations for the taking of oaths and the consequences thereof.

32. A similar use of 'one that is risen' is found in Acts 1:3; 25:19.

33. The use of participles to indicate titles are also found in Mark 16:6 with reference to Jesus 'the Nazarene, the Crucified' [τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον].

[ζητεῖτε] is significant. Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus said that whoever 'searches' will find (Lk 11:9). The women should stop searching amongst the dead so that they can find the 'Living One' (Bovon 2012:350).

Referring back to Verse 5, Luke 24:23 uses the verb ζῆν [he is alive] in an eschatological sense. This corresponds with his vocabulary of glory as found in John's Gospel as well. 'The Living One' is the one who enters into glory (Lk 24:26).

Summary

From the use of the verb ζωή [life] in the Synoptic Gospels, a number of theological perspectives can be derived.

In the temptation narrative, Jesus stresses that a human is dependent on God to be physically alive. Humans need the nourishment that God gives, not only physical bread but also his word.

Physical death is described as a sorrowful reality, but when Jesus enters, he saves those who have died. He saves so that life can be restored and people can live again.

In a spiritual sense, being alive is contrasted to being dead. Death is equated with extreme misery as a result of sin and wasteful living. However, God is merciful. God is willing to welcome back persons from their misery when they realise that their misery is the result of their sin and are penitent before him.

Being alive is not limited to the temporary aeon of this life. However, to enter the bliss of the eschatological life, obedience to God's law as expressed in a loving relationship with him and one's neighbours is required.

God is a living God, other than the dead idols. He is the God of the covenant. He has life in himself and gives it to others. He acts in history and cares for his people. Even in Sheol, he will not abandon his people. His covenant people are alive beyond their physical life.

Jesus is the Son of the living God. Yet, he died but was raised and exalted to eschatological glory. He thus received the honorary title of 'The living One'.

Ψυχὴ

Ψυχή [soul] is etymologically related to ψύχω [blow]. In classical Greek, it denotes the vital and immaterial force that resides in a material body. It comes to expression in breathing. Once a person dies, the ψυχὴ leaves the body. It is an omnibus term for human thought, will and emotion, and forms the essential core of a person. It can be separated from a body and does not share the finitude of a body (Brown 1978:677; Dihle 1978:613).

In the LXX, the ψυχὴ is regarded as the direct result of God breathing (blowing) his gift of life into a person. This would make a person an 'ensouled' being. It is regarded as the decisive mark of a living creature and the seat of emotions (Carrigan 2000:1245; Jacob 1974:618). In Hellenistic Judaism, the ψυχὴ is regarded as immortal, something that separates itself from the body at death (Brown 1978:682).

Ψυχὴ occurs 101 times in the New Testament, of which 37 times in the Synoptic Gospels (as recorded in Table 1.4), 15 in Acts and 10 in the Gospel of John (Harder 1978:682). The majority is therefore in narrative texts.

TABLE 1.4: ψυχὴ in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Luke 1:46–47	Μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχή μου τὸν Κύριον.	My '*life*' (soul) glorifies the Lord.
	καὶ ἠγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ τῷ Σωτῆρί μου.·	And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
Luke 2:35	καὶ σοῦ δὲ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία.	And a sword will pierce your own 'life' (soul).
Matthew 2:20	τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου.	Because those who were seeking the child's '*life*' have died.
Mark 3:4	Ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν ἀγαθὸν ποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι, ψυχὴν σῶσαι ἢ ἀποκτεῖναι;	Is it fitting on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a '*life*' or to kill?
Luke 6:9	ἔξεστιν τῷ σαββάτῳ ἀγαθοποιῆσαι ἢ κακοποιῆσαι, ψυχὴν σῶσαι ἢ ἀπολέσαι	Is it fitting on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save a '*life*' or to destroy it?
Matthew 6:25	μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε, ἢ τί πίητε μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν τί ἐνδύσησθε· οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖόν ἐστιν τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος;	Do not worry about your '*life*', what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not '*life*' more than food, and the body more than clothes?
Luke 12:22–23	μὴ μεριμνᾶτε 'τῇ ψυχῇ' τί φάγητε, μηδὲ τῷ σώματι τί ἐνδύσησθε. ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πλεῖόν ἐστιν τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος.	Do not worry about 'life', what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For '*life*' is more than food, and the body more than clothes.
Matthew 10:28	μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτεννόντων τὸ σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυναμένων ἀποκτεῖναι· φοβεῖσθε δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γεέννῃ.	Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the '*life*' (soul). Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both '*life*' (soul) and body in hell.
Matthew 10:39	ὁ εὑρὼν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολέσει αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ ἀπολέσας τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ εὑρήσει αὐτήν.	Whoever finds his '*life*' will lose it, and whoever loses his '*life*' for my sake will find it.
Passage using the same logion Mark 8:35–37	ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσει τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, σώσει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἄνθρωπον κερδῆσαι τὸν κόσμον ὅλον καὶ ζημιωθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; τί γὰρ δοῖ ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ;	For whoever wants to save his '*life*' will lose it, but whoever loses his '*life*' for me and for the gospel will save it. For what good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his '*life*' (soul)? Because, what can a man give in exchange of his '*life*' (soul)?

Table 1.4 continues on the next page→

TABLE 1.4(Continues...): ψυχὴ in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Passage using the same logion Matthew 16:25–26	ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ, εὑρήσει αὐτήν. Τί γὰρ ὠφεληθήσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῇ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ;	For whoever wants to save his '*life*' will lose it, but whoever loses his '*life*' for me will find it. For what good will it be for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his '*life*' (soul)? Or what can a man give in exchange for his '*life*' (soul)?
Passage using the same logion Luke 9:24	ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ, οὗτος σώσει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελεῖται ἄνθρωπος κερδήσας τὸν κόσμον ὅλον ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἀπολέσας ἢ ζημιωθείς;	For whoever wants to save their '*life*' will lose it, but whoever loses his '*life*' for me will save it. For what good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit the very self?
Passage using the same logion Luke 17:33	ὃς ἐὰν ζητήσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ περιποιήσασθαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν, καὶ ὃς ἂν ἀπολέσει, ζωογονήσει αὐτήν.	Whoever tries to keep his '*life*' will lose it, and whoever loses it will preserve it.
Matthew 11:29	ἄρατε τὸν ζυγόν μου ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καὶ μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι πραΰς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ, καὶ εὑρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν·	Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your '*lives*' (souls).
Matthew 12:18	ὁ ἀγαπητός μου εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχή μου·	My beloved in whom my '*life*' (soul) rejoices.
Mark 10:45	ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.	The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his '*life*' as a ransom for many.
Matthew 20:28	ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.	The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his '*life*' as a ransom for many.
Luke 9:56	ὁ γὰρ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων ἀπολέσαι, ἀλλὰ σῶσαι.	For the Son of Man did not come to destroy the '*lives*' (souls) of people, but to save.
Mark 12:30	καὶ ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας σου καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος σου.	Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your '*life*' (soul) and with all your mind and with all your strength.
Matthew 22:37	Ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου.	Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your '*life*' (soul) and with all your mind.
Luke 10:27	Ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχύϊ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου,	Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your '*life*' (soul) and with all your strength and with all your mind.
Mark 14:34	Περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου ἕως θανάτου·	My '*life*' (soul) is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.
Matthew 26:38	Περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου ἕως θανάτου.	My '*life*' (soul) is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Table 1.4 continues on the next page→

TABLE 1.4(Continues...): ψυχὴ in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Luke 12:19–20	καὶ ἐρῶ τῇ ψυχῇ μου ψυχή … ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ τὴν ψυχήν σου ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ	And my '*life*' (soul) will say to my '*life*' (soul) [...] This very night your '*life*' will be demanded from you.
Luke 14:26	Εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρός με καὶ οὐ μισεῖ τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τὰς ἀδελφάς, ἔτι τε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ, οὐ δύναται εἶναί μου μαθητής.	If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own '*life*', such a person cannot be my disciple.
Luke 21:19	ἐν τῇ ὑπομονῇ ὑμῶν κτήσεσθε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.	In your endurance, you will win your '*lives*' (souls).

In a song that reminds of the song of Hannah (1 Sm 2:1), Mary in a parallel phrase says 'my ψυχή [life/soul] glorifies the Lord, and my πνεῦμά [spirit] rejoices in God my Saviour' (Lk 1:46–47). Hannah sings 'my heart (MTT: "leb" and LXX: ἡ καρδία μου) rejoices in the Lord'. While these references to ψυχή, πνεῦμά and καρδία can merely be read as a Semitic form of a personal pronoun (cf. Brown 1978:677), it seems that there is more to it. The song of Mary opens with a parallel phrase, in which the second part interprets the first part. While Hannah refers to her καρδία [heart], Mary refers to her ψυχή [life/soul] and πνεῦμά [spirit]. In the song of Mary, the faculty of the πνεῦμά [spirit] forms a variation of ψυχή [life/soul], which Hannah describes as her καρδία [heart]. In the song of Mary, ψυχή [life/soul] and πνεῦμά [spirit] are used in the Hebraic reflective way referring to her own inner being. These two faculties designate the affective faculty, in contrast to the intellectual νοῦς [mind] (Bovon 2002:60).

In Luke 2:35, Simeon says to Mary that a sword will pierce her ψυχή [life/soul].[35] Mary's son will become the suffering Messiah and his mother will partake in his sorrows. This probably refers to an extreme suffering in her innermost being, in contrast to an external trial.

Matthew tells that King Herod was disturbed (even terrified) at the news of a newborn king of the Jews (Mt 2:3), as his position as king of Judea is being challenged by the king of the Jews. He needs to get rid of this rivalry and therefore seeks the ψυχή (life) of Jesus (Mt 2:20), and idiom meaning that he wants the child to be killed (cf. Ex 4:19; 1 Sm 20:1; 22:23; Pr 29:10). The result is that he orders the indiscriminate killing of all male infants in the area. While Matthew mentions Herod's murder of the children, the irony is stark, as he notes Herod's death three times (Viljoen 2011a:335). Once Herod has died,

34. The Greek text of Luke 9:56 is uncertain. It seems to be a gloss.

35. These words echoe the words of Psalm 37:15, but in this case, it refers to the wicked that will be punished: 'But their swords will pierce their own hearts [εἰσέλθοι εἰς τὴν καρδίαν αὐτῶν]'.

Jesus, the seemingly helpless child, returns with his parents to Nazareth.[36] Matthew communicates that God holds the ultimate power of life and death (Keener 1999:112).

Opponents watched Jesus with the intention to accuse him of profaning the Sabbath (Mk 3:2; Lk 6:7). The principal penalty for such an offence was death (Collins 2007:208). Jesus takes initiative and calls a man with a shrivelled hand into the room and asks which is lawful on the Sabbath: 'to do good or to do evil, to save a life [ψυχὴν] or to kill/destroy it' (Mk 3:4; Lk 6:9). Jesus speaks of this man's physical life, although in a metaphorical sense, as his life was not physically in danger. However, because of social stigmas associated with his disability, the man was as good as dead (Viljoen 2011b:6). It seems that it is Jesus' intention to save this man's life from social stigmas.[37] This is contrasted with his opponents' intention to kill Jesus, which was the penalty for profaning the Sabbath.

In Matthew 6:25 and Luke 12:22–23, Jesus warns against anxiety about one's physical existence. On morphological grounds, 'μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῇ ψυχῇ (ὑμῶν)' could be a Semitism meaning that 'you should not concern [yourself]' (Davies & Allison 2004a:647). However, it rather seems that the words ἡ ψυχὴ [life] and τὸ σῶμα [body] are used in parallel with the result that they both refer to a person's physical existence. Similar to the body that wears clothes, the ἡ ψυχὴ is physical too, as it eats and drinks. Jesus warns his audience not to be excessively concerned about their physical existence, as they should trust God to care for food and clothing. Jesus refers to two of the three commodities that people of antiquity regarded as indispensable, namely, food and clothing[38] (Bovon 2013:215). Jesus paves the way to state an even more important concern and that is the Kingdom of God (Mt 6:33; Lk 12:31).

When Jesus sends out his 12 disciples, he orders them to act in the presence with the final judgement in mind. In Matthew 10:28, he charges them not to fear those who can only kill the body, but rather the one that can destroy both the ψυχὴ [soul/life] and σῶμα [body] in hell [ἐν γεέννῃ]. In this context, ψυχὴ refers to the disembodied soul which can survive the bodily death. This charge is typical of martyrdom paraenesis found in the Maccabees (2 Macc 6):

> O Lord, [...] you know clearly that while I might be delivered to death, I suffer severe bodily pains, but in soul I am well content to suffer these things because I fear thee.[39] (v. 30)

36. This return echoes Moses' return to Egypt (Ex 4:19–20).

37. Jesus' action must have been controversial according to Jewish perspective. The Mishna Yoma 8.6 records: 'If a man has a pain in his throat they may drop medicine into his mouth on the Sabbath, since there is doubt whether life is in danger, this overrides the Sabbath'. It seems that healing was only permitted when it seemed that one's life was physically in danger (Collins 2007:209).

38. Shelter was regarded as the third indispensable possession.

39. 2 Maccabees dating back to the second century BC focuses on the Maccabean Revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

4 Macc 13:13–15: '[...] let us not fear him who thinks he kills'[40] (Davies & Allison 2004b:206; Luz 2001:101). The differentiation between ψυχὴ [soul/life] and σῶμα [body] points towards a dichotomous anthropology (Keener 1999:326). The implication of Matthew 10:28a is that only the body [σῶμα] would die when killed, while the ψυχὴ [soul/life] continues to exist. From this perspective, human life is not limited to the physical body. The body alone does not encompass the entire human self. The argument proceeds with a chiasmus as 'ψυχὴ' and 'σῶμα' (Mt 10:28b) form a chiasm with the preceding 'σῶμα' and 'ψυχὴ' (Mt 10:28a). According to Verse 28b, both the ψυχὴ [soul/life] and σῶμα [body] can be destroyed in hell [ἐν γεέννῃ], the final place of punishment. However, ἀπολέσαι [destroy] does not specifically imply killing but rather refers to eternal torturing in the place of punishment. The text suggests that God has unlimited power over life and death.

Following his statement that one should be willing to take up one's cross to follow him (Mt 10:38), Jesus elucidates what he means. He speaks of losing and finding one's ψυχὴ [life] within this context of martyrdom (Mt 10:39). This implies that a follower of Jesus must be willing to carry the death instrument in the midst of a mocking mob on the way to his/her bodily torture and execution. Similar statements are found in Mark 8:35–37, Matthew 16:25–26, Luke 9:24 and 17:33. This expression was in its basic form, probably an independent proverbial wisdom saying (Davies & Allison 2004b:673). In the context of the Gospels, this proverb has a Christological connotation because of the expansion 'ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ [καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου]' [because of me {and the gospel}] (Collins 2007:408). The saying is clearly paradoxical with a play of words. At first glance, it seems that Jesus distinguishes between the earthly ψυχή [life] that a martyr loses and the eternal ψυχή [life] that one receives. The phrase can be paraphrased as 'for whoever wants to save his (physical) life will lose (eternal) life; but whoever loses his (physical) life because of me will save it (will gain eternal life)'. However, it seems that there is more to it. When read in the context of Matthew 10:28, it seems that losing one's life implies more than the losing of one's physical life, but the loss of one's life in hell (Luz 2001:116). If this is the case, Jesus does not differentiate between the earthly and eternal ψυχή (life) but refers to a single reality that God grants humans, one's true self. 'True' life is not something that humans can acquire by themselves, but what God grants them even through death. With this double-stranded *mashal,* Jesus states that this life is much more worth than the gain or possessions of the whole world. A follower of Jesus looks beyond this world and the boundary of death towards eschatological life (Davies & Allison 2004b:224).

In Matthew 11:28–30, Jesus criticises the Pharisees' interpretation of the Law and depicts it as an unbearable burden. In contrast, Jesus invites his

40. 4 Maccabees is a philosophical thesis illustrated with examples drawn from 2 Maccabees about the martyrdom of Eleazer and the Maccabeean youths.

followers to take up his yoke that is pleasant as his burden that is easy. Jesus quotes from Jeremiah 6:16 to confirm that by doing this one will find rest for one's ψυχή [life/soul], which refers to one's inner emotional experience (Viljoen 2011b:4).

Matthew 12:18–21 has a long quotation from Isaiah 42:1–4, linking it to the quiet and secret activity of Jesus. However, this quotation is more than a description of the withdrawal of Jesus and his command to silence in Matthew 12:15–16, as it provides a significant picture of the character of Jesus (Viljoen 2019:4). In a statement recalling God's voice from heaven with Jesus' baptism (Mt 3:17), God speaks of Jesus as his παῖς [son] whom he has chosen, the one he loves, the one in whom his ψυχή [soul] delights. This phrase draws back on Isaiah 41:1, 'in whom my "soul" (MTT: "nephesh," LXX: "ψυχή") delights'. This implies his deepest feeling. While the Pharisees are deeply displeased with Jesus, God is deeply pleased with him.

One of the richest Christological statements is found in Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28: 'The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life [ψυχή] as ransom for many'. The statement is paradoxical as 'Son of Man' evokes Daniel 7:13 where 'one like the Son of Man' is a glorious figure who is given universal kingdom (Collins 2007:500). Within the context of the Gospels, this glorious figure humbles himself by giving up his life [ψυχή] as ransom for many. This saying evokes what had happened to the servant Isaiah 53:10b–12 (LXX): '...παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ … αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν, καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη' [his life was handed over to death [...] he has borne the sins of many and was handed over on account of their sins]. As the servant's ψυχή is handed over to death, the Son of Man gives his ψυχή. The implication is that Jesus gives his life (himself) as substitute for the lives of many others. He counteracts the effects of the Fall at the cost of his own death.

Luke 9:56 appears in the Old Latin version of Luke and the Latin version of the Diatessaron, although it does not appear in the most reliable texts. It is most possibly a gloss (Bovon 2013:5). It is therefore not attended to in this investigation.

In Mark 12:30, Matthew 22:37 and Luke 10:27, Jesus responds to the question of a scribe or expert of the Law about the greatest commandment with reference to the 'Shema'. The 'Shema' in the Masoretic Text and the LXX refers to three faculties[41] (with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength)[42]

41. Mark adds a fourth faculty (ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας [with all your mind]), while Matthew 22:37 only mentions three faculties, though the last, 'ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου' [with all your mind], is similar to the fourth faculty in Mark which differs from the third faculty of the *Shema.* Luke 10:27 followed Mark by mentioning all four faculties, but inverts the last two faculties.

42. Interesting enough, Plautus also combined these faculties: 'I'll work my hardest for, and follow up "*corde et animo atque viribus*" [with heart and soul and strengths]' (Captivi 2.3.27).

(Dt 6:5).[43] While the Synoptic Gospels differ in the list of faculties mentioned, they all refer to the ψυχή. With these faculties, Jesus refers to the entire person. Jesus affirms that one cannot love God with some of one's faculties, while neglecting others. In Jewish tradition, each faculty referred to a specific functional part of a human being (Davies & Allison 2004c:241; Gerhardsson 1976:140). When Jesus refers to ψυχῇ [with all your soul/life], he emphasises that one should totally surrender one's life to God. One should be dedicated to God and his commandments even to the point of martyrdom (Viljoen 2015:6).

After the narrator has described Jesus' anguished state in Gethsemane, Jesus' lament is given in direct speech, 'My ψυχή [life] is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death' (Mk 14:34; Mt 26:38). These words remind of a similar refrain found in the Psalms, 'τί περίλυπος εἶ, ἡ ψυχή' [life, why are you overwhelmed with sorrow] (LXX Ps 41:6a, 12; 42:5a) and of the lament, 'ἡ ψυχή μου ἐταράχθη σφόδρα' [my life is extremely disturbed] (Ps 6:4a). Jesus speaks of his innermost being.

In the parable of the rich fool, the fool performs a monologue as he speaks to his ψυχή [soul/life] and invites it to enjoy what life can offer by using a common saying, 'relax, eat, drink and be merry'.[44] This man is only concerned with his self-interest as he wants to spend his life to his own enjoyment without considering others or God. However, that very night his ψυχή [soul/life] was demanded back [ἀπαιτοῦσιν] from him (Lk 12:19–20), seemingly by the angels of death. 'Life' had only been on loan. He does not only lose 'his' life but also all the possessions he has gathered. The warning of the parable boils down to the brevity of life and the inevitability of death. However, there is more to it. The parable reminds that humans are dependent on God for their lives. A human is not the possessor of life, but a steward thereof (Bovon 2013:203). A steward of 'life' is called to use it responsibly in service to others and to the glory of God.

Luke 14:26 forms part of the triple tradition with parallels in Mark 10:29 and Matthew 19:29. In these passages, Jesus deals with what he requires of his disciples. He speaks of what they have to leave behind. The list of what is to be left behind differs between the three Gospels. Luke is unique in mentioning one's wife and own ψυχή [life] in this list, which expresses an even more profound break. Luke's version also shocks with his use of the verb 'μισεῖ' [hate]. This verb probably has a Semitic origin, as Semitic languages often use

43. The combination of 'heart and soul' signifying loving in entirety is found in Jewish writings (Jub 1:15–16; 16:25 and 1 QS 1.2).

44. This saying reminds of the warning of Isaiah against people who were rejoicing during sacrifices while they were supposed to be lamenting: 'But see, there is joy and revelry, slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep, eating of meat and drinking of wine! "Let us eat and drink," you say, "for tomorrow we die!"' (Is 22:13). There are countless parallels of this saying in Greek, Assyrian and Egyptian literature (see Bovon 2013:201).

contrasts to express aspects in comparative degree of preference (e.g. Dt 21:15[45]) (Bovon 2013:386). While Matthew formulates it more mildly in the form of a comparison 'one must prefer Christ to your family', Luke maintains power of the expression by using this emotive opposition. He emphasises the reality of martyrdom because of faithfulness to Jesus. A disciple of Jesus has to βαστάζει [carry] his cross and follow Jesus (Lk 14:27), which even implies crucifixion. The thrust of this saying draws back to Luke 9:23–24, where Jesus stressed the constant sharing of Jesus' suffering in daily life.

Luke 21:19 is set in the context of severe persecution and violence.[46] Because of their commitment to Jesus, his disciples will be threatened even by their family and friends. They will be delivered and led to death (Lk 21:16). In Luke 21:19, Jesus promises ψυχή [life] beyond being killed. In order to have this life, one needs perseverance [ὑπομονή]. Once his disciples have passed this affliction, they will enjoy life.

☐ Summary

Several facets of theological significance can be recognised by the use of ψυχή [life] in the Synoptic Gospels.

When used in a reflective Hebraic way, ψυχή [life] refers to a person's inner being, one's emotional affective faculty. It experiences joy and sorrow. Significantly, even God the Father rejoices with this inner being in his Son and Jesus' innermost being is overwhelmed by sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the song of Mary, her ψυχή is the subject that praises God, and it is one of a human's faculties that has to love the Lord God.

In some contexts, ψυχή [life] is used to refer to physical life. Humans receive life from God as he imparts life in them. Humans depend on God to sustain their lives. Humans are not possessors of these lives, but merely stewards. Humans have to spend their lives responsibly as God can demand their lives back at any time.

Jesus' disciples have to persist in their commitment towards the Lord, even to the point that their bodily existence can be taken from them. Yet, life entails more than this physical dimension. While persecutors can rob followers of Jesus from their bodily existence, they cannot do so with their 'lives'. Death is not stronger than life. Someone who loses his/her bodily existence for the sake of Jesus will gain eternal life of bliss. Yet, the lives of the unrighteous experience eternal torturing in the place of punishment.

45. Deuteronomy 21:15 employs a typical use of a Semitic comparative degree 'If a man has two wives, one of whom he loves and the other one he hates […]'.

46. This passage has indirect parallels in Mark 13:13 and Matthew 24:9b–14.

Besides the physical dimension of life, it also refers to a social reality. Because of social stigmas, humans can be socially dead (lifeless), a state from which Jesus came to save them.

In order for the sake that his disciples could have eternal life of bliss, Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many. He suffered the pangs of death so that his followers can be saved for eternal life.

ἡλικία

In classical Greek and LXX, ἡλικία has the following possible meanings: age, stages of life, especially physical maturity, stature and generation (Scheider 1978:941–942).

In the Synoptic Gospels, ἡλικία is found in four passages as indicated in Table 1.5.

The summary statement about Jesus in Luke 2:52 recalls what is previously said about him that he grew and became strong, he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him (Lk 2:40). Between 'wisdom' [σοφία] and 'grace' [χάρις], 'stature' [ἡλικία] is added.[47] While ἡλικία could refer to his bodily size, it seems that there is more to it as it is mentioned in context of 'wisdom' and 'grace'. Luke's reference to Jesus' growth in ἡλικία, therefore, more likely refers to his growth in esteem, God's favour and human recognition.

In Matthew 6:27 and Luke 12:25, Jesus says that a person's ἡλικία (in this context most likely referring to the length of life) does not depend on the person himself or herself. One's worries and troubles will not change anything in that respect as humans are powerless to lengthen their lives. What he requires are confident faith in God, the Creator and dependence on his providence.

In Luke 19:3, ἡλικία refers to the shortness of stature of Zacchaeus. When Luke refers to a person's physical appearance, it usually points out some defect or limitation (Bovon 2013:597). In this case, ἡλικία probably also refers to the insignificance and low esteem of Zacchaeus in the eyes of people, worsened by the fact that he was a tax collector, also explicitly mentioned by Luke. However, Luke mentions that he was earnestly trying to see Jesus. In Luke 11:9, Jesus declared 'search and you shall find'. Zacchaeus is depicted as one searching for hope and meaning in life. Jesus notices this insignificant man and instructs him to hurry down, an invitation that suggests a divine intention. Jesus has to stay in his house which is a statement that carries a holy connotation.

47. In its turn, both these verses recall what was said about the boy Samuel who 'continued to grow in stature and in favour with the Lord and with men' (1 Sm 2:26).

TABLE 1.5: ἡλικία in the Synoptic Gospels.

Gospel	Synoptic Gospel	Translated
Luke 2:52	Καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτεν ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ χάριτι παρὰ Θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις.	And Jesus grew in wisdom and *stature* and in favour with God and man.
Matthew 6:27	τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πῆχυν ἕνα;	But who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his '*lifespan*'?
Luke 12:25	τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ προσθεῖναι πῆχυν;	But who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his '*lifespan*'?
Luke 19:3	καὶ ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου, ὅτι τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς ἦν.	He wanted to see who Jesus was, and he could not see over the crowd, because his *stature* was small.

Summary

When speaking of how the ἡλικία of the boy Jesus developed, Luke is sure to emphasise his growth in greatness and esteem. In contrast to Jesus' stature, a tax collector with an insignificant stature, despised by many, is recognised by Jesus and receives hope and meaning to his life. Jesus furthermore teaches that all humans are powerless by themselves to maintain their lives. They have to trust God for his provision and care.

Theological reflection

Based on the preceding study of the meanings of 'life' words within their specific contexts, some theological conclusions are drawn in terms of different categories of life in the Synoptic Gospels. It should be recognised that this reflection is not exhaustive as the concept of life is expressed even wider than what word studies can reveal.

Divine life

Living God and his inner affective faculty

Matthew uses the expression 'living God' twice. In his confession on behalf of the disciples, Peter declares Jesus to be the Son of the 'living God', and the high priest charges Jesus to take an oath by the 'living God'. It seems that the expression 'living God' became especially important in missionary proclamation. The God of Israel has life in himself and gives life to humans. He is totally different from dead gentile idols. He is a real God who acts in history and cares for his people.

While the Pharisees are deeply displeased with Jesus, God is deeply pleased with him. God speaks of him as his son whom he has chosen, the one he loves and the one in whom his inner being delights. This pleasure of God is stated in terms of the emotional and affective faculty with God.

Jesus the 'Living One'

Life overwhelmed with sorrow

Jesus expresses his anguished state in Gethsemane. His innermost being is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. This speaks of the innermost feelings of Jesus as a human being. He experienced extreme sorrow as he took all the infirmities of his people upon him.

Life as a ransom

In one of the richest Christological statements, Jesus declares that he as 'Son of Man' came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. This statement is paradoxical as 'Son of Man' evokes Daniel 7:13 where 'one like the Son of Man' is a glorious figure who is given a universal kingdom. Yet, Jesus as a glorious figure humbles himself by giving up his life as a ransom for many so that they can live. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, salvation becomes possible for human beings. His resurrection becomes prototypical for those who know him as their saviour.

The living one

In the post-resurrection scene, Jesus is called 'the living one'. His resurrection constitutes a new order of life as an irrefutable demonstration of the end of death. The participle 'The Living One' is meant as a title. Jesus is the Son of this living God. Yet, he died but was raised to eschatological glory and thus received this glorious title. He is alive in an eschatological sense. This corresponds with his vocabulary of glory. 'The Living One' is the one who enters into glory.

Human life

Human life as a gift of God

Human life is the direct result of God breathing his gift of life into a person which makes humans 'ensouled' beings.

Humans who have received the gift of life should trust God to sustain their lives. They are warned to be not excessively concerned about their physical existence, as they should trust God to care for food and clothing. The Kingdom of God should be a more important concern for them.

Humans cannot live on bread alone, as they also need God's word. Every human being should acknowledge that it is God who sustains life with bread and his word.

Humans do not possess their own lives, because they are merely stewards thereof. As stewards of their lives, they must avoid greed and must think of the need of others. They are accountable to God for how they spend their lives, as he is the actual possessor of all life. He can demand a person's life back at any time.

Material sustenance is needed to live. While wealthy people might be willing to offer a part of their wealth, a small offering of a poor person can imply that such person offers his/her whole life. Some poor people struggle to sustain their lives as they need to spend all they have just to survive.

Life of two aeons

Life is viewed as consisting of two aeons. The first is temporal and the second is eternal. During the temporal aeon, people should live with the expectation of the eschatological eternal aeon.

Life in 'this' aeon

Life in 'this aeon' can be spent in two ways, metaphorically described as walking on one of two ways. The one is wide and easy to follow, and the other is narrow with many difficulties. These ways lead towards opposite destinations, the one to eschatological destruction and the other to eschatological life. Following the narrow road implies commitment and effort, and only a few follow this road. On the other hand, the way leading to destruction is attractive and is followed by many.

Living on the 'broad way'

Living on the 'broad way' is depicted in several scenes.

In the parable of the prodigal son, 'wasteful living' is depicted as squandering the inheritance that he received from his father. In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus warns against a life where one seeks life in the abundance of possessions where a person is only concerned with self-interest without considering God or fellow people. In the parable of the sower, Jesus warns against the pleasures of life that can be devastating for one's life. In a parabolic sense referring to getting rid of limbs, he instructs his hearers to get rid of anything that can stop them from entering eternal life.

Living on the 'narrow road'

Life is more than a bodily or physical existence. Jesus states that while persecutors may rob his followers of their bodily existence, they cannot rob

them of their 'lives'. Someone who loses his or her bodily existence for the sake of Jesus will gain eternal blissful life.

Followers of Jesus should expect to experience rejection, estrangement and all different forms of persecution. However, that what one has to leave behind 'now in this life' for the sake of Jesus is worth much less than which one will receive 'in the life to come'.

While on the narrow road, a person is tempted to believe that life should be measured by the abundance of possessions. The mistaken conviction is that the value of someone's life depends on one's possessions and the pleasures they provide. Life is more than enjoying the pleasures of abundance. Wealth does not guarantee the persistence of one's life as it can be taken away from a person at any time. Jesus warns that a person who seeks material life in abundance will lose it, in contrast to one who is rich towards God. Being rich towards God guarantees life instead.

A wrong interpretation of the Law can become an unbearable burden to one's life. One should instead come to Jesus to take up his yoke that is pleasant and easy. By doing this, one will find inner rest for one's life.

When praising and expressing one's love towards God, it should not be done in a superficial and unaffected manner. True worship affects one's inner emotional being.

Redemption and restoration of 'life'

Conversion can be defined returning from death to life. A converted person is like one who was dead but became alive again, and one that was lost and is found. It pertains to the passage from death to life and from perdition to salvation.

Life in the 'aeon to come'

Life to come for the unrighteous

The destination of unrighteous persons in the aeon to come is referred to as hell, a place of eternal punishment with its 'unquenchable fire'.

Life to come for the righteous

The righteous people owe their life of aeonian bliss to Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom to them. Through his death and resurrection, salvation became possible for human beings.

The idea that 'aeonian' life is a gift from God does not annihilate human responsibility. God expects from those he loves earnest reciprocity and

undivided loyalty. Whatever would hinder a person to show this undivided love must be left behind.

Aeonian life entails the full manifestation of God's kingdom, the reign of God that is to come. This implies that a human can fully participate in the life to come in God's reign. God's kingdom ensures well-being and life, the great enemy of death.

Conclusion

According to the Synoptic Gospels, God lives eternally and is the source of life. He is the one who can make alive and can kill. Life belongs to God. Death is not a natural phenomenon, but a punishment for a life badly lived. Humans are not supposed to live their lives selfishly, as they need to care for the lives of others and honour God with their lives. People who live badly can be regarded as dead even though they might possess natural vitality. Salvation implies to be freed from anything that hampers the development of life, whether it is sin, sickness or death. The full realisation of life happens after the physical death. For earthly humans, this is something to hope for, but in some degree, they experience life already here in this time. Future life is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ who gave his life as a ransom. This future and eternal life presupposes the resurrection of Jesus which presupposes the death of Jesus. With his death and resurrection, he overturned the effects of the Fall, and the worst of these effects is death itself. The death and resurrection of Jesus reflect the accomplishment of God's will and the achievement of the goal of salvation history. His death and resurrection constitute the heart of the Gospel. His resurrection to immortality is foundational in the coming of the everlasting Kingdom of God. God who created all that exists will transform all that exists into a new creation where there would not be death anymore. Eschatological life is a life without suffering and corruption and will consist in glory. This is the absolute contrast of a life of eschatological perdition that awaits the ungodly.

Chapter 2

Life in the Fourth Gospel and the letters of John

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Introduction

One of the striking features of the Fourth Gospel, one that distinguishes it from the other three Gospels, is its explicit and repeated reference to 'life'. Various scholarly studies have been made about the use of 'life' in John, mostly in combination with 'light', which is an equally frequent topic in the Gospel (cf. Brinton 1971; Köstenberger 2009; Suggit 1993). As the combination of 'life' and 'light' is prominent especially in John 1:1–14, many of these studies are focused on the prologue only (e.g. Culpepper 2016; Mazanga 2007). Most other researchers focus on the concept of 'light' as the main topic and only occasionally make reference to 'life' (e.g. Painter 2008:27–28; Thompson 2016:282–283).

In this chapter, the focus is on the concept of 'life' in the Johannine writings, with a special view to the theological (revelation-historical) significance of the concept. The investigation sets out with a survey of the concept 'life' as conveyed by Greek words in the text of John's Gospel. This is followed by a

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similar survey of his epistles. A brief semantic analysis of the relevant Greek words is made, including a brief overview of the socio-historical background of the concept. Thereupon, a cursory exegetical study of some relevant passages from the Gospel and letters is done. Finally, the place and meaning of 'life' in John are described within the theological context of the entire Scripture.

Survey of the use of 'life' words in John's Gospel

In the Fourth Gospel, the concept of 'life' is conveyed by the words ζωή (ζάω) and ψυχή (ψυχέω). However, the word βίος (βιόω), which is also used in the New Testament in reference to 'life', is not used in the Fourth Gospel (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:261–263).

Ψυχή

The word ψυχή occurs seven times in the Gospel of John in reference to life. A brief survey leads to the following. In three passages, it refers to Jesus' earthly life which he lays down for the believers: 'The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' [ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν] (Jn 10:11, 15, 17).

There are four references to human earthly life:

- 'Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life' [ὁ φιλῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολλύει αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ μισῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον φυλάξει αὐτήν] (Jn 12:25).
- Peter: 'I will lay down my life for you' [τὴν ψυχήν μου ὑπὲρ σοῦ θήσω] (Jn 13:37,38; 15:13).

By way of componential analysis, it becomes clear that John does not employ the word ψυχή in the sense of inner feelings, the inner self or the person as often in the New Testament (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:106, 321) but in reference to a specific category of life, viz. physical, earthly life (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:261–263). This use of ψυχή proves to be the case in all occurrences in John's Gospel (cf. the seven passages listed above). As such, it is used within the same semantic subdomain as the word ζωή. The difference between ψυχή and ζωή in the Fourth Gospel is clearly demonstrated in John 12:25, where it is said that we should not focus on our ψυχή but much rather on the ζωή αἰώνιος. As elsewhere in the Gospel, ψυχή in this passage speaks of the physical or earthly life of mortals and is contrasted to a life that goes beyond death and lasts forever, which is referred to as ζωή.

Ζωή

The word ζωή occurs 40 times in the Gospel of John, of which 26 times without any grammatical qualification, simply referring to '(the) life' (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:261–263). This use of ζωή entails the following:

- Life is in Christ [ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν] (Jn 1:4; twice).
- As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself [ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ἔδωκεν ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ] (Jn 5:26; twice).
- Jesus is the way and the truth and the life [Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή] (Jn 14:6).
- Jesus is the resurrection and the life [Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή] (Jn 11:25–26; three times).
- To see life [ὁ δὲ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ οὐκ ὄψεται ζωήν] (Jn 3:36).
- To have life [ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς] (Jn 5:40; 8:12; 10:10; 20:31).
- To give life [ζωὴν διδοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ] (Jn 6:33,51,53; 13:37,38; 15:13).
- The words that I give are life [τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωή ἐστιν] (Jn 6:63).
- The light of life [ἕξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς] (Jn 1:4; 8:12).
- To cross over from death to life [μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωήν] (Jn 5:24).
- Resurrection of life [ἐκπορεύσονται οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς, οἱ δὲ τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως] (Jn 5:29).
- The bread of life [ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς] (Jn 6:35, 48).

When contemplating ζωή within the context of each of the above verses, it seems that, in contrast to ψυχή, it does not refer to a physical earthly life, but to life in a more spiritual sense. By way of cursory synopsis, life [ζωή] or the life [ἡ ζωή] in these verses seem to involve the following:

- Jesus Christ received life from the Father and therefore has life (Jn 5:26).
- Jesus not only has life, but he is life itself (Jn 3:29; 11:25; 14:6).
- Having life and being life itself, Jesus gives life to man (Jn 6:33,51,53; 13:37,38; 15:13).
- So, those who receive life from Jesus truly have life (Jn 5:40; 8:12; 10:10; 20:31).

How does Jesus give life to man?:

- By the *Word of life* that he brings to the world. This word of life, or life-giving word, is God's revelation, which gives life through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit (Jn 6:63).
- Being life itself (Jn 3:29), Jesus is also the *light* of man (Jn 1:4), so that whoever follows him will *see* life (Jn 3:36).

- It is not only a matter of following Jesus; man has to 'eat' Jesus Christ as the bread of life (Jn 6:35, 48), which in general terms speaks of becoming *united with him* and his graceful gifts.

What are the consequences of receiving life from Jesus?:

- *Resurrection from the dead*: Jesus is the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25), and with him, all believers will also cross over *from death to life* (Jn 5:24). So, life is the opposite of death.
- *All will be resurrected*: *the believers to enter life*, the unbelievers to enter judgement and condemnation (Jn 5:29). So, ζωή will be the opposite of condemnation (cf. Richardson 1959:95).

Ζωή αἰώνιος

The phrase ζωή αἰώνιος occurs 14 times in the Fourth Gospel, in all instances referring to 'eternal life' or 'life everlasting':

- That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life [ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον] (Jn 3:15, 16; 3:36; 5:24, 29; 6:40, 47, 54).
- Jesus gives water that will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life [ἁλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον] (Jn 4:14).
- The reaper harvests a crop for eternal life [συνάγει καρπὸν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον] (Jn 4:36).
- Work for food that endures to eternal life [τὴν βρῶσιν τὴν μένουσαν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον] (Jn 6:27).
- Jesus has the words of eternal life [ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις] (Jn 6:68).
- Jesus gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish [δίδωμι αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον] (Jn 10:28).
- Anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life [ὁ μισῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον φυλάξει αὐτήν] (Jn 12:25).

As in the case of ζωή, eternal life [ζωή αἰώνιος] is something believers receive from Jesus (Jn 10:28) so that they have it or possess it (Jn 3:15). The way by which believers receive eternal life from Jesus is by the words of eternal life [ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου] that he speaks (Jn 6:68). In all remaining passages, the phrase ζωή αἰώνιος is used mainly in the prepositional phrase εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ['to eternal life'], in some cases bearing a temporal meaning (Jn 6:27; 12:25; cf. Bouma n.d.a:169; Keener 2003:602), and in all other cases expressing purpose (Jn 4:14, 36; possibly also Jn 12:25, cf. Bouma n.d.b:60; Keener 2003:626).

Ζάω

The verb ζάω occurs 14 times in the Fourth Gospel, as follows:

- Jesus: Your son is alive [ὁ υἱός σου ζῇ] (Jn 4:50,51,53).

- Jesus: The living Father sent me and I live because of the Father [κἀγὼ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα] (Jn 6:57).
- Jesus: Because I live, you also will live [ὅτι ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ζήσετε] (Jn 14:19; twice).
- The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live [τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσουσιν] (Jn 5:25).
- Whoever eats this bread will live forever [ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον ζήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα] (Jn 6:51, 58).
- Jesus: The one who feeds on me will live because of me [ὁ τρώγων με κἀκεῖνος ζήσει δι' ἐμέ] (Jn 6:57).
- Whoever lives by believing in Jesus will never die [ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ κἂν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ζῶν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα] (Jn 11:26; twice).
- The one who believes in Jesus will live, even though they die [ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ κἂν ἀποθάνῃ ζήσεται] (Jn 11:25, 26).

In John 4:50, 51 and 53, the verb ζάω is used in reference to the physical life of the child of the royal official, that is, within the same semantic field as ψυχή (Louw & Nida 1988:261–262). In all other cases in the Gospel, ζάω seems to have a spiritual sense. In John 6:57, similar to ζωή in John 5:26, ζάω speaks of the life of the Son, who lives through the Father. In all remaining passages, it speaks of the spiritual life or eternal life that believers have through Jesus. They receive this life by believing in Jesus (Jn 11:25, 26), having heard his voice (Jn 5:25; the Word of life, Jn 5:25). To accept the Word of life in faith is to be united with him, which is, metaphorically speaking, to eat him as the bread of life (Jn 6:51, 57, 58; cf. ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς in Jn 6:35, 48). John employs the verb ζάω mostly in the future tense [ζήσει and ζήσεται]. Those who are in Jesus will not die but will live with Christ forever (Jn 6:51, 57, 58; 11:25, 26). So, it seems that ζάω is used by John mainly in reference to eternal life.

Survey of the use of 'life' words in John's epistles

In John's first epistle, four different 'life' words (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:261–263, 506) are used: ζωή occurs 13 times, ζάω is used once; ψυχή is used twice, and βίος is also used twice. In 2 and 3 John, no reference to life in any sense of the word is found. Therefore, the study of 'life' in John's epistles involves only 1 John.

Βίος

In the New Testament, the word βίος is generally used in reference to the daily human life or existence (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:506). In some cases, βίος may also be understood as a person's possessions, property or livelihood (Louw &

Nida 1988:560). The latter sense is probably what John had in mind with ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου in 1 John 2:16 ('the pride of life – that is, in our achievements and possessions – which comes not from the Father but from the world', *New Living Translation*); also in 1 John 3:17, where he writes ὃς δ' ἂν ἔχῃ τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου [if anyone has the world's goods/possessions]. So, it seems that the word βίος in 1 John does not relate directly to the concept of life.

Ψυχή

Similar to the Fourth Gospel, ψυχή is used in 1 John exclusively in reference to our physical, earthly life (cf. Louw & Nida 1988:261–263). Both instances of ψυχή in the epistle are found in the same verse, viz. 1 John 3:16, where John writes that Jesus laid down his life for us and that we should likewise be willing to lay down our lives for others. The Greek text reads: 'ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν [...] ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι'. Of course, the life that Jesus laid down when he died on the cross is of a much higher value than that of any human being, for he was the Son of God who became flesh and dwelled amongst us in this world. However, by coming in the flesh, he was humbled to nothing more than the physical, earthly life of a human. Therefore, in 1 John 3:16, the life that Jesus laid down for us is mentioned in parallel to our human life that we should be willing to lay down. So, both instances of ψυχή in the verse should be understood as references to the physical, earthly existence. As such, it should be distinguished from the life that goes beyond death and lasts forever, which is referred to by John as ζωή (Louw & Nida 1988:261–262).

Ζωή

The word ζωή occurs 13 times in the Gospel of John, of which seven times without any grammatical qualification, that is, '(the) life'. As in the Gospel, 1 John refers to (the) life in the following contexts:

- *God gives life*: 1 John 5:16 [δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν] (c*f.* 'to give life', in Jn 6:33,51,53; 13:37,38; 15:13).
- *Life is in the Son*: 1 John 5:11 [αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν] (cf. 'life is in Christ', Jn 1:4).
- *To have life (by having the Son)*: 1 John 5:12 [ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωήν]; also 1 John 3:15 (cf. 'to have life', in Jn 5:40; 8:12; 10:10; 20:31).
- *To see life (in Jesus as the Word of life)*: 1 John 1:1 [ὃ ἑωράκαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα [...] περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς] (cf. 'to see life', in Jn 3:36).
- *The (word of) life is revealed (in the Son)*: 1 John 1:1–2 [περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς – καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη] (cf. 'The Word of life that Jesus brings to the world', in Jn 6:63).

Wuest (1980:97) regarded the phrase 'word of life' in John 1:1 as an indication that Jesus is the personification of life and that the apostles had seen The

Word of life when they saw Jesus. According to Findlay (2006:83), the 'word of life' should rather be taken as a mere synonym to 'the gospel', similar to John 6:68. It should be noted, however, that in John 6:68 the phrase ῥήματα ζωῆς is used, whereas 1 John 1:1 speaks of λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, which may indeed be regarded as a personal title of the Son. Wuest (1980:97) pointed out that the almost climactical repetition 'The Word of Life [...] The Life [...] The Eternal Life' makes it clear that this λόγος τῆς ζως in 1 John 1:1 points to the Son himself.

ζωὴ αἰώνιος

In 1 John, the phrase ζωὴ αἰώνιος occurs six times. In the prologue of the epistle (1 Jn 1:1–4), it is already made clear that John by ζωὴ αἰώνιος does not refer to a life different from what he calls ζωή, but only qualifies, or at most defines, the nature of 'the life' just mentioned. The life he speaks of is eternal, everlasting, of a higher quality than the ψυχή. In the rest of epistle, ζωὴ αἰώνιος is used in the following contexts:

- *To see (Jesus as) the eternal life*: 1 John 1:1–2 [ἑωράκαμεν {...} τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον] (cf. 'to see life', in John 3:36).
- *God promised us eternal life*: 1 John 2:25 [ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον].
- *God gave us eternal life*: 1 John 5:11 [ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεός] (cf. 'to give life', in Jn 6:33,51,53; 13:37,38; 15:13).
- *To have eternal life*: 1 John 5:13 [ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον] (cf. 'to have life', in Jn 5:40; 8:12; 10:10; 20:31).
- *Jesus is the true God and eternal life*: 1 John 5:20 [οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος] (cf. 'Jesus is the way and the truth and the life', in Jn 14:6).
- *To proclaim the eternal life*: 1 John 1:2 [ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον].

In the letter-opening, John emphasises that the Word of life was manifested 'as the life eternal which existed with the Father'. When it is defined as 'that which was from the beginning', it thereby receives the same limitless nature of eternity as in the Gospel's prologue, which takes us even beyond the creation of all things (cf. Findlay 2006:85). The phrase 'eternal life' binds the letter together in a type of *inclusio* pattern:

- 1 John 1:1–2 – The Word of life is seen and proclaimed as *the eternal life.*
- 1 John 5:20 – Jesus Christ is known and confessed as the true God and *eternal life*.

This feature of the letter, combined with the letter's purpose as stated in John 5:13 ('I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life'), suggests that 'assurance of eternal life' may be regarded as a very central theme of 1 John (cf. Bruce 1970:23).

Ζάω

The verb ζάω occurs only once in 1 John 4:9: 'God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him' [ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ]. Obviously, this verse is the brief version of the well-known Gospel verse John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'. As such, the meaning of the verb 'live' [ζάειν/ζᾶν], or at least 'live through Him' [ζάειν/ζᾶν δι' αὐτοῦ] in 1 John is similar to 'having eternal life' [ἔχειν τὴν ζωήν τὴν αἰώνιον]. This understanding is supported by the fact that in 1 John 5:12–13 'having the Son' is equalled to 'having (eternal) life': 'Whoever has the Son has life [...] so that you may know that you have eternal life' [ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωήν [...] ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον].

Semantic and socio-historic analysis

Life in the Greco-Roman world

In Classical Greek literature, ζωή was regarded as a physical vitality of all things, including the entire cosmos. The Greeks regarded life as a mere natural phenomenon that belongs to physical reality, just as its counterpart, death. Homer regarded real life as merely bodily life, and after this earthly life, there is nothing that can properly be called 'life' at all. At death, the soul [ψυχή] simply faded away to a situation of no existence (Bolt 1998:72–73). Only the gods were thought to have immortal life, but they were not regarded as part of the cosmos. Human ζωή, on the other hand, was regarded by the Greeks and Romans as something that belongs to this world and has no eschatological side to it (Bultmann 1985a:290).

In Hellenistic times, the Classical view of ζωή was continued. To Stoics, however, being alive [ζώον] was regarded as of less importance to mankind than virtue. So, Stoicism made a distinction between life and true life. The attainment of virtue gave meaning and fulfilment to human life. In Neo-Platonism, the anthropological dualism of Plato was continued. Human life was regarded as bodily existence [ζωή] on the one hand and mind [νούς] and the soul [ψυχή] on the other hand. Of these, the ζωή was of a lower rung on the ladder of totality (Bultmann 1985a:291). Thus, ζωή as seen in the Greco-Roman world of both Classical and Hellenistic times belonged to a lower order of existence which pertains simply to physical reality. These views are far removed from the eternal ζωή that the New Testament and the Johannine writings for that matter give witness to.

Life in intertestamental literature of the Near East

To what extent did John's use of the concept 'life' depend on already existing Near Eastern literature? Early writings from Mesopotamia, Babylon and Assyria

provide enough material to look in that direction for a possible *Vorlage* of John's concept of 'life'. However, investigations thereof reveal that the differences between these writings and John are far too numerous for such a link to be made. The most important difference between Near Eastern literature and John is that in those early writings, there was no room for the idea of eternal life. To the Babylonian mind, man was created mortal and his life ended in death.

A fine illustration of this morbid view of life and death is found in the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh (dated 2600 BC). When confronted with the fact of death, Gilgamesh describes the underworld as 'the house which none leave who have entered it, on the road from which there is no way back' (Yamauchi 1998:34). Even the latest Babylonian and Assyrian records reveal nothing of a resurrection of the body into immortality.

In contrast to the Babylonians, the view that man is destined not for death but for the resurrection was alive amongst the Hebrews. These differences 'set the eschatology of the Mesopotamians and that of the Hebrews as far apart as the East is from the West' (Wallis 1980:927–928).

Some scholars attempted to draw a line between the concept of life in John to that of Philo (cf. Dodd 1968:33; cf. Mazanga 2007:19), based on apparent similarities. In John 4:10, 14, Jesus speaks of living water; Philo also uses water as symbol of virtue and life (Dodd 1968:56; cf. Mazanga 2007:20). This similarity, however, is only superficial. In the Fourth Gospel, life is always connected to Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and life. Without Christ, you are without life, and to believe in him is to have life (Mazanga 2007:20). Philo, however, upheld the Stoic idea of true life that is found in virtue – and also in knowledge, he added from his Gnostic sentiments. His Gnostic views also included that Philo believed that 'life in the body is bad and a hindrance to the soul, so that true life is apart from the body and will culminate in life after death' (Bultmann 1985b:293).

Regarding the possible influence of Gnosticism at large, the conclusion of Kilpatrick (1957) was maintained by most scholars of the late 20th century:

> We can discard the Hermetica with the Mandaen texts and other evidences of Gnosticism. They constitute no significant part of the background of the Gospel; they do not provide the key to its interpretation. (p. 43)

The roots of John's understanding of life should rather be sought in the Old Testament, as is evident from the numerous Old Testament quotations and allusions in the Fourth Gospel (cf. Mazanga 2007:28–33).

Life in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, life [חַיִּים] is firstly understood as physical life, that is, life as created in the beginning (e.g. Gn 1:20; 2:7). Human life, as portrayed in the

Old Testament, is more than mere existence. From the beginning, it was meant to be quality life, which is made possible by obeying God's commands and by possessing wisdom (Dt 5:33; Pr 4:22). Physical life was not meant as an end in itself. Man was created for never-ending life, wherefore death was something unnatural. So, the Old Testament prophets Ezekiel and Daniel clearly set forth a doctrine of a resurrection of the flesh (e.g. Ezk 37; Dn 12; cf. Wallis 1980:927–928). Eventually in some Old Testament passages, life refers to eternal life that follows after death (e.g. Is 26:19) (cf. Mazanga 2007:55).

Life itself comes from God, who at the creation breathed the breath of life into man's nostrils (Gn 2:7). Although life was meant to last forever, it has been disrupted at the fall, so that because of human sin life became bitter (Gn 3:16–18) and was also shortened (Gn 6:3).

The tree of life (Gn 3:22) is a sign of eternal life that man was destined for but was forfeited by his fall into sin. The most important aspect of life, however, is that it involves an actual relation to God. God controls the names of those written in the book of life (Ex 32:32), and he 'determines the preservation or loss of life by the response to his word' (Von Rad 1985:291). In the prophets, the call for repentance is accompanied by the promise of life. This promised life is more than the enjoyment of blessings; it is to be in fellowship with God. Life of fellowship with God is a gift that God gives by grace and can only be had by faith (Hab 2:4). It is a glorious and never-ending fellowship that follows after death for those who lived clinging in faith to the saving God (cf. Von Rad 1985:291).

Life in intertestamental literature and Palestinian Judaism

The Old Testament view of life was continued in the intertestamental literature and Palestinian Judaism. In the writings of Enoch, Sirach and Baruch, ζωή is used in reference to either physical life on earth or life after death. In either case, the quality of life was determined by whether you are with God or separated from God. Away from God, earthly life was accompanied by distress, unhappiness, disasters and poor health. A life with God, however, brought success, prosperity, good health and salvation from God. After this life, those who on earth lived with God will live eternally with God, but those who lived apart from God will die, which is eternal separation from God (Bar 4:1). A life with God was linked to the Torah. Sirach 45:5 speaks of the 'law of life', which means that those who willingly adhere to the teaching of the law have for themselves eternal life (cf. Bultmann 1985b:293; Mazanga 2007:56).

As in the Old Testament, Palestinian Judaism believed that human physical life inevitably ends in death. However, Judaism did not understand death to be the permanent end to life. As a matter of fact, in the centuries between the

Old and the New Testaments in Jewish circles, there was a growing emphasis on the resurrection of the dead. Although the Sadducees rejected the idea of a resurrection (Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18), the Pharisees were in strong support of it (Ac 23:6–8; 24:14–15). The Pharisees even held that those who rejected the resurrection could not enter the world to come (Yamauchi 1998:46–47).

In sum, Palestinian Judaism, especially in circles such as the Pharisees, believed that the righteous after death will be resurrected by God and restored to eternal life under his rule, permanently free from pain, sickness or death. It even held the belief of a Messiah that is to come and that he will bring the dead back to life. Palestinian Judaism, as can be seen in the intertestamental literature and in the Qumran documents, seems to have depended on the Old Testament for its understanding of life. By and large, in the Old Testament and in the intertestamental literature, life was understood as existence with God under his rule in this world and also after death (cf. Mazanga 2007:58–61). Against this Jewish background, the concept of life in the Johannine writings needs to be studied.

Some exegetical considerations

In the Gospel of John, there are two passages where Jesus speaks at length on the topic of life, viz. John 5:19–30 and John 6:48–58. In John's first epistle, there is also one passage that calls for special attention, viz. 1 John 5:11–13. This passage is clustered with 'life' words and is significant because it not only summarises the letter's message of life but also defines the purpose of the letter in a nutshell (Findlay 2006:398). Accordingly, John 5:19–30, John 6:48–58 and 1 John 5:11–13 are explored below by way of cursory exegetical remarks, in order to get a clearer picture of John's message of 'life'.

John 5:19–30

This passage reports Jesus' answer to the Jews in their dispute following the healing of the paralysed man at Bethesda on the Sabbath. In these verses, Jesus uses no less than nine 'life' words spread evenly throughout the pericope. The first of these, ζῳοποιεῖ (twice in Jn 5:21), seems to set the topic for the pericope: The Father sent the Son to make alive. One of the features of the pericope is the link it sets between 'giving life' and 'bringing judgement'. It is structured in such a way that the argument is presented in a typical Johannine thought pattern, moving from 'life' to 'authority' to 'judgement' three times, each time on a deeper level.

The way in which thoughts in the pericope develop in a continuing spiral pattern somehow reminds of a melody played on the bagpipes. One note is being played throughout, while the others are added as the melody moves on. The basic thought, which is constantly repeated throughout the pericope,

is the fact that Jesus acts on the authority he received from the Father (vv. 19, 23, 27, 30). This repetition supports Jesus' answer to the objection about working on the Sabbath. In Verse 17, he says: 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working'. He thereby stresses the fact that he is working with and on authority of the Father.

Then, while continuing the idea of his authority, Jesus in the rest of the pericope alternately adds the ideas of life and judgement (vv. 22, 24, 27, 30). The life and the judgement that the Son brings are both based on the authority that he received from the Father. Finally, on the day of judgement, the believers will receive eternal life, whereas the unbelievers will be condemned to death.

Another important feature of this pericope is its closely knit presentation of the concepts of life, faith and hearing the word. In Verse 24, Jesus says: 'Whoever *hears my word* and *believes* him who sent me *has eternal life*' (cf. also v. 25). Life belongs to those who believe in the Lord, and they believe on hearing his word. Thus is described the process by which the Son 'gives life to whom he is pleased to give it' (v. 21). He sends his word so that those who are chosen for grace ('in whom he is pleased') will hear, and on hearing, they might believe; and to those who believe, he will eventually give life (vv. 21,24,29). This is what Dodd (1968:318–332) refers to as 'the life-giving word'.

John 6:48–58

The pericope John 6:47–59 is the final part of a rabbinic debate, which sets off in John 6:30 (cf. Keener 2003:679) and follows on Jesus' teaching to the crowd (Jn 6:22–46). After he explained to them that the manna in the desert actually points towards the true bread from heaven (Jn 6:30–31), they asked him to give them this bread. Thereupon, Jesus declared: 'I am the bread of life' (Jn 6:35). This is one of the 'I am'-sayings in the Gospel, and in John 6:48–58, it combines with other 'life' words to become the dominant theme of the pericope.

'I am the bread of life' in Verse 48 almost serves as a heading to the passage. It is repeated with a slight variation in Verse 58, as an embracement of the pericope in an *inclusio*. At the beginning of the pericope (vv. 49–51) and again at its end (v. 58), the manna in the wilderness is compared to Jesus as the bread from heaven, each time in an a-b-c-parallelism. This comparison, in the familiar Johannine style of spiral-like repetitions, revisits the comparison that Jesus had made earlier on in Verses 31–41.

In the central section of the pericope (Jn 6:51–57), Jesus explains what he means by saying that he is the bread of life. In order to do so, he changes the metaphor, from Verse 51 and further on: You have to eat this bread, and this bread is my flesh. This new metaphor was even more difficult for the crowd to understand. The Jews probably took these words as reference to cannibalism,

so that they asked: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' What they did not understand is that Jesus has shifted the focus of the comparison from the manna and the forefathers in the wilderness to the Passover lamb that they ate in Egypt. So, eating his flesh and drinking his blood should not be understood literally but should be taken as part of the paschal imagery (Keener 2003:690). Jesus crucified was the true Passover Lamb who was slaughtered and whose blood was shed so that those who eat his flesh and drink his blood may be saved from condemnation and have true life (Dodd 1968:333). So, how does one eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood? You partake in his flesh and blood by embracing his death through faith and the Spirit (Jn 6:27–29, 35, 63) as salvation from the slavery of our sins (cf. Keener 2003:690).

In John 6, Verses 53–56, the consequences of partaking in Jesus' flesh and blood are explained. This is done by three almost parallel phrases:

- Verse 53: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no *life in you*.
- Verse 54: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood *has eternal life*, and I will raise them up at the last day.
- Verse 56: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood *remains in me*, *and I in them*.

To rephrase, the consequences are the following: (1) that you have life in you (in this world); (2) that you will be raised up in the last day and have eternal life; and (3) that you will be one with Jesus Christ.

Being one with Christ has more than one meaning. Firstly, it means that the disciples share in Christ's righteousness. Thereby, the life that believers receive from Christ in the here and now world is defined. This life is also explained in the metaphor of the vine and its branches (Jn 15:1–8). In John 15:3–4, Jesus teaches that because he is in his disciples they are already clean [καθαροί], meaning that in Christ they are cleansed of sin, their hearts are renewed and they are set aside in Christ for a lifelong service to the Lord (Bouma n.d.b:99). It also means that with Christ in them, they share in his righteousness, that is, his complete obedience to the Father (Dodd 1968:411–412). 'In John 6:57, Jesus' dependence on the Father for life (Jn 5:26) becomes the model for disciples' dependence on him' (Keener 2003:691). All of these have to be considered when defining the life that believers receive from Jesus Christ while still in this world.

Secondly, the consequence of being one with Christ is the ability to persevere. Jesus teaches the disciples in John 15:

> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (v. 4)

This part of the metaphor speaks of perseverance (Keener 2003:691). From the disciples' union with Christ, they draw life-giving and fruit-bearing sap

as branches from a vine (Jn 15:4–6). The fruit that is required from Jesus' disciples, and the need for bearing more fruit (v. 2), refers to constant growth in faith, holiness and obedience to the Lord (Bouma n.d.b:99–100). So, the life that believers in this world receive from Christ is a life of perseverance.

Finally, being one with Christ means to live a life that is to the glory of the Father. A fruit-bearing life in itself is to the glory of the Father (Jn 15:8). In the prayer of Jesus in John 17, we hear that the believers' union with Christ not only leads to the Father being glorified but also leads to a life of glory for believers themselves. Jesus speaks to the Father: 'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one' (Jn 17:22). The glory that they receive is not the eternal glory of God, because only Christ shares in this glory. The glory they receive is the glory of the Mediator (cf. Bouma n.d.b:143), that is, the glory of the Son of God who became flesh, in whom the glory of the Father is revealed (Jn 1:14). By his sacrifice on the cross, the Mediator will grant us the grace to enter freely to the glorious presence of God on the last day (cf. Heb 10:19, 20). Thus, union with Christ, by which believers share in his righteousness, not only leads to a life to the glory of the Father but also leads to a life in which believers may behold the glory of the Father. This is the eternal life of glory that Christ will give to those who by faith are in union with him.

1 John 5:11–13

Following on the passage about the witnesses and the truthfulness of God's testimony (1 Jn 5:6–10), Verse 11 continues to define the contents of the testimony: 'This is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son'. Thereby, two of the main themes of the letter are juxtaposed, namely, '(eternal) life' and 'the Son of God'. In 1 John 5:11–13, the combination of *eternal life in the Son* is repeated no less than four times. This repetition is imbedded in a climactical thought pattern, which begins with the witnesses, followed by the contents of their testimony (repeated), and ends in the result of their testimony: knowing and believing.

Coming from God, the witnesses are trustworthy. Their testimony that we have eternal life in the Son is certain (repeated four times). The result of the testimony is articulated in Verse 13: 'so that you may know that you have eternal life'. This knowing is not merely a rational knowledge of a general truth. Yes, the witnesses and their testimony are trustworthy enough to establish rational knowledge (Gill 1999). Yet, true knowledge is possible only if it is based on belief in God and his Son and that God gave eternal life 'to us' (v. 11), that is, if it places you in a personal relationship with God (Calvin n.d.). No wonder that John explicitly says that he wrote these words 'to you who believe in the name of the Son of God' (v. 13).

So, 1 John 5:11–13 adds a new dimension to what it means that God gives life 'in his Son'. John 5:19–30 taught that Jesus spoke and acted on the authority of the Father and that life is found in obediently embracing his authoritative words. In John 6:48–58, we heard that Jesus, by his sacrifice on the cross, became the life-giving bread to us and that we, by 'eating' it, are saved from the death of our sins and brought to eternal life. And now, in 1 John 5:11–13, we learn that God himself testified to all of this, so that we may embrace in faith the truth that God in his Son gave eternal life also to me, personally. The thoughts of verses are arranged in climactic sequence. And then, in Verse 13, follows the outcome of the testimony: to know and to believe. By this repetition, the message to the readers is brought home loud and clear: 'If you have the Son, you have life' (Jn 6:12).

Theological context

Within the perspective of the broad theological framework of the entire Scripture, it is apparent that in the concept of 'life', the Bible narrative is moving in the framework of 'the grand cosmic conceptions of creation, fall, redemption and eschatological theodicy' (Wallis 1980:927). Life is essentially an attribute of God and part of his divine nature. So, all life begins with God, and true life can only be with God. The Father shares this divine life with the Son, as declared by Jesus in John 5:26: 'As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself'. This was true even before the incarnation of the Son (Van der Watt 1995:323). Therefore, the life in the Son was truly life in the full sense of eternity. Even before the creation, there was life.

At the beginning of time, when God created everything, he also shared life with his creatures. He shared it in particular with man by blowing the breath of life into his nostrils (Jn 2:7). So, man was created for life, that is, he was meant to live and not to die. Then, by falling into sin man entered death, directly the opposite of that for which he was created. In sin and death, man missed his God-given purpose in the creation. However, through grace, God's plan included to bring for mankind hope of a heavenly redemption from sin and death, that is, to bring back life. According to this plan, the Son of God became flesh, took man's sins upon him and tasted death in man's place. Thus, man was recovered from sin and death, so that life can be restored in him (Wallis 1980:928).

In John 1:1, followed by 1 John 1:1, the Son is called the Logos, which in general means that he is the revelation of God. In him, the Logos, the world may see and come to know God, because the Logos is God himself. The Logos is also a revelation of the life that is in God and comes from God, because through him, the Logos, all creation came into existence (Jn 1:3), and in him is life itself (Jn 1:4; cf. Culpepper 2016:6–7; Dodd 1968:318). Being the Logos,

he also reveals the glory of God. When the Logos became flesh, his glory could be seen, 'the glory of the only begotten Son, who came from the Father' (Jn 1:14). Not only is the incarnated Son a revelation of the glory of God; in him is also revealed his grace and truth (Jn 1:14). In the incarnated Logos, Jesus Christ, we see the fulfilment of the Old Testament truth, that is, God's promise that he will bestow grace on his people (Bouma n.d.a:67). This promise is that he will gracefully redeem his people from sin and death and bring them back to life.

For man, restoration of life has an ethical side, a spiritual side as well as a future side. These three aspects of life are distinguished – though not entirely separated – in the Johannine writings:

- For man to receive this life, he has to be *regenerated* (Jn 3:3). Regeneration is 'a profound renovation and reorientation of personal nature and ethical alignments and loyalties' (Wallis 1980:928). To enter this new life requires rebirth, which happens by the work of the *Holy Spirit*.
- The spiritual side of regenerated life is that one enters into union with Christ. The one who by faith becomes one with Christ, has life, that is, lives in union with Christ, and is part of him. This life in Christ is a life in faith and happens *through faith* (1 Jn 5:13). The believer in his union with *Christ* already here and now shares in something of eternal life which is to be received in future. In Christ, the believer has access to the Father, already in this life, so that he can pray to the Father for all his needs in Jesus' name.
- The future aspect of life is life in the world to come, or eternal life, as it is called in the Fourth Gospel. The believers will enter the future eternal life when their mortal bodies will be *resurrected* in a momentous transition from death to life, never to see death again. Eternal life is life with the *Father*, in his heavenly abode, to whom Jesus is the way (Jn 14:6).

John's reference to eternal life in the world to come adds a prophetic dimension to the Gospel. Hence, it is not surprising that John in his *Book of Revelation* in numerous passages prophetically speaks of 'life' in such a way that it rings an echo of the life [ζωή] of which we read in the Gospel:

- John (e.g. 5:26; 6:57) teaches that life is in the Father and therefore also in the Son.

This is slightly echoed in Revelation 4:9: 'to Him (God) who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever', and Revelation 1:17: 'I (Christ) am the First and the Last, and The Living One'.

- In John 4:14, Jesus says that he gives water that will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Revelation 7:17 says that 'the Lamb will lead them to springs of living water', and 21:6: 'To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life' (cf. also Rev 22:1).

The metaphor of 'living water' that comes from the Lord is probably an allusion to Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 55:1, Habakkuk 2:4 and Zechariah 14:8 (cf. Dodd 1968:83), which all in some way or other speak of living water. The visions of Revelation feature some other obvious Old Testament allusions that concern eternal life, such as the tree of life (Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14; cf. Gn 2:22) and the book of life (Rev 3:5; 13:8; 20:12; cf. Ps 69:29). Together with the echoes of John, the Old Testament allusions confirm that the life of which John so often speaks in his Gospel spans the entire revelation of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. It begins with the living God who gives life to all and ends with the eternal life of believers in the presence of God under his eternal rule. From Genesis to Revelation, the 'life' line brings us to understand that life is revealed in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who restored life to believers, a new life already here and now, continued in perfection after this life in God's presence, with its consummation at the Parousia when God's people will have life in abundance in eternity under his divine rule and in his glorious presence.

Conclusion

This study has arrived at the following conclusions about 'life' in John's Gospel and letters.

Firstly, in some passages, John clearly speaks of life as a physical reality, in this present world. In so speaking, he normally makes use of the word ψυχή. Closely related to this meaning is the meaning of 'being alive', for which John uses the verb ζάω, albeit in only a few instances, viz. John 4:50, 51, 53. In all remaining passages, ζάω has a more spiritual meaning, as is always the case in the Gospel with the noun ζωή. As it turns out, all other uses of ζάω and ζωή in John and 1 John pertain to some aspect of eternal life. In this study, the following were identified as aspects of the idea of 'life' as used in the Gospel and 1 John.

Life is an attribute of God, the Father, which he shares with his Son, the Logos (Jn 1:1; 1 Jn 1:1). Hence, the Logos incarnate, Jesus Christ, *has* life (1:4; 1 Jn 5:11) and *is the* Life (Jn 14:6; 1 Jn 5:20). Having life and being life itself, Christ *gives* life to the world (Jn 6:33, 51, 53; 13:37, 38; 15:13). So, those who receive life from Jesus, truly have life (Jn 5:40; 8:12; 10:10; 20:31).

How does Christ give life to mankind? First of all, he, as the eternal Logos, reveals himself to mankind as the way to life (Jn 14:6). The testimony of Jesus as the way to life is testified by God himself and is absolutely trustworthy (1 Jn 5:9). By this testimony, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, God works faith in human hearts (Jn 6:63). This work of the Spirit results in being reborn to a new life in this world (Jn 3:5–16).

In the new life, we are united to Christ, by 'eating' him 'as the bread of life' (Jn 6:35, 48). The metaphor is expanded to eating the flesh of Jesus (Jn 6:48–58) as the 'Passover Lamb' of God's salvation from the slavery of sin and death. The metaphor of 'eating the flesh of Christ' speaks of two gifts of life that the believers receive. Firstly, they partake in Jesus' flesh and blood by embracing his saving death through faith and the Spirit (Jn 6:27–29, 35, 63). Secondly, eating Christ's flesh and blood means to be so united with him that your life here and now is marked by perseverance in his righteousness and by growing in faith and holiness, to the glory of the Father.

What are the consequences of the life that Christ gives? For the here and now, it means a new life in Christ and his righteousness. Life in Christ is a life of perseverance in growing obedience and holiness before God. In the new life, the work of the Holy Spirit in believers becomes like 'a spring of living water welling up to eternal life' (Jn 4:14), which is provided by the sum total of all that one needs spiritually. A more important consequence, however, will be tasted only after this life. At their last breath, those who believe in Christ will cross over from death to life (Jn 5:24; 11:25, 26). That means that they will enter freely to the glorious presence of God (Jn 1:4, 14), which is life in its fullness. And finally, on the day when the Lord returns to judge the living and the dead, the believers, unlike the unbelievers, will not be condemned (Jn 5:29). Instead, they will be resurrected to eternal life (Jn 11:25). Eternal life is a glorious and never-ending fellowship with God that follows after death. It is a life in which believers may eternally experience the joy of beholding the glory of the Father.

One last remark: It is a trait of John's style that he deliberately uses words in ambiguous sense (Culpepper 2016:7). This must be kept in mind also in describing John's use of the word ζωή. It is not always possible to come to a clear-cut definition of the meaning of ζωή in a passage because in many cases, there is a possibility of multiple or overlapping meanings. Nevertheless, John is (Culpepper 2016):

> [*P*]rimarily interested in the nature of eternal life, and will affirm (in John 17:3) that it is already present and available here and now, but this first reference does not contain all the meaning that John will eventually load into this term. (p. 7)

These words more or less sum up both the difficulty of defining John's use of the concept of 'life', and the width and wealth of the scope of 'life' as used by John. As wide as the grace of the Lord, we hear the words of life in John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'.

Chapter 3

Life in the Acts of the Apostles

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Introduction

Discerning the theme of a biblical theology of life in the Acts of the Apostles could rightly follow many paths. I have opted to take as vantage point the characteristic of this New Testament writing as (historical) narrative literature,[49] which stands in a special relationship to the Gospel of Luke. Such a narrative approach presupposes, amongst others, that the writing is considered as a complete whole as is presented and that the overarching theme of life be considered in dialogue with the narrative structure and

49. Such a description of New Testament literature does not imply that it is fictive. Rather, this serves to distinguish it from the perception that the literature was intended to provide an exact historical account of the early Christian church. Numerous scholars focus on the context of ancient histiography in their introductory comments on Acts, and highlight the similarities it displays with other interpretative historical writings in antiquity. See, for example, Johnson (1992:3–7), Barrett (2002:lxxvii–lxxxv), Squires (2003:1213–1215) and Dunn (2016:xv–xix).

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episodes it consists of.[50] That is, isolated occurrences of vocabulary denoting 'life' or 'living' are not regarded as sufficient criteria for discussion in itself. These occurrences also require interpretation within their literary setting, as well as the overarching narrative perspectives on life and living.

What, then, are these overarching narrative perspectives on life and living? The content of the Acts of the Apostles presents a turning point in terms of the message of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This turning point is particularly evident when Acts is read as the second volume of the Luke-Acts corpus.[51] The Lukan Gospel narrative focuses, in general terms, on the earthly timeline of Jesus since his conception and birth, throughout his ministry, and reaches its climax in the concrete events surrounding his death and resurrection. In closing, the reader is presented with a foretaste of what is to follow in Acts, by means of the narration of his first appearances as the resurrected Lord (cf. Ac 24:36–43), appearances which serve to make clear the continuity between the pre- and post-crucifixion phases of Jesus' life. Acts moves the narrative forward: after 40 days of being present in a resurrected, bodily form amongst the apostles and proving that he truly lives by means of numerous signs (cf. Ac 1:1–3), Jesus prepares them for his departure and ascends to heaven (Ac 1:8) and shortly afterwards fulfils his promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ac 1:8) in dramatic fashion (Ac 2:1–13). Thereafter, the living Jesus is no longer present as a living and breathing resurrected body amongst his apostles; yet precisely because of taking up his position as exalted Lord, seated at the right hand of God, the full implications of his resurrected status – as the eternal living Lord – becomes accessible to individual believers. These implications can subsequently be internalised in the lives of Christ-accepting believers.

Therefore, whereas the focus in the Gospel of Luke was on the events of and surrounding the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, the focus in Acts is on the proclamation of the message of the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the reactions this message evokes.[52] By means of the proclamation of Jesus as the resurrected and living Lord, a radically inclusive community is created through the power of the Holy Spirit. This community is intended to be open-ended and accessible to Jews and Greeks and is to stretch to the ends of the earth. It is through the message of the reality, the actuality of the resurrected and living Lord that a new way of life in relation to God and to others becomes possible – a life which also brings threats to human existence and death very near. At the same time, the belief

50. Such an approach is in line with the normative process of reading and narrative analysis, as required by the methodology of narrative criticism. See, for example, Powell's description of narrative criticism for an overview of this literary approach to biblical texts (2010:240–258).

51. This discussion assumes the majority scholarly position that the Gospel of Luke and Acts stand in a close relationship to one another.

52. 'By telling a single story that includes both the Gospel and Acts, Luke connects the Gentile mission with, and grounds it in, Israel's heritage' (Keener 2012:550).

that there is the promise of life beyond the earthly life – eternal life beyond the judgement day – provides reassurance and motivation to persevere as proclaimers of the gospel, even if this may lead to death.

This narrative development provides, to my mind, a helpful framework within which to discern perspectives on a biblical theology of life in Acts.[53] The discussion which follows consists of three parts.

Firstly, I table all the occurrences of selected 'life' and 'living' vocabulary as found in Acts, guided by specific semantic domain classifications as provided by Louw and Nida (1996). In the tables, the Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010) is followed by an English translation (my own) and a brief note on the literary context of the occurrence. This tabled representation is an attempt at providing an overview of the semantic landscape of vocabulary related to 'life' and 'living', coupled with the narrative framework in which it occurs.

Secondly, I present a thematic exploration of these occurrences, whereby all identified occurrences are sorted according to a framework consisting of five particular theological 'life' themes: the resurrection of Jesus and his status as living Lord; the resurrection of the dead; the healing and/or resurrection of specific individuals; life in community or in relation to others; and threats to life. For ease of cross-referencing between the tables and the identified themes, each tabled occurrence in the Section 'Overview of textual occurrences of the concept of life' has also been allocated a sub-section, corresponding to the theme in the Section 'Thematic descriptions of the concept of "life"' to which it belongs.

Thirdly, I explore the theological significance of these five themes in the later section on 'Theological contribution'. Here the focus shifts to contemporary faith settings, specifically in the South African context. As such, this discussion wants to explore the relevance of the identified occurrences and themes for 20th century readers of Acts, guided by the overall theme of a biblical theology of life.

Overview of textual occurrences of the concept of life

As mentioned in the Introduction, the selection of occurrences that denote the concept of life and resurrection has been done not only based on the presence of particular vocabulary which conveys such meanings on a semantic level but also according to their place within a broader thematical framework of Acts as a whole.

53. The narrative unity of Luke-Acts leans itself favourably to comparison, to determine whether particular developments on the theme of life can be traced in Lukan thought. Such a comparative exploration is beyond the scope of this particular chapter, but it is certainly regarded as a worthwhile option for further engagement on the topic of a biblical theology of life.

TABLE 3.1: ζάω; ζωή, ῆς f; ψυχή, ῆς f [to be alive, to live, life].

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 1:3	[3] οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσεράκοντα ὀπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ	'and to them (the apostles) He proved himself *living* after his suffering with many convincing proofs [...]'	Narrator concerning Jesus	3.3.1
Acts 5:20	[20] Πορεύεσθε καὶ σταθέντες λαλεῖτε ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τῷ λαῷ πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης.	'[...] speak in the temple to the people all the words of this *life*'	Angel of the Lord concerning the command to the apostles to testify	3.3.5
Acts 7:38	[38] οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ γενόμενος ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ μετὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ λαλοῦντος αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σινᾶ καὶ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, ὃς ἐδέξατο λόγια ζῶντα δοῦναι ἡμῖν,	'[...] who received the *living* words to give to us'	Stephen concerning Moses	3.3.1
Acts 9:41	[41] δοὺς δὲ αὐτῇ χεῖρα ἀνέστησεν αὐτήν, φωνήσας δὲ τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ τὰς χήρας παρέστησεν αὐτὴν ζῶσαν.	'[...] he showed (them) that she *lived*'	Peter concerning Tabita (Dorcas)	3.3.3
Acts 10:42	[42] καὶ παρήγγειλεν ἡμῖν κηρύξαι τῷ λαῷ καὶ διαμαρτύρασθαι ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ὡρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν.	'[...] that He is the one appointed by God as judge over *the living* and the dead'	Peter concerning Jesus	3.3.2
Acts 14:15	[15] καὶ λέγοντες· Ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς·	'[...] to turn away from these worthless things, towards the *living* God [...]'	Paul and Barnabas concerning God	3.3.1
Acts 17:28	[28] ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, ὡς καί τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν· Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.	'[...] because in Him we *live* and move and are [...]'	Paul concerning God	3.3.1
Acts 20:10	[10] καταβὰς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ἐπέπεσεν αὐτῷ καὶ συμπεριλαβὼν εἶπεν· Μὴ θορυβεῖσθε, ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστιν.	'[...] Do not be troubled, because he is *alive*'.	Paul concerning Eutichus	3.3.3
Acts 20:12	[12] ἤγαγον δὲ τὸν παῖδα ζῶντα, καὶ παρεκλήθησαν οὐ μετρίως.	'They took the son away *living* [...]'	Narrator concerning Eutichus	3.3.3
Acts 20:24	[24] ἀλλ' οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιοῦμαι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμίαν ἐμαυτῷ ὡς τελειῶσαι τὸν δρόμον μου καὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἣν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, διαμαρτύρασθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ.	'[...] neither do I count my *life* dear (important) to myself [...]'	Paul addressing the elders of Ephesus	3.3.5
Acts 22:22	[22] Ἤκουον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄχρι τούτου τοῦ λόγου καὶ ἐπῆραν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν λέγοντες· Αἶρε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς τὸν τοιοῦτον, οὐ γὰρ καθῆκεν αὐτὸν ζῆν.	'[...] because it is not right that he *lives*!'	The people concerning Paul	3.3.5
Acts 25:19	[19] ζητήματα δέ τινα περὶ τῆς ἰδίας δεισιδαιμονίας εἶχον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ περί τινος Ἰησοῦ τεθνηκότος, ὃν ἔφασκεν ὁ Παῦλος ζῆν.	'[...] whom Paul claimed *lives*'	Festus to the king concerning Paul's testimony of Jesus	3.3.5
Acts 25:24	[24] καί φησιν ὁ Φῆστος· Ἀγρίππα βασιλεῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ συμπαρόντες ἡμῖν ἄνδρες, θεωρεῖτε τοῦτον περὶ οὗ ἅπαν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐνέτυχόν μοι ἔν τε Ἰεροσολύμοις καὶ ἐνθάδε, βοῶντες μὴ δεῖν αὐτὸν ζῆν μηκέτι.	'[...] shouting that he should *not live* anymore'	Festus to king Agrippa concerning the Jews who demand Paul's death	3.3.5
Acts 26:5	[5] προγινώσκοντές με ἄνωθεν, ἐὰν θέλωσι μαρτυρεῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην αἵρεσιν τῆς ἡμετέρας θρησκείας ἔζησα Φαρισαῖος.	'[...] that according to the strictest party of our religions I have *lived* as Pharisee'	Paul to king Agrippa concerning his testimony	3.3.5
Acts 28:4	[4] ὡς δὲ εἶδον οἱ βάρβαροι κρεμάμενον τὸ θηρίον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔλεγον· Πάντως φονεύς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος ὃν διασωθέντα ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης ἡ δίκη ζῆν οὐκ εἴασεν.	'[...] the goddess of Righteousness did not allow him to *live*'	Local people on Malta concerning Paul being bitten by a snake	3.3.5

Source: Louw and Nida (1996:23.88).

TABLE 3.2: ζῳογονέω [to cause to continue to live] – 'to keep alive, to preserve alive'.

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 7:19	[19] οὗτος κατασοφισάμενος τὸ γένος ἡμῶν ἐκάκωσεν τοὺς πατέρας τοῦ ποιεῖν τὰ βρέφη ἔκθετα αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ μὴ ζῳογονεῖσθαι.	'[...] so that they could not *be kept alive*'	Stephen's speech, concerning pharaoh's treatment of the Israelites	3.3.5

Source: Louw and Nida (1996:23.89).

TABLE 3.3: God as agent, as the One who performed the act of resurrecting/raising Jesus from the dead.

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 2:24	[24] ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἀνέστησεν λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου, καθότι οὐκ ἦν δυνατὸν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ·	'God *raised* Him [...]'	Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost	3.3.1
Acts 2:32	[32] τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀνέστησεν ὁ θεός, οὗ πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες.	'God *raised* this Jesus [...]'	Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost	3.3.1
Acts 3:15	[15] τὸν δὲ ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἀπεκτείνατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, οὗ ἡμεῖς μάρτυρές ἐσμεν.	'[...] you killed the First *to live*, but God *raised* Him from the dead'	Peter's speech after the healing of the lame man	3.3.1
Acts 3:26	[26] ὑμῖν πρῶτον ἀναστήσας ὁ θεὸς τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εὐλογοῦντα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἀποστρέφειν ἕκαστον ἀπὸ τῶν πονηριῶν ὑμῶν.	'God *raised* his Servant'	Peter's speech after the healing of the lame man	3.3.1
Acts 4:10	[10] γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου, ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐν τούτῳ οὗτος παρέστηκεν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ὑγιής.	'in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth [...] who *was raised* by God from death'	Peter's speech to the Jewish Council the day after the healing of the lame man at the temple	3.3.1
Acts 5:30	[30] ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν ἤγειρεν Ἰησοῦν, ὃν ὑμεῖς διεχειρίσασθε κρεμάσαντες ἐπὶ ξύλου·	'God [...] *raised* Jesus'	Peter and the apostles' answer to the Council after their miraculous escape from prison	3.3.1
Acts 10:40	[40] τοῦτον ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῆ γενέσθαι,	'God *raised* Him on the third day [...]'	Peter's speech at Cornelius	3.3.1
Acts 13:30	[30] ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν·	'God *raised* Him from the dead'	Paul's speech in the synagogue in Pisidia	3.3.1
Acts 13:33	[33] ὅτι ταύτην ὁ θεὸς ἐκπεπλήρωκεν τοῖς τέκνοις ἡμῶν ἀναστήσας Ἰησοῦν, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ γέγραπται τῷ δευτέρῳ· Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε.	'[...] by *raising* Jesus [...] today I *gave life* to you' ('verwek')	Paul's speech in the synagogue in Pisidia	3.3.1
Acts 13:34	[34] ὅτι δὲ ἀνέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν μηκέτι μέλλοντα ὑποστρέφειν εἰς διαφθοράν, οὕτως εἴρηκεν ὅτι Δώσω ὑμῖν τὰ ὅσια Δαυὶδ τὰ πιστά.	'He *raised* Him from the dead [...]'	Paul quoting Ps 2:7 in his speech in the synagogue in Pisidia	3.3.1
Acts 13:37	[37] ὃν δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν οὐκ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.	'but God *raised* Him [...]'	Paul's speech in the synagogue in Pisidia	3.3.1
Acts 17:31	[31] καθότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ᾗ μέλλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισεν, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.	'(God) *rose* Him from the dead'	Paul's speech in Athens in the Areopagus	3.3.1

TABLE 3.4: Resurrection of Jesus (without mention of God as agent).

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 1:22	[22] ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἀνελήμφθη ἀφ᾽ ἡμῶν, μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ σὺν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι ἕνα τούτων.	'His *resurrection*'	Peter during the election of a replacement for Judas	3.3.1
Acts 2:31	[31] προϊδὼν ἐλάλησεν περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ χριστοῦ ὅτι οὔτε ἐγκατελείφθη εἰς ᾅδην οὔτε ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ εἶδεν διαφθοράν.	'*resurrection* of Christ'	Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost	3.3.1
Acts 4:33	[33] καὶ δυνάμει μεγάλῃ ἀπεδίδουν τὸ μαρτύριον οἱ ἀπόστολοι τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, χάρις τε μεγάλη ἦν ἐπὶ πάντας αὐτούς.	'*resurrection* of the Lord Jesus'	Narrator's description of the fellowship of the believers and testimony of the apostles	3.3.1
Acts 17:18	[18] τινὲς δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἐπικουρείων καὶ Στοϊκῶν φιλοσόφων συνέβαλλον αὐτῷ, καί τινες ἔλεγον· Τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν; οἱ δέ· Ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι· ὅτι τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν εὐηγγελίζετο.	'[…] because the good news of Jesus and his *resurrection*'	Athenians' response to Paul's teaching on the resurrection of Jesus	3.3.1

TABLE 3.5: Resurrection from the dead, and of the dead (collectively).

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 4:2	[2] διαπονούμενοι διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς τὸν λαὸν καὶ καταγγέλλειν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν,	'[…] *resurrection* of the dead through Jesus'	Jewish leaders' anger due to the teaching of the resurrection of the dead	3.3.2
Acts 17:32	[32] Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν οἱ μὲν ἐχλεύαζον οἱ δὲ εἶπαν Ἀκουσόμεθά σου περὶ τούτου καὶ πάλιν.	'[…] the *resurrection* of the dead […]'	Reaction to Paul's speech in Athens (some laughed, others were curious)	3.3.2
Acts 23:6	[6] Γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἓν μέρος ἐστὶν Σαδδουκαίων τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων ἔκραζεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίων· περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ἐγὼ κρίνομαι.	'[…] and the *resurrection* of the dead […]'	Paul's speech before the Jewish Council re his trial	3.3.2
Acts 23:8	[8] Σαδδουκαῖοι μὲν γὰρ λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα, Φαρισαῖοι δὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν τὰ ἀμφότερα.	'Because the Sadducees do not believe in the *resurrection* […]'	Paul's speech before the Jewish Council – the difference between Pharisees and Sadducees' beliefs on the resurrection	3.3.2
Acts 24:15	[15] ἐλπίδα ἔχων εἰς τὸν θεόν, ἣν καὶ αὐτοὶ οὗτοι προσδέχονται, ἀνάστασιν μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων·	'[…] a *resurrection* (of the dead), of both the righteous and the unrighteous'	Paul before Felix, concerning his belief in the resurrection of all people	3.3.2
Acts 24:21	[21] ἢ περὶ μιᾶς ταύτης φωνῆς ἧς ἐκέκραξα ἐν αὐτοῖς ἑστὼς ὅτι Περὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ἐγὼ κρίνομαι σήμερον ἐφ᾽ ὑμῶν.	'[…] concerning the *resurrection* of the dead I am being judged today before you […]'	Paul before Felix	3.3.2
Acts 26:8	[8] τί ἄπιστον κρίνεται παρ᾽ ὑμῖν εἰ ὁ θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει;	'[…] why do you judge it impossible for God *to raise* the dead?'	Paul's defence before Agrippa	3.3.2
Acts 26:23	[23] εἰ παθητὸς ὁ χριστός, εἰ πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν φῶς μέλλει καταγγέλλειν τῷ τε λαῷ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.	'[…] Christ as the first of the *resurrected* of the dead […]'	Paul's defence before Agrippa	3.3.2

TABLE 3.6: Raised up, restoration of life (raised from illness and/or death).

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 3:22	[22] Μωϋσῆς μὲν εἶπεν ὅτι Προφήτην ὑμῖν ἀναστήσει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὑμῶν ὡς ἐμέ· αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε κατὰ πάντα ὅσα ἂν λαλήσῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς.	'*raising up* of a prophet among you'	Peter's speech at the temple after healing the lame man	3.3.1
Acts 3:6	[6] εἶπεν δὲ Πέτρος· Ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι, ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου περιπάτει.	'(Get up), walk!'[a]	Peter's command to the lame man to (stand up and) walk	3.3.3
Acts 4:10	[10] γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου, ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐν τούτῳ οὗτος παρέστηκεν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ὑγιής.	'healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nasaret [...] who was *raised* by God from death'	Peter's speech to the Jewish Council the day after the healing of the lame man at the temple	3.3.3
Acts 9:34	[34] καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος· Αἰνέα, ἰᾶταί σε Ἰησοῦς Χριστός· ἀνάστηθι καὶ στρῶσον σεαυτῷ· καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέστη.	'[...] *get up* and make up your bed; and immediately he *got up*'	Peter's healing of the lame man, Eneas	3.3.3
Acts 9:41	[41] δοὺς δὲ αὐτῇ χεῖρα ἀνέστησεν αὐτήν, φωνήσας δὲ τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ τὰς χήρας παρέστησεν αὐτὴν ζῶσαν.	'[...] and he *raised* her'	Peter's healing of Tabita (Dorcas)	3.3.3
Acts 14:10	[10] εἶπεν μεγάλῃ φωνῇ· Ἀνάστηθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου ὀρθός· καὶ ἥλατο καὶ περιεπάτει.	'*Stand up* straight on your feet [...]'	Paul healing the lame man in Listra	3.3.3

[a]Not all manuscript traditions include the command to 'get up', although it is typically included in modern translations.

TABLE 3.7: περιπατέω; πορεύομαι [to live, to behave, to go about doing]– to live or behave in a customary manner, with possible focus upon continuity of action.

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 9:31	[31] Ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησία καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Γαλιλαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας εἶχεν εἰρήνην οἰκοδομουμένη, καὶ πορευομένη τῷ φόβῳ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τῇ παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐπληθύνετο.	'[...] while they were built up and were *living* with reverence for the Lord'	Narrator concerning the church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria	3.3.4
Acts 21:21	[21] κατηχήθησαν δὲ περὶ σοῦ ὅτι ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους, λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν περιπατεῖν.	'[...] and should not *live* according to the practises'	Elders concerning the Jews who have come to faith and what they have heard about Paul's teachings	3.3.5

Source: Louw and Nida (1996:41.11).

Table 3.8: πολιτεύομαι [to live, to conduct one's life, to live in relation to others] – To conduct oneself with proper reference to one's obligations in relationship to others, as part of some community.

Verse	Greek text (ed. Holmes 2010)	English translation	Literary context	Theme
Acts 23:1	ἀτενίσας δὲ ὁ Παῦλος τῷ συνεδρίῳ εἶπεν· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ πάσῃ συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ πεπολίτευμαι τῷ θεῷ ἄχρι ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας.	'[...] I have *lived my life* with a clear conscience before God'	Paul to the Sanhedrin concerning his witness	3.3.5

Source: Louw and Nida (1996:41.34).

The tables in this section follow the chronological order of Louw and Nida's (1996) semantic domain classification system, with a particular focus on 23.88, 23.89, 23.93, 23.94, 41.11 and 41.34, followed by a thematic discussion of these occurrences in relation to the larger narrative of Acts in the Section 'Thematic descriptions of the concept of "life"'.

Thematic descriptions of the concept of 'life'

As mentioned in the Section 'Overview of textual occurrences of the concept of life', the occurrences of the concept of 'life' and 'living' in Acts are set within a very particular narrative representation of the impact of life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus on the lives of the apostles, and all who bore witness to the proclamation thereof – whether then accepting it in faith or not.

In this section, the content of the aforementioned references will be discussed thematically according to five identified themes: firstly, Jesus, the resurrected, living Lord; secondly, the resurrection of the dead; thirdly, the gift of life through healing; fourthly, life in community; and fifthly, life in close proximity to suffering and death.

Jesus, the resurrected, living Lord

For Green (1998:227), '[t]he resurrection of Jesus by God is the central affirmation of the Christian message in the Acts of the Apostles'. This is already affirmed as soon as the opening scene of Acts. The narrator provides readers with an introduction of note: one in which there is immediate confirmation of not only the continuation between who Jesus is and who his followers are, but also that Jesus, in fact, was undoubtedly resurrected after his death. By explicitly mentioning the 'many convincing proofs' by which Jesus proved to the apostles that he lived after his resurrection[54] and that he appeared and taught about the Kingdom of God for the deeply symbolic period of 40 days (cf. Ac 1:3),[55] the table is set for the events and testimonies which are to follow in the rest of the book.

Much emphasis is placed on the fact that it was not out of his own initiative that Jesus was resurrected and subsequently lives; rather, it is very specifically

54. This is the only occurrence of τεκμήριον ['proof', 'convincing proof'] in the New Testament. According to De Villiers (1977:27–28) such a 'proof' removes all doubt and cannot be reputed. This refers to Jesus' acts of showing his hands and feet to his disciples after his resurrection and eating in their presence (cf. Lk 24:38–43; Jn 20:27; Ac 1:4; 10:41).

55. According to Keener (2012:662), '[t]he forty days of appearances provide convincing proofs as well as his teaching'. This is the only place in the New Testament where the period of the resurrection appearances of Jesus is specified (Barrett 2002:4).

the work of God.[56] Thereby, the close relationship and proximity between God and Jesus is indicated. Repeatedly, this agency of God is put to the fore and especially so during speeches made by Peter and Paul: twice during Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:24; 2:32); twice during Peter's speech after the healing of the lame man at the temple (Ac 3:15, referring to Jesus as the 'First to life/Author of life' and Acts 3:26, as the 'Servant' of God)[57]; Peter's speech to the Jewish Council the day after the healing of the lame man (Ac 4:10); Peter and the other apostles' response to the Jewish Council after their miraculous escape from prison (Ac 5:30); Peter's speech at Cornelius' house (Ac 10:40); four times during Paul's speech in the synagogue in Pisidia, once quoting Psalm 2:7 (Ac 13:30, 33, 34, 37) and finally during Paul's speech in Athens in the Areopagus (Ac 17:31).[58]

The resurrection of Jesus is also mentioned without specific or immediate reference to God's agency: in Peter's speech during the election of a replacement for Judas (Ac 1:22); Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:31); and the narrator's description of the testimonies of the apostles, as partakers of the fellowship of believers (Ac 4:33) and in the narrator's description of the Athenians' reaction to Paul's teaching thereof (Ac 17:18).

The proclamation of the message of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension is very often related to the larger narrative of God's guidance and sustenance of Israel, their forefathers and foremothers, and to the prophecies uttered by God's appointed prophets (cf. Ac 1:14–36; 3:11–26; 4:24–30; 5:29–32; 7:1–53; 8:30–39; 10:34–43; 11:1–18; 13:15–41, 44–47; 15:6–21; 17:1–3, 24–31; 19:1–7; 22:1–21; 24:14–16; 26:4–8, 12–18; 28:23–31). Thereby, emphasis is placed on the fact that Jesus' life, death and resurrection, his ascension, and the work of the Holy Spirit are rooted in and a continuation of who God is. Jesus, the resurrected, living Lord, fulfils a unique role and purpose, yet always has and will do so within the intimate relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and within God's salvation history.

56. According to Matthews (2000:17), 'Acts is more theocentric than Christocentric. It is God who occupies the dominant place'. I am hesitant to choose between either one or the other; in my opinion, Acts rather demonstrates the continuity and relationship between not only God and Jesus Christ but also the place of the Holy Spirit.

57. Bruce (1980:89) argues that the word ἀρχηγός here denotes Christ as the source of life or salvation, as in Hebrews 2:10. The Servant of God title immediately reminds of the Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah (especially Is 52:13–53:12). According to Bruce (1980:88), '(n)o passage of Old Testament prophecy has made so deep and plain a mark on New Testament thought and language as this'.

58. Considering the central role of speeches in Acts, it comes as no surprise that the central message thereof, that is the resurrection of Jesus by God, holds a central role in them. Strelan (2004:232–233) notes that '[w]hile God's raising of Jesus from the dead is fundamental in the preaching of the apostles in Acts, that message is proclaimed only to Israel [...] it is never proclaimed in a pagan context. When, in Acts, Paul does mention resurrection in a pagan context – in his speech on the Areopagus in Athens – he is roundly ridiculed for it [...]'

Noteworthy is the specific mention of God as *living* God, further strengthening such continuation and relation: firstly, in Paul and Barnabas' response to the people mistaking them for gods after the healing of the lame man (Ac 14:15, 'so that you may turn away from these vanities to the living God'), and secondly, more implicitly, when Paul addresses the Athenians in the Areopagus regarding his observance of their beliefs (Ac 17:28, 'for in him we live and move and have our being'). The ability to live implies that God is the giver and creator of life. Both times, these references to God as living God stand in contrast to the dead idols being worshipped.[59]

During Peter's speech at the temple, he emphasises that it is Moses who prophesied that the Lord their God will 'raise up' a prophet from their own (Ac 3:22), an interesting word choice given the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus throughout Acts. During Stephen's speech before the Council, he makes specific mention of the 'living words' received by Moses on Mount Sinai (Ac 7:38), perhaps no coincidence when this continuation between living God, living Jesus and living Spirit (of God) in Acts is identified.

Life and resurrection of the dead

Part of the message to be proclaimed by the witnesses of the living, resurrected Lord Jesus is that he will fulfil the role of God-appointed judge of the living and the dead. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the long-awaited 'final days' before the day of judgement has commenced, as prophesied by Joel and as quoted by Peter in Acts 2:16–21. Proof that Jesus has indeed been appointed in this role and will execute such judgement has been provided through God's resurrection of Jesus from the dead (cf. Peter's speech, Ac 10:42; also Ac 17:31).

Such a role of judgement by the Lord Jesus specifically relates to the resurrection of the dead, an act of salvation which is possible through the resurrection of Christ as the first of the resurrected of the dead (Ac 26:23). The resurrected Lord will not only determine who lives and will be raised by God but has through his own resurrection paved the way for such resurrection of the dead to be possible at all.

It is this conviction and testimony of the resurrection of the dead which is often the cause for mockery, anger and active resistance towards the apostles and other witnesses. Already in Acts 4:2, mention is made of anger of the Jewish leaders and others in response to the apostles' teaching that the

59. Wordelman (2003:205–232) makes a compelling case for modern interpreters to really familiarise themselves with the world of the Greco-Roman audience within which Acts 14, the 'Lystran episode', is situated. Her research led her to focus specifically on the narrative's relationship to Greco-Roman literary and mythological traditions, and to critically engage the role of historical-critical perspectives on sustaining cultural stereotypes based on Orientalism in the history of interpretation of this episode.

resurrection from the dead has now become a reality through the resurrection of Jesus. Later in Acts, it is specifically the reactions to the utterances of Paul in this regard which are mentioned: the Athenians are not sure whether they should laugh or be curious (Ac 17:32); the Pharisees and the Sadducees in the Council hold deeply dividing opinions on the matter and subsequently react strongly to his speech (cf. Ac 23:6; 23:8); it stands central to Paul's hearing and defence before Felix (Ac 24:15; 24:21); and during his defence before Agrippa, he goes as far as to challenge him and ask why it is so difficult for him and others to believe that God raises the dead (Ac 26:8), considering that the resurrection of Jesus by God, as the long-awaited Messiah, provides ample proof thereof.[60]

Restoration of life through healing

The book of Acts contains a number of episodes that narrate healing and the restoration of life to specific individuals, at the hands of the apostles and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Given the ancient context of the implications of illness and death as separation from the sphere of life, and subsequently also the categorisation of being impure or unholy, its implications are that these individuals, through the healing power of the Name of Jesus Christ, are brought back to life in more than simply the biological sense. Not only is life physically returned to them, their physical restoration also shifts them from the margins back into the community and from the sphere of impurity closer again to holiness. Alongside physical restoration, they also experience social and cultic reintegration. The selected examples of such types of healings and restoration of life are specifically those which are closely related to, or echo, the notion of being raised, resurrected or returned to life (and therefore not merely all references to healing).[61]

60. As noted by Yamauchi (1998:46–47), various sects within the Jewish tradition held strongly opposed views on the resurrection. Whereas the Pharisees went as far as saying that those who denied the resurrection will have no share in the world to come, the Sadducees denied the resurrection altogether. Emphasis on the resurrection of the dead among the Hebrews grew over time (noticeably during the period between the Old and New Testament), into the belief 'that God was a God who would maintain fellowship with them beyond the grave, who would vanquish death, and who would raise the dead' (Yamauchi 1998:49). Bauckham (1998:86) emphasises that the Jewish belief in life after death was not merely an extension of Greek philosophical traditions, where human nature was regarded as naturally immortal. Rather, it is from 'from reflection on who God is: the sovereign Creator, the righteous Judge, and the faithful Father of his people', that they came to hope for eternal life. For a concise overview of perspectives on life, death and the afterlife in the Greco-Roman world of the first century – the world in which the audience of Acts were situated – see Bolt (1998:51–79).

61. Strelan (2004:232) is of the opinion that natural death seems problematic for some early Christian communities, in part because of the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead in the witnessing and faith of the first Christians. There is an absence of natural deaths in Acts and the absence of any clear indication that Peter and Paul died. For Strelan, this suggests that the author held strong eschatological views about at least the time of his heroes, and likely also about his own.

In Acts 3:1–10, the healing of the lame man at the temple by Peter and John is narrated. It is noteworthy that in some manuscript traditions, the command to 'get up' (Ac 3:6) is included, giving a foretaste to the testimony of the resurrected Jesus which is to follow the next day during Peter's speech before the Council (Ac 4:10).[62]

In Acts 9:32–35, a very similar healing takes place in Lidda. A man who has been lame and bedridden for eight years is visited by Peter. With the utterance of one sentence and the command to 'stand up' and make up his bed (Ac 9:34), Eneas is healed and subsequently 'all the residents of Lidda and Saron' devoted themselves to Jesus Christ (Ac 9:35).

Peter's healing work is not yet done; shortly after, in Acts 9:36–42, he is called to Lidda where he meets mourning widows around the death bed of Dorcas. Again the command is, 'Stand up', and Tabita has healed. As if to ensure that the audience understands fully what is happened, the narrator specifically states that she was brought before the widows and other believers 'alive' (Ac 9:41). Again, the impact is felt throughout a whole community, and all in Joppa come to faith (Ac 9:42).

In Listra, Paul heals a man lame since his birth by commanding him to 'stand up straight/upright' on his feet (Ac 14:10); in response, the man was able to leap up and walk, and Paul and Barnabas are mistaken as gods.

During Paul's time in Troas, yet another miraculous healing takes place. After a sleeping young man, Eutychus, falls from a window three stories to his death during Paul's speech, Paul reassures those present that he is 'alive' (Ac 20:10). Again the narrator affirms this miracle of life by explicitly stating that the boy was taken home 'alive' (Ac 20:12).

Life in community

Acts does not merely contain verbal testimonies and descriptions of miracles, which witness to the reality of Jesus Christ's resurrection and continued presence as living Lord; it also attests to the impact such realities have on the day-to-day living of those who accept it by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acceptance of Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Lord, as the promised Messiah, as the first resurrected and as the One appointed by God as Judge of all, brings about radical change and possibilities for living in ways that were formerly not possible. Such change and possibilities are activated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and, moreover, sustained by its ongoing presence

62. Keener (2013:1042) remarks that there are 'clear parallels with Jesus's healing of the lame man in Luke 5:17–26, including the literary function (linking the healing with Jesus's power to forgive and save and a universal scope, Lk 5:24; Ac 4:9, 12)'.

and guidance. It involves new ways of relating to others and creates community and fellowship across socio-cultural, religious and political boundaries; particularly striking in societies which were sharply divided according to those regarded as 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.

Although there are a number of instances where the remarkable characteristics of such life as community of believers are described by the narrator (e.g. Ac 2:43–47; 4:32–37), the specific description in relation to the occurrence of the verb πορευομένη is worth noting in Acts 9:31: shortly after Paul's departure to Tarsus, in the whole of Judea, Galilee and Samaria, the church experienced a period of peace and sustenance, 'lived in the fear of the Lord' and 'in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied'. This verb carries the meaning of 'living or behaving in a customary manner, with a possible focus upon continuity of action'.[63]

In Acts 21:20–21, the audience catches a glimpse of the uncertainties and confusion which formed part of the newly established Christian communities. Paul visits James and receives feedback from the elders regarding the Jews who have come to faith: they continue to uphold the law; yet they have heard that Paul teaches Jews residing amongst the heathens to distance themselves from the law of Moses, not to circumcise their children, and not to 'live according to' the Jewish customs (Ac 21:20–21). Thus, there appears to be confusion amongst the converts as to their relationship to a life according to the law, upon accepting the gospel.

Life as witness to the living Lord in constant proximity to suffering and death

Lest there be any impression that life as an apostle of the living Lord and as part of the newly founded communities of believers (known as 'Christians', from Ac 11:26 onwards) who professed the death and resurrection of the living Lord Jesus was free from conflict, challenges, trials or suffering, Acts clearly testifies that this was not the case.

Rather, precisely because of the radicality of the message of Jesus who rose from the dead and who thereby made salvation and eternal life possible not only for Jewish believers but for all who accept this message, the apostles and fellow believers constantly found themselves in situations of varying degrees of persecution, with some resulting in death.[64] A number of instances

63. In following the semantic domain classification 41.11 of Louw and Nida (1996).

64. Penner and Vander Stichele (2004:193–209) authored a thought-provoking essay on the violent patterns of power – and its intersection with masculinity – in Acts. In as much as the violent episodes of the book of Acts can be contextualised, the impact of such violent representations on audiences past and present deserve attention. This is especially important from a gender-critical perspective, which resists violent masculine power as acceptable within the Christian faith tradition – especially if seemingly 'biblically founded'.

are particularly noteworthy,in terms of explicit mention of or reference to the concept of life.

After the miraculous opening of the prison doors, whereby the apostles were freed, an angel of the Lord gives them the command to return to the place where they were arrested, that is, the temple, and to proclaim there to the people 'the full message of this new life' (Ac 5:20). It is in the house of the Lord where the message of salvation must be proclaimed, without omitting anything. This 'new life' refers to the salvation as revealed in Christ and which has become a reality through the resurrection of Jesus.

In Stephen's speech, he reminds the Council of their history and of the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt under the Egyptian king: their forefathers and foremothers were compelled to expose their babies so that they would not 'stay alive' (Ac 7:18–19). He describes the words received by Moses on Mount Sinai as 'the living words' which were to be shared with them; yet, the forefathers did not want to listen and were disobedient (Ac 7:38–39). Ironically, it is at the hands of these members that Stephen is shortly thereafter killed in a similarly gruesome manner, by stoning, for stating that they are the ones who resist the Holy Spirit, who betrayed the Righteous One and who are disobedient to the law of God (Ac 7:51–53).[65]

When Paul delivers his speech to the elders in Ephesus, he makes it clear that he expects imprisonment and execution; yet, he does not count dear 'his life' for his own sake, but only wishes to fulfil his calling as proclaimer of the gospel of God's grace (Ac 20:24).

After Paul gave his defence speech on the temple steps in Jerusalem, the crowd react by shouting that it is not fitting for 'a man like this to continue living' (Ac 22:22). The next day, Paul opens his defence speech before the Council by stating that he has a clear conscience about the manner in which he has 'lived before God' until this day (Ac 23:1).

When Paul appears before Agrippa and Bernice, Festus explains the situation to the king: Paul apparently proclaimed that a certain Jesus 'lived' (Ac 25:19), seemingly an internal difference of opinion amongst the Jewish people. The next day, the content of Paul's proclamation is strongly and ironically contrasted with Festus' opening words, in which he states that the Jewish people in Jerusalem shouted that Paul should 'live no longer' (Ac 25:24). The irony continues once Paul gets his chance to defend himself before Agrippa. These people would do well, according to him, to remember that they first learnt of him when he was 'living' as a devout Pharisee, as part of the strictest sect of their religion (Ac 26:5).

65. Stephen is not mentioned by name anywhere else in the New Testament (Keener 2013:1294). According to Keener (2013:1294), 'Luke parallels Jesus and Stephen, since the latter, as the church's first martyr, provides a paradigm of the church following its Lord'.

In the final part of the Acts narrative, Paul finds himself on the island of Malta. After starting a fire, a snake flees from the heat and bites his hand – to which the people reply that he must surely be a murderer whom the goddess of Righteousness does not want to allow to 'live'; however, Paul survives without any harm (Ac 28:3–5). His death appears to not only be called for by those with whom he shares religious roots; even pagan gods, it seems, want to see his end.

Theological contribution

In Acts, it is evident that the events concerning Jesus' death and resurrection are not only immediate events to which eyewitnesses can confidently attest to – they are also events which carry a very particular significance and meaning. The resurrection of Jesus and the fact that he lives after his death now holds the potential to become a life-altering, internalised truth for all who believe it. Jesus' ascension to heaven is the event which breaks open such potential: an event which transcends the boundaries of the here and now material experiences of the earthly presence of Jesus towards his heavenly reign. The realities of earth and heaven have now been drawn closer together in his status as resurrected Lord. Moreover, it is through the Holy Spirit that it becomes possible for those who proclaim the message of the Risen One, to do so in continuation of the work started by Jesus during his earthly ministry – and also for those from the Jewish faith to recognise these events as fulfilment of God's promises through the ages.

In Acts, thus, the concept of life is rooted not only in the fact and truthfulness of the resurrection of Jesus, that is, *that* Jesus rose from the dead, but also specifically in the *significance and transformative implications* of this truth for the life of each and every person who accepts it. Acceptance of the proofs of Jesus as the resurrected, living Lord and his place in God's redemptive act of salvation is not merely an afterlife reassurance of the future resurrection of the dead; its impact is already felt in the present by all who step into its significance, here and now. Therefore, Acts is the continuation of a larger Jesus narrative, yet with a very specific new focus: its foundation is the reality of the eternal, living Lord, with an emphasis on the consequences of the retelling – the proclamation – of the crucified and resurrected, living and ascended Jesus, a retelling and proclamation which is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The resurrected Lord is subsequently not only the content of the witness proclaimed in Acts, but this content also has very direct, concrete implications for the lives of those who accept this belief as truth. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, life gains new meaning: not only can the individual believer live a new way of life through the living presence of the living God, he or she can also proclaim and share this new way of life with others and be instruments of life and healing in its most comprehensive sense.

Acceptance of the message and reality of the living Jesus as an internal truth brings to expression transformative potential and power in the lives of believers: to be healed, to be renewed and restored, and to be radically altered towards a new experience of living; not only on an individual level, but also in relation to others, in community with all who accept its truth; and also not only in this life on earth but also life beyond the grave. Thereby, the resurrected, risen and ascended status of Jesus Christ becomes a reality with which they can identify and in which they can partake. The resurrection of Jesus – the living Jesus who follows the movement of the living God – has a pulling power towards healing exchanges and alterations. This encompasses the myriad possibilities of death and deadly experiences, with which our world is filled, towards life and life-giving experiences. In a country such as South Africa, plagued by violence, abuse, racism, classism, patriarchy and sexism, homophobia, and ecological damage on land, sea and in the air, we are in desperate need of healing exchanges and alterations. In Acts, we see glimpses of possibilities towards alternative ways of framing our current realities, with the encouragement of actual practices by which such alternatives become tangible.

On a very concrete level, it profoundly shapes the understanding and expression of life in community with fellow believers; one which sets differences and divides aside and is deeply concerned with care and fellowship, and inclusion of all who are not yet part of it – even if there are, at times, confusion about how exactly it all fits together. In view of the South African history which has and still continues to divide deeply Christian religious communities based on markers such as race, language, address, spirituality and doctrine, this should serve as a mirror – even if then showing us what we are, at present, not. If we take seriously the call to 'life together', as represented in Acts, we need to do much better than simply confessing our belief in the 'holy, catholic church'.[66]

Paradoxically, it is the acceptance and proclamation of the truth of the resurrected, at-present-and-eternal-living Lord, which constantly brings the threat of violence and death very close to those who confess it and live in a manner which is accepting of its truth. Belief in and commitment to the resurrected Lord hold very real risks for the earthly life of believers. By bearing witness to the message and experiences of Jesus having overcome death, through both their speeches and their way of living, apostles and believers often face life and death situations themselves. Witnessing to the living God means living a life which comes constantly very close to the periphery of death – to some degree, at least, an imitation of Jesus' own life and persecution. Perhaps, the invitation to contemporary Christian believers – especially those

66. As confessed when reciting the Apostles' Creed – one of the most universal creeds of the Christian faith tradition.

in countries such as South Africa, where freedom of religion is a constitutional right – is to engage critically with their own perceptions of resistance and persecution, based on their religious beliefs. The label of persecution is, might I say, sometimes used too easily and is confused for genuine enquiry or valid critique of certain opinions or practices which are presented as being 'Christian' – while, in fact, rather far removed from being 'good news' for anyone but a few select individuals…

Acts also holds the message of comfort: the type of comfort which is found in the reality of the resurrected, living Jesus who not only transforms lives of believers through the power of the Holy Spirit during their earthly existence but also comforts his followers through the promise of resurrection and life for 'the dead', an event where the righteous will be judged favourable. Who these righteous ones may be has now been broadened and radically extended in a manner that was not formerly possible. Ironically, it is precisely such peripheral, 'living on the edge, near death' experiences of a life guided by a promise of that which is beyond, which can serve as encouragement for even more faithful and bold lives of testimony and commitment to the living Jesus. In a world where 'life in the moment' and instant gratification seems to take premise over long-term commitments, endurance, growth and vision, Acts offers Christian believers a lens with which to see a glimpse of the future: one in which life in the fullest sense of the word is an eternal possibility.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the theme of life in the book of Acts was approached within the framework of this writing as narrative literature: a writing that aims at telling the story of the impact of Jesus' crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension on the first communities who embraced this story in faith. Firstly, I identified occurrences of the concept of 'life' and 'living' throughout the book of Acts according to five related semantic domains. Then, I proceeded by providing a thematic overview of these occurrences according to five sub-themes: Jesus, the resurrected, living Lord; the resurrection of the dead; the gift of life through healing; life in community; and life in close proximity to suffering and death. Finally, the theological relevance of these sub-themes for contemporary believers was explored. As such, the relevance of 'life in the book of Acts' was affirmed: it continues to serve as encouragement, as hope, as invitation and as comfort for those who – up to this day – choose to live in the presence of the living Lord.

Chapter 4

Life in the Pauline Letters (1): Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon (the undisputed Pauline letters)

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Introduction

There are various related lexemes that can serve as markers in identifying the most important locations where the concept of life occurs in the undisputed Pauline letters. This is not to say that the concept of life is confined to the occurrence of these lexemes, but rather that the passages where they occur constitute the main focus of enquiry. After identifying the most important

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lexemes, similar references to the concept of life will be grouped together and discussed, with a focus on unique or special occurrences. Lastly, the theological contribution in the undisputed Pauline letters will be highlighted.

Identification of relevant lexemes

Based on a combination of an assessment of related semantic domains and subdomains in Louw and Nida (1989) and the meanings in Bauer et al. (2000), the following lexemes can be identified in indicating where the concept of life is the most prevalent in the undisputed Pauline letters (meanings marked with an asterisk [*] are unique to Paul).

ζωή

According to Bauer et al. (2000:430–431),[68] the following meanings are applicable:

- Under the main rubric of 'life in the physical sense' (Bauer et al. 2000:430): Romans 5:10; 8:38; 1 Corintians 3:22; 15:19; 2 Corintians 4:10, 11; 5:4; Philippians 1:20.
- Under the main rubric of 'transcendent life' (Bauer et al. 2000:430–431) and the sub-rubric of 'the life of believers' (Bauer et al. 2000:430–431), two applicable categories can be identified: (1) 'without (clear) eschatol[ogical] implications' (Bauer et al. 2000:430) (Rm 6:4; 7:10; 8:2, 6, 10; 2 Cor 2:16; 4:12; Phlp 2:16); and (2) 'life in the blessed period of final consummation' (Bauer et al. 2000:430–431) (Rm 2:7; 5:17, 18, 21; 6:22, 23; 11:15; Gl 6:8; Phlp 4:3; of these, ζωή is used in a construction with αἰώνιος in Rm 2:7; 5:21; 6:22; 6:23; Gl 6:8.).

ζάω

According to Bauer et al. (2000:424–426),[69] the following meanings are applicable:

- Under the main rubric of 'to be alive physically' (Bauer et al. 2000:424–425) and the sub-rubric of 'physical life in contrast to death' (Bauer et al. 2000:424–425), the following categories apply: (1) 'physical life in contrast to death' (Bauer et al. 2000:424–425) (Rm 7:1, 2, 3; 14:8ac, 9b; 1 Cor 7:39; 15:45; 2 Cor 1:8; 4:11; 5:15a; 6:9; 1 Th 4:15, 17.); (2) 'dead persons who return to

68. Apart from the fixed construction ψυχὴ ζωῆς, in which ζωή occurs (Louw & Nida 1989:37), Louw and Nida (1989:261–262) lists ζωή only under domain 23.88 ('to be alive, to live, life'), in which they do not distinguish between physical and transcendent life.

69. Louw and Nida (1989:261–262) do not distinguish between being alive physically or in a transcendent sense.

life' (Bauer et al. 2000:425; cf. Louw & Nida 1989:262–263: 'to come back to life after having once died') (Rm 14:9a; 2 Cor 13:4a.); (3) 'sick persons, if their illness terminates not in death but in recovery' (Bauer et al. 2000:425) (1 Th 3:8); and (4) 'beings that in reality, or as they are portrayed, are not subject to death' (Bauer et al. 2000:425) (Rm 9:26; 14:11; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16; 1 Th 1:9).

- Under the main rubric of 'to be alive physically (Bauer et al. 2000:424–425) and the sub-rubric of '[with] mention of that upon which life depends' (Bauer et al. 2000:425): 1 Corinthians 9:14.
- Under the main rubric of 'to be alive physically' (Bauer et al. 2000:424–425) and the sub-rubric of '[with] more precise mention of the sphere' (Bauer et al. 2000:425): Galatians 2:20c; Philippians 1:22.
- Under the main rubric of 'to live in a transcendent sense' (Bauer et al. 2000:425) and the sub-rubric of in the world' (Bauer et al. 2000:425): Romans 6:11, 13; 7:9; 2 Corintians 13:4ab; Galatians 2:19, 20ab; 5:25.
- Under the main rubric of 'to live in a transcendent sense' (Bauer et al. 2000:425) and the sub-rubric of 'in the glory of the life to come' (Bauer et al. 2000:425): Romans 1:17; 8:13b; 10:5; Galatians 3:11, 12; Philippians 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:10.
- Under the main rubric of 'to conduct oneself in a pattern of behavior' (Bauer et al. 2000:425–426): Romans 6:2, 10; 8:12, 13a; 14:7, 8b; 2 Corintians 5:15; Galatians 2:14, 19, 20d.
- Under the main rubric of 'to be life-productive' (Bauer et al. 2000:426): Romans 12:1.

ἀναζάω

Bauer et al. (2000:62) apply the meaning 'to function after being dormant'* (Bauer et al. 2000:62) to Romans 7:9.

ἀνίστημι

According to Bauer et al. (2000:83; cf. Louw & Nida 1989:263: 'to cause someone to live again after having once died'), the meaning 'to come back to life from the dead' can be applied to 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 16.

ἐγείρω

According to Bauer et al. (2000:271–272), the following meanings can be applied to the undisputed Pauline letters:

- Under the main rubric of 'to cause to return to life' (Bauer et al. 2000:271–272; cf. Louw & Nida 1989:263: 'to cause someone to live again after having once died'): Romans 4:24; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corintians 6:14; 15:15–17; 2 Corintians 4:14; Galatians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

- Under the main rubric of 'to enter into or to be in a state of life as a result of being raised' (Bauer et al. 2000:272): Romans 4:25; 6:4, 9; 7:4; 8:34; 1 Corintians 15:12, 13–17, 20, 29, 32, 35, 44, 52; 2 Corintians 5:15.

ἐξεγείρω

Baur et al. (2000:346; cf. Louw & Nida 1989:263: 'to cause someone to live again after having once died') apply the meaning 'to raise up fr[om] the dead'* to 1 Corintians 6:14.

ζωοποιέω

(Louw & Nida 1989:262: give life to; make to live)

Bauer et al. (2000:431–432) apply the meaning 'to cause to live' (cf. Louw & Nida 1989:262: 'to cause to live') to the following: Romans 4:17; 8:11; 1 Corintians 15:22, 36, 45; 2 Corintians 3:6; Galatians 3:21.:

συζάω

Bauer et al. (2000:954) apply the meaning 'live with' (cf. Louw & Nida 1989:263: 'to live in association with or together with someone else') to Romans 6:8 and 2 Corintians 7:3 (as well as 2 Tm 2:11).

γρηγορέω

Bauer et al. (2000:207–208) apply the meaning 'to remain fully alive'* (cf. Louw & Nida 1989:263: 'a figurative extension of meaning of γρηγορέω a "to stay awake"') to 1 Thessalonians 5:10.

ψυχή

One of the meanings of ψυχή is 'to be alive, to live, life' (Louw & Nida 1989:261–262) or 'earthly life' (Bauer et al. 2000:1098–1099) (Rm 11:3; Phlp 2:30).

ἄψυχος

Bauer et al. (2000:161) apply the meaning 'inanimate, lifeless'* (cf. Louw & Nida 1989:263–264: 'pertaining to a state of not having life') to 1 Corintians 14:7.

σάρξ

According to Bauer et al. (2000:915–916), the following meanings are applicable:

- 'one who is or becomes a physical being, *living being with flesh*' (Bauer et al. 2000:915) (Rm 3:20; 1 Cor 1:29; 15:50; Gl 1:16; 2:16)
- 'the outward side of life' (Bauer et al. 2000:916) (1 Cor 1:26; 2 Cor 5:16b; 11:18; Phlp 3:3–4; Gl 6:12; Phlm 16).

The way in which lexicons arrange texts under specific meanings is not necessarily the best rubric under which to discuss the concept of life in the undisputed Pauline letters. The definitions that are assigned to words in lexicons often focus on a technical aspect of a lexeme's meaning and not necessarily on the theological context in which they occur. In this contribution, the concept of life will be discussed under headings that range from more mundane contexts in which it occurs to more transcendent and eschatological contexts in which it occurs. The last three headings will constitute contexts that do not fit the previous headings. The headings will be as follows: (1) mundane or natural life, (2) Jesus' life, (3) resurrected life, (4) life in Christ or eternal life, (5) 'flesh' as denoting a living being or the outward, natural side of life, (6) God as a living God and (7) 'life' as it is used metaphorically in becoming active after being dormant.

■ Mundane or natural life

The texts that fall in this category are the following: Romans 6:2; 7:1, 2, 3; 8:12, 13a, 38; 11:3; 12:1; 14:7, 8ac, 9b; 1 Corintians 3:22; 7:39; 9:14; 14:7; 15:19, 45; 2 Corintians 1:8; 4:11; 6:9; 7:3; Galatians 2:14, 20acd; Philippians 1:20, 22; 2:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17. In all of these texts, the focus is on mundane or natural life. In the first sub-category, life is in some way contrasted to death. In Romans 7:1–3, ζάω is used in the context of a wife being bound by the law of marriage to her husband as long as he 'lives', in contrast to being free from the law of marriage when he dies. Life here indicates the state of being alive. In Romans 8:38–39, Paul declares how nothing, including death or 'life' (ζωή, v. 38), can separate believers from God's love in Christ. Paul probably does not have any specific aspect of life in mind and merely points to one of two possible states of existence (Moo 2018:566). Romans 11:3 contains a reference to Elijah's cry to God that the people who have killed the prophets also seeks his 'life' (ψυχή, citing 1 Ki 19:10), which obviously points to biological life. In 1 Corinthians 3:21–22, in his admonishment to the congregation that no one should boast in people, Paul argues that all things are theirs (v. 21), whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world 'or life or death' [εἴτε ζωὴ εἴτε θάνατος] or the present or the future; all things are theirs (v. 22). Although 'life' could simply point to the sphere of biological life (Fitzmyer 2008:208), in view of the reference to the present and the future, eschatological connotations to life are conceivable. Fee (2014:167) argues such a kind of life when he states that 'we live the life of the future in the present age, and therefore the present has become our own possession'. The point that Paul makes in 1 Corinthians

7:39, that a wife is bound to her husband as long as he 'lives' (ζάω), is similar to that in Romans 7:1–3, which implies a contrast to the possible death of her husband.

In 2 Corinthians 1:8–9, Paul reports of the afflictions that he and his co-workers experienced in Asia, up to the point that they despaired of 'life' (ζάω, v. 8) itself, which he describes as feeling that they received a death sentence (v. 9). In 2 Corinthians 4:11, there is a reference to 'we who live' [ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες] who are constantly being given over to death for Jesus' sake, which points to the suffering that Paul and his co-workers endure to the point of almost dying. The reference is thus to physical life (Harris 2005:348; cf. Guthrie 2015:259–260). This reference to death also 'highlights the life-death paradox which is at the heart of Verses 10–11: we are "the living dead" or "the dying living"' (Harris 2005:347). When Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6:9 about the hardships he has endured, he states that he can be considered as dying 'and behold, we live' [καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν]. In light of 'the surprising acts of deliverance' (Seifrid 2014:283), Paul's reference is most probably to physical life (Guthrie 2015:336–337; Harris 2005:481–482; cf. Garland 1999:312–313; Ps 117:17–18, LXX). According to 2 Corinthians 7:2–3, after asking the congregation to make room in their hearts for Paul and his co-workers (v. 2), he writes that the congregation is in their hearts 'to die together and to live together' ([εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν], v. 3), which point to natural life and natural death (Harris 2005:519; cf. Guthrie 2015:362–363). In Philippians 1:20, Paul states that Christ will be honoured in his body, 'whether by life or by death' [εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου], which again points to natural, bodily life and death (Keown 2017a:239). The same applies to Philippians 1:22, where Paul writes about the prospect to 'live in the flesh' [ζῆν ἐν σαρκί] in contrast to dying (Keown 2017a). In Philippians 2:30, there is a reference to Epaphroditus who risked his 'life' [ψυχή] to complete that which is lacking in the congregation's service to Paul. In other words, he almost died. In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and 17, when Paul instructs the Thessalonians about the second coming of Christ, he argues that believers who are 'alive' [ζάω] would not precede the people who already died[70] at the time of Jesus' coming, but meet the Lord after they have been resurrected. Being physically alive at the time of Jesus' coming is what is in view here (cf. Shogren 2012:184; Weima 2014:384).[71] In all of the examples in this category, the focus is on natural life in contrast to death, although such a contrast is more direct in some verses than others.

70. Paul actually refers to the dead as those who have fallen asleep [κοιμάω], being a well-known euphemism for the deceased at the time (Van Houwelingen 2007:319).

71. It can be noted that in Thessalonica, many of the non-believers lived without hope (1 Th 4:5, 12; 5:6; Van Houwelingen 2007:310). Paul's reference to being alive in 1 Thessalonians might thus have overtones of living with hope.

In the second sub-category, although the focus is on mundane life, there seems to be an overlap or a contrast between mundane life and life in Christ or eternal life. In Romans 6:2, Paul asks the rhetorical question: 'How can we who died to sin still live [ζάω] in it?' To live in sin involves more than mundane life, but involves a lifestyle of sin (Moo 2018:383) or a way of living under the power or authority of sin (Jewett 2006:396), which stands in opposition to life in Christ. According to Romans 8:12–13, the congregation is warned not to 'live' [ζάω] 'according to the flesh' [κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν], for such a way of living results in death. In Romans 8:1–16, living according to the flesh involves more than merely living according to human passions or desires. In its contrast with life in Christ according to the Spirit, life in the flesh is juxtaposed with life in the Spirit, which carries eschatological connotations. In other words, life according to the flesh points to a way of existence in the eschatologically old age before or outside of Christ, under the power of law, sin and death (Jewett 2006:495; Moo 2018:516; Schreiner 2018b:414). Paul states in Romans 14:7–9 'that none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. (8) For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living' (ESV). The verb ζάω is used in all instances in these verses. There is arguably a measure of overlap between natural life on this earth and life in Christ, especially the second time ζάω is used in Romans 14:8. In other words, life 'to the Lord' involves more than mere mundane, natural life, but a life directed to the Lord, which involves honouring him and giving thanks to him (Rm 14:6).

In 1 Corinthians 15:19, amidst Paul's discourse on Jesus' resurrection, he bewails the pitiful end that would result from having hope 'in this life only' [ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ [...] μόνον]. Technically, natural life will come to an end, which implies a contrast with everlasting resurrection life (cf. Gardner 2018:668). According to 1 Corinthians 15:45, Adam became a 'living being' [ψυχὴν ζῶσαν], which is contrasted to the 'Last Adam', Christ, who became a 'live-giving spirit' [πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν]. Here is thus a clear contrast between natural, psychological life of Adam and the new resurrection life that Jesus provides. In Galatians 2:20, Paul writes that the life that he now 'lives in the flesh' [ζῶ ἐν σαρκί], he 'lives' ([ζάω], fourth occurrence) by faith in the Son of God. Living in the flesh surely points to bodily (Das 2014:271; DeSilva 2018:248), mundane life, but it coheres and seems to overlap with 'life' (fourth occurrence) in Christ (see the Section 'Jesus' life'). In Philippians 1:21, Paul states that for him to live [ζάω] is Christ and to die is gain. Natural or physical life is in focus here in contrast with dying (Hansen 2009:81; Keown 2017a:241). Yet, because the life Paul refers to 'is clearly life as a believer in Christ rather than life as an unbeliever' (Keown 2017a:241) and because it refers to an 'ongoing faith relationship with Christ in this world (Phlp 3:8–10), joy in him (Phlp 3:1; 4:4), and continued service of him through evangelism (Phlp 1:7, 12–18, 22; cf. 2 Cor 5:15) and pastoral ministry

(Phlp 1:25–26)' (Keown 2017a:242), the meaning of ζάω seems to overlap with life in Christ (cf. Hawthorne & Martin 2004:55; see the Section 'Jesus' life'). In other words, the new life in Christ has to come into effect in every aspect of natural life, even if it involves physical death.

A third sub-category of living comes to the fore when Paul reports the Antioch incident. He writes in Galatians 2:14 that he said to Peter: 'If you, though a Jew, live [ζάω] like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews [ἰουδαΐζω]?' (English Standard Version [ESV]). In this context, the respective form of 'living' that Paul describes implies at least cultural eating norms (cf. Keener 2019:163) and thus has more of a cultural context. The unique cultural lifestyle of the Judaean caused Judaeans and gentiles to live separate lives, especially in respect of table fellowship (cf. Das 2014:214; DeSilva 2018:208). In the current context, however, living like a gentile implies faith in Christ and thus to live a lifestyle free from the law (cf. Das 2014:214), which seems to overlap with life in Christ.

The fourth sub-category consists of references to bodies or things that are either animated (living) or inanimate (lifeless). The reference in Romans 12:1 to the presenting of believers' bodies as 'living' [ζάω] sacrifices falls in this category (cf. Moo 2018b:770).[72] A similar yet opposite connotation presents itself in 1 Corinthians 14:7, when Paul discusses the speaking in tongues and illustrates his point by referring to 'lifeless' [ἄψυχος] instruments who give distinct sounds.

In respect of the last sub-category, in 1 Corinthians 9:14, there is a reference to ministers of the gospel who should get their 'living' [ζάω] from the gospel. In this context, ζάω pertains to a minister's salary or benefits (Fee 2014:457; cf. Thiselton 2000:693). As the sustenance of ministers of the gospel is at stake, it can be concluded that even this aspect of life stands in service of the gospel itself.

Jesus' life

The following texts resort under this heading: Romans 5:10; 6:10; 2 Corintians 4:10–11.

In these references, the life of Christ is in focus. In Romans 5:10, Paul indicates that believers will be saved by Christ's 'life' [ζωή], which implies his resurrection life (Moo 2018:340–341; Schreiner 2018b:272). Similarly, in Romans 6:10, there is a reference to the life that Christ 'lives' [ζάω], which he 'lives' [ζάω] to God. The life of Christ is here contrasted with 'the death he died' in

72. Contra Schreiner (2018:626), who argues that 'living' pertains to the 'spiritual state of believers'. Moo (2018:770) shows that, unlike the context of Romans 6:11, 13, ζῶσαν in Romans 12:1 modifies θυσία [sacrifice], not σώματα [bodies].

which he 'died to sin'. The connotation of resurrection is thus part of Christ's life and implies new power to carry out God's will (Moo 2018:404; cf. Schreiner 2018b:321). When Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:7–12 writes about believers' lives that contain a treasure in jars of clay (v. 7), he refers to the afflictions that they endure (vv. 8–9). Part of this affliction is to carry the death of Jesus in believers' bodies so that the 'life of Jesus' [ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ] may be manifested in their mortal flesh (v. 10). Worded differently, believers' lives are given over to death for Jesus sake so that the 'life of Jesus' [ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ] may be manifested in the mortal flesh (v. 11). Christ's life always carries the connotation of resurrection life, which forms the basis of a believer's eternal life in Christ. Christ's life thus also refers to 'the life offered to people by the risen Jesus, through the new-covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit' (Guthrie 2015:260; cf. Harris 2005:347).

■ Resurrected life

The following texts can be arranged under this rubric: Romans 4:17, 24–25; 6:4, 9; 7:4; 8:11, 34; 10:9; 14:9a; 1 Corintians 6:14; 15:12, 13–17, 20, 22, 29, 32, 35–36, 44, 52; 2 Corintians 4:14; 5:15; 13:4a; Galatians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:14, 16.

In Romans 4:17, which is within the discourse about the promise to Abraham and his faith, Paul writes about God in whom Abraham believed, who gives life [ζωοποιέω] to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In context, the giving of life points to God's resurrection power (Schreiner 2018b:244). Yet, such language also recalls a way of describing God's *creatio ex nihilo* (Thielman 2018:248; e.g. 2 Bar 21:4; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 4.187). At the end of this chapter, in Romans 4:24–25, Paul refers to Christ who was raised [ἐγείρω] from the dead for believers' justification. Christ's resurrection also forms part of the content of belief. In Romans 6:4, Christ's resurrection [ἐγείρω] is pictured as the basis for walking [περιπατέω] in the newness of life (Schreiner 2018b:313). More references to Jesus being raised [ἐγείρω] from the dead occurs in Romans 6:9; 7:4; 8:11 and 8:34. In Romans 8:11, after Christ's resurrection by the Spirit is mentioned, there is an additional reference to God that will 'give life' [ζωοποιέω] to believers' mortal bodies on the basis of Jesus' resurrection, which points to the resurrection of believers (Moo 2018:515; Schreiner 2018b:410). In Romans 10:9, Jesus' resurrection [ἐγείρω] is again set forth as the content of belief (Moo 2018:676; cf. Rm 4:25). In Romans 14:9, Paul mentions that Jesus who 'died and lived again' [ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἔζησεν] might be Lord of both the dead and the living, which signifies that the resurrection establishes Jesus' lordship (Moo 2018:862; cf. Schreiner 2018b:700). Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 6:14 that God raised [ἐγείρω] Jesus from the dead and will also raise up believers by his power, which indicates that Jesus' resurrection is the basis for the resurrection of believers (cf. Fee 2014:283; Schreiner 2018a:127). In 1 Corinthians 15, which constitutes an elaborate discussion on the decisiveness of resurrection for the gospel and for the resurrection and

eternal future of believers (cf. Gardner 2018:644), there are several references to Jesus being raised ([ἐγείρω], 1 Cor 15:12, 13–17, 20) from the dead and to believers being bodily resurrected ([ἐγείρω], 1 Cor 15:12, 13, 15, 16, 29, 32, 35, 44, 52) or being made alive ([ζωοποιέω], 1 Cor 15:22, 36). Apart from the way in which Jesus' resurrection forms the basis of the resurrected body according to this chapter, the transformed body is 'adapted to the eschatological existence that is under the ultimate domination of, and animated by, the Spirit' (Fee 2014:869).

In 2 Corinthians 4:14, there is another reference to Jesus' resurrection [ἐγείρω] being the basis for believers' resurrection. In 2 Corinthians 5:15, Jesus' resurrection [ἐγείρω] forms the reason for not living for yourself. According to 2 Corinthians 13:4, Jesus was crucified in weakness, but 'lives' [ζάω] by the power of God, which forms the basis of life with Christ. In Galatians 1:1, Paul mentions Jesus' resurrection [ἐγείρω] as motivation of his gospel that does not originate with human beings. He is an apostle, not by the doing of people, but through the resurrected Christ and God the Father. Das (2014:78) argues that for Paul, the 'age to come had already dawned with the resurrection of Jesus'. Paul already establishes the connection between Jesus' resurrection and believers' future resurrection (Keener 2019:50; cf. Das 2014:78; DeSilva 2018:115). In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, when Paul addresses the Thessalonian congregation about Jesus' second coming, he argues that we wait for the Son from heaven, whom God raised [ἐγείρω] from the dead, who will be the same Jesus who delivers people from the wrath of God to come. Jesus' resurrection thus forms the foundation of Jesus coming and his future deliverance of God's wrath (cf. Shogren 2012:74). In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, Paul directly connects Jesus' resurrection [ἀνίστημι] with the expectation that God will bring with him 'those who have fallen asleep'. Two verses later, in Verse 16, Paul expresses the hope that the Lord himself will descend from heaven, when the dead in Christ will 'rise' [ἀνίστημι] first. Believers' resurrection can thus be understood as a direct consequence of Jesus' resurrection (cf. Shogren 2012:182) and thus as being guaranteed by Jesus' resurrection (Weima 2014:378).

■ Life in Christ or eternal life

The following texts apply to this rubric: Romans 1:17; 2:7; 5:17–18, 21; 6:4, 8, 11, 13, 22–23; 7:9–10; 8:2, 6, 10–11, 13b; 10:5, 11:15; 1 Corintians 15:45; 2 Corintians 2:16; 3:6; 4:12; 5:4, 15; 13:4b; Galatians 2:19, 20b; 3:11–12, 21; 5:25; 6:8; Philippians 2:16; 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:8; 5:10.

The bulk of Paul's references to life lie in this category. Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17, which states that the righteous shall 'live' [ζάω] by faith (cf. Gl 3:11). Moo (2018:82) argues that 'Old Testament covenant "life" functions as a paradigm for eternal life in the New Testament' here (cf. Thielman 2018:84). Schreiner (2018b:82) adds that life in this verse is eschatological. Longenecker

(2016:186) goes further by stating that 'life' is 'used here as equivalent to the experience of "salvation" [σωτηρία] and a positive response to the gift of "God's righteousness"'. In Romans 2:6–7, when Paul lays down the principles of righteousness in the pre-Christ era (Du Toit 2016),[73] he states that 'eternal life' ([ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον], v. 7) is the end result for those who by patience in doing well seek for glory, honour and immortality.[74] In Romans 5:17–21, when Paul contrasts the respective dispensations that Adam and Christ represent, he argues that those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness will 'reign in life' [ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν] through Christ. This reign is contrasted to death that reigned through Adam (v. 17). Although some understand the reigning in life as pointing forward to the eschaton exclusively (e.g. Thielman 2018:290; Wright 2002:528), the reigning in life can be understood as pertaining to this life: Christ believers already take part in an eschatological reality wherein they have dominion over sin and death (cf. Bultmann 1964:867; Jewett 2006:384; Moo 2018:367; Schreiner 2018b:291–292), which stands in contrast to the reigning power of death in the previous age. Likewise, the one trespass of Adam led to the condemnation of all people, whereas the one act of righteousness led to the justification and the 'life' [ζωή] of all people (v. 18), which points to eschatological life that has already been inaugurated and will result in being saved from wrath in the last day (Moo 2018:368; cf. Jewett 2006:386; Schreiner 2018b:293). According to Verse 21, as sin reigned in death, grace might reign through righteousness, leading to 'eternal life' [ζωὴν αἰώνιον] through Christ. It is quite clear from these verses that the concept of 'life' in Christ overlaps with 'eternal life'. The one implies the other. In Romans 5:12–21, the Christ age is also pictured as innately eschatological in that it points to God's realised eschatological inbreaking in Christ, signifying a new dispensation with new reigning powers (cf. Schreiner 2018b:301).

In Romans 6, the 'newness of life' [καινότητι ζωῆς] in which believers walk is presented as resulting from burial with Christ, 'just as Christ was raised from the dead', signified[75] by baptism (v. 4). The walking in the 'newness of life' is thus based on Christ's resurrection from the dead (Schreiner 2018b:313). The burial with Christ 'marks the end of the old life but is also part of the transition to a new life' (Moo 2018:386). Likewise, the walking in the 'newness of life' 'is a life empowered by the realities of the new age' (Moo 2018:391). The dying,

73. I have argued in some length elsewhere that the entire Romans 1:18–3:20 can be understood as pertaining to the pre-Christ or Old Covenant era, in which Paul highlights the ideal standard of the law and the incapability of human beings to adhere to the law, which, in turn, anticipates salvation-historical fulfilment.

74. This is apart from the question whether the receiving of eternal life in this context is hypothetical or actual (see Moo 2018:150–151).

75. Baptism should not be taken as working *ex opera operato*. Yet, in the early church, baptism, faith and the reception of the Spirit were not seen as separate events, but as part of the conversion experience (Schreiner 2018b:312; cf. Dunn 1970:145; Moo 2018:390).

being buried and being resurrected with Christ are thus 'experiences that transfer us from the old age to the new' (Moo 2018:389). Yet, there is also a corporate, salvation–historical component to such a transition in that it took place historically, although it becomes applicable to the believer at conversion (Moo 2018). The new life thus bears a distinctive eschatological character (Schreiner 2018b:313; cf. Longenecker 2016:614–616). In Verse 8, Paul states that believers 'will live' [συζήσομεν] as a logical consequence of dying with Christ. Many commentators agree that συζήσομεν is a logical future in that the new life is a logical, immediate consequence of dying with Christ and belief in the resurrection, making the new life a present reality (e.g. Cranfield 1975:312–313; Jewett 2006:406; Kruse 2012:262; Schreiner 2018b:321; Wright 2002:540; cf. Moo 2018:402). The reality of dying with Christ and being raised with Christ causes a believer to consider himself or herself as dead to sin and 'alive to God' [ζῶντας {...} τῷ θεῷ] in Christ (v. 11). The new, eschatological life in Christ thus bears ethical consequences. Another reference to transitioning 'from death to life' [ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας] follows in Verse 13. At the end of this chapter, in Verses 22–23, Paul argues that 'now' [νυνί] that believers are set free from sin and became slaves of God, they receive their fruit, which leads to sanctification 'and its end, eternal life' ([τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωὴν αἰώνιον], v. 22). The νυνί can be considered as an eschatological 'now', which points to the new reality of the new, eschatological age in which believers already live (cf. Jewett 2006:426–427). Paul ends off this chapter (v. 23) by stating that the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is 'eternal life' [ζωὴ αἰώνιος] in Christ. Eternal life thus seems to be something that believers already partake in, which means it overlaps with or is even identified with the life received in Christ.

The way in which Paul refers to being 'alive' [ἔζων] in Romans 7:9 probably points to the state of being alive before the coming of the law at Sinai (Moo 2018:462; Wright 2002:563), which clearly involves more than biological life, but signifies a form of spiritual life. In Romans 7:10, he explains that the commandment promised 'life' [ζωή] but actually proved to be death. Although life in these two verses is hardly eschatological life or eternal life as such, it is more than mundane life as it promises at least God's blessings to his people in the covenant, involving peace, security in the land, good harvests and so on (Dt 28:1–14; 30:15, 19, Moo 2018:463).

In Romans 8, after stating that there is 'now' [νῦν] no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (v. 1), Paul reasons that the principle [νόμος] of the Spirit of 'life' [ζωή] in Christ has set believers free from the principle [νόμος][76] of sin and death (v. 2). The νῦν in Verse 1 can be considered an eschatological νῦν in that it indicates the way of existence in the new, eschatological age in Christ (Longenecker 2016:684; Moo 2018:495; Schreiner 2018b:394–395; cf. Thielman

76. That νόμος points to a principle in both instances in Romans 8:2, rather than to the Mosaic law, is the majority view (e.g. Longenecker 2016:685; Moo 2018:497; Schreiner 2018b:396).

2018:378; Wright 2002:575). In Verse 2, 'life' modifies the Spirit, which means that the Spirit is characterised as giving life. Life also functions to indicate the eschatological mode of existence as a mode under the leadership and power of the Spirit. In other words, '[a]s sin and death are those powers that rule the old age (see ch. 6 to ch. 7), so the Spirit and the eschatological life conferred by the Spirit are those powers that rule the new age' (Moo 2018:499 cf. Fee 1994:526; Schottroff 1991:107). According to Verse 6, life [ζωή] is the consequence of the mind set on the Spirit, which is contrasted with the mind that is set on the flesh and results in death. Similar to Verse 2, Verse 6 associates the Spirit with 'life' [ζωή], which is contrasted with the body being dead because of sin. In Verse 11, Paul pictures the Spirit as both raising Jesus from the dead and as dwelling within believers. The reasoning is that the same Spirit who raised Jesus will also 'give life' [ζωοποιέω] to believers' mortal bodies through the indwelling Spirit. Here is thus continuity between the life that the Spirit 'now' (v. 1) gives to believers and the resurrection of the body in the eschaton. That is why Paul also sees the indwelling Spirit as a guarantee for the awaited resurrection (Bultmann 1964:867; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:1–5). Verse 13 states that if the deeds of the body are put to death by the Spirit, believers will 'live' [ζάω], which places life on the opposite side of both death and the deeds of the body.

In Romans 10:5, when Paul writes about righteousness that is not based on the law, he references Leviticus 18:5, which states that those who do all the commandments of the law will live [ζάω] by them. Although life is not eschatological life or eternal life, it implies more than mundane life and includes God's Old Covenant promises (Moo 2018:665–666; cf. Rm 7:10 above). In Romans 11:15, there is a reference to Israel's acceptance by God as being 'life from the dead' [ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν]. What exactly life points to here is not certain. It can either point to spiritual quickening (e.g. Fitzmyer 1993:613; Wright 2002:683) or bodily resurrection (e.g. Dunn 1988:658; Jewett 2006:681; Schreiner 2018b:582). Yet, an eschatological dimension is arguably present here.

In 1 Corinthians 15:45, which occurs within Paul's discourse on the resurrection, he contrasts Adam who became a 'living being' [ψυχὴν ζῶσαν] with the Last Adam, who became a 'life-giving spirit' [πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν]. Here, natural, psychological life is contrasted with spiritual, resurrection life (cf. Garland 2003:735; Schreiner 2018a:322), which is innately eschatological (Fee 2014:874; cf. Thiselton 2000:1282). In 2 Corinthians 2:16, Paul writes that being saved constitutes a fragrance 'from life to life' [ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωήν] amongst believers, while being a fragrance 'from death to death' [ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον] for those who are perishing. This points to whether people respond in faith to the life given in Christ or whether they encounter condemnation and death (Seifrid 2014:91–92). 'From life' seems to point to Jesus' risen life (Barrett 1973:101; Martin 2014:188) and 'to life' to eternal life

(Garland 1999:149; Martin 2014:188) or eschatological life (Collins 2013:73). In 2 Corinthians 3:6–7, Paul juxtaposes the letter of the law as something that kills with the Spirit that 'gives life' ([ζωοποιέω], v. 6), which forms part of the ministry of the Spirit (v. 7) in the new covenant (v. 6). This life that the Spirit imparts coheres with 'the eschatological new redemptive order' of the new covenant. Paul contrasts the 'old order of sin and death to the new, eschatological age of fulfillment in Christ' (Martin 2014:195). Apart from the inauguration of the eschatological age, the life that the Spirit imparts involves eternal life (Harris 2005:274; cf. Seifrid 2014:130). In 2 Corinthians 4:12, Paul states that death is at work in him and his co-workers, while 'life' [ζωή] is at work in the congregation. The life that the readers experience could pertain to 'the joys and privileges of Christian existence' (Harris 2005:350), but in anticipation of the resurrection of believers in 2 Corinthians 4:14, it rather points to the resurrection life of Jesus (Guthrie 2015:262; cf. Seifrid 2014:209). In 2 Corinthians 5:1–4, Paul expresses his longing for believers to enter the heavenly dwelling in opposition to still be in 'this tent'. Believers long to be further 'clothed', so that 'what is mortal may be swallowed up by life' ([καταποθῇ τὸ θνητὸν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς], v. 4). Life is personified as the transformational agent of the bodily resurrection of believers (Garland 1999:262; cf. Guthrie 2015:283; Harris 2005:390), a life that is already working in their lives (Garland 1999:262; cf. Harris 2005:390). According to 2 Corinthians 5:15, Christ died for all, so that those who 'live' [ζάω] might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and was raised. Here, those who live seem to indicate those who received eternal life in Christ (Guthrie 2015:305–306) and thus were converted (Harris 2005:423; cf. Seifrid 2014:245). In 2 Corinthians 13:4, when Paul gives his final warnings to the congregation, he writes that he and his co-workers are weak in Christ, but 'will live with him' [ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ] by the power of God towards them. Although life is in the future tense, it is already a reality in Paul's life. Yet, the same resurrection power of Christ will also raise people in the future resurrection (Guthrie 2015:636). However, it is also probable that ζήσομεν points to his immanent visit to the congregation when he will convince them of their wrongdoing (Harris 2005:916; Martin 2014:674).

In Galatians 2:19–20, Paul declares that he died to the law that he might 'live to God' ([θεῷ ζήσω], v. 19). It is no longer Paul that lives, but Christ who 'lives' [ζάω] in him. His life in the flesh (bodily life), he now lives [ζάω] by faith in the Son of God, who loved Paul and gave himself for him (v. 20). Most commentators identify Christ who lives in Paul as the indwelling Spirit (e.g. De Boer 2011:161; DeSilva 2018:248; Fung 1988:124; Keener 2019:195), which empowers believers to do God's will (DeSilva 2018:247). The new life in Christ points to the new found freedom from the law as well as the new creation (see Gl 6:15), which coheres with the embodiment of righteousness (DeSilva 2018:247–249). Hays (2000:244) and De Boer (2011:161–162) argue that the

new life that Paul acquires in Christ signifies a new identity, which is certainly true for all believers. The new life in Christ is innately eschatological (Witherington 1998:189; cf. De Boer 2011:159–162) and signifies 'a new phase in salvation history' (Keener 2019:194). Das (2014:269) argues that the new life in Christ can be identified with eternal life, which is a 'current reality' in believers' lives (cf. Witherington 1998:189).

Several aspects of life come together in Galatians 2:19–20. Death to the law brings spiritual life directed to God (v. 19). Believers are no longer in control of their lives; Christ lives in them through the Spirit, which coheres with eschatological, eternal life. Yet, at the same time, bodily life is lived by faith in God's Son (v. 20). In other words, bodily life is in service of God and dedicated to God. In Galatians 3:11, there is another reference to Habakkuk 2:4, which states that the righteous shall 'live' [ζάω] by faith (cf. Rm 1:17), which is followed in Galatians 3:12 by a quote from Leviticus 18:5, which requires someone to do the commandments of the law in order to 'live' [ζάω] by it. Essentially, these two references are 'antithetically parallel' (Moo 2013:208): whereas 'doing' constitutes the way to live according to Leviticus 18:5, faith constitutes the means to live according to Habakkuk 2:4. Whereas life according to Galatians 3:11 points to true life (Hab 2:4), which is paradigmatic of the new life in Christ, life in Galatians 3:12 points to the blessings and covenant promises of God in the Old Testament such as health, fruitful crops, security in the land and so on (Lv 18:15). As faith in Christ brings a person into the life of the new creation, which ultimately results in eternal life (DeSilva 2018:293), life in the New Covenant (based on faith) supersedes life in the Old Covenant. Galatians 3:21 mentions the same principle as in Verse 12 (cf. Lv 18:5) but presents it as an impossibility. Implicitly, Paul teaches that righteousness and eschatological life can only be modelled on the example of Abraham's faith (cf. Moo 2013:239), on which faith in Christ is modelled. In Galatians 5:25, the principle is stated that if believers 'live' [ζάω] by the Spirit, they should also walk in or keep in step [στοιχέω] with the Spirit. Here, living has to do with the Christian ethical living or walking under the power of the eschatological Spirit as the 'source of the new life' (Fee 1994:456; cf. De Boer 2011:371; DeSilva 2018:472). Or in Keener's (2019:525) words, having life by the Spirit 'refers to the eternal life, the life of the coming age, generated by the Spirit (Gl 6:8)'. The Spirit thus constitutes 'the new life-principle of freedom' in that 'He grants the effectual power of divine grace which operates through Christ in the believers' (Ridderbos 1953:210). Galatians 6:8 states the principle that sowing to the flesh reaps corruption, whereas the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit 'reap eternal life' [θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον]. As with Romans 8, there is a close connection between the working of the Spirit and eternal life (cf. Fee 1994:467; Gl 5:5). Moo (2013:386) contends that eternal life pertains to the life of resurrection in particular (cf. Dunn 1993:331). Fee (1994:467) states

that eternal life that is reaped from the Spirit 'is Paul's view of the Spirit as the primary reality of our eschatological existence as already and not yet'. The Spirit 'is both the evidence of our having entered into life in the present and the ground and guarantee of our final, full realization of that life'.

In Philippians 2:16, Paul admonishes believers to hold onto the 'word of life' [λόγον ζωῆς] that he may boast in the day of Christ that he did not run or labour in vain. The 'word' probably refers back to Philippians 1:14 where it is about preaching the gospel (Hansen 2009:184; Holloway 2017:135; Keown 2017a:487). The 'word of life' would then point to the proclamation of the word that generates eternal life, which already commences in the present (Keown 2017a:487–488; cf. Bultmann 1964:867; Fee 1995:248). After believing the word, they received life (Hawthorne & Martin 2004:146). In Philippians 4:3, there is a reference to fellow workers whose names are in the 'book of life' [βίβλῳ ζωῆς]. The same connotations to life are present here. The 'book of life' is a concept that occurs in the Old Testament (e.g. Ex 32:32–33; Ps 68:28, LXX; 86:6, LXX, see Keown 2017a:328). Here it is shorthand for the 'book containing the names of those who will inherit eternal life' (Keown 2017b:329; cf. Fee 1995:397). The reference to the book of life thus 'sounds an eschatological note consonant with the reminder of *citizenship in heaven* (3:20)' (Hansen 2009:286, emphasis original).

In 1 Thessalonians 3:7–8, after Paul indicated that he and his co-workers have been comforted through the Thessalonian congregation's faith (v. 7), he writes: 'now we live [ζάω] if you are standing fast in the Lord' (v. 8). This life is interpreted in various ways. Weima (2014:271) argues that it needs to be interpreted metaphorically as 'a hyperbolic expression that powerfully conveys his deep love for the believers in that city'. Similarly, Bruce (1982:67) and Beale (2003:105) interpret 'now we live' such as that Paul and his co-workers were encouraged and their anxiety removed because of the report of the congregation's faith (cf. Wanamaker 1990:136). Shogren (2012:141) contends that it refers 'not to physical life, but a life of joy'. Boring (2015:122), however, maintains that 'now we live' has 'overtones of a resurrection to new life', and Morris (1984:73) argues that '[t]his is more than physical life; it is all the fullness of the Christian life'. While the metaphorical interpretation is certainly possible, it seems that connotations to the life in Christ is equally possible. Paul's words, 'now we live' thus seems to be primary metaphorical, expressing relief or encouragement, with overtones of the joy believers have in the resurrection life in Christ. In 1 Thessalonians 5:10, Paul states that Christ who died for believers will 'live' [ζάω] with Christ, whether they are 'awake or asleep' [γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν]. Here, life with Christ clearly points to (eternal) resurrection life in the eschaton (Bruce 1982:113–114; Witherington 2006:153; cf. Shogren 2012:211; Weima 2014:440), although believers started to experience this life in the present (Weima 2014:440).

■ ‘Flesh’ as denoting a living being or the outward, natural side of life

The following texts can be arranged under this rubric: Romans 3:20; 1 Corintians 1:26, 29; 15:50; 2 Corintians 5:16b; 11:18; Galatians 1:16; 2:16; 6:12; Philippians 3:3–4; Philemon 16.

In all of these texts, Paul uses the word σάρξ to either to refer to a living being (Rm 3:20; 1 Cor 1:29; 15:50; Gl 1:16; 2:16) or to the outward, fleshly or bodily side of life (1 Cor 1:26; 2 Cor 5:16b; 11:18; Gl 6:12; Phlp 3:3–4; Phlm 16). Although Paul uses σάρξ in a wide range of meanings, varying from physical flesh that covers the body (e.g. 1 Cor 15:39; Bauer et al. 2000:914–915), the physical body as a functioning entity (e.g. 1 Cor 6:16; Bauer et al. 2000:915), a living being (1 Cor 1:29; Bauer et al. 2000:915), earthly or biological descent (e.g. Rm 4:1; Bauer et al. 2000:916) to the outward side of life (e.g. 1 Cor 1:26; Bauer et al. 2000:916), I have argued in some length elsewhere (Du Toit 2019:189–212, 220–222) that Paul sometimes uses σάρξ in context of a way of life or existence in the old era under law, sin and death in contrast to a way of life and existence in the new era in Christ under the rule of the Spirit [πνεῦμα]. A way of life in or according to σάρξ involves external markers of identity such as law, circumcision and ethnicity, which all are in the domain of human possibility. In contrast, a way of life in or according to πνεῦμα involves internal markers of identity such as trust in God (faith) and the indwelling Spirit, which point to divine action (cf. Rm 7:5–6; 8:1–16; Gl 5:16–25). There is thus a sense wherein σάρξ corresponds to living in the old era under the law and πνεῦμα corresponds to true, eschatological life in the new era in Christ.

■ God as a living God

The texts that apply here are the following: Romans 9:26; 14:11; 2 Corintians 3:3; 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

In these texts, Paul refers to God as the ‘living’ [ζῶντος] God (Rm 9:26; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16), the ‘living and true’ [ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ] God (1 Th 1:9) and as part of God’s speech when God swears by himself: ‘as I live’ ([ζῶ ἐγώ], Rm 14:11). The phrase ‘living God’ is found throughout the Old Testament (e.g. Dt 5:26; Jos 3:10, 1 Sm 17:26, 36; 2 Ki 19:4, 16; Ps 42:2; 84:2; Is 37:4; Jr 10:10; 23:36; Dn 6:20, 26; Ho 1:10) and could point to God as a living being, as living in contrast with lifeless idols or as actively working with his people (Coetsee 2019:5). Yet, Paul applies the same phrase in new contexts. In Romans 9:26, Paul quotes Hosea 2:1 (LXX; Ho 1:10, MT), which states that those who are not God’s people shall be called sons of the living God. In the context of Romans, this quote probably recalls Romans 4:17, which is about God calling things that do not exist. The reference to the ‘living God’ in 9:26 could thus include the connotation of ‘God’s life-giving power’, wherein those who are not God’s people are called

'into the exalted status of sonship/daughtership' (Jewett 2006:601). In Romans 14:11, Paul cites Isaiah 45:23 (LXX), which starts with God's words: 'as I live'. This is a divine or prophetic oath formula (Jewett 2006:851; Longenecker 2016:1004). In the context of Romans, connotations of God's unique sovereignty are present (Moo 2018:863) as well as an appeal to God's authority in judgement (cf. Jewett 2006:851). In 2 Corinthians 3:3, the 'Spirit of the living God' is portrayed as the agent in the writing of 'a letter from Christ' on human hearts, which refers to the lives and testimonies of the Corinthian congregation. It could point to the Spirit working 'in ever new, living, and fresh ways' (Seifrid 2014:114) or more probably to 'the life-giving Spirit' (Garland 1999:159; Thrall 1994:227). In 2 Corinthians 6:16, believers are presented as 'the temple of the living God', which points to the fact that God actively dwells within believers (cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19) and 'is constantly active within the world, who not only intervenes in human affairs but also guides and directs all of them' (Seifrid 2014:294–295). The name 'living God' also 'implies his communication and communion with his people' (Seifrid 2014:295). An implicit contrast to the fact that idols in pagan temples are lifeless is also conceivable (Harris 2005:505; Seifrid 2014:294). The reference in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 to God who is 'living and true' can be interpreted as conveying the truth about God in contrast to the congregation's past worship of lifeless idols (cf.; Boring 2015:68; Shogren 2012:73–74; Witherington 2006:74)

'Life' as it is used metaphorically in becoming active after being dormant

This meaning applies to Romans 7:9, where ἀναζάω is used in a metaphorical way to denote that sin 'sprang to life again' (Moo 2018:462; cf. Longenecker 2016:642). In other words, it became operative again.

Conclusion

When the concept of life in the undisputed Pauline letters is examined, one can identify a certain continuum and a specific focus. Although Paul often refers to natural, mundane or physical life, such references never occur in isolation as if natural life would be an important focus in itself. Natural life is most often set in contrast with natural death. Yet, natural death only plays an incidental role in that the sting in death is sin (1 Cor 15:56), not the fear of death. Natural life is thus merely transitory (Schottroff 1991:106; cf. Rm 8:21) to eternal life and never an end in itself. That is why Paul can bewail the pitiful end that would result from having hope in this life only (1 Cor 15:19). Natural life is often mentioned in close proximity with eternal life or life in Christ. Bodily life should be in service of real life, which is eternal life in Christ. Bodily

life should be filled with hope for the transformation of the body into eternal, immortal existence in Christ.

The life of Christ forms the basis and the foundation of believers' life in Christ. Paul never mentions Christ's life without some reference to his death. Believers' new life is not only modelled on Christ's life, but believers are saved by Christ's life (cf. Rm 5:10). Without Christ's resurrected life, the gospel would be meaningless (cf. 1 Cor 15). Christ's life coheres closely with both Jesus' bodily resurrection and the awaited bodily resurrection of believers. Christ's resurrection is thus not only the foundation of the hope and belief that believers will be resurrected but serves as its guarantee.

Christ's resurrection life does not only guarantee believers' future resurrection but stands in a continuum with the life that believers receive in Christ through the work of the Spirit. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead imparts life into believers (cf. Rm 8:11). This life that believers receive coheres with the inbreaking of eschatology. The new life in Christ is part of the new creation and a new order that was inaugurated through Christ's death and resurrection. The new order of life in Christ and the Spirit does not only free believers from the power of sin (cf. Rm 6:12–14; 8:2; Schottroff 1991:106) and death, but it also transfers believers from a life under bondage of the law to a life of faith in the freedom of the Spirit. Life in the Spirit, therefore, enables believers to life ethically and to do God's will. Yet, the new life in the Spirit does not only bring believers into a new sphere of power but also imparts eternal life, which is already a reality in believers' present, although its future completion is awaited (see also Jervis 2012:155). The indwelling Spirit is, in fact, believers' guarantee of their future resurrection. New, eschatological life in the Spirit stands opposed to a life in the old age under the law, which is essentially a life 'in flesh', which points to a life under the rule of law, sin and death. Life in the Spirit versus life in the 'flesh' also conveys a contrast between divinely imparted life (Spirit) and life that is dependent on human ability (flesh), which is ultimately flawed and results in eternal death.

A pertinent characteristic of life in the undisputed Pauline corpus is that it is utterly Christ-centred. Grace reigns through righteousness that leads to eternal life through Christ (Rm 5:21). Believers walk in the newness of life on the basis of Christ's resurrection (Rm 6:4). Christians died with Christ and believe that they will live with him (Rm 6:8). Eternal life is in Christ (Rm 6:23). Life in Christ has set believers free from the law of sin and death (Rm 8:2). Christ is in believers (Rm 8:10) and lives in them (Gl 2:20). In fact, for Paul, to live is Christ (Phlp 1:21)!

Paul also uses the concept of life in references to God as a 'living God' or within a divine oath formula in which God swears with the words 'as I live'. Although these reference are borrowed from the Old Testament, Paul mostly applies them in the context of a contrast to lifeless idols. Paul rarely uses the

concept of life in a metaphorical way. A metaphorical reference to the resurgence of sin can be identified in Romans 7:9, where Paul refers to sin that 'sprang to life'. Another metaphorical reference occurs in 1 Thessalonians 1:8, when Paul writes 'now we live', which is probably a reference to being encouraged and relieved, although overtones to the joy that believers have in the life in Christ, is also possible.

Chapter 5

Life in the Pauline Letters (2): Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians (disputed Pauline letters)

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Introduction

Amongst the disputed letters, one generally finds Ephesians, Colossians and the second letter to the Thessalonians. Ephesians and Colossians have been marked to be disputed because of a distinct writing style, vocabulary and eschatology from what is found in the undisputed Pauline letters. However, there is not nearly consensus in New Testament scholarship about the authorship of 2 Thessalonians. 'In some circles it is taken as a given that' 2 Thessalonians 'is post-Pauline or even anti-Pauline', writes Shogren (2012). Without partaking in this debate, Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Thessalonians are researched as disputed Pauline letters.

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Schnackenburg (1969) wrote on Christian Existence in the New Testament and touched on the concept of 'life' in these letters. The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (eds. Nida & Louw 1988) gives references to Greek verbs for 'live' and Greek nouns for 'life' in the New Testament. In 1998, the book *Life in the face of death* was published (ed. Longenecker 1998) with a focus on the resurrection message of the New Testament.

The focus of this chapter is to identify and discuss the occurrences of the topos of 'life' in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians and in the second letter to the Thessalonians, in order to summarise an appropriate theology of life in these letters.

The method applied in this chapter entails the following:

- An identification and discussion of Greek words used in these letters to address the topos of life.
- An interpretation of the topos of life in each letter.
- A comparison of the topos of life in the three letters.
- Writing a theology of 'life' in the letters.

Greek words used to refer to 'life'

In the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians and the second letter to the Thessalonians, the following Greek words referring to 'life' are used:

- ξωή and ξάω
- ἀναστροφή and ἀναστρέφω
- συζωοποιέω
- περιπατέω
- σάρξ.

The word ξωή means 'a living', 'means of living', 'subsistence', 'goods' or 'property' (Liddle & Scott 1983:299). Bauer (1979:340–341) says ξωή can be used to refer to either 'life in the physical sense' or 'supernatural life' (eternal). Nida and Louw (eds. 1988:261–262) explain that the verb ξάω means 'to be alive' or 'live'. The noun ζωῆ is used once in Ephesians, and both the noun and verb are used in Colossians.

The noun ἀναστροφή has possible meanings of 'way of life', 'conduct' or 'behaviour' (Bauer 1979:61). The verb ἀναστρέφω has inter alia the possible meaning of 'to live' (Bauer 1979:61). Nida and Louw (eds. 1988:504) give possible meanings of 'life' and 'conduct'. Both the noun and verb are used in Ephesians.

The verb συζωοποιέω was only used by Christian writers with the meaning 'to make alive together with'. Bauer (1979:776) explains that this verb was used by Christian authors to communicate the thoughts of people who were

dead in their sins and were made alive by God together with him. Nida and Louw (eds. 1988:263) add to this the meaning of 'to raise to life together with'. They explain that in Ephesians and Colossians, this verb refers to a spiritual existence rather than a literal resurrection of the body. This verb is used in both Ephesians and Colossians.

The verb περιπατέω has the possible meanings of 'go about', 'walk around' or 'live' (Bauer 1979:649). Nida and Louw (eds. 1988:209) refer to the action 'to walk along or around' or 'to live or behave' (eds. Nida & Louw 1988:505). This verb is frequently used in Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Thessalonians.

In the Section 'An interpretation of the topos of 'life' in Ephesians', the occurrence of these Greek words in these letters will be examined, and the topos of life featuring in these letters will be discussed.

An interpretation of the topos of 'life' in Ephesians

In the letter to the Ephesians, the theme is 'the church as body of Christ' (see Eph 1:22–23). Here we find a lot of emphasis on the lives lived of members of the church in conformity with the salvation that God has granted. The occurrences of certain words can be listed as shown in Table 5.1.

The topos of 'life' features in Ephesians in the letter-body-opening (LBO) (Eph 2:1–3:21), and in the arguments in the letter-body-middle (LBM) (Eph 4:1–6:18).[77] In the LBO, it is part of the background of the letter, and in the LBM, we find imperatives with regard to life, flowing from the background given in the LBO.

TABLE 5.1: Words describing the lives lived by members of the church.

Chapter and verse	Greek word	Literal translation
Ephesians 2:2	περιεπατήσατε	in which you used to live
Ephesians 2:3	ἀνεστράφημέν	all of us lived
Ephesians 2:5	Συνεζωοποίησεν	God made us alive with Christ
Ephesians 2:10	Περιπατήσωμεν	in order that we can live in it
Ephesians 4:1	περιπατῆσαι	I urge you to live
Ephesians 4:17	περιπατεῖν	to no longer live
Ephesians 4:17	περιπατεῖ	as the Gentiles live
Ephesians 4:18	ζωῆ	the life of God
Ephesians 4:22	ἀναστροφὴν	way of life
Ephesians 5:2	περιπατεῖτε	live a life of love
Ephesians 5:8	περιπατεῖτε	live as children of light
Ephesians 5:15	περιπατεῖτε	be careful how you live

77. The author's understanding of the letter structure: (1) Letter-opening: greeting (Eph 1:1–2), praise to God (Eph 1:3–14) and thanksgiving (Eph 1:15–23); (2) Letter-body: opening (Eph 2:1–3:21), middle (Eph 4:1–6:18), closing (Eph 6:19–20); (3) Letter-closing (Eph 6:21–24).

A reminder that God gives a new spiritual life (Eph 2:1–10)

The author addresses the readers and reminds them that they were dead in their transgressions and sins in which they used to live (Eph 2:2; περιεπατήσατε) when they followed the ways of the world and of the ruler of the kingdom of air, the spirit who is at work in those who are disobedient. The author acknowledges that 'all of us once lived' (Eph 2:3; ἀνεστράφημέν) like that, living by the desires of the flesh [σάρξ]. O'Brien (1999:162) explains that 'flesh' in this context does not refer to physical existence but to humanity's sinfulness and rebellion against God. Because of this, they were spiritually dead and enslaved and they stood condemned by nature as objects of wrath. But because of his love and mercy, God made us alive (Eph 2:5; συνεζωοποίησεν) with Christ-saved [σεσῳσμένοι] by grace through faith, raised up [συνήγειρεν] with Christ (Eph 2:6).

God is thus the source of spiritual life. He acted out of love and mercy and made us spiritually alive with Christ. The sinful condition of the readers' past existence is changed by God. Verses 8–10 provide us with a summary of the nature of God's salvation. That is why Verse 10 says that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, so that we may live [περιπατήσωμεν] in that.

This passage zooms in on the 'transformation God accomplished in bringing those who were spiritually dead into new life in Christ' (Klein 2006:63). It implies resuscitation, transformation and exaltation (see Harris 1998:149). From a spiritual death, the Christian is alive with Christ (Eph 2:6). This means that Christians' new lives are in association with Christ – in union with the risen Christ – dependent on Christ's new life (see Harris 1998:156). In 2:5, it is said that 'you are saved' [ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι]. The participle σεσῳσμένοι is in the perfect passive, indicating that the past act of Christ's saving (through his death and resurrection) has ongoing effects for the readers in the present. They enjoy the fruits of the resurrection even now.

This argument in Ephesians 2:1–10 serves as the foundation for the imperatives in the LBM. Because of God's love, grace and mercy (Eph 2:4–5), the readers received salvation and a new life through faith (Eph 2:8). Saved people are God's works of art. Klein (2006:70) says, 'Christians are God's projects' or 'works in process'.

The readers' past lives are depicted as conditions of death, sinfulness and bondage to evil forces and the flesh, says Lincoln (1990:85). He shows that the readers' sinful lives are in contrast with their 'experience of God's mercy, of new life, and of the heavenly realms through their relationship with Christ'. It is a 'contrast between the believers' past unredeemed situation and their present privileged experience of salvation' (Lincoln 1990:86). It is a contrast

between the πότε [then] and the νῦν [now] (see Bruce 1984:280–291; Lincoln 1990:87; O'Brien 1999:155, 163), as shown in Table 5.2.

God's intervention through Christ was the turning point in history. This argument serves rhetorically as a narratio – giving the motivation for the commands to follow in the LBM (see also Lincoln 1990:91). This serves as an indicative to form the ground for the imperatives to follow. The indicative is about the privilege of a new life, and the imperatives following are the responsibilities because of this privilege (see O'Brien 1999:275).

A command to live accordingly (Eph 4:1–16)

On the grounds of the new life Christians received through Christ, the author urges his readers to live (Eph 4:1; περιπατῆσαι) a life worthy of the calling they have received. The readers have a status of a new life in the body of Christ and they need to live this status out. The author's argument is that if one considers oneself being called by God, then one's lifestyle must confirm that calling. Klein (2006:107) says it requires that one incontestably pursue God's agenda – not one's own agenda.

The exhortation to live a life worthy of the calling is then continued with two prepositional phrases 'with humility' and 'with gentleness', and two participial clauses 'bearing with one another in love' and 'making every effort to keep the unity' – in order to explain the nature of a worthy life. Klein (2006:106) shows that all these characteristics are in contrast to the way people typically relate to each other. This lifestyle worthy of the calling of God is a result of a spiritual life which implies a process of growing, and Ephesians 4:13 shows that the mature phase is to be full of Christ. Being an infant in one's spiritual life is not easy because an infant believer is tossed back and forth by the waves and winds of teaching, cunning and the craftiness of deceitful minds.

This passage makes it clear that a life in the body of Christ brings certain spiritual responsibilities and necessary responses. In the next argument, the responsibility to live as children of the light is discussed.

TABLE 5.2: Contrast between the πότε [then] and the νῦν [now].

Πότε	νῦν
Ruled by the ways of the world and of the ruler of the realm of the air (Eph 2:2)	Ruled by Christ (Eph 2:6)
Paganism	Christianity
Spiritually dead	Raised with Christ – having a new life
Alienated from God	Faith-union with God
Dead through trespasses and sin	Made alive
Reaction of God: wrath	Reaction of God: mercy, love, grace and kindness
Being children of wrath (Eph 2:3)	Being saved by grace (Eph 2:5,8)
Dying	Rising

Practical guidelines for life (Eph 4:17–5:21)

In the previous argument, the author exhorted his readers to live a life worthy of God's calling. This is taken further in this passage when he exhorts them to live as children of the light. In the LBO, he referred to their previous way of life, and in this passage, he further discusses the Gentile way of life. The author is presenting two sides of the coin to his reader when he urges them to live [περιπατεῖτε] as children of light. The one side is to be rejected, the other to be adopted.

Reject this way of life

The one side of the coin is the side the author wants his readers to reject – the way the Gentiles live [περιπατεῖτε]. In the city of Ephesus, religious life was dominated by emperor worship, idolatry, the arts of occultism and spiritism and moral life was typical of that of a Greco-Roman city (see Elwell & Yarbrough 1998:309). Worship of the Roman emperor and his family was extensive, and sorcery and evil spirits were part of the religious climate (see Elwell & Yarbrough 1998:310). In these people's lives, power belonged to imperial figures or the occult.

This kind of life the Gentiles lived is also referred to as the readers' former ways of life [ἀναστροφὴν] in Ephesians 4:22. This side of the coin is called the dark (Eph 4:18; 5:11) and unwise (Eph 5:15) side. This way of life is to be rejected because one who lives a life like this is a person who is separated from the life [ζωῆ] of God (Eph 4:18), a person who does not live a life coming from God (if the genitive θεοῦ is taken to indicate the source of life). Such a person is considered to be an idolater (Eph 5:5) and does not have any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph 5:5), and he or she will experience God's wrath (Eph 5:6). This way of life is characterised in Ephesians 4:18–5:3.

Adopt this way of life

The other side of the coin is the side the author wants to persuade the readers to adopt. This way of life is nothing new to the readers. The author says in Ephesians 4:20–22 that they were taught about this way of life. This life is different from the other side of the coin because they are no longer darkness but light (Eph 5:8) and they are carrying out the Lord's will and pleasing the Lord (Eph 5:10); they are imitators of God (Eph 5:1) and are dearly loved by God (Eph 5:1). This way of life is characterised in Ephesians 4:22–5:21.

Make a choice

The Christian should thus break (put off; Eph 4:23) with the pagan way of living and conform to (put on; Eph 4:24) Jesus (Eph 4:17–21). Through the

work of Jesus, all Christians should be transformed and one must be able to see radical changes in their lives. Choosing one side of the coin is a conscious choice of the believer – a choice between a pagan life and a Christian life (Table 5.3).

This choice between a pagan and a Christian life is a continuous challenge for believers. When Paul exhorts the readers to be made new [ἀνανεοῦσθαι] in Ephesians 4:23, he makes use of the present participle medium, denoting a continuous process in which God effects the ongoing work of renewing his people (see O'Brien 1999:329). It is a process of 'putting to death' and 'putting off' old sinful practices so that the new risen life of Christ can be 'put on', says Harris (1998:212). O'Brien says that this process is a continual challenge for the believer. The sphere in which the renewal takes place is, according to Ephesians 4:23, 'the spirit of your mind'. This phrase is explained by O'Brien (1999:330) as meaning to be renewed in one's inner person, meaning that the pattern, motivation and direction of one's thinking must be changed.

TABLE 5.3: Choices between a pagan life and a Christian life.

A pagan life	A Christian life
Darkened in one's understanding (Eph 4:18)	-
Alienated from the life [ζωῆ] of God (Eph 4:18)	-
Ignorance (Eph 4:18)	-
Hardening of their hearts (Eph 4:18)	-
Having lost all sensitivity (Eph 4:19)	-
Giving oneself over to sensuality (Eph 4:19)	-
To indulge in every kind of impurity (Eph 4:19)	-
With a continual lust for more (Eph 4:19)	-
Being corrupted by deceitful desires (Eph 4:22)	Living a new life because they were created to be like God (Eph 4:22–24)
False (Eph 4:25)	Truth (Eph 4:25)
Angry (Eph 4:26)	Sort out anger (Eph 4:26)
Steal (Eph 4:28)	Sharing (Eph 4:28)
Unwholesome talk (Eph 4:29)	Build others up (Eph 4:29)
Full of bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, malice (Eph 4:31)	Kind and compassionate (Eph 4:32) Forgiving (Eph 4:32)
-	Loving (Eph 5:1)
Sexual immorality (Eph 5:3) Impurity (Eph 5:3)	-
Greed (Eph 5:3)	-
Obscenity (Eph 5:4)	-
Foolish talk (Eph 5:4)	-
Coarse joking (Eph 5:4)	-
-	Thanksgiving (Eph 5:4)
-	Goodness, righteousness and truth (Eph 5:9)
Debauchery (Eph 5:18)	-
-	Filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18)
-	Submittance to one another (Eph 5:21)

Warning (Eph 6:10–18)

As the house tables in Ephesians 5:22–6:9 give further instructions to individuals on how to pursue God's way, Ephesians 6:10–18 is the last and conclusive argument in the LBM where the readers are urged to put on the full armour of God. Although we do not find any of the Greek words discussed in paragraph two to refer to life in this argument, it is relevant to focus on this passage for a moment.

In Ephesians 2:1–10, the author made it clear that spiritually they received a new life in Christ and that this new spiritual life brought certain responsibilities in life. In Ephesians 4:17–5:21, the readers were therefore exhorted to live as children of the light. They had to choose to break with the dark side of life, following the ways of the world, and to adopt a lifestyle to please the Lord.

The author knew that the choice to live as children of the light was not easy because of the 'anti-Christian atmosphere in which we live' with which the 'sons of disobedience' (Eph 2:2) are in league (see Schnackenburg 1969:12). Life is a struggle against the evil powers of the dark side of life. It is a spiritual warfare, and, says Paul in 6:12, 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. That is why the Christians are exhorted to put on the full armour of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, namely, the Word of God! The armour of God is, however, not the only way to stand firm in this life – the final command is to pray (Eph 6:18). This is the recipe for Christians to cope with the powers of evil! O'Brien (1999:458) says Paul challenges his readers to action in this spiritual war with weapons which God provides (O'Brien 1999:463) to resist the enemy.

What does Ephesians communicate about God and life?

God has 'incomparably great power' and 'mighty strength' (Eph 1:19) and out of his great love and mercy and grace (Eph 2:4–5), he is the source of our new life. This new life is a spiritual life, given to us through the work of Jesus Christ. Like God the Father, Jesus Christ is portrayed as being in a position of power at God's right hand, 'far above all rule, authority, power and dominion' (Eph 1:21). He is mightier than any human authority or pagan gods. God made us alive with Christ. He created us to live good lives (Eph 2:10). Ephesians thus states that God is in control of our lives and exhorts us to live a life worthy of God's calling. Christians should live lives worthy of God's calling as wives and husbands (Eph 5:22–33), as parents and children (Eph 6:1–4), as slaves and masters (Eph 6:5–9). In the LBM in Ephesians 6:10–20, Paul stresses the fact that Christians need God's protection and empowerment in the course of their daily lives because life is an ongoing struggle against evil powers.

An interpretation of the topos of 'life' in Colossians

This letter addresses inter alia the problem of false teaching in the readers' midst. The main theme of this letter is very similar to that of the letter to the Ephesians. In this case, the theme is that Christ is the head of the body. As head of the body, Christ supplies power to the whole body (Col 2:19). The lives of the 'body' must be in a relationship with the head of the body. In the letter to the Colossians, the Greek words in Table 5.4 communicate the topos of life.

The topos of life features in Colossians in the letter-opening (Col 1:9–14)[78] in the prayer as a means of introducing the topos. In the LBM, instructions are given with regard to this life (Col 2:6–3:17) and in the last exhortations in the letter-body-closing (Col 4:2–6).

An introduction of the topos of 'life' (Col 1:9–14)

Paul claims never to have stopped praying for the Colossians since they heard about them. They prayed and asked God to fill them with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that they would live a life [περιπατῆσαι] worthy of the Lord and to please him in every way. Literally, περιπατῆσαι means 'to walk', and this metaphor is used in Colossians to refer to Christian conduct (see Still 2006:284). The author spells out what this 'worthy walk' or 'life worthy of God' looks like:

- Fruit-bearing [καρποφοροῦντες] (Col 1:10).
- Growing in the knowledge [ἐπίγνωσις] of God (Col 1:10).
- Being empowered [δυναμούμενοι] by God to have great endurance and patience (Col 1:11).
- Being grateful [εὐχαριστοῦντες] to God (Col 1:12).

TABLE 5.4: Greek words communicating the topos of life.

Chapter and verse	Greek word	Literal translation
Colossians 1:10	περιπατῆσαι	To live a life worthy of the Lord
Colossians 2:6	περιπατεῖτε	Live in him
Colossians 2:13	Συνεζωοποίησεν	He made you alive with Christ
Colossians 2:20	ξῶntες	As if you live in the world
Colossians 3:3	ζωῆ	Your life
Colossians 3:4	ζωῆ	Your life
Colossians 3:7	περιεπατήsaté	You lived
Colossians 3:7	ἐξῆτε	You lived
Colossians 4:5	περιπατεῖτε	Act in wisdom

78. The author's understanding of the structure of the letter: (1) Letter-opening: greeting (Col 1:1–2), thanksgiving (Col 1:3–8) and prayer (Col 1:9–14); (2) Letter-body: opening (Col 1:15–2:5), middle (Col 2:6–4:1) and closing (Col 4:2–6); (3) Letter-closing (Col 4:7–18).

Bruce (1984:46) refers to the 'knowledge' [ἐπίγνωσις] in Colossians 1:10 as the 'essence of true heart-religion'. This knowledge, Bruce proceeds, is a means of promoting spiritual life – it starts with a proper attitude towards God – and he refers to Proverbs 1:7, saying that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge'. I would refer to this knowledge as spiritual intelligence, an awareness and acknowledgement of a super power. This awareness and acknowledgement can bring one to wisdom (σοφία in Col 1:9) and understanding (σὐνεσις in Col 1:9) – an eventual learning of how to live in God's world in God's way (McKnight 2018:110). Not only does this knowledge stop at the awareness of a superpower but it also develops into a knowledge of the will of God. The will of God, says Lohse (1971:25), demands an obedience that is visible in one's actions. That is why this knowledge leads to right behaviour (Bruce 1984:46) and to the formation of character (McKnight 2018:111).

This is where the fruit-bearing comes in. The value of the knowledge of God's will is that it enables appropriate conduct (Dunn 1996:71). The knowledge of his will has the power to move one to a fruitful life, showing that one is empowered by God, resulting in one's thankfulness. This process is, however, not only in one direction: while the fruits of good works spring from the divine seed sown in one's heart, an ever-increasing progress in the knowledge of God is also made as the fruits of the Spirit develop (see Bruce 1984:47). Where does God fit into this process?

In Verse 13, we get a statement of God's role in the readers' ties with God: '(He) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves [...]'. Marshall, Travis and Paul (2002:155) call this a doctrinal statement when Paul states that God is the power behind their new life, behind their being freed from the power of darkness and becoming children of God. God facilitates and effects deliverance for believers through his Son (Still 2006:285). The initiative is God's, says Dunn (1996:73). This divine power will enable the readers to stand firm (see Bruce 1984:47) and their good works will be a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. What is the role of Jesus in this process?

In the opening of the letter-body (Col 1:15–20) following this prayer of Paul, we find a hymn in honour of Christ, stating the role of Christ in this. Christ is the head of the Church and all humankind has been created through him and for him. Paul's prayer is that the Colossians will walk 'worthy of the Lord' (Col 1:10). Lohse (1971:28) says the phrase 'worthy of the Lord' does not only demand behaviour that is worthy, but it binds the conduct of the Christian to undivided obedience to Christ – the Lord over all powers. McKnight (2018:116) shows how Christ is our standard, a moral template for our daily lives.

Introduction to the exhortations (Col 2:6–3:17)

In the light of what the false teachers tried to teach the Colossians, Paul now persuades them that they are free from human regulations through their lives with Christ. While Paul prayed in Colossians 1:9–14 for the Colossians to live a life worthy of God, he moves on in Colossians 2:6 to an instruction when he persuades them to continue to live [περιπατεῖτε] in Christ. This clearly is not something to come out of themselves – Colossians 2:12 says you have 'been buried [...] and raised [συνηγέρθητε] with him'. God made believers alive [συνεζωοποίησεν] in Christ. They not only died [ἀπεθάνετε] with Christ (see Col 2:20; 3:3), but they were also raised [συνηγέρθητε] with him (Col 3:1). The author asks them in Colossians 2:20 'if you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why then do you submit to its rules as if you still live [ξῶντες] in the world?' He wants to know why the Colossians are being led to live in such a way as to dismiss what they have in Christ (see Still 2006:320). Being raised in Christ must have positive implications!

Paul gives two reasons why the Colossians should make Christ the centre of their lives. In Colossians 3:3, Paul explains that life [ζωῆ] for them is hidden with Christ in God. Still (2006:323) points out that God is the one who hides their lives in Christ – God transformed the lives of Christians, and this life is hidden in the sense that it is a hidden reality accessible to faith. In Colossians 3:4, Paul says that Christ is life [ζωῆ].

The two sides of a coin are then used to persuade the readers: the one side of the coin is the life in Christ – the other side is a life based on worldly principles. The author lists, on the one hand, vices to be abandoned (Col 3:5,8) and, on the other hand, virtues to be adopted (Col 3:12) (see Still 2006:325). On the one hand, the readers are exhorted to seek 'the things above' [τὰ ἄνω], and on the other hand, they are commanded not to seek 'the earthly things' [τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς] (see Table 5.5).

A life based on worldly principles is described as a life based on earthly nature (Col 3:5), on human traditions and deceptive philosophies (Col 2:8) and on human commands (Col 2:22). He reminds his readers that they once walked [περιεπατήsaté] in these ways when they lived [ἐξῆτε] a life based on

TABLE 5.5: Contrast between 'the things above' [τὰ ἄνω] and 'the earthly things' [τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς].

τὰ ἄνω	τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς
Given to us by God (Col2:13)	Earthly nature, coming from human traditions and deceptive philosophies (Col 2:8)
Symptoms: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiving, love, peace, thankfulness, wisdom, gratitude, doing everything in the name of Jesus (Col 3:12–17)	Symptoms: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, idolatry, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, lies (Col 3:5)

worldly principles (Col 3:7). A life based on worldly principles is described by Paul as a life where one is taken captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy (Col 2:8), and where one depends on human tradition (Col 2:8). In Colossians 2:18–19, the author explains that people trying to persuade them to live this kind of life have false humility and an unspiritual mind with idle notions, causing them to lose connection with Christ.

The symptoms of such a life are described as sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed and idolatry, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and lies (Col 3:5,8–9). Paul's commands about this kind of life are not to handle, not to taste, not to touch (Col 2:21), to put to death (Col 3:5) and to rid themselves of all such symptoms (Col 3:8).

The other side of the coin – a life in Christ – is something given to us by God (Col 2:13) when he forgave us all our sins, triumphing over worldly powers and authorities (Col 2:15). Colossians 3:12 says the readers are God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. He explains in Colossians 3:9–10 that they have taken off their old self with its practices and have put on a new self, and are being renewed in knowledge in the image of their Creator. Schnackenburg (1969:44) says the author now confronts them, no longer as powerless and helpless people, but as new people renewed in knowledge after their creator. The command is: 'Set your hearts on things above, not on earthly things' (Col 3:2). Their lives are to be different – their interests must be Christ's interests (O'Brien 1982:160). O'Brien (1982:163) argues that this imperative, to 'consider' the things above, shows that one's thinking is intimately related to the way one lives. The Colossians need to focus on 'the things above' with their intellect and their will, and their aims and motives need to be guided by Christ. The author gives them practical guidelines in Colossians 3:12–17 for a life guided by Christ:

- Compassion – 'a pity for and mercy on others, particularly those in need' (Still 2006:331).
- Kindness – 'having a gracious sensitivity towards others to that is triggered by genuine care' (Garland 1998:210).
- Humility.
- Gentleness.
- Patience – 'the ability not to become frustrated and enraged but to make allowances for others' shortcomings and to tolerate their behaviour' (Lincoln 2000:248).
- Forgiving.
- Love.
- Peace.
- Thankfulness.
- Wisdom.
- Gratitude.
- Doing everything in the name of Jesus.

When the author mentions love as a quality of a life in Christ in Colossians 3:14, he states that love binds together in perfect unity all the qualities mentioned before. Moffat (1929:191) calls it the link of the perfect life. Love is the bond that leads to perfection (Lohse 1971:149).

The last exhortations in the letter-body-closing (Col 4:2–6)

Paul closes his letter-body with a few last exhortations: persistence in prayer (Col 4:2–4), being watchful and thankful (Col 4:2), the right behaviour towards outsiders ([ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε], Col 4:5), making the most of every opportunity (Col 4:5) and graceful conversations (Col 4:6).

The Colossians should conduct themselves 'in wisdom' towards 'outsiders'. They must realise that in all their actions and in their way of life, the 'mystery of Christ' is publicly witnessed, and these outsiders, the non-Christians, are keeping a critical eye on them (Lohse 1971:167). The Colossians were once themselves the outsiders (Col 3:7). However, having received Christ, they were now to walk in him (Col 2:6), walking worthily of the Lord (Col 1:10). The implicit warning is: the eyes of the outsiders will be on them. These outsiders are not only non-Christians, but they are also potential Christians and the behaviour of the Colossians must serve the Lord in this potential. O'Brien (1982:241) says the apostle here has his missionary responsibilities in mind. As the reputation of the gospel is bound up with the behaviour of those who claim to have experienced its saving power (Bruce 1984:174), Paul admonishes the Colossians to behave according to God's will in order to serve the spreading of the gospel.

What does Colossians communicate about God and life?

The theme of this letter is that Christ is the head of the Church. Elwell and Yarbrough (1998:318) show how two assertions regarding Jesus Christ are at the centre of this letter: Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), and all things hold together' in Christ. Through his reconciling work (Col 1:20), he serves as the sustaining and redeeming lifeline between the spiritual holy God and the physical sinful world. He rescued the Colossians from darkness and delivered them into light (Col 1:13) and that is why Paul exhorts them to affirm and live out certain truths (Elwell & Yarbrough 1998:319).

The teaching in this letter serves not only to provide a refutation of the false teachings but also to lay a doctrinal basis for a mature Christian way of life (see Marshall et al. 2002:154). All the knowledge and power that they need for this mature Christian way of life is contained in Christ and available to them. Marshall et al. (2002:156) explain that the Colossians have been fully

initiated into a new life with the result of Christ's death and resurrection. They do not need anything else to live a mature Christian life.

In Colossians 1:15–23, we find a description of the supremacy of Christ, and this description explains the role of God and Christ in the new life of Christians:

- Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).
- All things were created by him and for him (Col 1:16).
- In him, all things hold together (Col 1:17).
- In everything, he has the supremacy and he is the head of the body, namely the Church (Col 1:18).
- God was pleased to reconcile all things with him through Christ's blood (Col 1:19–20).
- God reconciled Christians by Christ's physical body to make them holy, without blemish and free from accusation.

Colossians 1:23 gives the condition for this new life: 'If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel'. To be perfect or mature clearly implies the maintaining of perfect union with Christ, Schnackenburg (1969:82) says. He explains that this union is in the first place a gift of grace, but that also demands a personal effort to realise this offer of salvation and it implies moral effort.

An interpretation of the topos of 'life' in 2 Thessalonians

The opinion is held that this letter to the Thessalonians could be a response to a possible misunderstanding of Paul's first letter. It is, however, also possible that Paul received a report from Christians outside the community mentioning difficulties that they had heard were taking place in the community (see Marshall et al. 2002:62). From the letter (Col 2:1–2), it seems as if the Thessalonians were anxious because they had been led to believe that the day of the Lord had arrived (see Marshall et al. 2002:67). It is possible, according to Marshall et al., that the first letter to the Thessalonians put this idea in the readers' minds because it emphasised the future horizon of the Christian life'.

In the second letter to the Thessalonians, the Greek words in Table 5.6 were found as a means to find the message of life.

The topos of 'life' is introduced in the letter-opening in the thanksgiving (Col 1:3–12), followed by exhortations in the LBM (Col 2:13–16), with a warning

TABLE 5.6: Greek words found as a means to find the message of life.

Chapter and verse	Greek word	Literal translation
2 Thessalonians 3:6	περιπατοῦντος	Who lives
2 Thessalonians 3:11	περιπατοῦντας	Who live

in the LBM (Col 3:6–13).[79] The thought of a life is devoted to God's glory in the thanksgiving in Colossians 1:3–12.

Although we find that none of the Greek words discussed in paragraph 2 to refer to life in the thanksgiving in Colossians 1:3–12, it is important not to miss the thought of a life that glorifies the Lord (see Marshall et al. 2002:67). This thanksgiving has the function of setting the tone of the letter, introducing the themes to be treated, and it is paraenetic to strengthen the relationship between Paul and his readers (see Malherbe 2000:388–389). In ancient rhetoric, this is seen as an example of the persuasion strategy of pathos,[80] where Paul affects the emotions of his readers – persuading them that he knows them, that he cares about them and at the same time he encourages them to keep on doing good.

Paul thanks God for the readers' spiritual progress amid persecutions and trials. He gives some details about their progress: their faith is growing more and more and their love for each other is increasing (Col 1:3), and they show perseverance and faith (Col 1:4). They have made progress in life, and this kind of conduct 'will be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God' according to Paul (Col 1:5). It is clear from this that trials and persecutions are opportunities for the readers to demonstrate their 'worthiness for entry to the Kingdom of God' (Marshall et al. 2002:67).

In Verses 8–9, the reader is reminded that this spiritual progress involves condemnation (see Harris 1998:151): God will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel and they will be shut out from the presence of the Lord. This serves as a warning that spiritual progress not only leads to a new life but also includes condemnation. The warning is that those who do not make spiritual progress and who are separated from Christ, excluded from the presence of the Lord, will not share in the life of God (see Harris 1998:163). Being excluded from the presence of the Lord means no immortality, a non-existence and the deprivation of eternal blessedness (Harris 1998:166).

An exhortation (2 Th 2:13–16)

Although we do not find that any of the Greek words discussed in paragraph 2 to refer to life in 2 Thessalonians 2:13–16, it is important also to focus for a moment on the word σωτερία in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 where God is thanked because he called them to be saved. Nida and Louw (eds. 1988:242) explain that σωτερία refers to a state of having been saved – salvation. God called

79. The author's understanding of the structure of the letter: (1) Letter-opening: greeting (Col 1:1–2) and thanksgiving (Col 1:3–12); (2) Letter-body: opening (none), middle (Col 2:1–3:13) and closing (Col 3:14–16); (3) Letter-closing (Col 3:17–18).

80. See Aristotle, Ars Rhetorica 1,1.

them to live as people being saved, being delivered by God through Jesus Christ. Salvation is a process and at the finishing line, eternal life awaits – a new life.

In the second argument in the LBM, the readers are exhorted to stand firm and hold to the teachings of the author and his missionary colleagues (2 Th 2:15). To stand firm in the Lord, according to Bruce (1982:193), is seen by Paul as the very 'breath of life'. One way of standing firm in the Lord is to hold fast to the traditions which had been delivered to them. This exhortation to stand firm is preceded by a motivation: God called and chose them to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. God called them to have a new spiritual life to experience salvation (see Wanamaker 1990:267). The reason why Paul wants the readers to stand firm in what he and his co-workers taught them is because through their preaching of the gospel, they were called by God to experience salvation so that they might share in the glory of Jesus. This spiritual life they were called to promises them a share in the glory of Jesus. Standing firm and holding on to what Paul taught them will help them to have a spiritual life and thus share in the glory of Jesus.

A warning (2 Th 3:6–13)

In the first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul exhorted the readers in 2 Thessalonians 4:11–12 to live their lives in such a way that they would win the respect of outsiders and not be dependent on anybody. In 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13, we find a warning against idleness – Paul addresses the problem of Christians living disorderly or idle lives. According to Trilling (1972 141, 151–153), Paul deals here with the problem of laziness in the Christian community. This idleness or laziness had a disruptive influence on the community (see Wanamaker 1990:58). Paul first warns the readers to stay away from those who are idle [ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος] and do not live according to the teaching they received from Paul and his co-workers (2 Th 3:6). In Verse 11, however, he mentions that they had heard about some of them being idle themselves [περιπατοῦντας [...] ἀτάκτως]. The adverb ἀτάκτως in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 2 Thessalonians 3:11 may refer to undisciplined, disorderly and lawless behaviour, or not to be at one's post (Liddell & Scott 1983:111) – thus a failure to fulfil one's obligations as Wanamaker (1990:281) suggests.

In this context, where Paul describes his and his co-workers' example as people who work hard, it seems more acceptable to understand ἀτάκτως as referring to a failure to fulfil one's obligations or duties. Paul presents himself and his co-workers as role models when he reminds them that they had fulfilled their obligations and duties – they paid for their food, and they worked day and night to take care of themselves. Bruce (1982:208) explains that the

maxim of Paul and his co-workers, who taught by precept and action, is that it is scandalous to lead idle lives and look to others for support if they themselves have the opportunity and strength to work to maintain themselves and to help others who are less fortunate.

What were the reasons for the readers being lazy and not fulfilling their daily duties? The author came to know that the readers had a false understanding about the day of the Lord. It is not clear if false teachers were involved or whether they developed a misconception because of previous information about the end of times. He warns them not to be deceived by any prophecy or report or letter (2 Th 2:1–3). It seems as if he realised that eschatological excitement had caused the Thessalonians to 'give up their daily labour and employment as though they were already living in a restored paradise situation' (see Mearns 1981:147). Against this background, Paul warns the Thessalonians to be economically self-sufficient and not to be deceived.

What does 2 Thessalonians communicate about God and life?

God is the source of a new eternal life as he sent his Son to bring salvation to humankind. A good lifestyle (conduct) will be counted as worthy of the Kingdom of God. While we wait for eternal life, we need to live in such a way as to earn the respect, not only of God but also of others.

A comparison between Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Thessalonians

An important question to ask concerns the nature of the so-called new spiritual life mentioned and discussed in all three letters. Is this new life a 'present' or a 'future' reality for believers? Are the blessings and benefits of this new life a

TABLE 5.7: Messages about life in Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Thessalonians.

Message about life	Ephesians	Colossians	2 Thessalonians
God is the source of new spiritual life	2:1–10	1:9–14	2:13–16
A life worthy of God	4:1–16 4:17–5:21	1:9–14 2:6–3:17 4:2–6	1:3–12
A life based on worldly principles	4:17–5:21	2:6–3:17	-
Life is a struggle against evil	6:10–18	-	-
God calls one to salvation and a new spiritual life	-	-	2:13–16
Warning against an idle life	-	-	3:6–13

present reality, or are these blessings and benefits only associated with the end-times?

This brings us to the debate about 'futuristic eschatology' and 'realised eschatology' in these letters. The letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, as well as the second letter to the Thessalonians, have the emphasis on eschatology. Ephesians says that God has already made us alive, we have already been saved. He raised us up with Christ and seated us with him (Eph 2:5–6). Colossians says that the believers have already been rescued from the power of darkness (Col 1:13), have already been transferred to the Kingdom (Col 1:13) and have already been raised with Christ (Col 2:12; 3:1). We find in these two letters a realised eschatology in which the readers' salvation is described by referring not only to the death of Christ but also to their having already been resurrected with Christ. 2 Thessalonians seems to offer a different kind of eschatology. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, the readers are urged to be ready and prepared in order not to be alarmed when Jesus returns, and he reminds them that the return of Jesus will not be without warning. In 2 Thessalonians, we thus find a futuristic eschatology as the readers are made aware of the return of Jesus in the future.

From this, it seems as if the resurrection of believers is a past event according to Ephesians and Colossians – as if eternal life is already a present reality. This would mean that these two letters of Paul communicate about eternal life being lived in the present. 2 Thessalonians, however, refers to eternal life that will come in future.

However, although we do find realised eschatology in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, future eschatology is not absent. In Ephesians 1:21, we read about the age to come: in Ephesians 5:5, the Kingdom of God is mentioned, Ephesians 1:14 mentions the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of our inheritance, and Ephesians 4:30 discusses the day of redemption. Moo (2008:69) shows that there is indeed a clear 'not yet' side to the eschatology of Colossians. We have indeed been raised with Christ (Eph 2:12; 3:1), but we have not yet appeared with him in glory (Eph 3:4). Moo (2008) also refers to the hope that is stored in heaven (Eph 1:5) – another clear 'not yet'.

From 2 Thessalonians, it seems as if the realised eschatology offered by 1 Thessalonians or false prophecies might have led many believers 'into an over-confident and boastful attitude' (see Mearns 1981:157), and that is perhaps why the second letter to the Thessalonians stresses 'future splendour rather than present glory' (Mearns 1981:157).

It thus is not a case of either realised or futuristic eschatology, but rather of different focuses in these letters because of the different socio-historical situations of the recipients and the purposes of these letters. Wessels

(1987:199) says that in Colossians, Christ is shown to be more powerful than the angelic cosmic powers. As a letter written inter alia also to fight the false teachers with deceptive philosophies, human traditions and principles of this world, Christ's complete act of salvation – death and resurrection – is discussed. Wessels is of the opinion that the situation of Ephesians is one in which it is emphasised that 'in Christ' believers are made alive and made one. As the theme of Ephesians is clearly the Church as the body of Christ, the author emphasises the status of this body – they are completely new in Christ. Both these letters, Wessels (1987:199) says, respond to situations which ask for clear statements about the consequences of Christ's death and resurrection for the here and now. In the case of 2 Thessalonians, the author wants to contest misconceptions about realised eschatology and therefore reinforces future eschatology.

Yet why would the authors of the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians include realised eschatology? The argument of Still (2004:133) persuaded me that the author of Colossians (and Ephesians) only employs 'resurrection language' to speak of a believer's conversion. The author thus does in fact refer to believers being 'raised up', 'seated with Christ', 'rescued' and 'transferred into the Kingdom' when he mentions the new spiritual lives they received through Christ. The question is, why would Paul use this 'resurrection language' when he explains their new spiritual lives? This can be seen as a typical example of the use of the rhetorical device of hyperbole (Aristotle, Ars Rhetorica III,11,15; Bullinger 1968:423–427; Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 8, 76) when an overstatement is made and by exaggerating for effect. Hyperbole is used to evoke strong feelings and to create strong impressions. It is a figure of speech and is normally not taken literally but metaphorically.

What effect would it be used for in Colossians and Ephesians? It should be kept in mind that Paul, in the case of the Colossians, has to do with false teachers questioning the adequacy of God's present provision in Christ for spiritual fullness (see Moo 2008:69). Against this scenario, it seems logical for Paul to prove them wrong, to make his point by using an overstatement, by using exaggeration as his strategy. Paul uses a powerful argument against false teaching by persuading his readers of the completeness of their spiritual victory. Henkemans (2013) explains that hyperbole can be used as part of the strategic manoeuvrings in the argument – in order to criticise the false teachers' argumentation, Paul advances his own argument by using hyperbole, by amplifying and exaggerating important aspects of the reader's new status in Christ. The use of hyperbole creates a more forceful argument.

Ephesians, however, was not written against such a socio-historical background. Can the realised eschatology in this letter also be seen as the use of hyperbole? The theme of Ephesians is the Church as the body of Christ.

Lincoln (1990:xl) reminds us that Ephesians is about 'Christian existence'. Paul reminds his readers of what they have become as a church, of their status as 'those who belong to the Church' (Lincoln 1990:xli); on the grounds of their existence as Christians, the letter to the Ephesians seeks to persuade the readers to 'Christian commitment' (a phrase used by Lincoln [1990:xlii]). When realised eschatology occurs in the LBO in Ephesians 2:1–10, the author uses the persuasion strategy of logos by using facts and logic; however, the facts are an overstatement of reality, which can be seen as the use of the stylistic device of hyperbole. Quintilian (Institutio Oratoria, 8, 76) was of the opinion that 'the hyperbole is a beauty, when the thing itself, of which we have to speak, is in its nature extraordinary or abnormal'. To Paul, the issue of 'new life' in his letters to both the Colossians and Ephesians is extraordinary in nature.

New spiritual life is therefore described in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians with realised eschatology language in order to serve the purposes of the letters against the particular socio-historical backgrounds, to be clear about the nature of this new life and to discuss this new life as something extraordinary and abnormal.

The theological contributions of these letters with regard to 'life'

'Life' in these letters predominantly has a spiritual meaning. The reconciliatory work of Christ gave believers new spiritual lives to be realised in present history, but they also have an inheritance in future with the expected glory of Christ.

It is clear from this research of these three letters that God is the source of this new spiritual life. This 'life' is mediated by Jesus Christ as the σωτήρ [saviour]. Jesus is the origin and means of all life to the world and that was the purpose of his coming to the world. New life is thus entirely dependent on the grace of God. Life is thus a result of God's power, mercy, Jesus' mediation and Jesus' resurrection.

What are the role and responsibilities of humankind with regard to life? God called humankind to salvation and a new life. It is clear that new spiritual life is given through faith, and therefore, life is a choice between the dark and the light, between a life based on worldly principles and a life worthy of God. This choice is an ongoing process in the struggle against evil. Life is thus also a result of humankind's choice and obedience. Life then gains new meaning through the acceptance of Jesus – this acceptance brings healing, renewal and restoration.

Conclusion

These letters provide Christians with hope. By making it clear that although life may appear to break one's spirit at times and although death remains everyone's fear, 'death is far from being the whole of the human story' (ed. Longenecker 1998:16). These three letters clearly communicate that the focus of human thought and action is to be on 'life' (see ed. Longenecker 1998:16). Through Christ, Christians can be in a living relation with God and life can be enjoyed. Because God lives, Jesus came alive to give believers new lives! Death is no longer a threat! Christians' immortality finds a reality in the risen Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis for the hope of Christian believers in their own future resurrection and immortality (see Harris 1998:147).

The new life in Christ means a spiritual rebirth, which requires faith and a Christian lifestyle. This new life is a continual challenge and a continual process.

Chapter 6

Life in the Pauline Letters (3): Life in the Pastoral Epistles

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Introduction

The letters commonly known as the Pastoral Epistles rustle with life suggested by verbs and nouns that lurk in the typographical landscape consisting of lines, verses and chapters. Viewed together, the composite picture of the life that emerges testifies to the presence of rhetorical objectives masterfully communicated by the selection of explicit as well as implicit vocabulary. Two nouns translated 'life' occur in the three letters, respectively. One of these only makes an appearance in 1 and 2 Timothy, while the second word appears in all three. The verb ζωογονέω is found in 1 Timothy only. A very distant semantically related cognate verb ζωγρέω surfaces only in 2 Timothy. However, from the outset, it must be pointed out that this summary is not unproblematic.

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One cannot make the case for a monolithic theology of life in the 'Pastorals'. These three letters were viewed as a single corpus and called 'Pastorals' only since 1703 and 1726 by D.N Berdot and Paul Anton, respectively (Carson & Moo 2005:554). Their independence and idiosyncrasies should be maintained because there are real differences between the three (Westfall in Porter & Adams 2010:252).[81] Authorship of these letters or the so-called integrity debate is a moot point as scholarship remains divided on this matter.[82] More importantly though, it has no bearing on the topic at hand.

The theology of Paul continually elicits vigorous debates in the form of the business and volumes dedicated to this particular topic. My approach will be to reconstruct from the text the rhetorical structure of what is called a Pauline theology. Neither is the intention to index various theological categories that may or may not be discernible from the three texts. I will investigate the rhetorical intention or the objective behind the choice of vocabulary deployed and their persuasive effect. The argument is that the author was very deliberate in including as well as omitting certain vocabulary to persuade his audience to adopt or reject positions based on whatever he presents in each letter.

Research design

I will employ text-generated persuasion analysis, an offshoot of the minimal theory framework developed by Tolmie (2005:24–27). A text-immanent approach seeks to reconstruct a rhetorical strategy from the text itself followed by a text-generated descriptive analysis of how an author is inferred to persuade an audience. The method presupposes that authors crafted texts deliberately to persuade or 'to form attitudes or to induce actions in [...] agents' (Burke 1950:41). This departure from Greco-Roman rhetorical criticism defines rhetoric as 'the employment of a text for the purpose of persuasion' (Tolmie 2005:2).

Tolmie (2005:24–27) and Snyman (2009:1) are cautious to designate it a methodology and refer to it instead as a *minimal theory framework* and as a 'general guideline', respectively. I disagree. It is a developed and utilised methodology with clear steps, although Tolmie does not call it that, and there is evidence of embedded methodological elements (Genade 2011:13).

81. Nevertheless, I tentatively indulge, without prejudice, the prevailing conflationary approach applied to these three letters that enjoys majority critical support. However, there are divergent voices. See Ray Van Neste (2002:121); Davies (1996:90); Johnson, Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus (New Testament in Context Commentaries 1996:7). It is also not a material consideration that impacts upon constructing a theology of life from these letters.

82. Personally, and professionally I am on the side of Pauline authorship of these letters and stated as much elsewhere (Genade 2011:2).

I organised it as steps (Genade 2011:12) replicated[83] here for comprehensiveness as follows:

1. Identify the dominant rhetorical strategy of a section. This involves answering two primary questions: (1) How can one describe the author's primary rhetorical objective in the particular section? (2) How does the author set about achieving this objective?

The answers to the above questions enable one to describe the dominant rhetorical strategy of the section, which is then expressed in a single sentence:

2. Create a detailed analysis of the author's rhetorical strategy in a particular section. While flexibility is maintained concerning the approach for each section, a general rather than a fixed methodological approach is followed to achieve a description of the *main characteristics* of the author's strategy in a particular section, which may involve describing: (1) the type of argument or the nature of a specific argument, or (2) how an author argues or employs a process of argumentation to achieve a particular rhetorical objective.
3. Where deemed necessary, identify the 'supportive' rhetorical strategies important for the overall argument of a section or the entire discourse. Strategies that cannot be directly related to the dominant rhetorical objective fall into this category. In the present analysis, I do not deem it necessary to identify any 'supportive' strategies; hence, this terminology will not be utilised.
4. Identify the rhetorical techniques within a section. These involve how an author enhances the effectiveness of his or her communication, for example, metaphor, rhetorical questions, paronomasia (wordplay), the way sentences are constructed and chiasmus.

Delimitation of the methodological application

To analyse and assess the occurrences of the applicable vocabulary to extricate a theology of life, the scale of the analysis will not be comprehensively applied to each letter in its entirety. Such an exercise would exceed the scope of this publication as well as the editorial constraints of the chapter. Instead, analyses will be limited to and conducted on an *ad hoc* basis to those sections where the relevant vocabulary occurs and will strive towards this objective without compromising the contextual integrity of the particular passage or section. These three letters are suffused with references to God and life. It will therefore

83. 'This section of the chapter represents a substantial reworking, more than 50%, of the PhD thesis, entitled ' A text-centered rhetorical analysis of Paul's letter to Titus', obtained at the Free State University, Faculty of Theology, Department of New Testament; November 2007, with Prof. Dr D.F. Tolmie as supervisor.

not be possible to analyse each instance in detail. I will identify common elements in a selection of verses and investigate the rhetorical strategy, objectives and function.

After the introduction, the next port of call will be a survey of the applicable vocabulary of life and its distribution across the three letters. The investigation into the theology follows next and will be analysed within the context of ascertaining the dominant rhetorical strategy, its analysis and identification of rhetorical techniques. This culminates in an eventual discussion of the results and an extraction of the theology of life.

Overview and orientation

Vocabulary of life

Life in these letters has a radical theological bend, origin and justification. Explicit vocabulary signifying the notion of 'life' is spread sparsely, yet discriminately, amongst the three letters. The specific cluster of words is ζωή, ζωογονέω, ζωγρέω, βίος, ζάω, συζάω and διάγω.

Their distribution amongst the letters is illustrated in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1: ζωή, ζωογονέω, ζωγρέω, βίος, ζάω, συζάω and διάγω in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.

Word	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus
ζωή	1 Timothy 1:16 ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἠλεήθην, ἵνα ἐν ἐμοὶ πρώτῳ ἐνδείξηται Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς τὴν ἅπασαν μακροθυμίαν πρὸς ὑποτύπωσιν τῶν μελλόντων πιστεύειν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. And yet, for this reason, I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in him for eternal life. (1 Tm 1:16 NAS)	2 Timothy 1:1 Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ κατ᾽ ἐπαγγελίαν ζωῆς τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,	Titus 1:2 ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αἰωνίου, ἣν ἐπηγγείλατο ὁ ἀψευδὴς θεὸς πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,
	1 Timothy 4:8 ἡ γὰρ σωματικὴ γυμνασία πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος, ἡ δὲ εὐσέβεια πρὸς πάντα ὠφέλιμός ἐστιν ἐπαγγελίαν ἔχουσα ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης. or bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.	2 Timothy 1:10 φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου,	Titus 3:7 ἵνα δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι κληρονόμοι γενηθῶμεν κατ᾽ ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

Table 6.1 continues on the next page→

TABLE 6.1(Continues...): ζωή, ζωογονέω, ζωγρέω, βίος, ζάω, συζάω and διάγω in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.

Word	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus
		but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,	that being justified by his grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.
	1 Timothy 6:12 ἀγωνίζου τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως, ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, εἰς ἣν ἐκλήθης καὶ ὡμολόγησας τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν ἐνώπιον πολλῶν μαρτύρων. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.	-	-
	1 Timothy 6:19 ἀποθησαυρίζοντας ἑαυτοῖς θεμέλιον καλὸν εἰς τὸ μέλλον, ἵνα ἐπιλάβωνται τῆς ὄντως ζωῆς. storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.	-	-
ζωογονέω	1 Timothy 6:13 παραγγέλλω [σοι] ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῳογονοῦντος τὰ πάντα καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρήσαντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν, I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,	-	-
ζωγρέω	-	2 Timothy 2:26 καὶ ἀνανήψωσιν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίδος, ἐζωγρημένοι ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου θέλημα. and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive [alive] by him to do his will.	-

Table 6.1 continues on the next page→

TABLE 6.1(Continues...): ζωή, ζωογονέω, ζωγρέω, βίος, ζάω, συζάω and διάγω in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.

Word	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus
βίος	1 Timothy 2:2 ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἤρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι. for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.	2 Timothy 2:4 οὐδεὶς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ἵνα τῷ στρατολογήσαντι ἀρέσῃ. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.	-
ζάω	1 Timothy 3:15 ἐὰν δὲ βραδύνω, ἵνα εἰδῇς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας. but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.	2 Timothy 3:12 καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ θέλοντες εὐσεβῶς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διωχθήσονται. Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.	Titus 2:12 παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.
	1 Timothy 4:10 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἠλπίκαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι, ὅς ἐστιν σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πιστῶν. For it is for this we labour and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers.	2 Timothy 4:1 Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ: I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.	-
	1 Timothy 5:6 ἡ δὲ σπαταλῶσα ζῶσα τέθνηκεν. But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.	-	-

Table 6.1 continues on the next page→

TABLE 6.1(Continues...): ζωή, ζωογονέω, ζωγρέω, βίος, ζάω, συζάω and διάγω in 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.

Word	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus
συζάω	-	2 Timothy 2:11 πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· εἰ γὰρ συναπεθάνομεν, καὶ συζήσομεν; 2 Timothy 2:11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with him, we will also live with him;	-
διάγω	1 Timothy 2:2 ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἤρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι. for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.	-	Titus 3:3 Ἦμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι, δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοί, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

The choice of vocabulary suggests a preoccupation with the topic of life in its various nuances amongst the three letters, respectively. At this early stage, it already seems obvious that the choice of vocabulary within their various contexts is there for a reason and I address this a little later. The nouns ζωή and βίος make a comparatively balanced appearance. Of the verbs, ζάω dominates across the spectrum. The verbs ζωογονέω and ζωγρέω feature only once in 1 and 2 Timothy, respectively. The verbs ζωγρέω and διάγω are semantically significant oblique references to life. Their presence ties in with the rhetorical strategy of the author. The lay of the land in terms of the vocabulary having been established, I next focus on the theology presented in the letters.

Theology

1 Timothy and Titus primarily and uniquely portray God as σωτήρ (1 Tm 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Tt 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). Additionally, the doxology of 1 Timothy 1:17 as well and the extended description of God preceding the brief doxology in 1 Timothy 6:15–16 foreground his sovereignty and transcendence in a peculiar manner. One final example is the repeated appearance of ἐνώπιον του θεού, accompanied at times by additional descriptions of God and other celestial beings, as part of an adjuration formula (1 Tm 5:4, 21; 6:13; 2 Tm 2:14; 4:1).

At the heart of the theological emphases found in these three letters is the sovereign character of the divine salvific intervention in history. There is evidence of strategic intentional placement by the author of ‘each elaborate

description of God as well as characterised God with a uniform emphasis to reinforce God's sovereign control of salvation history' (Couser 2000:265).

There is rich theological language in these three letters to give a sense of the nested contexts, and the occurrences of the mentions of God, Jesus Christ and Spirit or Holy Spirit will now be highlighted.

God

God's reality and presence are centre, front and back for the author of these letters. In 35 places, in the genitive, God is described as pivotal to or the source of an array of activities, initiatives, ethical mandates and more. For example:

1. Paul's apostolic ministry is κατ᾽ ἐπιταγὴν θεοῦ ([by the command of God]; 1 Tm 1:1).
2. Grace and mercy to Timothy come from God who is also identified as the father of Paul and Timothy, χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς (1 Tm 1:2).
3. The activities of the false teachers or the opposition do not further ἢ οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ ([the administration of God]; 1 Tm 1:4; [NAS]).
4. God is τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ ([the blessed God], 1 Tm 1:11).
5. God is τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ ([their saviour], 1 Tm 2:3).
6. Between God and human beings, there is εἷς [...] μεσίτης θεοῦ ([one mediator], 1 Tm 2:5).
7. The church is ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ ([the church of God], 1 Tm 3:5; 3:15).
8. The church is the οἴκῳ θεοῦ ([the household of God], 1 Tm 3:15).
9. God is θεοῦ ζῶντος ([living God], 1 Tm 3:5).
10. In relationship to creation, God is πᾶν κτίσμα θεοῦ καλὸν ([all of God's creation is good], 1 Tm 4:4).
11. The λόγου θεοῦ ([Word of God], 1 Tm 4:5) and prayer sanctify food.
12. Taking care of one's family is ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ([acceptable before God], 1 Tm 5:4).
13. The adjuration of Timothy happens ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ([before God], 1 Tt 5:21; 6:13; cf. 2 Tm 2:14; 4:1).
14. The ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ ([name of God], 1 Tm 6:1) should not be spoken against or blasphemed.
15. Timothy is ἄνθρωπε θεοῦ ([man of God], 1 Tm 6:11).
16. Paul is an apostle διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ ([through the will of God], 2 Tm 1:1.
17. Timothy is the recipient of grace, mercy and peace ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ([from God], 2 Tm 1:2).
18. God is θεοῦ πατρὸς [...] ἡμῶν ([the father of {Paul and Timothy}], 2 Tm 1:2).
19. Timothy must rekindle τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ([the gift of God], 2 Tm 1:6) that was imparted to him.
20. Paul commands Timothy to conjoin in suffering for the gospel κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ ([according to the power of God], 2 Tm 1:8).

21. The λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται ([the Word of God is not imprisoned], 2 Tm 2:9).
22. Timothy must adjure the church ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ([before God], 2 Tm 2:14; cf 1 Tm 5:21; 6:13).
23. The μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ θεοῦ ἕστηκεν the ([firm foundation of God stands], 2 Tm 2:19).
24. The τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος ([man of God], 2 Tm 3:17) is made adequate by the Scriptures.
25. The adjuration of Timothy happens ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ([before God], 2 Tm 4:1).
26. Paul is δοῦλος θεοῦ ([bod servant of God], Tt 1:1).
27. The church is described as ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ ([the ecclesia of God], Tt 1:1).
28. God is τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ ([their saviour], Tt 1:3).
29. Paul prays χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ ([grace and peace from God], Tt 1:4) for Timothy.
30. God is θεοῦ πατρὸς [...]. τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ([God our father], Tt 1:4; [saviour], Tt 1:3).
31. The bishop must ὡς θεοῦ οἰκονόμον ([as administrator/household manager of God], Tt 1:7) be blameless.
32. The ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ([Word of God], Tt 2:5) must not be blasphemed.
33. God has a doctrine, τὴν διδασκαλίαν [...] θεοῦ ([the doctrine of God], Tt 2:10) that must be adorned.
34. God is τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ([our saviour], Tt 1:3, 2:10, 3:4).
35. The χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ([the grace of God], Tt 2:11) appeared to all people.

In Titus 1:3, God, as the subject of the verb, ἐφανέρωσεν [...]. τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ἐν κηρύγματι [made known his word in the proclamation]. The doctrine that must be adorned (reference 33) implies a theology of consequence, action and ethic or a theology that is acted out in life, viz. work life. It is the acted out theology of, in this instance, the δοῦλοι that evokes a response from their immediate environment of an implied watching world, the fellow citizens. A positive response to the reality of God is dependent upon the appropriate or adorning lived out ethic of the worshipper of this God and observed by the environment.

The noun θεός is used a total of 48 times in the nominative, accusative, dative and genitive forms across all three letters, respectively. It breaks down as follows:

1. Twenty-two times in 1 Timothy.
2. Thirteen times in 2 Timothy.
3. Thirteen times in Titus.

The fact that Titus has half the number of chapters of 1 Timothy and less than 2 Timothy makes that occurrence ratio statistically significant. Five times God is called ‘our saviour’ and only in 1 Timothy and Titus. Once, he is called ‘saviour of all men’ (1 Tm 1:1; 2:3; Tt 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; 1 Tm 4:10).

Jesus Christ

1. Paul is an ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1 Tm 1:1; 2 Tm 1:1; Tt 1:1).
2. He describes Jesus as Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡμῶ and as τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (1 Tm 1:1; 1:2, 12 'our Lord').
3. Jesus strengthened Paul and considered him faithful (1 Tm 1:12).
4. The source of πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησου (1 Tm 1:14).
5. He is the saviour being Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι (1 Tm 1:15).
6. The patience of Christ Jesus is celebrated (1 Tm 1:16).
7. Jesus is ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς (1 Tm 2:5), the sole mediator between God and humanity, ἄνθρωποί.
8. He is the object of faith (1 Tm 3:13).
9. Timothy can be διάκονος Χριστοῦ (1 Tm 4:6).
10. Adjuration of Timothy happens ἐνώπιον Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ ([before Christ Jesus], 1 Tm 5:21; 1 Tm 6:13).
11. Sound words are attributed to originate from or belong to Jesus (1 Tm 6:3).
12. He is expected to appear in the future (1 Tm 6:14).
13. There is a promise of life, ζωῆς τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tm 1:1).
14. He, together with God, is the source of mercy and peace, ἔλεος εἰρήνη (2 Tm 1:2).
15. Through him, the grace of God was given from all eternity (2 Tm 1:9).
16. Jesus is the σωτήρ who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the good news (2 Tm 1:10; [salvation is in him], 2 Tm 2:10; [through faith], 2 Tm 3:15; Tt 1:4; [great god and saviour], Tt 2:13; 3:6).
17. Faith and love as well as grace are ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tm 1:13; 2 Tm 2:1).
18. Jesus Christ has good soldiers, στρατιώτης who should not be apprehensive about suffering hardship (2 Tm 2:3).
19. Jesus is ἐγηγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυίδ (2 Tm 2:8).
20. Godly living in Christ results in persecution, εὐσεβῶς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διωχθήσονται (2 Tm 3:12).
21. He is the judge of the living and the dead (2 Tm 4:1).

Jesus is called 'our saviour' four times and only in 2 Timothy and Titus (2 Tm 1:10; Tt 1:4, 2:13, 3:6).

The name Ἰησοῦς Χριστός or in revere appears 31 times in total. It breaks down as follows:

1. Fourteen times in 1 Timothy.
2. Thirteen times in 2 Timothy.
3. Four times in Titus.

It is interesting that the name consistently appears together with the title anointed or Christ in all of the above occurrences. It is almost as if the author intentionally emphasised the distinctiveness of the name.

Holy Spirit

1. He 'vindicated' (NAU) or made righteous, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, Jesus Christ (1 Tm 3:16).
2. He predicts apostasy ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς (1 Tm 4:1).
3. He dwells in believers (2 Tm 1:14).
4. He washes believers through regeneration and renewing (Tt 3:5).

There are four references to the Spirit, πνεῦμα (1 Tm 3:16; 4:1; 2 Tm 1:14; Tt 3:5), and its occurrence breaks down as follows:

1. Two times in 1 Timothy.
2. One time in 2 Timothy.
3. One time in Titus.

Pneumatology occupies a much smaller footprint than references to God and Jesus Christ in these letters. Nevertheless, the theology of the three letters legitimately qualifies as being strikingly Trinitarian. Salvific terminology abounds and involves, explicitly so in Titus, all three persons of the trinity. God and Jesus Christ are co-equally and interchangeably called 'saviour' in 2 Timothy and Titus. What lies behind this doctrinal density?

The intention is not to communicate mere doctrine. These facts were not intended as dogma lectures to individuals or the congregations behind them. The theology had to be assimilated, imbibed, incarnated and then expressed through a particular lifestyle. In fact, the typical tri-segment structure of a Pauline letter is evident in these letters (Harvey 1998:18–20; Mounce 2000:4, 377, 463). The opening chapters are doctrinally loaded with subsequent chapters often containing instructions applicable to the lifestyles and conduct of the respective social groups. The body of a Pauline letter, especially 2 Timothy, contains the paraenesis or 'moral exhortation in which someone is advised to pursue or abstain from something' (Malherbe 1989:124). It would be remiss to construct a theology of life exclusively from the presence of frequency of the words life or living. There seems to be a rhetorical undercurrent that insinuates that one read between the lines to get to the marrow of such a theology. Thus, embracing suffering is an expression of that theology. So is fighting the good fight. Teaching younger women to serve their families in their household is another example of this under-the-radar kind of teaching.

Each theological reference to God, Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit is intended to demonstrate a response to these theological realities by the author, Timothy, Titus and by extension to the wider recipients. In other words, just like Paul, for example, received his apostleship from God and Jesus Christ or in the way Timothy is called a servant of God or of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, in the same way, the audience, by their service and daily ethical conduct, does so in response to the same theological realities.

Analysis

The design, scope and purpose of the present study constrain the comprehensiveness of the analysis. I will not conduct a verse, sentence or pericope level analysis for each book. To deliver on the outcomes of this publication, I will highlight thematic confluence where such is evident across the three letters and assign or identify a rhetorical strategy.

These letters share multiple theological commonalities. A clear Trinitarian thread runs through each of them. Structurally, there is little deviation from the first-century epistolary convention. The organisational pattern of theology or theory followed by paraenesis (Whang in Porter & Adams 2010:253, 268) is clearly discernible amongst these three letters without ignoring the idiosyncrasies of each or denying the differences between them (Carson & Moo 2005:554).

Paul responds to these various problems or challenges within these churches by injecting theology into the situations. How or why the apostle responds as he does is often not focused upon in other methodologies. It is a very important consideration in persuasion analysis.

In these letters, various situations reflect prevalent thinking often erroneous, within those local settings. Each letter addresses an array of issues including at least one core problem that occasioned its writing. The occasion, *sitz im leben* or provenance, as it is called by most commentators, is known in rhetorical parlance as the rhetorical situation or exigence (Bitzer 1968), which describes:

> A complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigency which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigency. (p. 6)

Text-generated persuasion analysis (TGPA) does not consider any discourse as random. Instead, it interprets or approaches each discourse from the assumption that it was conceived because the particular situation necessitated its creation for that situation to be resolved.

The thinking on different aspects of church or individual Christian life within the congregations at Ephesus and Crete required modification or reinforcement. Persuasion was deployed to achieve the targeted response. Thus, the theology scattered throughout the three letters is intentionally and strategically interposed to stimulate a change or affirmation of thought with a concomitant change of conduct. The total of the discourse was intended to effect a change and to affect the audience, so that they would amend their behaviour to reflect or resemble the doctrine espoused within the narrative.

The exigency in 1 Timothy concerns leadership. Fee (1988:8) suggests that 'the church is being led astray by some of its own elders' and the letter aims to address or to eliminate that threat.

Overall rhetorical strategy

In each of these letters, excepting perhaps 2 Timothy, it is essentially doctrinal weaknesses that make the church vulnerable to error. The deviation from sound doctrine manifests in leadership, teaching and ultimately poor ethics. 2 Timothy also deploys theology to eliminate the risk of error at an individual level.

My formulation of an overall rhetorical objective or strategy for these three letters is as follows: to counter erroneous thinking and conduct that stem from an underdeveloped theology by injecting sound doctrine, using inter alia, as rhetorical devices, the divine and apostolic examples to persuade the audience to adopt the latter resulting in or manifested by the appropriate behaviour or ethic, firstly within the local religious community and expanding to include wider secular society.

Exigencies

This section summarises the exigences within these letters and the distillation of a theology of life from it. The theology deployed here functions rhetorically to drive specific persuasive objectives.

Risk is a common element shared jointly and severally by these letters. The unity, reputation and preservation of the church are under threat from false teachers (1 Tm; Tt). In 2 Timothy, the preservation, perpetuation and proclamation of the gospel must be secured in light of the apostle's impending death. The overall rhetorical objective is to hedge against, minimise or eliminate these risks, which can only be achieved if the author structures his correspondence in a manner that strives for the maximum persuasive effect.

The primary peril in 1 Timothy is false doctrine. The 'Ephesian heresy' (Mounce 2000:lxix–lxxi) appears to be a blend of proto-Gnosticism, Hellenism and Judaism. Kelly (1960:70) views it as a 'gnosticizing form of Jewish Christianity'. In the absence of the challenge posed by false teachers, much of the instructions pertaining to leadership and church structure would appear unjustified. This would also apply to the ethical instructions.

Titus has much in common with 1 Timothy. The dominant, though not exclusive, threat appears to be Jewish false teachers (Tt 1:10, 14). Their influence, while potentially destructive, can be quelled by the introduction of

legitimate leadership teaching healthy doctrine that encourages good deeds or ethical lifestyles within the church.

2 Timothy evinces concern for potential weaknesses in Timothy's disposition or fitness for the challenges of the Christian ministry as suggested by references to apostasy and exhortations to stand firm and to suffer for Christ (Stam 1983:121–22). The broader context involves suffering (2 Tm 1:8, 16; 2:3; 3:12; 4:5) and martyrdom (Sirilla 2017). The author introduces rhetoric into this context to remedy the latent risk that Timothy might not 'finish the race (2 Tm 4:7) which accounts for the encouraging tone of the letter and the recollections of a shared history (2 Tm 3:10–11). Positively, the exhortation is that Paul's spiritual progeny follow his example of loyalty to the proclamation, preservation and transmission of the gospel as well as remaining loyal to him until the end (2 Tm 1:6–14; 2:1–13; 3:10–4:5).

In all three letters, theology forms the substrate of the response to the dangers confronting these faith communities. The theological themes deployed are not intended as mere 'head' knowledge. Rather, these are deliberately invoked to compel implicitly as well as explicitly an ethic that is theologically driven. While each of these letters is unique, the theological emphases overlap sufficiently to craft a collage of a theology of life I categorise as divine, existential and theological.

Divine life

This subtitle is not synonymous with 'sacred life'. It may include it but is far more comprehensive.

Because God is the living God, ζῶντος θεοῦ (1 Tm 3:15; 4:10), the life of God activates, animates or is mirrored by those who profess faith in him. It describes a life lived in response to and in conformity with God's attributes and activity in history; the life of God transmuted into those believing in him and the response to God from within the believers reflecting aspects of the character or attributes of God. He is after all the one who 'gives life to all things' (1 Tm 6:13). This is the theozoentic character of life and the fountainhead of this divine life. There could be no faith life without it; it begins with it. Theozoentic life elicits two consequential responses, namely, the eusebeic and the epiphanic. Both of these are extensions or permutations of the divine life.

The noun εὐσέβεια (1 Tm 2:2; 3:16; 4:7–8; 5:4; 6:3, 5–6, 11; 2 Tm 3:5; Tt 1:1; adverb in Tt 2:12; 2 Tm 3:12; infinitive Tm 5:4) is generally translated 'godliness'. This translation implies an inward, inherent holiness and is not very helpful especially because the word 'god' is lacking (except in Tm 2:10, with θεοσέβεια). Its literal meaning is 'well-directed reverence […] an externalised piety' (Zodhiates 1992:683) and used by Paul only in these letters (Wilder in

Köstenberger & Wilder 2014:29). This behavioural emphasis is lost in the translation preference. Nevertheless, the relationship with God is or ought to be characterised by this behavioural disposition, an observable life orientation in response to knowledge or a relationship with the divine. This is what I call the eusebeic response. The next element of the divine life is the epiphanic.

Ἐπιφάνεια originates from the Hellenistic era and referred to the intervention of a god on behalf of his worshippers (Towner 1986:434). The epiphany word group appear in all three letters, have temporal distinctions and have ethical implications. The noun occurs five times. Four are future tense, namely, 1 Timothy 6:14, 2 Timothy 4:1, 8 and Titus 2:13. One noun is past oriented with the main verb, namely, 2 Timothy 1:10. The verb, in aorist form, appears only in Titus 2:11 and 3:4 referencing the past appearance or incarnation of the grace of the saviour God universally. Future and past epiphanies are associated with a specific ethical response which the author presses home to his audiences. Towner (1986) maintains:

> [*A*] new manner of living is not only possible but obligatory. The future epiphany also affects human existence, but differently than the past event. Connected with the future appearance of Christ is the thought of judgment (clearly in 2 Tim 4. 1 and also implicitly in 1 Tim 6. 14; Tit 2. 13), which is thus appealed to as a motivation to 'put on' the new life already made available by the first event. (p. 439)

This is the epiphanic response; a lifestyle, conduct or behavioural response. In response to a past epiphany, namely, the incarnation (Towner 1986:434), Christians live in a certain way now. In response to an anticipated or future epiphany, Christians live in a certain way now. There is, therefore, a character or quality of life that is epiphanically influenced.

These letters are an ad hoc blend of propositional truths and paraenesis (Schreiner 2011:68–71). There is a reason why the author describes God as living. It implies consequentiality or accountability. God is living as opposed to dead, inanimate or indifferent and will judge the living and the dead (2 Tm 4:1). This truth ties into the risks confronting the respective recipients and accounts for the juxtaposition of sound doctrine and sound teachers vis-a-vis unqualified teachers and erroneous doctrine. It explains the interplay between the propositional and paraenetic content. Doctrine learned and doctrine lived are inseparable.

■ Existential life

The practical character is built on a trans-corpus theological substratum expressed previously as the theozoentic. Linked to this is the existential aspect of life as it unfolds in the divine presence. In Paul's mind, events in the church and individual Christian lives take place 'in the presence' or 'in the sight' of God. It plays out as follows:

- Timothy 2:3: This is good and acceptable in the sight [ἐνώπιον] of God our Saviour.
- Timothy 5:4: But if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety with to their own family and to make some return to their parents, for this is acceptable in the sight [ἐνώπιον] of God.
- Timothy 5:21: I solemnly charge you in the presence [ἐνώπιον] of God and of Christ Jesus and of his chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.
- Timothy 6:13: I charge you in the presence [ἐνώπιον] of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate.
- 2 Timothy 2:14: Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence [ἐνώπιον] of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.
- Timothy 4:1: I solemnly charge you in the presence [ἐνώπιον] of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

In each of the above instances, the existential impact upon conduct in the presence of the divine is undeniable. It has implications for the individual in this case Timothy, as well as on the faith community. Church happens within the realm of the enopion-principled existence. Thus, Timothy is explicitly abjured in the presence of God (2 Tm 4:1). By implication, this principle extends to and manifests in the behaviour and attitudes of the leadership, who according to Thomas Aquinas (cited in Sirilla 2017:215), commenting on Titus 1:7a, must be 'not arrogant or hot-tempered or drunk or violent or greedy for base profit'.

The practical nature of these letters (Johnston 2006:243) may be the single trait about which there seems to be unanimity. They emphasise a purely organisational objective, at least in the case of 1 Timothy and Titus (Köstenberger & Wilder 2014:16) of which church structure and leadership qualifications rank uppermost. It offers solutions to some of the problems faced by the early church (Guthrie 2009:98) in church, home, public and private life. In each of these respective contexts, the remedy takes the form of or involves behavioural adjustments intended to differentiate genuine professions of faith with concomitant corroborating conduct from those professions that are disavowed by contradictory behaviour (1 Tm 4:12; 2 Tm 2:22; Tt 1:16). In other words, right behaviour follows right belief. The controlling principle that influences the conduct and attitudes of the congregation is the author's conviction that life is 'behaved' before God. Together with the enopion principle, there is also the 'now-life' reality.

The five occurrences of the adverb νῦν fulfil an epoch-demarcating function. Substantively (2 Tm 1:10) and as a modifier with ἡ ζωή (1 Tm 4:8) and αἰών (1 Tm 6:17; 2 Tm 4:10; Tt 2:12), it essentially signifies the pre-parousia period or

the 'present life', 'present aeon' or 'age'. The concepts ὕστερος καιρός (1 Tm 4:1) and ἔσχατος ἡμέρα (2 Tm 3.1) also refer to the present age when evil flourishes (Towner 1986:42 8). This time frame is when certain behaviours or attitudes may manifest much of which will be negative (2 Tm 4:3) and within which the genuine professors will be required to rise to the occasion. Positive conduct or attitudes may include holiness ([κλῆσις ἅγιος]; 2 Tm 1:9–10); godliness ([εὐσέβεια]; 1 Tm 4:8); fostering a healthy relationship with material wealth (1 Tm 6:17); shunning ungodliness and worldly desires; and living self-controlled, righteous and godly lives (Tt 2:12). The ambit of 'accountable behaviour extends to include almost every aspect of human existence, from ministerial activity to conduct in the worship setting, home and world' (Towner 1986:439). A negative expression of affection may include loving the present world over the gospel cause (2 Tm 4:10) and eventually abandoning it. The now-life will be characterised by actions and attitudes that are theologically motivated whether positive or negative.

The author uses the enopion principle and the 'now-life' reality in an effective manner to constrain ethical conduct that testifies to the relationship with the divine and a lifestyle holistically consistent with those who make a profession of godliness.

■ Eschatological life

The author combines a rear-view mirror perspective with a windshield or a forward-looking one. This is the eschatological approach to the present life. It is a life lived in anticipation of the parousia or the future epiphany that appears in these texts.

My concern is not to analyse the character of the eschatology presented. In other words, I am not considering whether we are dealing at present with an over-realised (Lane 1965) or a realised eschatology (Towner 1987). I endeavour instead to ascertain the rhetorical objective behind the eschatological references. The presupposition is that the author introduced certain topics very intentionally to persuade his audience away from one course of action to the adoption of an alternative one. The anticipatory stance is deliberate. It intensifies the element of compunction and the arrogation or maintenance of a specific ethic.

The author is not transmitting information about the theology of the return of Christ. No. That is at least not his first objective when introducing these concepts. He employs this theological truth, as he does with the other truths, in order to encourage behavioural change or behavioural consistency in his audience.

The strength of his rhetoric lies not so much in the veracity of what he puts forth but in his personal example. In fact, it is the combination of truth and

personal example. He actually believes in the parousia and modifies his own behaviour in light of it. It is 'the day', ἐκεῖνη ἡ ἡμέρα (2 Tm 1:12, 18; 4:8); 'the' day of Christ's return when judgement will be executed and salvation finalised. In anticipation thereof, the author endures sufferings and is not ashamed of his present Christian identity (2 Tm 1:12). He prays for Onesiphorus to anticipate being rewarded for his loyalty in the future (2 Tm 1:18). Finally, the author anticipates a future reward in the form of a crown of righteousness from the Lord (2 Tm 4:8).

Together with ἐκεῖνη ἡ ἡμέρα, the rest of the vocabulary include ἐπιφάνεια and, the age to come, ζωή ἡ μελλούσα (1 Tm 4:8). These all convey a future focus that impinges upon present behaviour. In the case of ζωή ἡ μελλούσα, the benefits of 'godliness' transcend to the future (1 Tm 4:8) and generous rich people store up for themselves a good foundation in the coming age (1 Tm 6:19). In 2 Timothy 2:12, the endurance commended is an implicit reference to the future. The outcome for those who continue (to the end) is positive, namely, they shall reign with him. Those who deny Christ (now) will be judged, namely, be denied by him (then).

The ἐπιφάνεια 'of our Lord Jesus Christ' is the end point towards which Timothy must 'keep the commandment' (1 Tm 6:14) and is adjured in the light of the coming judgement associated with that day (2 Tm 4:1). The ambiguous reference in 2 Timothy 4:8 might not preclude a future leaning given the immediate context of Paul's expectation of a crown of righteousness (Towner 1986:435). In Titus 2:13, the object of expectation is the appearance of 'our great God and saviour, Christ Jesus'. So what? Without a future appearance together with the implication of consequences, the insistence upon good works (Tt 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14) or adornment of self (1 Tm 2:9) or the doctrine of God (Tt 2:10) or minimising opportunity for blasphemy (1 Tm 1:20) amount to moralism rather than a theology of life and life to come.

Paul uses argument by example. He presents himself as a model to Timothy and by extension to others (Bailey 2010:174; Westfall in Porter & Adams 2010:223), an exemplar of someone who successfully navigated the tension of the dual epiphanies culminating in a bold declaration that he 'fought the good fight, […] finished the course, […] kept the faith' (2 Tm 4:7). In the face of death, he nevertheless speaks eagerly of 'loving Christ's appearing' (Fee 1988:20). Why would he formulate it in this manner if not to motivate others to imitate him?

Summary

Life is divine and has consequences, immanence and transcendence. It is lived existentially as well as eschatologically. The living God infuses his creation with life (1 Tm 6:13) giving it a theozoentic quality. Two responses flow from

this, namely, the eusebeic and the epiphanic. Both are permutations of the divine life envisaged in these letters. The author holds before his audience the image of judgement of the living and the dead by God and Jesus Christ (2 Tm 4:1). There is a blessed hope and appearing of God and saviour (Tt 2:13) that the audience should anticipate and respond to in the 'now'-life with a corroborating and distinguishing ethic.

The enopion principle portrays life as lived in the presence of God. All these elements form part of the rhetorical arsenal that the author unleashes upon his audience to drive home his call for conduct conforming to the profession of faith in the living God. A rhetorical tool of a personal nature is an example. Paul models belief in a now-life and a life-to-come that incorporates judgement and rewards. This immanence and transcendence characteristic of life, together with rewards and judgement, intensifies the demand placed upon the audience towards compliant lifestyles.

Paul's supreme objective for writing (Whang, cited in Porter & Adams 2010:268):

> The ultimate purpose, however, seems to be clear and simple, namely, to change the addressees' behavior to conform to the new reality of their Christian faith. Their ontological change owing to their union with Christ, their intellectual, emotional and intentional change owing to their spiritual rebirth should be materialised and demonstrated in every life. (p. 268)

Conclusion

The doctrine that must be adorned (Tt 2:10) implies a theology of consequence, action and ethic, a theology that is active in life, namely, work life. It is the acted out theology of Christians in the arena of a watching world, the fellow citizens. A positive response to the reality of God is dependent upon the appropriate or adorning lived out ethic of those who worship God. It is a theology made visible through right living. Life becomes the 'making visible' of the invisible reality of the divine to enhance the admirability of God.

The theology of life in these three letters is neither cultic nor cerebral. Rather, it is a theology that infuses life, the lived life. It is what informs the inner motivations, impulses, trade, sex, raising children and vocational attitude. We find here the life of theology unleashed through the lived lives of all who live between the two epiphanies.

The Christian life is lived on this mystical tightrope of the already-and-the-not yet, the now-life and the life to come. In-between these two realities is the lived life experience in its various and interrelated nuances of mandatory ethics for all who belong to the οἴκου θεοῦ [household of God].

A full-orbed theology of life emerges from within these three letters that is never more relevant and needed than today.

Chapter 7

Life in Hebrews

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Introduction

The New Testament document with the heading, *To the Hebrews* (cf. Steyn 2012:235–253, 2016a:103–122), was written by an unknown Jewish-Hellenistic (Steyn 2015a:271–291),[84] but Christian author (Steyn 2009:583–607) towards the end of the first century AD. It was written with the intention to encourage a group of early Christians to persevere in their Christian faith (Steyn 2019a:259–276). They should remain faithful in their belief that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is different from the angels (Steyn 2003:1107–1128, 2011a:143–164) and from Moses (Steyn 2014a:113–125). He is the ultimate King and High Priest (similar to Melchizedek) (Steyn 2002:207–223) who brought

84. Lewicki (2004:13) formulates: '*Die Textadressaten leben in einem kulturell-religionsgeschichtlichen Milieu, in dem der zunehmende Einfluß des mittelplatonischen Denkens und dessen verschiedene Rezeptionen und Modifikationen (etwa bei Philo) zu beobachten sind*'.

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his own body as sacrifice[85] in the sanctuary of God (Steyn 2011b) – once and for all – when he died for the sins of humanity.[86] In this manner, he not only demolished death itself but also the slavery of the fear of death (Heb 2:15). This sacrifice, which could be compared to the cultic festival of the Great Atonement, opened a new way for all believers into God's house. They have now become a new covenant community, who could trust the promises of God, which are fulfilled irrespective of the limitations of life's circumstances and the challenges of suffering and persecution. There is hope for the future because Jesus went ahead on this journey of suffering and death, through which he enabled a new entry into the presence of God's sanctuary. This current generation of believers should thus not shrink back, get tired or abandon their faith, but should keep their eyes fixed on Jesus – the beginning and end of their faith. The unknown author of Hebrews supports the argumentation in his encouraging tractate consistently with many passages from the Jewish Scriptures in their Greek versions (Steyn 2008a:297–307, 2010a:238–255, 2011c), which he considers to be God's living word (Steyn 2008b:327–352, 2014b:68–87) that is spoken time and again by the Father, the Son (Steyn 2001:433–440) or the Holy Spirit in the introductory formulae of his quotations.

This document, addressed 'to the Hebrews', is vibrant with life. Its *Gottesbild* is based on that of a 'living God'[87]; its Christology is based on the *living, resurrected Christ*, who reached perfection[88]; its salvation history is based on the *living promises* of God (Steyn 2020:371–396) (hence God's word remains *living Word*) and on the salvation of Christ; its eschatology is based on the soteriological achievement of Christ (Steyn 2019b:441–459) as High Priest, who brought his own body as sacrifice and who opened up a new and *living way* (Steyn 2007:612–620) for humanity. Lindars (1991:25) even held the opinion that 'the chief influence on the thought of Hebrews is the mainstream of Christian life and teaching'. Interestingly, however, despite

85. See Beltz (1981:155): '*in der Erklärung des Gamaliel 6,25 wird das Opfer von Jesus anders geschildert*: „*er trug (sich) zwar selbst als lebendiges Opfer* (*dar*)*, zusammen mit deinen Kindern. Er brachte sie dar als Opfer (für das) All*"'; (re: *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, IX, X, Leiden 1977).

86. Cf. Galley (1987/88:74): '*Hinter dem Zeugnis vom Blut im Hebr steht eindeutig der nicht zitierte Grundsatz Lev 17,11 „des Leibes Leben ist im Blut, und ich habe es euch verliehen für den Altar, daß man euch Sühne schaffe; denn das Blut bewirkt Sühne mittels des (in ihm enthaltenen) Lebens*"'.

87. While referring to Hebrews 1:1, Lewicki (2004:15) remarks: '*Daß dieser Gott nicht ein "ermüdend-statischer", sondern ein "lebendiger" Gott ist, wird mit dem nächsten Prädikat zum Ausdruck gebracht: Er ist der "redende Gott"*'.

88. 'His life of obedience, his sacrificial death and heavenly exaltation are the means by which he was perfected' (Peeler 2014:191).

all this prominence, the concept of 'life' in the book of Hebrews has not yet systematically and extensively been investigated as a *Leitmotiv*, topos or important theological theme in itself. The current investigation will thus attempt to address this gap in the research. Firstly, a concordance will be compiled with the occurrences and frequency of this topos. These occurrences will then, secondly, be organised into different semantic areas that are theologically directed in terms of divine ontology and revelation, as well as in terms of soteriological, anthropological, eschatological and biological (zoological) orientation. Each of these categories will be briefly introduced in the light of exegetical research and within its own embedded literary and theological context. It is the aim of this study to provide an introductory overview of the concept of life as an important theological topos in Hebrews.

Occurrence and distribution of the concept of 'life' in Hebrews

A survey of the occurrences of 'life' as a topos in Hebrews reveals 15 key references where the term appears as verbal form (derived from ζῶ) or in some nominal form (derived from ζωή). Compare the references in Table 7.1.

This concordance makes it clear that, in terms of frequency, it is distributed through the whole of the book with the first instance already present in Hebrews 2:15 and the last in Hebrews 13:11.

The six different contextual themes within which the term 'life' is being used in Hebrews, could be organised into six semantic areas that are, in turn, theologically directed: The living God (divine ontology); the *logos* of God (divine revelation); a mortal being alive (anthropological orientation); Christ's life (soteriological orientation); a new and living way (eschatological orientation); and animals as living beings (biological orientation). Each of these categories will now be briefly introduced in the light of exegetical research and within its own embedded literary and theological context.

TABLE 7.1: Occurrence and distribution of the concept of 'life' in Hebrews.

Theme	Semantic-theological area	Reference
The living God	Divine ontology	Hebrews 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22
The *logos* of God	Divine revelation	Hebrews 4:12
A mortal being alive	Anthropological orientation	Hebrews 7:3; 7:8; 9:17
Christ's life	Soteriological orientation	Hebrews 7:16; 7:25
A new and living way	Eschatological orientation	Hebrews 2:15; 10:20; 10:38; 12:9
Animals as living beings	Biological (zoological) orientation	Hebrews 13:11

Divine ontology: The living God (Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:9, 22)

The expression θεοῦ ζῶντος is a familiar expression in the LXX.[89] It is thus not surprising at all that the author of Hebrews, being familiar with the Jewish Scriptures and its concept of God, builds on this perception of the divine.[90] Hebrews makes at least four times explicitly reference to God as a 'living God' [θεοῦ ζῶντος], by explicitly including the adjective 'living'.[91]

The first occurrence (Heb 3:12)

The first occurrence (Heb 3:12) warns the readers to take care that none of them may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from *the living God*. By doing so, 'their inner life is made manifest by their actions' (Mackie 2011:107). See Hebrews 3:

βλέπετε, ἀδελφοί, μήποτε ἔσται ἔν τινι ὑμῶν καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος	Take care, brothers, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. (v. 12)

The warning follows immediately after the long quotation of LXX Psalms 94:7–11 (Steyn 2010b:194–228). It forms the opening line of the author's commentary to the quoted Psalm and is a direct address to his current audience to heed the message of the passage quoted. It refers to the first quoted lines of LXX Psalms 94:7–8, where the author of the Psalm appealed to his readers not to harden their hearts [μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν] today [σήμερον] if they hear his voice [ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε]. Hence, the current readers should take care [βλέπετε] that none of them may have an evil, unbelieving heart [καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας] that turns away from the living God [ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος]. God is portrayed in Hebrews as *a speaking God*, whom the author introduced in Hebrews 1:1. God 'spoke' [λαλήσας] to our ancestors through the prophets in the past, but 'has spoken' [ἐλάλησεν] to us by the Son in these last days. We read that such a great salvation 'was declared through the Lord' ([λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου], Heb 2:3) and that God said to Christ ([ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν], Heb 5:5) when he was appointed as high priest that he is God's Son (quoting LXX Ps 109:1). Even the sprinkled blood of Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, 'speaks better than that of Abel' ([αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρεῖττον λαλοῦντι], Heb 12:24). The believers should therefore not refuse the one who is speaking ([μὴ παραιτήσησθε τὸν λαλοῦντα], Heb 2:25).

89. It surfaces in LXX Deuteronomy 4:33; 5:26; 1 Kingdoms 17:36; Esther 8:12q; Hosea 2:1; Daniel 4:22; 5:23; 6:21; 3 Maccabees 6:28. Similarly also in Joshua 3:10; 4 Kingdoms 19:4, 16; Esther 6:13; Psalms 41:3; 83:3; Isaiah 37:4, 17; Daniel 6:27; Bel et Dracon 5, 6, 24, 25; Tobit 13:2.

90. Cf. in the New Testament also 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and Acts 14:15.

91. Lewicki (2004:141) reminds: '*im Gegensatz zu den Vorstellungen der zeitgenössischen Denkströmungen (ist er) ein lebendiger Gott* […] *konkret vernehmbar und erfahrbar*'.

The second occurrence (Heb 9:14)

The second occurrence (Heb 9) makes it clear that the blood of Christ will purify the conscience of the believers from dead works to worship *the living God*:

πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι.	[...] how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God! (v. 14)

Hebrews 9 compares the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries with each other and presents Jesus as the ultimate high priest who entered once and for all into the sanctuary with his own blood (Heb 9:11–12). The author compares the blood of Christ with that of the sacrificial animals, stating with a rhetorically laden 'how much more' [πόσῳ μᾶλλον] will Christ's 'blood purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!' The contrast between the 'dead works' [νεκρῶν ἔργων] and the 'living God' [θεῷ ζῶντι] is obvious. The enabling medium for the transformation of a dead lifestyle to a conscience aligned with the living God is to be found in the sacrificial blood of Christ (Heb 9:13–14). Therefore, (διὰ τοῦτο), states the author of Hebrews, is Christ the Mediator of a new covenant ([διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν], Heb 9:15).[92]

The third occurrence (Heb 10:31)

The third occurrence (Heb 10) poses again a warning that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of *the living God*:

φοβερὸν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας θεοῦ ζῶντος	It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (v. 31)

The author of Hebrews 10 makes it vividly clear that if one:

> [*W*]illfully persists in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth [τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας], there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment [ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως], and a fury of fire [πυρὸς ζῆλος] that will consume the adversaries. (v. 26)

In comparing violation of the Law of Moses with the spurning of the Son of God [ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσας], profaning the blood of the covenant [τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος] and outraging the Spirit of grace [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας], the author asks his audience in a strongly formulated rhetorical question how much worse punishment they think will be deserved by the latter group (Heb 10:29). He then quotes LXX Deuteronomy 32:35, 36 about God's vengeance and judgement. The argument climaxes in

92. Nomoto (1968:21) identifies here also the goal of missionary preaching: '*die "Umkehr" (Heb. vi l) bzw. "das Sich-Bekehren" (I Th i 9; Apg. xiv 15) von "toten Werken" (Heb. vi l) zum "lebendigen Gott" (I. Th i 9; Apg. xiv 15), nämlich "der Glaube an (den lebendigen) Gott" (Heb. vi)*'.

the statement that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb 10:31). The denial and rejection of God's Son results in confrontation, vengeance and judgement by God who exists and who is alive. The spurning [καταπατήσας] of God's Son means to trample him under their feet. It is a deliberate act of turning away from him and intentionally refusing, declining and rejecting him. This behaviour is a violation against God himself, which sets his judgement into motion and leads to his vengeance. These are signs of a living God, who does not remain static and immobile in a challenging and defiant broken relationship of disobedience, but who acts accordingly and who deals with this resistance. Hence, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of this angry God who seeks justice.[93]

The fourth occurrence (Heb 12:22)

In the fourth occurrence (Heb 12:22), the believers eschatologically reached Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of *the living God*. Jones (1985:397) is correct when noting that 'access to God was the very hallmark of life under the new covenant and cult'. We read in Hebrews 12:

ἀλλὰ προσεληλύθατε Σιὼν ὄρει καὶ πόλει θεοῦ ζῶντος, Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ, καὶ μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων, πανηγύρει	But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering. (v. 22)

The eschatology of Hebrews reveals a constant movement in space between the earthly world below and the heavenly world above, as well as a progressive line on a time-continuum (Steyn 2011d:429–450). The eschatological peak is reached in Hebrews 12 when the believers find themselves participating in a festal gathering at Mount Zion in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God (Heb 12:22).

These four statements put the theology of Hebrews into perspective. It defines the nature of God as a divine and living Being. Hence, God's very essence is associated with life itself. It needs to be noted that the author of Hebrews explicitly adds the adjective ζῶντος in all these cases as a qualifier to describe God's nature – whereas he could have easily omitted it and only referred to θεός.

A fifth occurrence (Heb 12:9)

A fifth occurrence might be added to these four, namely, Hebrews 12:9.[94] In this context, reference is made to 'the Father of the spirits' [τῷ πατρὶ τῶν

93. Cf. Lewicki (2004:111): '*Durch die Aufnahme des Motivs vom* (θεὸς ζῶν *wird mit diesem Gerichtsgedanken gleichzeitig die Kehrseite des "Abfallens vom lebendigen Gott," von dem in 3,12 die Rede war, aufs neue gezeigt.*"'

94. In a recent investigation on the possible influence of Deuteronomy's concept of life on Hebrews, Coetsee (2019) is of the opinion that Hebrews 12:9 provides the 'most convincing trace', but admits that 'it is difficult to prove the deliberate use of Deuteronomy's concept of life in Hebrews'.

πνευμάτων], which refers back to God in Hebrews 12:7. By utilising a rhetorical question, the context expresses how willingness to subject oneself to (this) God leads to life ([ζήσομεν], Heb 12:9). It implies thus in another manner, the same theological image of God, that God is a living God, the Source of life.[95] The meaning and intention are the same. It affirms the nature of God who is defined as the Father of life (Heb 12):

εἶτα τοὺς μὲν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν πατέρας εἴχομεν παιδευτὰς καὶ ἐνετρεπόμεθα· οὐ πολὺ [δὲ] μᾶλλον ὑποταγησόμεθα τῷ πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ ζήσομεν;	Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? (v. 9)

Summary

The relationship of believers with God is a personal relationship with him as a living God. It is expressed positively through an attitude to worship the living God (Heb 9:14) and by reaching the eschatological destination of the city of the living God (Heb 12:22). This relationship is defined by a negative attitude when unbelieving hearts turn away from the living God (Heb 3:12) or by a positive attitude when God's children show a willingness to subject themselves to God and live (Heb 12:9). A relationship defined by a negative attitude of apostasy results in eschatological judgement when one falls into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31).

Divine revelation: The logos of God is living and active (Heb 4:12)

Aside from the fact that God himself is portrayed in Hebrews as a living God, also the Word of God [ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ] is presented as being *living* and active (Heb 4:12) (see also Steyn 2015b:117–143. God's word is a living and active word in Hebrews.[96] Quotations are introduced by the author with verbs of *saying*, not with verbs of writing. God, the Son and the Spirit *speak* in these quotations and are the subjects of this revelatory and testifying action.[97] We read in Hebrews 4:

Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργὴς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον	Indeed, the Word of God is living and active sharper than any two-edged sword. (v. 12)

95. Cf. Peeler (2014:159): 'The living God gives life. The holy God gives his holiness. The just God (6.10) gives righteousness. The God of peace (13.20) gives peace'.

96. Lewicki (2004:23) writes: '*Die Worte der Schrift sind für ihn nicht einfachhin Schriftworte, sondern niedergeschriebene lebendige – immer aktuelle – Gottes worte*'.

97. '*Der "lebendige Gott" des Hebr ist ein in der Schrift sprechender Gott. In der Schrift und durch sie offenbart Gott seinen Willen und spricht die Menschen an. Sie gilt als Gottes immer aktuelles Wort, das er an jede neue Generation richtet*' (Lewicki 2004:141).

It remains somewhat uncertain to determine what exactly our author meant with the term λόγος in this context. The word is used in Hebrews in connection with the angels who declared the 'message' ([ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος], Heb 2:2), as well as in connection with the exodus-generation, who have heard the 'message' ([ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς], Heb 4:2). The same applies to the appeal made to the hearers to progress from the 'basic "message" (i.e. teaching) about Christ' ([τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον], Heb 6:1) towards perfection. Also, the reminder to the audience to remember those who spoke 'the Word of God' ([οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ], Heb 13:7), that is, God's message, to them points in the same direction. It is thus clear that in these cases, the connection is one linked to speaking and hearing the good news. The same applies later to the context in which the author attempts to explain more of this 'message' [ὁ λόγος], although being hard to explain [δυσερμήνευτος λέγειν] to the audience, because of them becoming dull in their understanding ([νωθροὶ γεγόνατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς], Heb 5:11). Although they actually should have been teachers, they need someone to teach them 'the basic elements of the utterances (oracles) of God' ([τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ], Heb 5:12), as they prove to be 'unskilled in the word of righteousness' ([ἄπειρος λόγου δικαιοσύνης], Heb 5:13). Slightly different is the application of the term λόγος elsewhere in Hebrews (7:28) in the sense of a decree. In contrast to the law [ὁ νόμος] that appoints 'as high priests those who are subject to weakness', 'the word of the oath [ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὁρκωμοσίας], which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever'.

These instances above point in the direction of the 'message' about God's salvation.[98] In the light of this, Hebrews 4:12–13 might be understood in the sense that God's message is dynamic and transformative. It is not static at all, but 'living and active' [Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργής]. While it enables and changes, it is energetic and powerful – and hence a living word, that is a word that provides life. Similar to medical equipment that opens up, reveals and analyses, so also does the Word of God examines – a process which leads to accountability by the one being examined. The wordplay on the same word at the beginning and end of the section is striking: ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ at the beginning (Heb 4:12) emphasises πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος at the end (Heb 4:13).

Anthropological orientation: A mortal being alive (Heb 7:3, 8; 9:17)

In another set of passages in Hebrews, the author utilises the concept of life in an ordinary human anthropological manner in the sense of mortal life and death. The key figure here is Melchizedek who is presented in comparison with the other high priest, namely, the Son of God (Peeler 2014:121, 124). While

98. One might add also Hebrews 12:19; 13:17, 22.

using allusions from LXX Genesis 14:17–20, the author of Hebrews portrays Melchizedek as someone who is 'without father, mother or genealogy, and someone who has neither beginning of days [μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν] nor end of life' ([μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων], Heb 7:3). Striking is the fact, however, that the Son does not resemble Melchezidek, but rather *vice versa*: Melchizedek resembles the Son of God by remaining a priest forever. Hebrews 7 states:

ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές	Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. (v. 3)

Still continuing on the theme of Melchizedek, the author of Hebrews elaborates on his interaction with Abraham. He states: 'In the one case, tithes are received by those who are mortal' – referring here to Abraham; 'in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives' (μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ, 7:8) – referring here to Melchizedek. Abraham stands as a symbol of mortality, while Melchizedek stands as a symbol of life and as representative of the eternal priesthood of God's Son (Heb 7):

καὶ ὧδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι λαμβάνουσιν, ἐκεῖ δὲ μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ	In the one case, tithes are received by those who are mortal; in the other, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. (v. 8)

In the central Christological section of Hebrews, the author deals with the term διαθήκη – a concept which he frequently refers to in his document. Its meaning in the context of Hebrews 9:17 is particularly in reference to a last will and testament, which 'takes effect only at death [ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία], since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive [ὅτε ζῇ ὁ διαθέμενος]'. The issue is the mortality of a human being and the person's legacy, which is left behind for those who are still living (Heb 9):

διαθήκη γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία, ἐπεὶ μήποτε ἰσχύει ὅτε ζῇ ὁ διαθέμενος	For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. (v. 17)

■ Soteriological orientation: Christ's life (Heb 7:16, 25)

The strategic function of the Christological statement in Hebrews 13:8, which connects not only the preceding and following verses, but actually the whole of Hebrews 13 with Hebrews 1–12, has been convincingly argued by Van Zyl (2015). He (Van Zyl 2015) concluded:

> It supports the teaching and life of the spiritual leaders, counteracts false teachings, provides stability for the readers' pilgrimage in this life, and serves as the Christological basis of the community's worship. (p. 1)

Two particular references in relation to life as topos in Hebrews are centrally and strategically located in Hebrews 7 where the life of Christ is compared to that of Melchizedek. These are not only rooted within the Christology but more specifically presented from a soteriological perspective (Steyn 2019b:441–459) by means of the role and cultic function of the high priest.[99]

The *first reference in Hebrews 7:16* draws attention to the difference regarding the priesthood of Melchizedek, 'who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent [οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν], but through the power of an indestructible life' ([ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου], Heb 7:16). This feature regarding Melchizedek's office as high priest is used to compare Christ's office as high priest (Heb 7:15) in order to make the point of its duration, which is 'forever' (Heb 7:17) and which has been established 'through the power of an indestructible life'. According to Hebrews 7:

ὃς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου	one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life. (v. 16)

This 'indestructible life' [ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου] alludes to Jesus' conquering of death[100] through his resurrection[101] – which confirms William Lane's assumption, based on Hebrews 7:16, that the author of Hebrews does not remain 'completely silent on the question of Jesus' resurrection' as this verse refers 'to an objective event, rather than to a quality of life that belonged to Jesus inherently' (Lane 1998:256; cf. Moffit 2011:7). David Moffit (2011:13) refers to the absence of explicit references to Christ's resurrection as the 'riddle of Hebrews' silence' and states that the author 'does not [...] conceive of this transition from earth to heaven in terms of resurrection'. Moffit (2011) has drawn an important conclusion from the status of Jesus' 'indestructible life' and argues – implying the contexts of Hebrews 9:14 and Hebrews 10:19 – that:

> Because Jesus' human body rose to indestructible life, he is able to present his blood (which in a biblically informed, sacrificial context is language for life, not

99. Moffit (2011:35) points to the tension in this imagery, saying that 'a fundamental tension in the Christology that correlates with the high/low antinomy shows up in the author's attempt to present Jesus' high-priestly ministry in connection with both his heavenly exaltation (e.g. Heb 5:6; 7:26; 8:4; 9:12, 24) and his earthly life (e.g. Heb 2:17; 10:5–10).

100. Tasker (1956:25–26) proposed that Hebrews' answer to the question about how the death of Jesus could have such unique significance and such far-reaching effects should be seeked in Hebrews 7:16, namely, 'that, though an event in time, it was eternal in character. It was the perfect offering of the perfect high priest who Himself had "the power of an indestructible life"'.

101. Moffitt (2011:2) quite rightly suggested 'that the event of Jesus' resurrection is not only important for the argument of the Epistle, but specifically that the author's argument depends upon the assumption that the resurrection marked the moment at which Jesus' human body was given indestructible life'.

> language that symbolizes death), his body, and himself in the very place where the author says he presented these things – before God in heaven. (p. 42)

The 'power' [δύναμιν] that enabled this life from death could only be the power of the living God himself, which is enacted by God's Spirit.[102]

The *second reference in Hebrews 7:25* continues with the comparison between the Aaron priesthood, on the one hand, and those of Melchizedek and Christ, on the other hand. A major difference between the two kinds of priesthoods, which is highlighted by the author of Hebrews, lies in the fact of the mortality of the former priests. They 'were many in number, because they were prevented by death [διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν] from continuing in office' (Heb 7:23). Again, as in the previous reference (Heb 7:16–17), the point of difference is the 'permanent priesthood' of Christ, which is not terminated by mortality, 'because he continues forever' (Heb 7:24). The theological implication is ultimately a soteriological one (Heb 7):

ὅθεν καὶ σῴζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι᾽ αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν	Consequently, he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (v. 25)

The nature of Christ's office as an eternal living high priest enables those who approach God through him to be saved. His mediating role and his intercession are directly connected to his eternal state of life.

Eschatological orientation: A new and living way (Heb 2:15; 10:20, 38)

The following three occurrences regarding the topos of life in Hebrews are all referring to the new way of life that has been introduced by Christ. They connect with the soteriological motif, which unlocked entry into a new life, that is a 'new and living way' ([ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν], Heb 10:20). This was made possible because of Christ's incarnation by which humanity ('the children') shares the same flesh and blood (Heb 2:14a).[103] In Hebews 2:

καὶ ἀπαλλάξῃ τούτους, ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας	[...] and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. (v. 15)

This incarnation enabled Christ to share human mortality and thus to 'destroy the one who has the power of death' (Heb 2:14). This, furthermore, enabled

102. Cf. Schnelle (2009:640): 'In the self-offering of Jesus Christ, it is God himself who acts; God brings him back from the dead (Heb 13:20), installs him as the eternal high priest, and effects the believers' redemption'.

103. According to Schnelle (2009:639), we find in Hebrews 2:14a 'along with John 1:14, the clearest affirmation of the incarnation in the New Testament'.

Christ to 'free (ἀπαλλάξῃ) those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death' (ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας, 2:15). The implication of this new life is thus not only focused on the eschatological future and entry into life eternal, but its implication is already a reality in the present.[104] Not only death itself is destroyed, but even the emotion of the fear of death that enslaved humanity.

In Hebrews 10:

ἣν ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ	[...] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh). (v. 20)
ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχή μου ἐν αὐτῷ.	but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back. (v. 38)

In Hebrews 10, the author returns to the motif of a 'new life', a 'new and living way' ([ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν], Heb 10:20),[105] which has been enabled through Christ's incarnation, that is by means of his soteriological and mediatory role in relation to humanity. Through the imagery of the earthly high priest's sacrificial rite for atonement in the sanctuary on earth, the author pictures the scene of Christ's atoning sacrifice, which enabled access into God's heavenly sanctuary. It is through Christ's death, literally by the blood of Jesus' ([ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ], Heb 10:19) and 'through his flesh' ([τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ], Heb 10:20) – which represents the 'curtain' [διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος] – that believers gain entry[106] into the sanctuary. The door to this new life has been opened and one can already see behind the curtain. Jesus opened up this way and provides entry into the heavenly temple, as well as to its sanctuary behind the curtain, where the hope of the believers is now anchored. It is an eschatological journey that lies ahead and is characterised by two elements. Firstly, Christ who opened this new way will return shortly. Secondly, those who have been justified by Christ's atoning act, will 'live by faith' ([ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται], Heb 10:38).[107] Before the author proceeds with his lengthy exposition of faith heroes and their perseverance in Hebrews 11, he provides his readers with an eschatological view on the *future* in order to keep their destination in mind. This is done by means of his quotation from Habakkuk 2:3–4 in Hebrews

104. Koester (2001:306) concludes thus that 'Hebrews does not resolve the tension between the idea of death and resurrection, which assumes temporal discontinuity between the present and future life, and the idea of ongoing life after death, which assumes considerable continuity in a person's existence'. See also Moffit (2011:13).

105. By using πρόσφατον for 'new', the author emphasizes that it was not previously available, and by using ζῶσαν, he stresses that it 'is a "living" way in the sense that it gives life' (Lindars 1991:102).

106. Cf. Luck (1963:211): '*Durch ihn ist die Welt, die Sphäre der sarx nicht mehr der Bereich der widergöttlichen Mächte, sondern Zugangsweg zu Gott, und zwar nicht erst nach Ablegen der sarx! Er, sein Weg durch das Fleisch, ist auch der Weg der Gemeinde* [...]'.

107. As far back as the 17th century, John Brown (1679–80:102–127) elaborated on Hebrews 10:38, emphasising the fact that 'Christ himself had a suffering life'. Brown addressed his study to 'the Christian reader, more particularly to the poor suffering Remnant of the Church of Scotland'.

10:37–38 (Steyn 2011c:325). The key by which entry is gained into this new life is hereby clearly defined: ἐκ πίστεως (Steyn 2010c:311–329). Those who *by faith* accepted Christ's mediatory act of atonement, his salvific sacrifice, 'will live' [ζήσεται]. Faith in Christ gives entry for those justified into this new life. Lührmann (1992:755; [*author's added emphasis*]) has therefore argued, quite rightly in my opinion, that '*Pistis* is in this letter, in contrast to Paul and John, not used in connection with the Christological content of faith, but it marks *the way* which those who belong to the Christ, as Son and High Priest, *must follow*'. Hence, 'Christian life is lived on the basis of faith' (Lindars 1991:109) and 'faith is an attitude which applies to the whole of Christian life. It is the response to the work of God in Christ' (Lindars 1991:127). They ought to pursue a lifestyle of perseverance that clings faithfully and dynamically to God's promises – irrespective of the circumstances that they might need to endure.[108] According to Hebrews, this faith is thus not just a point in time, but a lifestyle of hope, faithfulness, and blind faith which ought to endure and which can withstand the test of time and sufferings.[109] The theme of perseverance is prominent. They need to fix their eyes on Jesus and they need to go to Jesus outside the camp (Steyn 2016b:337–357) to carry the disgrace that he bore.

Biological (zoological) orientation: Animals as living beings (Heb 13:11)

An interesting occurrence regarding the concept of life in Hebrews surfaces in the last chapter when reference is made to the sacrificial animals. The term applied by the author for these animals is the term ζῴων, which defines their nature as 'living beings'. The irony is that these living beings are actually brought to be slaughtered as sacrificial animals (Heb 13):

ὧν γὰρ εἰσφέρεται ζῴων τὸ αἷμα περὶ ἁμαρτίας εἰς τὰ ἅγια διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, τούτων τὰ σώματα κατακαίεται ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς	For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. (v. 11)

Conclusion

It has been noted that the concept of 'life' as a topos, *Leitmotiv* or theme in the book of Hebrews, has not been studied satisfactorily in its own right before. The current brief investigation attempted to address this issue – without any pretension of being complete.

108. Coetsee (2019) concluded similarly: 'Hebrews, just like Deuteronomy, urges its addressees on the edge of a great crossroad to wholeheartedly obey the living God who revealed himself to them, so that they can live'.

109. Guthrie (1998:386) summarizes the message of Hebrews 11 as follows: 'For all its length, the chapter really presents us with a simple message that must not be missed: *The life of faith is the only life that pleases God*'.

Compiling a concordance of the term ‘life’ in its verbial and nominal forms in Hebrews has shown that it occurs at least 15 times and is equally distributed throughout the book. These occurrences could be categorised into six semantic-theological categories that include divine ontology and revelation, as well as orientations towards the soteriology, anthropology, eschatology and biology (zoology).

It became especially clear that the concept of ‘life’ in Hebrews is deeply rooted in the ontology of God and the soteriology of Christ, while being strongly eschatologically oriented. It is thus closely connected to the Christology, soteriology and eschatology of Hebrews.

Chapter 8

Life in James

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Introduction

There are few things more important than life. The Bible itself begins with the creation of life, where man and woman are placed in a garden with the tree of life at its centre (Gn 2:9). It ends with a vision of God's eternal kingdom, pictured in the form of a city in which the tree of life stands in a prominent position, its leaves serving for the healing of the nations (Rv 22:2). The idea of life is thus central to the theology of the Bible.

Yet, life is not generally recognised as a theme in the Letter of James. Topics such as eschatology, the law, ethics, riches and poverty are frequently mentioned by commentators, but life has hardly been noticed as one of the letter's themes.[110] In addition, the fact that the Greek words for life [ζωή] and

110. See, for example, Davids (1982:34–57), Martin (1988:lxxvii–lxxxvi), DeSilva (2004:823–830), McCartney (2009:56–76), Allison (2013:89–94). Adamson (1976:26–27), in contrast to most commentators, does discuss regeneration as one of James's themes.

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live [ζάω] together appear only three times in James (Ja 1:12; 4:14–15) may seem to reinforce the notion that the concept of life is not significant in the letter. It may therefore appear that this letter contributes little to a biblical theology of life and that Martin Luther's judgement of it as an 'epistle of straw' must once again be applied.

Nevertheless, closer investigation shows that the idea of life represents a significant part of James's theological perspective; indeed, this idea can be said to undergird and overshadow the entire epistle. James has a definite understanding of life as an existence which is sustained by God and given meaning by him. This life is experienced in different aspects, including earthly life, eschatological life and spiritual regeneration experienced by believers in their present earthly life.

This chapter explores James's perspective on the theme of life, firstly by identifying ways in which the theme is referred to. This leads to a list of passages in which the theme of life appears. The passages are categorised and discussed, and conclusions are drawn regarding James's conception of life.

Orientation to the Letter of James

The introductory questions for the Letter of James are not easy to answer; the issues are complex, internal and external evidence is limited, and there is a significant divergence of opinion amongst scholars regarding questions of authorship, date, recipients, et cetera.[111,112] Although many of these issues are not critical for the present study, it is accepted that the letter was written by James the Just of Jerusalem and that it was written to Jewish Christians living outside Palestine. An important perspective for this study concerns the Christian nature of the Letter of James. Although the muted nature of distinctively Christian teaching in the letter has led a few scholars to argue that it is essentially a Jewish (and not Christian) document, it is now generally agreed that the Letter of James is indeed a Christian document; this conclusion is accepted in this study.[113]

111. Scholarly positions regarding the authorship of the letter range from full acceptance of authorship by James the Just of Jerusalem (e.g. Moo 2000:9–22), to editing of source material that came from James (e.g. Davids 1982:2–22; Martin 1988:lxix–lxxvii), to later authorship by a pseudonymous author writing under James's name (e.g. Allison 2013:3–32).

112. It is widely agreed that the recipients of the letter were Jews. Many scholars understand them to be Christian Jews in particular (e.g. Davids 1982:63–64; Martin 1988:8–11); others believe that they include Christian and non-Christian Jews (e.g. Adamson 1976; Allison 2013:32–50 – though these two authors have very different perspectives on the nature, purpose and *Sitz im Leben* of the letter).

113. See Davids (1982:13–16) and Martin (1988:cv–cix) for discussion of this point. Note Allison's (2015:2) comment: 'No one, to my knowledge however, defends this position [i.e. that James is essentially a Jewish, but not Christian, document] today'.

Occurrences of words and concepts relating to life in the Letter of James

In order to assess how the concept of life appears in the Letter of James, it is useful to locate the occurrences of words and concepts relating to life or death. As an initial step in this process, words in the relevant semantic domain may be investigated. In their classification, Louw and Nida (1996:1.260–267) list 58 separate words and phrases under the subdomain 'Live, Die', which itself falls under the primary domain 'Physiological Processes and States'. Of these, nine words, with a total of 15 occurrences, are found in the Letter of James with a possible meaning related to the concept of life. The occurrences are listed in Table 8.1.

Consideration of these word occurrences in their contexts shows that the predominant sense in which life and death are referred to in James is the eschatological sense (eight occurrences). Such uses are found in James 1:11, 12, 15, 21; 4:12; 5:3, 20. Life in the sense of earthly life is also represented, though much less often (Ja 4:14–15; 5:15 – three occurrences). Four instances of the word occurrences may be considered metaphorical (Ja 2:17, 26; 3:8); these are not directly relevant to the present study and will not be considered in detail. Classifications of the various occurrences are indicated in the fourth column of Table 8.1.[114]

Further consideration of the contexts of these word occurrences shows that the idea of salvation in James (represented, especially, by the word σῴζω) is closely connected to the idea of life, as is the concept of judgement. Judgement is important in that it is the event that stands at the transition from earthly life to eschatological life or death. Passages in which these ideas occur are James 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:15, 20 (salvation), James 2:12; 3:1 4:12; 5:1–6 (judgement) and James 5:7–9 (judgement and salvation). All of these, with the exception of James 5:15, relate to eschatological life.

TABLE 8.1: Occurrences in James of words in the semantic domain 'life/death'.

Lemma	Frequency	References	Classification
ἀπόλλυμι [kill, destroy]	2	James 1:11; 4:12	Eschatological life
ἐγείρω [raise]	1	James 5:15	Earthly life
ζάω [live]	1	James 4:15	Earthly life
ζωή [life]	2	James 1:12; 4:14	Eschatological life Earthly life
θανατηφόρος [deadly]	1	James 3:8	Metaphorical use
θάνατος [death]	2	James 1:15; 5:20	Eschatological life
νεκρός [dead]	3	James 2:17, 26 (twice)	Metaphorical use
σάρξ [flesh]	1	James 5:3	Eschatological life
ψυχή [soul, life]	2	James 1:21; 5:20	Eschatological life

Source: Word counts and locations are derived from Aland et al. (2012); English glosses in column 1 are the author's original work.

114. Justification for these classifications is given in the detailed discussion below.

An additional passage that relates to eschatological life refers to 'the kingdom, which [God] has promised to those who love him' (Ja 2:5). With regard to earthly life, the statement about being made in the image of God (Ja 3:9) is also relevant.

There is a third sense in which life occurs in James, not included in the references above. This follows from the use of the verb ἀποκυέω in James 1:18, which speaks about God having 'brought us forth by the word of truth'. The import of this statement is debated, but it is argued below that James is here referring to the spiritual regeneration of believers, which enables them to live in obedience to God's law. This I term life in the ethical sense. Closely related to James 1:18 is the statement about the 'implanted word' in James 1:21.

It can be seen from this brief survey that the theme of life is, in fact, fairly prominent in the Letter of James. The relevant passages, which are considered in greater detail in the following sections, can be classified as follows:

- *Earthly life*: James 3:9; 4:13–16; 5:14–15.
- *Eschatological life*: James 1:9–11, 12–15, 21; 2:5, 12–13, 14; 3:1; 4:12; 5:1–6; 5:7–9; 5:19–20.
- *Ethical life*: James 1:17–18, 21.

Earthly life

The most basic sense in which the Bible conceives of life concerns the simple reality of life on earth. The first two chapters of Genesis recount God's creation of life, including plant, animal and human life, and this perspective is assumed throughout Scripture (e.g. Job 10:8–12; Ps 104; 139:13–16; Ec 12:7; Johnson 2000:641). Although James does not develop this theme in any detail, it is clear that he understands earthly life as a gift from God, in harmony with the perspective of Scripture as a whole. The following three passages elucidate something of James's perspective on earthly life; they are discussed in an order which helps to elucidate James's thinking on the topic.

James 4:13–16

[13] Ἄγε νῦν οἱ λέγοντες·σήμερον ἢ αὔριον πορευσόμεθα εἰς τήνδε τὴν πόλιν καὶ ποιήσομεν ἐκεῖ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ ἐμπορευσόμεθα καὶ κερδήσομεν, [14] οἵτινες οὐκ ἐπίστασθε τὸ τῆς αὔριον ποία ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν – ἀτμὶς γάρ ἐστε ἡ πρὸς ὀλίγον φαινομένη, ἔπειτα καὶ ἀφανιζομένη – 15 ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγειν ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ καὶ ζήσομεν καὶ ποιήσομεν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο. [16] νῦν δὲ καυχᾶσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις ὑμῶν· πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη πονηρά ἐστιν.115

[13] Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit'– [14] yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. [15] Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that'. [16] As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. (Ja 4:13–16)[116]

115. Quotations from the Greek New Testament are taken from Aland et al. (2012).

116. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations in English are from Holy Bible (2016).

This passage includes two of the three references to ζωή/ζάω in the Letter of James and thus provides an appropriate starting point for understanding James's conception of life. In this passage, James upbraids merchants for making plans 'in arrogance' (Ja 4:16) without recognising the sovereignty of God over all of life, including their own. The merchants are confident about their plans, deciding for themselves when, where and for how long they will travel, what they will do on their travels and what the outcome will be (Ja 4:13). James's criticism is sharp: they do not know the future and they misunderstand the very nature of life, which is but a mist or plume of smoke [ἀτμίς][117] that appears for a short time before vanishing [Ja 4:14]. This view of the fragility of human life is fully in line with that of the Old Testament, where the image of smoke/breath/vapour is used as a metaphor in a similar way to the way it is used in James 4:14 (Ps 37:20; 39:11; 102:3; Allison 2013:657).

In Verse 15, human inability to control life is contrasted with God's sovereignty over life: 'If the Lord wills, we will live [ζήσομεν]'. Many commentators note that a phrase like 'if God wills/the gods will' was common amongst classical writers (Allison 2013:659; Davids 1982:173), and Adamson (1976:181) comments that the phrase eventually became something of an empty expression. However, in early Christian usage this kind of expression was used frequently and with evident sincerity (1 Cor 4:19; 16:7; Ac 18:21; Rm 1:10; Phlp 2:19; Heb 6:3); this fact, combined with the substitution of 'Lord' for God, is a strong indication that the early Christians used the phrase with deliberate reference to the will of God or of Christ (Allison 2013:660; Davids 1982:173). It may thus be accepted that James 4:15 is a strong assertion that a person's very life, moment by moment, is dependent on God's sovereign will.[118] Once again, this is entirely consistent with Old Testament teaching (see, e.g. Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6; 25:38; Ps 104:27–30; Johnson 2000:641).

James 3:9

ἐν αὐτῇ εὐλογοῦμεν τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ καταρώμεθα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ γεγονότας·	With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (Ja 3:9)

By stating that people are made in the likeness of God [καθ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν θεοῦ], James reflects the consistent testimony of Old Testament and Jewish teaching

117. On the meaning of ἀτμίς, see Davids (1982:172) and Allison (2013:657).

118. McCartney (2009:227–228) understands Verse 15 in the sense of God's ethical will rather than his decretive will, giving the sense that merchants should make their plans in obedience to God's revealed commands. However, this sense does not fit with Verse 14's assertion of the fragility of life.

(Gn 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6; Wis 2:23; Sir 17:3),[119] although he does not provide any interpretation of the image. Given that the idea of human beings being made in God's image is usually associated with the original creation, this reference to the image provides insight into James's understanding of earthly life for human beings. However, the image of God also extends to the immortal and immaterial aspects of human life and being.

James 5:14–15

14 ἀσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀλείψαντες αὐτὸν ἐλαίῳ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου. 15 καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος·

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. (Ja 5:14–15)

There is some debate whether this passage refers to spiritual or physical weakness/illness and to spiritual or physical healing.[120] There are, however, a number of reasons why it is most natural to understand this as a reference, at least primarily, to physical illness and healing:

1. The one who is 'sick' must call for the elders (implying that he is unable to go to them).
2. It is far more natural to speak of a prayer of faith raising up one who is ill than to speak of such a prayer raising up one who is spiritually weak (cf. Mt 9:6; Mk 1:31; Ac 3:7).
3. The verb σῴζω [save] is often used in the gospels for healing from illness, and this healing is often associated with faith (e.g. Mt 9:21–22; Mk 3:4; 5:23, 28, 34; 6:56; 10:52; Lk 7:50; 8:48, 50; 17:19; 18:42; Jn 11:12).
4. The only other New Testament occurrence of anointing with oil is connected with the healing of the sick (Mk 6:13) (see further Allison 2013:765–766; Moo 2000:237, 243).

Accepting that this passage refers to physical illness and healing, it provides further insight into James's view of earthly life. The statement 'the Lord will raise him up' asserts that God is able to heal the sick, whose lives are threatened by illness. As is the case in James 4:15, this passage reflects an assurance that God has sovereign control over the lives of human beings. This assurance reflects the Old Testament conviction that (Bauckham 1998):

> God is the living God of unlimited power, who can save his people out of the most serious threats to life, since life is his gift and he alone is able to grant it and withdraw it. (pp. 84–85)

119. In the LXX of Genesis 1:26, both εἰκών and ὁμοίωσις are used for image. In all the other passages, only εἰκών is used.

120. See Bowden (2014) for a survey of interpretive approaches to this passage. These approaches include a number of combinations of physical and/or spiritual illness, and physical and/or spiritual healing.

Eschatological life and death

The Letter of James contains a number of references to the final judgement (Ja 2:12–13; 3:1; 4:12; 5:9), and the author assumes that there will be two possible outcomes to that judgement, namely, life and death (Ja 1:12,15; 4:12; 5:3,5,20). Given this reality, it becomes important to know how one may both avoid condemnation and death and also receive the crown of life. In James, reception of life at the final judgement is understood as salvation (cf. Ja 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:20), and much of the letter reflects a concern to instruct the readers in how they may be 'saved'. Thus, to understand James's view on eschatological life, one needs to consider occurrences of the concepts of salvation and final judgement, and also the outcome of the latter. The key passages in this regard are discussed below. It is noteworthy that by far the greatest number of references to life in the Letter of James concern eschatological life.

James 1:9–11

9 Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ, 10 ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται. 11 ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι καὶ ἐξήρανεν τὸν χόρτον, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν, καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπώλετο· οὕτως καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται.

9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. (Ja 1:9–11)

This passage has some obvious parallels to James 4:13–15 in that both refer to the fragility of human life in the context of wealth. Commentators are divided over whether 'the rich' (Ja 1:9) refers to a rich Christian or to a rich unbeliever; this division leads also to disagreement over the meaning of 'humiliation'.[121] There is general agreement, however, that παρελεύσεται at the end of Verse 10 refers to the passing away of the rich person rather than the passing away of his riches (Adamson 1976:65; Allison 2013:206; Hort 1909:16; Mayor 1913:44). This passing away is vividly depicted in the image of the falling flower described in Verse 11. Further, in contemplating the end of the rich, the question arises whether the poor are not also subject to death. Some earlier commentators reasoned that, while the poor are also subject to death, James's warning is to the rich as they are more likely to depend on their earthly wealth and so to ignore the reality of their own mortality (Hort 1909:16; Mayor 1913:44).

Some of these puzzles of interpretation arise from the assumption that James is referring merely to earthly death, and a more convincing understanding of the passage can be gained if it is understood as a reference to an

121. For the view that the rich person is a Christian, see, for example Hort (1909:14), Mayor (1913:43), Adamson (1976:61), Moo (2000:66–68); for the alternative point of view, see, for example Davids (1982:77), McCartney (2009:96–97), Allison (2013:204–206).

eschatological reversal in which the poor will be raised up and the rich will suffer judgement (cf. Lk 6:20–26). That James 1:9–11 should be understood eschatologically follows from its use of Isaiah 40 and the way Isaiah 40 itself was used in many other writings. Although Davids (1982:77) sees only a 'rough allusion' to Isaiah 40:6–7, James's use of the Old Testament prophecy seems to be far more deliberate. Note the parallels:

> Πᾶσα σὰρξ χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου, ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν. (Is 40:6–7 LXX)

> [...] ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται. ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι καὶ ἐξήρανεν τὸν χόρτον, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν. (Ja 1:10–11)

It is true that James draws also from Psalm 102:15–16 (LXX) and that he expresses himself with rhetorical creativity, but the parallels with Isaiah 40:6–7 are unmistakable. Further, the use of ταπεινός and ταπείνωσις in James 1:9–10 creates another link with Isaiah 40:2 (LXX; Penner 1996:207). Regarding the use of Isaiah 40, Penner (1996:204–206) cites a number of texts (1 En 1:6; 53:7; Pss Sol 11:4; T. Mos 10:4; Sib Or 3:680; 8:234; 2 Bar 82) in which the well-known Old Testament prophecy was used eschatologically, leading him to the conclusion that James 1:9–11 'witnesses to, and finds its context in, an interpretive tradition of associating Isaiah 40 with God's eschatological judgment on the unrighteous and his salvation of the elect'. This eschatological use of Isaiah 40 is thus part of a tradition that looks forward to a great reversal in which God's people – generally understood as poor and oppressed – are exalted while their oppressors are humbled.

On this eschatological interpretation of James 1:9–11, there is no need to consider why James mentions only the death of the rich and not of the poor. On this understanding, the fate of the rich, indicated by the verbs παρελεύσεται and μαρανθήσεται, is the eschatological destruction described more fully in James 5:1–3 (cf. Allison 2013:213). The destruction described in the later passage is prefigured here by the vivid, poetic description of the flower's withering. Although most English translations interpret τῷ καύσωνι as the scorching heat of the sun, it is likely that the word actually refers to the sirocco wind – a desert wind which, in a very short time withers both grass and flowers (Allison 2013:208–209; Martin 1988:27). Thus, the picture of the rising sun, the withering sirocco wind, the falling of the flowers and the destruction of their beauty create a powerful metaphor for the judgement that awaits the arrogant rich.

Although the bulk of this passage deals with the (eschatological) destruction of the rich, it also points to the exaltation of the poor (Ja 1:9). Both the juxtaposition of the poor person's exaltation with the rich person's fate, and the statement that God has chosen the poor to be heirs of the kingdom (Ja 2:5), indicate that the author has eschatological exaltation in mind at this point.

Occurring as it does in the opening section of the letter, this passage demonstrates that eschatological life and death were prominent in James's thinking in this letter. It is likely that the 'lowly' condition of Verse 9 relates to the 'trials' of Verses 2–4, indicating that an important part of the author's concern in exhorting the poor to endurance was to focus their minds on the coming eschatological reward and to help them to find hope in that.

James 1:12–15

[12] Μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν, ὅτι δόκιμος γενόμενος λήμψεται τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς ὃν ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν.[13] μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι· ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἀπείραστός ἐστιν κακῶν, πειράζει δὲ αὐτὸς οὐδένα.[14] ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος·[15] εἶτα ἡ ἐπιθυμία συλλαβοῦσα τίκτει ἁμαρτίαν, ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον.

[12] Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.[13] Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God', for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.[14] But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.[15] Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (Ja 1:12–15)

It is not necessary to consider this passage in all its details, but it is significant that the passage begins with the promise of life and ends with the warning of death. In both cases, the reference is to eschatological life or death.

In Verse 12, the reward promised to those who persevere under trial is designated 'the crown of life' [τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς], one of the two instances in James where ζωή is used (the other being Ja 4:14 – see above). It is tempting to speculate on the meaning of 'crown' – whether it refers to an athlete's crown or a royal crown – but, as Davids (1982:79–80) points out, the idea of a crown as an eternal reward was so common in the writings of apocalyptic Judaism that it is more likely to be a stock idea than a deliberate metaphor.[122] The genitive τῆς ζωῆς in James 1:12 is almost certainly an epexegetic genitive specifying the content of the crown: the crown is eternal life (Davids 1982:80; Martin 1988:33).

The crown of life is given to the one who 'remains steadfast under trial' [ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν], thus becoming 'tested' [δόκιμος γενόμενος]. These phrases continue the theme of James 1:2–11, which deals with trials and the need for perseverance (cf. πειρασμοῖς, τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως, ὑπομονήν and ἡ [...] ὑπομονὴ in Ja 1:2–4). This description of the person who ultimately receives the crown of life shows that, for James, it is necessary to persevere under trial, to be perfected (Ja 1:4), to resist temptation (Ja 1:13–15) and thus to be proved – to become δόκιμος – if one is to inherit eternal life. In addition, the person who receives the crown is described as one who loves God, and the crown is said to be promised to such people (Ja 1:12). These statements

122. See, for example Wisdom 5:15–16; T. Benjamin 4:1; T. Job 4:9–10; 40:3; 2 Baruch 15:8 (cf. Allison 2013:232); 2 Esdras 2:46. In the New Testament, note 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10; 3:11.

show that the crown of life is not simply earned, but is received as a gift of God.

The statement about receiving the crown of life initiates the theme of salvation in the letter, although terms for salvation are not used at this point.

Verses 13–15 of James 1 present the counterpoint to perseverance and the reception of the crown of life. Instead of persevering, a person may entertain evil desires. In Verses 14–15, such desire [ἐπιθυμία] is compared to a seductress who lures a man into her trap. The result is that she conceives a child called sin, and this child, in turn, grows up and gives birth to death.[123] The metaphor vividly illustrates the growth of sin in a person, and for our present purposes it is important to note the eventual outcome: death, understood in the eschatological sense and forming the contrast to the crown of life (Ja 1:12).

When this passage is read in the light of the rest of the letter, it is clear that James assumes that the final judgement lies between one's earthly life and one's final destiny of eternal life or death. The emphasis at this point, though, is on the correspondence between the way one lives one's life (perseverance versus giving into desire) and the final outcome (life or death).

James 1:21

διὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν καὶ περισσείαν κακίας ἐν πραΰτητι δέξασθε τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (Ja 1:21)

This verse contains the first use in the letter of the verb σῴζω [to save].[124] The significance of the concept here becomes evident from the context. In James 1:12–15, perseverance with its outcome of life is contrasted with succumbing to temptation and its outcome of death. In both cases, the author has eschatological life or death in mind, as discussed above. In Verses 16–18, James describes the work of God in bringing forth [ἀποκυέω] his people, implicitly contrasting this work with the way sin brings forth [ἀποκυέω] death in Verse 15.[125] In Verses 19–21, James concludes a brief ethical exhortation with this reference to the implanted word 'which is able to save your souls'. The ethical exhortation correlates with the earlier consideration of temptation in Verses 12–15, showing that James is here thinking of final salvation from eschatological death to eschatological life.[126] This is how the verb 'save' [σῴζω] is used

123. For extensive discussion of this metaphor, see Wilson (2002) and Baker (2007:199–203).

124. The other instances are in James 2:14; 4:12; 5:15, 20. The noun σωτηρία is not used in James.

125. See the section on ethical life below for a more detailed discussion of James 1:16–18, 21.

126. Cf. Davids (1982:95), Martin (1988:49) and Allison (2013:316–317). The applicable definition of Arndt et al. (2000:982) is helpful at this point: in this sense, σῴζω means 'to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction'.

throughout James, with the exception of 5:15 (which refers to healing from sickness – see the section on James 5:14–15).

That which is saved, the readers' souls [τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν], should be understood as a reference to the whole person, not to an immaterial soul which is contrasted with the body (Davids 1982:95). As Allison (2013:317) comments, 'one guesses that James believed in the resurrection of the body as well as the salvation of the soul'.

James has now introduced the concept of *salvation*, with the implication that entry into eschatological life requires a person to be *saved*. This perspective necessarily entails the belief that all who are not saved are subject to judgement and to death in the eschatological sense.

James 2:5

ἀκούσατε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· οὐχ ὁ θεὸς ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῷ κόσμῳ πλουσίους ἐν πίστει καὶ κληρονόμους τῆς βασιλείας ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν;

Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? (Ja 2:5)

In this passage, the reference to 'the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him' is a close parallel to 'the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him' (Ja 1:12). Whereas in James 1:12, those who love God are said to 'receive' [λαμβάνω] the crown of life; in this passage, they are said 'to be … heirs' [κληρονόμους {εἶναι}] of the kingdom. The verb 'inherit', or its equivalent 'become heirs of', is used with 'kingdom [of God]' or 'eternal life' in a number of New Testament passages, indicating that these were probably just two different terms for the same concept, that of the believer's eschatological reward.[127] James 1:12, 2:5 therefore express the same idea, namely that those who love God will receive eternal life, otherwise termed 'the kingdom'.

One perspective that James 2:5 does add is that those who receive the kingdom are 'rich in faith' [πλουσίους ἐν πίστει]. This phrase is usually understood to mean either 'rich in respect of faith [i.e. having much faith]' (Allison 2013:396; Mayor 1913:83) or 'rich from the perspective of faith' (Davids 1982:111; Martin 1988:65) or 'rich through the exercise of faith' (Hort 1909:51). In view of the parallel constructions in Ephesians 2:4 ('rich in mercy') and 1 Timothy 6:18 ('rich in good works'), the first option would seem to be the best (Allison 2013:396, n.182). This also has the advantage of understanding faith as describing a positive quality of the poor, in contrast with the negative qualities of the rich in James 2:6–7. If this interpretation is correct, it implies that James understands that the one who receives eternal life is not only characterised by endurance (Ja 1:12) and loving God (Ja 1:12; 2:5) but also by faith.

127. For the terminology of inheriting eternal life, see Matthew 19:29; Mark 10:10; Luke 10:25; 18:18; Titus 3:7. For inheriting the kingdom, see Matthew 25:34; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5 (Mayor 1913:83).

James 2:12–13

[12] Οὕτως λαλεῖτε καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖτε ὡς διὰ νόμου ἐλευθερίας μέλλοντες κρίνεσθαι. [13] ἡ γὰρ κρίσις ἀνέλεος τῷ μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος· κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως.

[12] So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. [13] For judgement is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement. (Ja 2:12–13)

James 2:12–13 forms the conclusion to a warning against partiality (Ja 2:1–13) and sums up that teaching with a solemn exhortation expressed with the construction οὕτως ... οὕτως ... ὡς (cf. Mayor 1913:91). The exhortation is to 'speak' and to 'act' as those who are mindful of the coming judgement. Both verbs are in the present tense of the imperative mood indicating ongoing action; together, with the repeated οὕτως, they emphasise the need to be doers of the law. In addition to concluding the immediately preceding section (Ja 2:1–11), this instruction looks back to James 1:22–25, where the theme of being doers of the law was introduced, and ahead to the next section (Ja 2:14–26) in which works are said to be the essential accompaniment to faith.

The present passage includes important references to judgement. In Verse 12, the readers are said to be μέλλοντες κρίνεσθαι [about to be judged] according to [διὰ] the law of liberty. The verb μέλλω is naturally paired with a word for judgement, referring to the final judgement, and carries the sense of inevitability (Ac 17:31; 24:25; 2 Tm 4:1; Heb 10:27; Arndt et al. 2000:628). In Verse 13, the definite article is used with κρίσις, implying the final judgement (Allison 2013:419). Interpreting this passage as a reference to the final judgement is consistent with the strong emphasis throughout James on eschatological judgement and thereby also on the necessity for salvation (which is mentioned again in Ja 2:14, immediately after the present passage).[128,129]

The statement that 'judgement is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy' (Ja 2:13) is an application of the principle that judgement will be according to [διὰ] the law of liberty (Ja 2:12). This statement also relates to the preceding discussion in which partiality towards the rich is condemned on the grounds that it violates the law's requirement to love one's neighbour as oneself (Ja 2:1–11). One may also notice here a definite link with James 1:9–11, which speaks of the eschatological reversal in which the poor will be exalted and the rich will be humbled. In terms of James's understanding of life, what is noteworthy is that his view of the final judgement and its consequences dictates his understanding of how people ought to live their lives on earth, particularly in relation to the poor. Conversely stated, the way one lives on earth has consequences for one's experience of life hereafter.

128. On judgement, see James 4:12; 5:9, 12; on salvation, see James 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:20.

129. There is widespread agreement amongst commentators that this passage refers to the final judgement (Allison 2013:418; Davids 1982:118; Martin 1988:71; Moo 2000:116).

James 2:14

Τί τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγῃ τις ἔχειν, ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχῃ; μὴ δύναται ἡ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;	What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? (Ja 2:14)

This verse introduces the section on faith and works (Ja 2:14–26), which has given rise to endless discussion because of its apparent tension with the Pauline teaching on justification/salvation through faith alone, apart from works (e.g. Rm 3:21–4:25; Eph 2:8–9); it is not necessary to debate the issues here. What is important with regard to James's understanding of life is to note the use of the word σῴζω, which indicates deliverance from death and preservation of life (see earlier note on σῴζω in Ja 1:21). There is little doubt that the life and death in question are eschatological, as is evident from the facts that (1) this verse follows directly on a statement regarding eschatological judgement (Ja 2:12–13; see earlier section); (2) only one out of the five occurrences of σῴζω in James clearly relates to earthly life (namely its use in Ja 5:15; see earlier section); (3) James's whole discussion from James 1:21 to the present verse connects obedience to God's word with eschatological salvation; and (4) Abraham and Rahab are given as examples of people who were saved/justified through works (Adamson 1976:121; Moo 2000:123–124; also Allison 2013:461–462; Davids 1982:120; Martin 1988:80).

Rhetorically, the purpose of this verse, and of the discussion from James 2:14 to James 2:26, is to refute the idea that a faith which is unaccompanied by works can lead to salvation. The issue is placed pointedly before the reader using the phrase τί τὸ ὄφελος [what is the benefit/profit?]; the benefit in question is the benefit of salvation at the last judgement (cf. Allison 2013:457). This rhetorical question is followed by a brief sketch of a scenario where someone claims to have faith yet does not have works [ἔργα]. Using another question, the author implies emphatically that such a faith cannot lead to salvation; it is therefore dead (Ja 2:17), ineffectual and without profit. It should be noted that the author is not disparaging faith *per se* (richness in faith has already been connected with inheritance of the kingdom in Ja 2:4), but he is warning that a profession of faith which is not combined with works cannot lead to salvation.

With regard to the theme of life, this passage reflects an assumption that salvation, and thereby eschatological life, is not only desirable but of crucial importance. Further, one's works (and faith) during one's earthly life will determine one's eternal destiny, and it is, therefore, important to live in this world in such a way as to gain salvation and entry into eternal life.

James 3:1

Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί μου, εἰδότες ὅτι μεῖζον κρίμα λημψόμεθα.	Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. (Ja 3:1)

This verse introduces James's discussion of the tongue and its dangers (Ja 3:1–12). Some commentators take the whole passage to be directed at teachers or would-be teachers, but it probably has more general application to the community addressed by James. The warning of James 3:1 is, however, directed specifically to teachers and those who might consider exercising that function. Given the strong emphasis throughout the letter on eschatological judgement, the association of speech with judgement in James 2:12, the future tense of λημψόμεθα and the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:36–37, the judgement in question here is almost certainly eschatological – as maintained by most commentators (e.g. Allison 2013:521–522; Davids 1982:141; Martin 1988:107–108; Moo 2000:149).

The idea of teachers receiving a 'greater judgement' [μεῖζον κρίμα] probably refers to a greater danger of judgement, rather than to a judgement that is necessarily more severe; the reason for this danger is that the teacher's ministry consists in speaking – an activity in which it is peculiarly easy to sin (Ja 3:2–8; Moo 2000:149–150). The idea of greater accountability for greater responsibility may also be present (Allison 2013:152; Moo 2000:150).

This verse follows the consistent pattern of James whereby a person's present behaviour and lifestyle is considered to be determinative for the outcome of the final judgement. Here, as throughout the letter, this reality is at the forefront of James's thinking and is a continual motivating factor for his ethical exhortations.

James 4:12

εἷς ἐστιν ὁ νομοθέτης καὶ κριτὴς ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι· σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων τὸν πλησίον;	There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? (Ja 4:12)

This verse forms part of an indictment of community members who were slandering others (Ja 4:11–12). The logic of James's rebuke is not completely transparent, but he seems to be reasoning as follows. By slandering one's neighbours, one fails to love them as oneself and therefore fails to obey the law. Such behaviour amounts to setting oneself up as a judge of the law, because by disobeying the law one is, in effect, saying that the law is wrong: one is implicitly claiming that God was wrong to give certain laws, thus setting oneself up as a rival lawgiver (Mayor 1913:143; Moo 2000:198–199).

Such behaviour is unacceptable because there is only one lawgiver and judge, namely God himself. God's sovereignty as lawgiver and judge is emphasised by the adjectival clause 'who is able to save and to destroy'. Judgement and the salvation and destruction referred to in this verse are eschatological. This is evident from parallels like Matthew 10:28 and from the overarching eschatological perspective of the letter in which judgement, life/salvation and death/destruction are constantly associated, frequently in

ethical contexts (e.g. Ja 1:9–15, 21; 2:12–14; 5:1–9, 19–20; cf. Allison 2013:638; Penner 1996:121).

This passage is very significant for understanding James's perspective on life because it states explicitly one of the most fundamental biblical principles with regard to life, namely that God alone is the giver of life and that he has the power also to take life (cf. Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6; 2 Ki 5:7; Bauckham 1998:84–85). This principle is applied to earthly life in the immediately following verses (Ja 1:13–15); here it is applied with respect to eschatological life and death.

James 5:1–6

[1] Ἄγε νῦν οἱ πλούσιοι, κλαύσατε ὀλολύζοντες ἐπὶ ταῖς ταλαιπωρίαις ὑμῶν ταῖς ἐπερχομέναις. [2] ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν σέσηπεν καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ὑμῶν σητόβρωτα γέγονεν, [3] ὁ χρυσὸς ὑμῶν καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος κατίωται καὶ ὁ ἰὸς αὐτῶν εἰς μαρτύριον ὑμῖν ἔσται καὶ φάγεται τὰς σάρκας ὑμῶν ὡς πῦρ. ἐθησαυρίσατε ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις. [4] ἰδοὺ ὁ μισθὸς τῶν ἐργατῶν τῶν ἀμησάντων τὰς χώρας ὑμῶν ὁ ἀπεστερημένος ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν κράζει, καὶ αἱ βοαὶ τῶν θερισάντων εἰς τὰ ὦτα κυρίου σαβαὼθ εἰσεληλύθασιν. [5] ἐτρυφήσατε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐσπαταλήσατε, ἐθρέψατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σφαγῆς, [6] κατεδικάσατε, ἐφονεύσατε τὸν δίκαιον· οὐκ ἀντιτάσσεται ὑμῖν.

[1] Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. [2] Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. [3] Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. [4] Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. [5] You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. [6] You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. (Ja 5:1–6)

James 5:1–6 correlates with James 1:9–11 and James 2:1–13 in that all three passages deal with the rich and the poor (cf. Hartin 1993:58). The present passage provides further insight into what it means for the rich to fade away like a flower (Ja 1:9–11) and why the behaviour of the rich towards the poor was violating God's demand to love one's neighbour as oneself (Ja 2:8,15–16).

The passage begins (Ja 5:1) with a call to the rich to give expression to the misery which they are about to experience because of God's judgement. The verb κλαίω [weep] is common throughout the LXX (122 occurrences[130]), but ὀλολύζω [howl], an onomatopoeic word referring to 'cries of violent grief' (Hartin 1993:59), occurs only in the prophets, most especially in connection with God's judgement.[131] The noun ταλαιπωρία, meaning 'wretchedness, distress, trouble, misery' (Arndt et al. 2000:988) is common in the Old Testament prophets.[132] James thus evokes the prophetic tradition in this verse.

130. Word counts in this paragraph were made using Accordance XII software with Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006).

131. The verb ὀλολύζω occurs 19 times in the LXX: Isaiah 10:10; 13:6; 14:31; 15:2–3; 16:7; 23:1, 6, 14; 24:11; 52:5; 65:14; Jeremiah 2:23; 31:20, 31; Ezekiel 21:17; Hosea 7:14; Amos 8:3; Zechariah 11:2.

132. Ταλαιπωρία occurs a total of 29 times in the LXX, including 7 times in the Psalms and 19 times in the prophetic books.

His denunciation of the rich is complete, and the possibility of repentance or escape from judgement is not considered (Davids 1982:175). This means that the rich who are in view here cannot be part of the Christian community. The purpose of the pericope is to encourage members of the community who may have been suffering oppression at the hands of the rich (cf. 5:7; Adamson 1976:184; Martin 1988:176). The use of ἐρχομέναις (Ja 5:1), 'the last days' (Ja 5:3) and 'day of slaughter' (Ja 5:5) combined with the general tenor of the pericope indicate that the final judgement is in view (Allison 2013:669; Davids 1982:175; Martin 1988:173; Moo 2000:211). This is confirmed by the references to the παρουσία and the coming judgement in James 5:7–9, a passage which is linked to the present pericope by the conjunction οὖν and the theme of patient waiting (which is possible because of the certainty of God's ultimate justice – cf. 2 Th 1:5–10).

In James 5:2–6, four charges are brought against the rich: (1) treasuring up wealth in the last days (Ja 5:2–3); (2) withholding wages from hired workers (Ja 5:4); (3) living in self-indulgence (Ja 5:5); and (4) condemning and murdering the righteous (Ja 5:6).[133] These charges relate to the earlier teachings of the letter in which care for the poor is emphasised as a requirement of God's law and a prerequisite for salvation at the final judgement (note, especially, Ja 2:5–8,16).

Two observations may be made with regard to the theme of life in this pericope. Firstly, this passage reflects James's conviction that God is the one who gives life and takes it away, the emphasis here being on taking it away. It is stated in Verse 4 that the 'cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts', showing that it is God who will ensure ultimate justice. In addition, the whole biblical tradition concerning the final judgement, which is at the forefront of James's thinking in this pericope, further confirms that God is the one who will visit death and destruction on the rich who disobey his law. Whereas in James 1:9–11, the rich person was said to 'fade away in the midst of his pursuits', the description in the present passage shows that James does not think merely of a quiet disappearance, but of a painful experience of judgement.

Secondly, the charges against the rich, especially when considered in the light of the earlier teaching of the letter, show that one's life and conduct in the present world are determinative for one's eternal destiny, whether eschatological life or eschatological death.

133. Cf. Mayordomo-Marín (1992:134). It is better to read the perfect tense verbs in Verse 2–3a as statements about the present condition of the rich, rather than as prophetic perfects indicating the future (eschatological) destruction of their wealth. This makes Verses 2–3a one of the charges against the rich, rather than part of the description of their future state (Mayordomo-Marín 1992; *pace* Allison 2013:673–675; Davids 1982:175; Mayor 1913:148).

James 5:7–9

7 Μακροθυμήσατε οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἕως τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου. ἰδοὺ ὁ γεωργὸς ἐκδέχεται τὸν τίμιον καρπὸν τῆς γῆς μακροθυμῶν ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ, ἕως λάβῃ πρόϊμον καὶ ὄψιμον. 8 μακροθυμήσατε καὶ ὑμεῖς, στηρίξατε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν. 9 μὴ στενάζετε, ἀδελφοί, κατ᾽ ἀλλήλων, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε·ἰδοὺ ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἕστηκεν.

7 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. (Ja 5:7–9)

Although the letter moves into its concluding phase from James 5:7 onwards, there is nevertheless a close connection between Verses 7–11 and 1–6 (Moo 2000:220–221); the οὖν at the start of Verse 7 should therefore be given due weight as a marker of logical connection. There is a striking contrast between the tone and manner of address in these two passages. Instead of a call to 'weep and howl', the presentation of a charge sheet (Ja 5:2–6) and the pronouncement of certain judgement leading to 'miseries', the readers are now addressed with the affectionate 'brothers' (ἀδελφοί) and encouraged to be patient until the Lord's coming.

The concept of the 'coming of the Lord' [παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου] is significant in this passage. Though some scholars interpret this as God's coming in judgement, παρουσία in the New Testament is virtually a technical term for the second coming of Christ (see Mt 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Th 2:1, 8–9; 2 Pt 3:4; 1 Jn 2:28; cf. Davids 1982:182; Martin 1988:190; Moo 2000:221). It would certainly have been understood in this way by a Christian audience. The closely-associated statements that the coming of the Lord is 'at hand' [ἤγγικεν] and that 'the Judge is standing at the door' show that James not only expected Christ's soon return but also that this return would be associated with the final judgement.

Thus, for James's readers, the coming of the Lord is an event that will be characterised by relief from distress, not misery, precisely because it will bring about the judgement of their oppressors. The joy which awaits those who persevere is likened to the farmer's harvest, a time of joy in which months of labour, waiting and possible deprivation are turned to joy by the provision of food for another season. In this way, James encourages his readers to realise that their present hardships should be seen as a time of preparation leading to ultimate joy.

These two passages (Ja 5:1–6, 7–9) can thus be seen to bring together the themes of earthly life, eschatological life and eschatological death. Temporally, these three meet at the *parousia* of Christ, which brings the final judgement and the separation of those who have persevered in faith and obedience to God's law from those who have lived in self-indulgence and disobedience. Earthly life is understood as a time of preparation, because a person's life in relation to God and neighbour provides the basis for judgement, thus

determining one's final destiny. Little detail is given regarding the nature of eschatological life or death beyond the clear association of eschatological death with severe distress (Ja 5:1–6) and the association of life with relief from suffering (Ja 5:7–8).

James 5:19–20

[19] Ἀδελφοί μου, ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῇ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν, [20] γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἁμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκ θανάτου καὶ καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.

[19] My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, [20] let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. (Ja 5:19–20)

James concludes his letter with a summons to action that is aimed at preserving the spiritual and communal integrity of the Christian community (Moo 2000:248–249). The focus is on a member of the community – note the use of ἀδελφοί and 'among you' – who is wandering from the truth. The text should read ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας (as in a number of manuscripts), thus connecting the idea of 'the way' [ὁδός] with wandering [πλανάω], a connection which is stated in Verse 20 using the noun πλάνη. James's thought thus taps into the rich biblical tradition regarding the two ways: the way of obedience leading to life versus the way of disobedience leading to death (Dt 11:26; 30:15; Ps 1:6; Jr 21:8; Mt 7:13–14; Allison 2013:786–787; Martin 1988:218). Recognising this tradition, and in view of the epistle's consistent teaching that qualities such as patience, perseverance, loving God and being a doer of his word are necessary for ultimate salvation (cf. Ja 1:12–15, 21–22; 2:5–14), it is not difficult to infer that James expects such wandering from the truth to lead to death. The earlier passages show that James has in mind not simply physical death but spiritual (eschatological) death (cf. Allison 2013:786, along with most commentators).[134]

Verse 20 assures the readers that the one who turns the sinner from his wandering will save 'his' [αὐτοῦ] soul from death. A number of scholars take the view that the one whose soul is saved is the one who turns the sinner back from his wandering.[135] However, this interpretation disturbs the thrust of the author's exhortation in this passage. It is the threat of death for the sinner that creates the need to turn him back from the error of his way, and the assurance that such restoration will indeed save him provides a suitable motivation to the community to engage in this work. Interpreting the assurance as a promise

134. Note especially James 1:15 (apart from Ja 5:20, the only occurrence of θάνατος in the letter), and James 1:21 in which the phrase 'save your souls' occurs. See the discussion on these passages above.

135. For example, Adamson (1976:203). See Allison (2013:787) for a discussion of reasons in support of this position.

of salvation for the restorer creates an abrupt change of focus and leaves the problem of the wanderer unresolved (cf. Davids 1982:201; Martin 1988:220). In the same way, the promise of 'cover[ing] a multitude of sins' applies also to the sinner.

This concluding exhortation thus brings into sharp focus the issues of eternal death and eternal life, and thereby the necessity of salvation. It is a fitting conclusion to a letter in which this concern has been prominent throughout and provides a reminder that James's thinking is dominated by the eschatological framework which sees earthly life as the precursor to judgement and its sequel of either eternal life or eternal death. The latter two are of such weight that they must govern and direct the way one lives one's life in the present world.

Ethical life

The discussion up to this point has explored two kinds of life that appear in the Letter of James, namely, earthly life and eschatological life. It has become clear that James places a strong emphasis on how one's eternal (eschatological) destiny is affected by the way one lives one's earthly life. Indeed, this is one of the core motivations for the strong moral imperatives in the letter. The question that now presses, especially from the wider canonical perspective of the New Testament (and indeed of the whole Bible) concerns the ability of James's readers to implement these commands and thus to gain the crown of life.

It is important to note that the motif of empowerment is present in James. In James 1:5, those who are required to demonstrate steadfastness in trials are encouraged to ask God for wisdom, trusting that he will answer such a request. The warning against double-mindedness shows that wisdom is related to ethical purity and faithfulness to God (cf. Ps 86:11; 119:113; Ja 4:8), and this is confirmed by the broader Old Testament perspective on wisdom, in which wisdom preserves a person from sin (Pr 2:10–19; 6:20–24; Moo 2000:57). The theme of wisdom recurs in James 3:13–18, where the wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle and full of mercy; it leads to a harvest of righteousness.[136] The idea of empowerment is perhaps strongest in James 1:21, where James states that the 'implanted word … is able to save your souls'.

In light of this need for empowerment, James 1:18 becomes significant because it relates both to life and to the idea of empowerment for obedience to God's commands.

136. See, further, Davids (1982:51–56) on the theme of wisdom.

James 1:16–18, 21

16 Μὴ πλανᾶσθε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί. 17 πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δώρημα τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστιν καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων, παρ᾽ ᾧ οὐκ ἔνι παραλλαγὴ ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα. 18 βουληθεὶς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχήν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων. […]

21 διὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν καὶ περισσείαν κακίας ἐν πραΰτητι δέξασθε τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. […]

21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (Ja 1:16–18, 21)

James 1:16–18 provides a counterpoint to James 1:13–15 by contrasting God's good gifts with the temptation to evil. In James 1:13, James states that God does not tempt people to sin; rather, their own desire leads ultimately to the birth of sin and the bringing forth (using ἀποκυέω) of death. In contrast, God gives good gifts (Ja 1:17); specifically, he 'brought us forth' (again using ἀποκυέω) by the word of truth (Ja 1:18). The fact that ἀποκυέω appears only in these two places in the entire Greek New Testament highlights the rhetorical connection between the two passages.[137] This rhetorical link creates the expectation that God's act of 'bringing forth', as a good gift, has an effect opposite to the chain of temptation, desire, sin and death in Verses 13–15. There is a further link between James 1:18 and James 1:21, where the 'implanted word' (Ja 1:21) is almost certainly to be identified with the 'word of truth' (Ja 1:18). Again in contrast to the sequence of temptation, sin and death, the implanted word is 'able to save your souls' (Ja 1:21). These contrasts are fairly clear, but to gain a proper understanding of God's good gifts, one needs to ask the meaning of the statement 'he brought us forth by the word of truth' in Verse 18.

One interpretation offered for this statement is that it refers to God's creation of human beings (e.g. Hort 1909:31–35). In favour of this interpretation is the reference in Verse 17 to God as the Father of lights and the use of κτισμάτων in Verse 18, both of which draw attention to God's work in creation. However, although creation is associated with God's word (e.g. Gn 1; Ps 33:6; Wis 9:1), the term λόγος ἀληθείας ['word of truth'] is not found in connection with creation (cf. Allison 2013:282). Furthermore, the flow of thought in Verses 13–21 requires some solution to the problem of sin and temptation rather than an account of creation. This is confirmed by the statement in Verse 21 that the 'implanted word … is able to save your souls'.

A second possible interpretation of James 1:18 is that it refers to God's creation of Israel. This interpretation finds support in Deuteronomy 32:18, which speaks about God 'giving birth' to Israel (in the MT but not the LXX) and is attractive to exegetes who understand the letter as being addressed to

137. Cf. Martin (1988:38), who states that the 'parallelism between v 15 (ἀποκύει) and v 18 (ἀπεκύησεν) is the exegetical key to this section [i.e. vv.17–19a]'.

Jews in general (e.g. Allison 2013:282–285). In Allison's (2013:282–283) explanation of this interpretation, the 'word of truth' and the 'implanted word' are identified with the Torah. This interpretation is not widely supported and an important difficulty with it derives from the fact that the Letter of James is a Christian document. For all the variety within early Christianity, the essential core common to all its expressions was the conviction that Jesus is the Christ (Dunn 2006:403–406; cf. Ac 2:36; 5:42). The message proclaimed in Jerusalem (of whose church James became leader) was that there is salvation in no one else besides Jesus of Nazareth (Ac 4:12). However much James might seek to write in a way that was attractive to non-Christian Jews, one questions whether he, as a Christian, would have suggested that salvation could be found outside of Jesus Christ. Yet that is what this interpretation would imply, given the statement in Verse 21 about the 'implanted word, which is able to save your souls'.

The third and most likely interpretation of James 1:18 is that it refers to God's work in regenerating Christians (although 'regeneration' may not be the most helpful term for explaining James's thinking at this point). The 'word of truth' (equivalent to the 'implanted word' of Ja 1:21) is a key term here and links the ideas of creation and redemption. As Martin (1988) explains, this word is the:

> [*S*]poken word which God uttered at creation [...] and which expressed and executed his divine will. [...] that voice of God [*could be*] heard in a creative or redemptive sense (where creation would be the new creation). (p. 40)

The creative sense is found in passages such as Genesis 1 and Psalm 33:6 in the Old Testament and its effectual nature is seen in Psalms 107:20; 147:15; Isaiah 55:1. The redemptive sense is found in the New Testament's use of 'word of truth' for the gospel (Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; 2 Tm 2:15; see also 2 Cor 6:7; 1 Pet 1:25). Given the redemptive focus of James 1:16–18, 21, it is meaningful to interpret God's act of bringing forth in Verse 18 as an act of redemption experienced by believers. This act of redemption is understood as a new act of creation in which believers become the eschatological firstfruits, offering a paradigm for the redemption of the whole creation. In this new order the powers of evil are broken (Martin 1988:40–41; see also Davids 1982:89; Moo 2000:79–80). In this interpretation the gospel is uniquely related to the original creation (Baker 2007):

> [*I*]t is not a brand new power spreading through humanity somehow separate from God's original life-giving force; it is the same. Thus, James's Christian readers are being told that their birth into a new life is an extension of God's original purpose for creating humanity in the first place. (p. 204)

If this interpretation is correct, there is a third sense in which James conceives of life. I have termed this the 'ethical' sense, and it is powerfully related to the other two senses (earthly and eschatological life). As in the case of earthly

and eschatological life, this ethical life is given by God's sovereign initiative, a point which is emphasised by James's use of βουληθείς at the beginning of James 1:18 (compare 4:12–16 for God's sovereign control over earthly and eschatological life). Ethical life is characterised by the life-giving power that brought the original creation into being and it enables believers to order their earthly lives in such a way as to prepare them for the final judgement, thus leading them to final salvation. This last point is highlighted in James 1:21, especially in its use of the phrase 'implanted word' [ἔμφυτον λόγον]. As Baker (2007) puts it:

> [*T*]he command to receive the innate word is a command to draw fully upon the power of God's word that is interwoven into every fiber of the believer's being, a power delivered from God's creative word through the gospel. (p. 205)

Thus, for James, ethical life shares the character of both earthly and eschatological life inasmuch as it is a mode of existence sustained solely by God's power and sovereign will. Furthermore, it provides the solution to the human problem of sin and disobedience. Whereas sin and disobedience to God's law lead inevitably to eschatological death, the ethical life which God gives brings his original life-giving power to bear on the believer's earthly life in such a way as to make eschatological life a possibility. Living in this life-giving way requires one to 'receive with meekness the implanted word' knowing that that word 'is able to save your souls' (Ja 1:21).

James's perspective on life

James shares the fundamental perspective of all Scripture that God is the sole giver of life (Cf. Johnson 2000:641); with the literature of Second Temple Judaism and the rest of the New Testament, he also has a strong understanding of life in God's eternal kingdom as the final reward for those who love God (cf. Bauckham 1998:82). His view on regeneration, while expressed in its own style, is nevertheless in harmony with the teaching on this subject as found in other New Testament passages (e.g. Jn 1:12–13; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; 1 Pt 1:23–25; 1 Jn 3:1–3). Thus, in terms of the essential understanding of life, James affirms, but does not contribute anything new, to the biblical understanding of life.

James's particular contribution to a biblical theology of life is found in the way he develops a sustained ethical argument based on the fundamental reality that all of life comes from God. This is seen, firstly, in the way the possibilities of eschatological life and death are constantly held before the readers as a spur to faithfulness: James motivates his readers to patience by pointing to the crown of life (Ja 1:2–12), while the rich are warned of their coming humiliation (Ja 1:10–11); impartiality and consideration for the poor are brought into the ambit of judgement under the law of liberty (Ja 2:1–13); faith without works is dead because it cannot lead to salvation (Ja 2:14–26); teachers must beware of the coming judgement (Ja 3:1); judging the law is

dangerous because 'there is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and destroy' (Ja 4:12); the coming judgement of the rich is both a warning and a comfort to believers who must wait patiently for the coming of the Lord (Ja 5:1–11); and members of the Christian community must bear the realities of eternal life and death before them when they see one of their members going astray (Ja 5:19–20).

Secondly, accepting the interpretation for James 1:18 given above, it is God's gift of ethical life that empowers believers to live in obedience to God's word. This is not only reflected in James 1:18, 21 but also in the theme of wisdom as God's gracious gift (Ja 1:5–8; 3:13–18). Thirdly, as far as simple, practical arrangements for the living of one's earthly life are concerned, these must also be made in recognition that life is a gift from God (Ja 4:13–16).

Conclusion

Although, at first sight, the Letter of James has relatively little to say about the theme of life, more detailed investigation shows that the idea of life is fundamental to the author's way of thinking and also to the ethical exhortations which constitute the bulk of the letter. Three types of life can be identified: earthly life, eschatological life and ethical life. Although these three types of life are distinct, they can all be thought of as modes of existence initiated and sustained by God's sovereign will and power. In James, earthly life, eschatological life and ethical life are intertwined. The way one lives one's earthly life determines one's final destiny (whether of eschatological life or death); thus, the prospect of the final judgement becomes a significant motivation for obedience to God's word in the present life. Ethical life (or spiritual regeneration) is crucial because it empowers the believer to live in obedience to God's requirements.

In his understanding of life, James does not contribute anything beyond what is present in the other biblical writings; however, he does stand faithfully within that tradition and applies the broader biblical perspective to his readers and their situation with eloquence and power.

Chapter 9

Life in Peter and Jude: The life pattern of the Christian believer

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Introduction

A semantic analysis of words in the epistles of Peter and of Jude broadly related to the concept of life points out that the focus of these New Testament writers have moved beyond the biological life of the Christian believer, which they accept as a given when viewed in the whole of biblical revelation and only receives cursory mention in these epistles. These epistles rather exhibit semantic progression towards the spiritual life of the Christian believer.

The spiritual life of the Christian believer flows from his/her spiritual rebirth [ἀναγεννάω] which forms the basis of Peter's exposition of the appropriate Christian life pattern. The spiritual rebirth is grounded in the saving grace of God as manifested in the salvific work of Jesus Christ and is effected by the Holy Spirit. From this spiritual rebirth, the Christian believer embarks on a life pattern [ἀναστροφή] that is guided by the sanctification of the Spirit (1 Pt 1:2).

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Completing the semantic progression, these epistles offer the elements of such an appropriate life pattern. These elements manifest through the recurrence of key concepts in the epistles, namely: being alive in Christ [ζάω], modelling one's life [συσχηματίζω], living a certain life pattern [ἀναστροφή, ἀναστρέφω, συνοικέω, ζάω], doing good [ἀγαθοποιέω, ἀγαθοποιΐα], spiritual growth [αὐξάνω] and eternal life as the end-goal [ζωὴν αἰώνιον].

The semantic progression will be indicated by way of diachronic and synchronic semantic analysis of the said concepts and their interrelation in the socio-historic context of the epistles under investigation. Based on the semantic analysis, the theological significance of the semantic progression will be discussed in the light of the biblical corpus as a whole. Connections to a similar progression in other books of the New Testament will also be investigated, as well as the theological implications of this progression.

■ Starting point: Biological life

The concept of life in the New Testament (referenced by the roots βίως and ζωή) refers in the first instance to physical, biological life. It denotes the organic functioning of all living beings (Link 1986:474). Yet, human life is unique in that man is capable of self-realisation and is open to formative influences. In Greek, ζωή tends to refer to life as a vital, natural force in humans and animals, as opposed to inanimate objects (Link 1986:476). In philosophical terms, different views on the nature of this life emerged (Link 1986:477). In the Old Testament, the concept of life refers to something thoroughly natural, vital and pertaining to this world, rather than divorced from it. The Greek division of life into body, soul and reason is not present in Jewish thought on life. Rather, in the Old Testament, the whole of human life is included yet viewed from a certain viewpoint (e.g. flesh or soul) (Link 1986:477). The Greek ideal was an aloof and contemplative life, while the Jewish ideal was an active, involved life (Link 1986:478), a life that is authored by Yahweh. In the LXX, the Jewish concept is reinterpreted in terms of the Greek term ζωή (Link 1986:479). In later Judaism, the concept of life was influenced by Hellenistic thought in terms of eternal life and resurrection, although in later development this was overtaken by the idea of the immortality of the soul.

These ideas are also reflected in the New Testament (Link 1986:480). The Synoptic Gospels reflect most clearly the Old Testament concept of life, both in terms of natural life and eternal life. Paul's view of life is heavily influenced by the resurrection of Christ who becomes the author of a new life for mankind (Link 1986:481). This new life shaped by the Holy Spirit is not divorced from reality but rather functions within the historical context of believers, balancing the paradox of present reality and future expectation of eternal life (the latter aspect especially emphasised in the Gospel of John).

Βίος, in turn, refers to man's manner of life (life pattern), populated with more ethical content that is 'life in its concrete outward manifestations' (Link 1986:474–475), these manifestations later developing towards 'livelihood, trade, wealth'. The latter is evidenced in the New Testament, while the meaning of 'manner of life' (life pattern) is only hinted at, and then in a negative sense (Link 1986:475). A possible explanation for the lack of proper adoption of this meaning in the New Testament is that the latter views life not as a means to self-enrichment, but rather as a means towards service to others.

In 1 Peter 4:5, the verb form ζῶντας is used. Thus the link to life as biological life is established and forms the basis of our consideration of the concept of life in these letters. This is also evidenced by the use of βρέφη in 1 Peter 2:2, referencing in the context a baby or infant (Braumann & Brown 1986:283), and thus quite directly biological life. Jude does not explicitly or implicitly provide the link proffered here.

Stage 1: From biological life to rebirth

This chapter argues that using biological life as a point of departure, the first letter of Peter, exhibits semantic progression towards a concept of life as an appropriate life pattern for believers. This progression moves towards this end-goal through the saving grace of God, and more specifically the concept of rebirth referenced by the verb ἀναγεννάω (Braumann & Brown 1986:59). The verb appears in 1 Peter 1:3 as well as 1 Peter 1:23, and in both cases references a figurative rather than literal meaning (Louw & Nida 1996:154). There is evidence that the use of ἀναγεννάω in this manner is an earlier use than that of the mystery religions, and that use predating 1 Peter should rather be sought in the rabbinic and Qumran traditions (Jobes 2005:82–83). The closest source, however, remains the teaching of Jesus (cf. Jn 3).

This figurative meaning in the context of 1 Peter encompasses spiritual rebirth effected by God in man through the salvific work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The origins of the concept are to be found in the Jewish tradition where Jews did not describe themselves as being regenerate but had the expectation of a new life for themselves and the world (Büchsel & Rengstorf 1964:674). In contrast, in 1 Peter, regeneration is presented as a present reality ushered in by the resurrection of Christ, with believers linked to him by his Spirit.

Stage 2: From rebirth to a new spiritual life

The progression from biological life to rebirth as described above leads to a new spiritual life for believers. This progression is evidenced in both 1 Peter and Jude through the use of the lemmas ζωοποιέω, διασῴζω and σῴζω. These lemmas occur three times in 1 Peter 3:18–21 in this order. The latter also appears in 1 Peter

4:18 as well as Jude 5 and 23. Ζωοποιέω is used in 1 Peter 3:18 in the sense of 'to make alive', although not in a biological sense but rather in a spiritual sense. The biological creation of life by a divine subject is attested from the time of the Greek philosophers (Bultmann 1964:874). The LXX confirms this but also extends the reference to a spiritual life-giving by God through the salvation of his people, which is clearly reflected in its use in 1 Peter 3:18 ([...] ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζῳοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι)[138] with the Spirit of God as the divine subject (in other instances in the New Testament,[139] the divine subject may be God, Christ or the Spirit). In contrast, the law cannot make alive (Gl 3:21). In addition to the soteriological aspect attached to ζωοποιέω, it also references an eschatological dimension (Bultmann 1964:875), leading to the same tension between the present reality and the eschatological expectation that we witnessed with ἀναγεννάω. In the case of ζωοποιέω, this present reality is the spiritual life-giving, and the eschatological expectation anticipates a physical, bodily life-giving (cf. 1 Cor 15; Jobes 2005:87–88).

In respect of διασῴζω, the lemma appears eight times in the New Testament, of which one refers to healing from physical illness (Matthew 14:36) and six refer to rescue from physical danger (Lk 7:3; Ac 23:24; 27:43, 44; 28:1, 4), with an emphasis on the complete nature of the rescue (Louw & Nida 1996:240). Bauer (2000d:237) contends that this indicates a meaning closer to σῴζω while ignoring the semantic import of διά; yet other scholars identify the semantic import in the idea of rescue throughout an event until the rescue is complete (Louw & Nida 1996:240). The eighth occurrence in 1 Peter 3:20 continues the trend referring to the rescue of Noah and seven others through the water of the flood. Yet, in the context and in conjunction with σῴζει in Verse 21, the author seems to imply spiritual salvation in addition to physical rescue, exhibiting soteriological overtones with typological reference to Christian baptism (Brown & Schneider 1986:211; Jobes 2005:252–253). Again the new spiritual life of the believer comes to the fore, based on his or her rebirth in Christ and through the Spirit.

The lemma σῴζω appears in 1 Peter 3:21 and 4:18, as well as Jude 5 and 23. In relation to biological life, it refers to rescue from natural dangers and afflictions, to keep someone from harm (Bauer 2000k:982; Brown & Schneider 1986:211) through a dynamic act of rescue (Foerster 1964:966). This meaning is found mostly in the Gospels and Acts. The harm might take the form of death or disease, or indeed any mortal danger. By extension, σῴζω may also refer to salvation from eternal death and all that might lead thereto (Bauer 2000k:982), referred to as 'preserving the inner being' by Foerster (1964:968) based on classical sources. In the New Testament, the subject of this form of

138. All quotations from the Greek text of the New Testament are taken from Nestle et al. (1998).

139. John 5:21, 6:63; Romans 4:17, 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 36, 45; 2 Corinthians 3:6.

rescue or salvation is God or Christ, as well as human mediators of such salvation that is the apostles. The lemma is used in this active sense in 1 Peter 3:21 and Jude 5. In the former instance, baptism becomes the symbol of God's saving grace. The latter instance references God's rescue of his people 'Israel' from slavery in Egypt, yet in the context, the focus is on the contrast between salvation and demise based on Israel's disbelief (cf. Green 2008:188–189). In the passive voice, the reference is to being saved or attaining salvation, as is evident in 1 Peter 4:18 (Bauer 2000k:983; cf. Jobes 2005:294).

In 1 Peter 1:5 and 9, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:15 as well as Jude 3, the noun σωτηρία is used, referring similarly to σῴζω to physical deliverance but also transcendent salvation (Jobes 2005:88). In all these contexts, the latter reference is preferred, relating to the spiritual salvation of believers. Yet, in Petrine thought, σωτηρία also 'refers to the ultimate deliverance that is the final goal of redemptive history and in which believers in Christ will partake' (Jobes 2005:88). Believers are assured of this ultimate deliverance for they have been spiritually reborn into it by the death and resurrection of Christ. The use of the noun in 1 Peter 2:2 provides a link to a certain way of Christian living as the spiritual milk may reference more than simply the Word of God; rather it is God in Christ whom the believers have tasted, and thus they are exhorted to a life pattern that is devoid of 'all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander' (cf. Jobes 2005:140). In Jude 3, the noun seems to be used in a broader sense than only the act of salvation '[…] to include the Christian experience of God's love and protection […]' (Green 2008:176).

The noun σωτήρ appears five times in 2 Peter[140] and once in Jude 25. In 2 Peter, Jesus Christ is described as the Saviour (Foerster 1964:1018), and in Jude 25, God is described similarly, in all occurrences referring primarily to divine spiritual salvation for believers rather than physical deliverance. The latter is unusual in the New Testament, probably indicating that the Father is the author of salvation (and thus also regeneration) which is then executed in history through the salvific work of the Son, Jesus Christ (Green 2008:235).

It is clear from the analysis of words relating to saving, salvation and saviour that the letters of Peter and Jude focus exclusively on the spiritual salvation of believers through the work of salvation of God in Jesus Christ. In turn, such spiritual salvation leads to a new spiritual life.

Stage 3: From a new spiritual life to a Christian life pattern

1 and 2 Peter provide evidence of a further progression to a Christian life pattern. The term 'life pattern' is used in this chapter in preference to 'lifestyle'

140. 2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18.

because the latter implies in a variety of current contexts an individual choice (Oxford English Dictionary n.d.). 'Life pattern' on the other hand rather implies a way of life that is the result of outside influence rather than personal choice, referencing a normative example worthy of imitation and indicative of principles and behaviours particular to a community (Anonyms 2020). The New Testament acknowledges the formation of life patterns through conditioning as part of man's existence (Vorländer & Wright 1986:568). Conditioning may produce negative life patterns of self-interest or positive life patterns conditioned through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm 12:1–2). The use of μεταμορφόω in Romans 12:2 points to a person changing inwardly in fundamental character or condition (Bauer 2000h:639), which leads to a revised life pattern and a corresponding change in behaviour (εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον – Rm 12:2).

The key terms indicating the progression from a new spiritual life into a Christian life pattern are ἀναστρέφω and ἀναστροφή. They occur 10 times in 1 and 2 Peter.[141] These two key terms are supported by the use of related concepts, namely ζάω, ζωή, ἀγαθοποιέω, συνοικέω, βιόω and ὑπόδειγμα. From the semantic links between these concepts, the central argument of the chapter will become clear.

The terms ἀναστρέφω and ἀναστροφή have a wide range of meanings in Greek, moving from the literal turning around to include the figurative meaning of living life, qualified in any number of ways (Bertram 1964:715; Ebel 1986:933). This meaning is well-attested in the whole ancient world as well as the Old Testament, providing an ethical aspect to the meaning. It is this meaning that is referenced in the context of 1 and 2 Peter: 'to conduct oneself in terms of certain principles, *act, behave, conduct oneself, live* […]' (Bauer 2000b:72). In this sense, both the verb and noun forms are used in the New Testament Epistles, with positive and negative descriptions of human conduct.[142] We find an example of this in 1 Peter 1:17 where a positive attribute of a Christian life pattern is described (ἐν φόβῳ τὸν τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε – conduct yourself […]), namely living in fear of God. Jobes (2005) says of this verse:

> [*S*]ince they have become God's children by virtue of being born again (1:3), they consequently have a new life that is to be lived markedly different from the old one. (p. 116)

Yet in 2 Peter 2:18, a negative counterpoint is described (ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις τοὺς ὀλίγως ἀποφεύγοντας τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφομένους).

141. 1 Peter 1:15, 17, 18; 2:12, 3:1–2, 16; 2 Peter 2:7, 18; 3:11.

142. In the letters of Paul and John, περιπατέω is the preferred word for 'way of life'.

According to Ebel (1986:934–935), the word group has special significance in the paraenesis of 1 Peter. He describes a distinction between a pre-or non-Christian way of life (whether Jewish [Gl 1:13] or non-believing [Eph 4:22]) versus a Christian way of life. It denotes a life led according to an individual's value system, whether grounded in religion or not. The exhortation directed at believers to live a Christian life pattern is grounded in their calling by God and the sacrificial death of Jesus. The importance of such a life pattern is not only to be found in obedience to God but also as a counterpoint to the critical eyes of a non-believing world in which the believers live as aliens and strangers (1 Pt 1:1; 2:11). Thus the life pattern of the believer results in a witness to the world. In this regard, Louw and Nida (1996:503) offer the qualification that the life pattern established for Christians contains an '[...] apparent focus upon overt daily behavior'. The implication would be that Peter's call to believers to live according to such a life pattern is not limited to religious life but rather encompasses one's whole way of life (Jobes 2005:113). The radical nature of this change in life pattern is commensurate with the radical nature of the rebirth of the believer.

The core concept consisting of a Christian life pattern and corresponding behaviour is supported by a number of other concepts in 1 and 2 Peter. The lemma ζάω appears twice namely in 1 Peter 2:24 and 4:6. In the former instance, it refers to conducting oneself in a pattern of behaviour (Bauer 2000e:425). In the context of 1 Peter 2:24, it is extended to living for the benefit of someone or something (in this case τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ), pointing to the example of Christ suffering on behalf of believers. Christian ethics as expounded by Peter is thoroughly grounded in the suffering of Christ (Jobes 2005:197). 1 Peter 4:6 indicates that the standard for such a life of service is God, using a marker of similarity [κατὰ θεὸν] (Bauer 2000g:512; Jobes 2005:273). The noun form ζωῆς used in 1 Peter 3:7 indicates that this life to be led by believers is a gift of God to his children, and part of their eternal inheritance. In 1 Peter 3:10, in the context of Verses 8–12, the noun form ζωὴν forms part of a description of qualities that make this pattern of life unique to believers. Peter describes εἰς τοῦτο ἐκλήθητε in Verse 9 in terms borrowed from Psalm 34, exhorting them to adopt a life pattern characterised by turning away from evil and doing good (Jobes 2005:220). And in 2 Peter 1:3, the same noun form is used to connect the lived life of the believer with piety before God (Green 2008:33). The radical change in the lifestyle of the believer is further described in Verse 4[143] as on the one hand escaping from the corruption because of sinful desire, and on the other hand, becoming partakers in the divine nature. An even more detailed characterisation of the lifestyle of the believer follows in Verses 5–7,

143. This full meaning and scope of this verse is much debated (e.g. a physical union with God versus a description of the new life in Christ before God as described in the rest of the New Testament), but the scope of this chapter does not allow for an in-depth discussion.

which points to the growth in the spiritual growth of the believer (see section on 'Growth').

The verb ἀγαθοποιέω appears in 1 Peter 2:15 and 20 as well as 3:6 and 17, and the noun ἀγαθοποιΐα in 1 Peter 4:19. The word group refers to the action of doing what is beneficial to another or meeting a high level of exemplary conduct that is doing what is good and right (Bauer 2000a:3), correlating with the Hebrew equivalent expressing the realisation of the good by action (Grundmann 1964:17). In 1 Peter, the person who does good (probably both in what is beneficial to others as well as meeting the high expectations of God) is distinguished not only by his ethics but also him being in Christ. Thus, ἀγαθοποιέω describes part of the identity of believers, for '[s]uch right action is the visible proof that a man has really and gratefully grasped the new opportunity for existence as his own' (Beyreuther 1986:102). Another dimension is evident from Peter's use of the word, namely that the believer who does good serves as a witness to an alternative life pattern to that of the world. Jobes (2005:175) posits that these good deeds would be generally acknowledged by the society as good. In 1 Peter, the exhortation directed at slaves and wives refers to 'good works beyond that normally expected in a given situation, which could be noted [...] by the master, or by the husband' (Jobes 2005:175).

In 1 Peter 3:7, the verb form συνοικοῦντες simply refers to living with someone (such as your spouse) (Bauer 2000i:973). However, in the context of the household, code regarding the relationship between husband and wife (1 Pt. 3:1–7), the focus is on the conduct of husbands in relation to their wives (Louw & Nida 1996:504). Thus, the Christian life pattern expressed in these letters applies to the relationship between husband and wife, as it also applies to the relationship of believers with authorities (1 Pt 2:13–17) and employers (1 Pt 2:18–25).

The use of βιῶσαι in 1 Peter 4:2 also points towards the progression from the new spiritual life of believers to a Christian life pattern which affects every sphere of daily life. The verb βιόω refers to Living One's life (Bauer 2000c:177). According to Louw and Nida (1996:505), the focus is indeed on everyday activity and the believer's conduct therein. 1 Peter 4:2 reiterates that the believer's conduct in everyday activities must be determined by the will of God rather than the passions of man. Thus, the new spiritual life finds expression in a life pattern fashioned after the will of God. This interpretation of the use of βιόω is supported by the Jewish tradition (Bultmann 1964:293). It must be added that the temporal aspect of life indicating duration is also present in 1 Peter 4:2 (Link 1986:475).

The last concept pointing to the progression described above is ὑπόδειγμα found in 2 Peter 2:6. Bauer (2000n:1037) defines its meaning as '[...] an example of behavior used for purposes of moral instruction, *example, model, pattern*'. The example may be positive and thus worthy of imitation, or negative and thus to be avoided. The latter is the case in 2 Peter 2:6 where the

inhabitants of the cities of Sodom and Gomorra are presented as an example of the ungodly, and by implication their example is to be avoided by the believers, not forming part of their Christian life pattern. In 1 Peter 2:21, we find the noun ὑπογραμμός in the same semantic domain (Louw & Nida 1996:591), pointing to a model of behaviour (Bauer 2000m:1036) with the referent being the example of Christ.

The analysis offered above indicates that the key terms ἀναστρέφω and ἀναστροφή move the semantic import of 'life' in 1 and 2 Peter from the biological aspect of it to the new spiritual life guaranteed for believers through Christ and the Spirit to a Christian life pattern that is determined by the will of God as described in these letters (and indeed the rest of the New Testament). The life pattern of the believer provides agency to witness to the world and its divergent life pattern(s). Other supporting concepts indicate that such a life pattern leads to service to others [ζάω, ζωή] and doing good [ἀγαθοποιέω, ἀγαθοποιΐα], applies to interpersonal relationships [συνοικέω] and relates to everyday activities [βιῶσαι]. This life pattern is also informed by negative examples to be avoided [ὑπόδειγμα].

Elements of the appropriate life pattern for Christian believers

Having established the progression in the three letters under investigation from biological life to rebirth to a new spiritual life to a Christian life pattern, we now consider the elements for such a life pattern to be appropriate for believers.

Life-productive persons and things

Four times in 1 Peter the concept of life finds expression in life-productive and life-communicating persons and things (Bauer 2000e:426; Forbes 2014:18). In the progression described above, this use of the participle forms of ζάω provides a link between the rebirth of believers in Christ and through the Spirit leading to a new spiritual life and consequent Christian life pattern. As the living stone, or cornerstone, of the spiritual building of God, Christ through his salvific work is the golden thread in this progression, keeping all the phases together (λίθον ζῶντα – 1 Pt 2:4) (cf. Jobes 2005:146ff.). The result of the regeneration is a living hope (ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν – 1 Pt 1:3) (Büchsel & Rengstorf 1964:673; Jobes 2005:84).[144] Such a living hope stands in contrast to hope that is dead because it is based on futile things, such as pagan religion and philosophy (Eph 2:12; 1 Th 4:13). The regeneration and the living hope are

144. Dubis (2010:7) is of the opinion that ζῶσαν should rather be translated as 'enduring' based on the use of μένοντος in Verse 23.

communicated through the imperishable seed, namely the living Word of God (διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ – 1 Pt 1:23), which in turn leads to a life pattern characterised by love (1 Pt 1:22). And ultimately in Christ, all believers become living stones (λίθοι ζῶντες – 1 Pt 2:5) (cf. Jobes 2005:148ff.).

Modelling

As living stones built into the spiritual home of God, believers are called upon to live according to a Christian life pattern and to model their lives according to such a pattern rather than any other. The verb συσχηματίζω gives expression to this: 'to form according to a pattern or mold, *form/model after someth*[...]' (Bauer 2000j:979). Braumann (1986:708) posits that '*syschēmatizō* means not only to conform to the external form but (from Aristotle onwards) to assume the form of something, to identify oneself essentially with someone else'. In the passive form, the meaning moves to 'be formed like, be conformed to, be guided by [...]' (Bauer 2000j:979). In 1 Peter 1:14, the verb is used in a negative sense, calling believers to not model their daily living according to the old life pattern of sinful desires, for this implies yielding yourself to the same (Braumann 1986:709). Rather, believers should yield to the life pattern associated with the new spiritual life found in Christ and founded in holiness before God (1 Pt 1:14–16).

Doing good (deeds)

The outward manifestation of the Christian life pattern is to be found in doing good, as indicated by the earlier analysis, and presents as the believer's witness to co-believers and non-believers.

Growth

The progression discussed in this chapter has a Christian life pattern in mind in the life of every believer. This life pattern is, however, not a goal in itself that is reached in an instant. Rather, the use of the verb αὐξάνω in 1 and 2 Peter indicates that the believer grows into such a life pattern. Bauer (2000l:151) points to the following general meaning: '[...] to cause to become greater in extent, size, state, or quality, *grow someth., cause to grow, increase* trans'. The intransitive use leads to the meaning '[...] to become greater, *grow, increase* intr'. The passive form is used actively in 1 Peter 2:2 to indicate that the agent of growth is the pure spiritual milk, traditionally interpreted to be the Word of God.[145] This concept of growth within the life pattern is supported by the use of the verb in 2 Peter 3:18 where believers are exhorted to grow in grace and

145. For an alternative interpretation, see the penultimate paragraph under 'Stage 3: From a new spiritual life to a Christian life pattern' (cf. Jobes 2005:132–141).

knowledge of Jesus Christ, which precedes the Christian life pattern. The growth of the believer acts as a bulwark against the warning of Verse 17 to not be carried away by the error of lawless people and thus lose stability in faith (Green 2008:137).

End point: Eternal life

In Jude 21, we find the concept of eternal life as part of the progression described in this chapter, expressed by the phrase εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. The use of ζωὴν with αἰώνιον points to '[...] life for those who have come out of the state of death' (Bauer 2000f:430; cf. 1 Pt 3:10). It may also reference '[...] life in the blessed period of final consummation' which fits with growth as an element of the Christian life pattern described above. Bultmann (1964:865) posits that the future life described throughout the New Testament is established by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and has already commenced although it is still to be fully consummated. This reality is presented in different forms and to varying degrees in the New Testament, with ζωή being a present reality for believers, yet also something that they still hope for – the living hope described in 1 Peter 1:3. The present reality finds expression in the daily living of the new life pattern in the Spirit, while believers expectantly hope upon the return of the Christ, with eternal life as prize (Green 2008:227).

The progression indicated in this chapter can be visualised as seen in Figure 9.1.

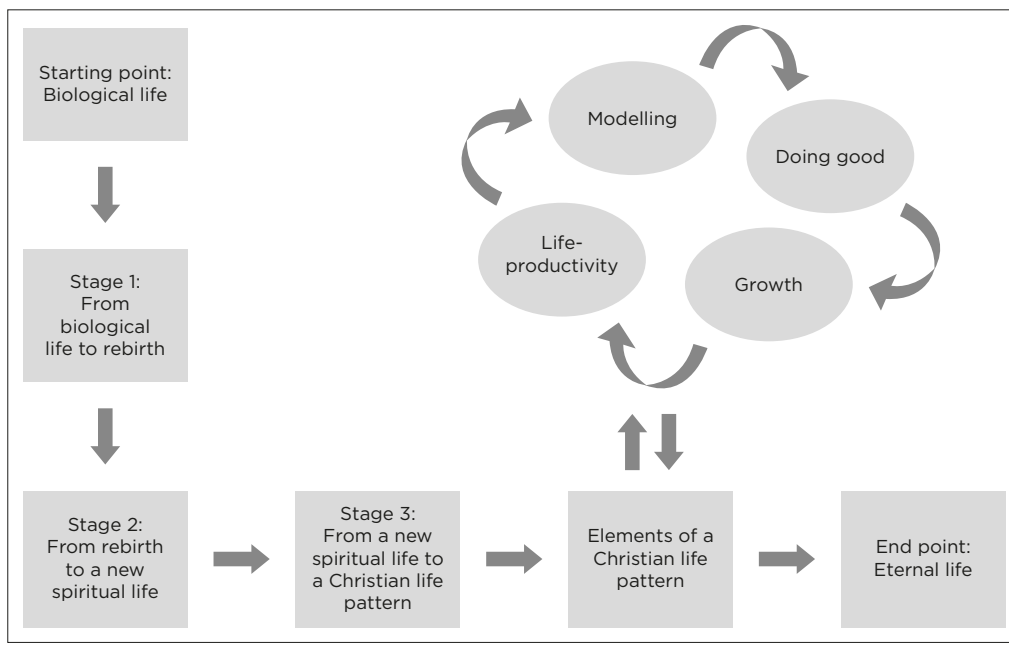

FIGURE 9.1: Visual representation of the semantic progression of life in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude.

TABLE 9.1: Comparison of the semantic progression indicated in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude with the other letters of the New Testament.

Word (group)/ phrase	Starting point	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Elements	End point
Ζάω, ζωή	Romans 7:1–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 5:15, 6:9	-	Romans 6–7; Galatians 2:19, 5:25; 2 Corinthians 13:4	Romans 6:10, 8:12, 14:7; Galatians 2:14, 19; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Corinthians 3:7; 2 Timothy 3:12; Titus 2:12	Romans 12:1	1 Thessalonians 5:10;
βιόω, βίος	-	-	-	1 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:4	-	-
(ἀνα)γεννάω	-	John 3:3, 7[a]	-	-	-	-
ζωοποιέω	-	-	Romans 4:17; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Timothy 6:13;	-	-	-
διασῴζω	-	-	-	-	-	-
σῴζω	-	-	Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 1:21, 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Timothy 1:15, 2:4; 2 Timothy 1:9, 4:18; Titus 3:5	-	-	-
ἀναστρέφω, ἀναστροφή	-	-	-	Galatians 1:13; Ephesians 2:3, 4:22; 1 Timothy 3:15, 4:12; James 3:3	-	-
ἀγαθοποιέω, ἀγαθοποιΐα	-	-	-	3 John 11	3 John 11	-
συνοικέω	-	-	-	-	-	-
ὑπόδειγμα	-	-	-	James 5:10	-	-
Συσχηματίζω	-	-	-	-	Romans 12:2	
αὐξάνω					Colossians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 10:15; Ephesians 4:15	
ζωὴν αἰώνιον	-	-	-	-	-	Romans 2:7, 5:21, 6:22; Galatians 6:8; 1 Timothy 1:16, 6:12, 19; Titus 1:2, 3:7

a. The lemma ἀναγεννάω only appears in 1 Peter, but theologically the link to John 3:3 and 7 is clear. The concept of rebirth is well-established in Christian theology based on this link, and thus underlies all the New Testament writings.

Connections to similar progression in the other letters of the New Testament

Looking at the use of the concepts discussed in this chapter in the other letters contained in the New Testament, the question is whether the same progression is detectable in other books.

Table 9.1 indicates the same progression identified in 1 and 2 Peter, and to a lesser extent, Jude is also visible to varying degrees in the other letters of the New Testament. The progression binds together the theological aspects of rebirth into a new spiritual life based on the salvific work of God in Christ to the daily life of the believer, as the effect of the new spiritual life of believers becomes visible in their lives. The general division of the letters of the New Testament into teaching (which is often more theological in nature) and exhortation (guidelines for living a Christian life pattern) supports this contention (cf. Silva 2007:183).

Theological implications of the progression in the semantic aspects of life in Peter and Jude

The question remains what the theological implications are based on the progression in the semantic aspects of life in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude. The progression aligns quite closely with the doctrine of the order of salvation expounded in Reformed theology (Van Genderen & Velema 1992:522ff.). Human life begins as biological life, of which God is the creator. Yet through God's intervention in the history of people, biological life progresses to spiritual life in a living relationship with him. The salvific work of Christ and the living-giving work of the Spirit bear the order of salvation as their fruit (Van Genderen & Velema 1992:525), and in this way, believers partake in the fruit through faith. The alignment looks as seen in Table 9.2 (cf. Van Genderen & Velema 1992:522ff.):

TABLE 9.2: Orders of salvation and their semantic progressing in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude.

Order of salvation	Semantic progression in 1 and 2 Peter and Jude
Calling (1 Pt 1:15)	-
Rebirth (1 Pt 1:3 and 17)	Stage 1
Faith (1 Pt 1:5ff.)	Stage 1
Repentance (2 Pt 3:9)	Stage 2
Justification (1 Pt 2:24)	Stage 2
Sanctification (1 Pt 4:1–11)	Stage 3
Perseverance (2 Pt 1:5–11)	Stage 3
Glorification (1 Pt 4:11)	End point

This analysis provides further evidence of God's order for salvation in the lives of believers, indicating that to him as creator and provider of life, man only lives in the biblical sense of the word when he lives physically as well as spiritually in the presence of God, Christ and the Spirit.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to investigate the hypothesis that the authors of the epistles of Peter and that of Jude in their consideration of the concept of life moved beyond the biological life of the Christian believer by way of a semantic progression towards the spiritual life of the Christian believer. The implication is not a denial of biological life, which they accept as a given, but rather an extension of the meaning of life to include the spiritual life created by God for his children.

The semantic progression was identified as follows: Starting point (biological life); Stage 1 (from biological life to rebirth); Stage 2 (from rebirth to a new spiritual life); Stage 3 (from a new spiritual life to a Christian life pattern); and End point (eternal life). Completing the semantic progression, these epistles offer the elements of such an appropriate life pattern. These elements manifest through the recurrence of key concepts in the epistles, namely, life-productive persons and things, modelling, doing good and spiritual growth.

The analysis also pointed out that the use of these terms and concepts in the other letters of the New Testament indicated to a greater or lesser extent the same semantic progression and that it confirms the Reformed doctrine of the order of salvation. More importantly, it indicates that the concept of life in the New Testament (and indeed Scripture as a whole) can only properly be understood as being physical and spiritual rather than one or the other.

Chapter 10

Life in Revelation: Life in an eschatological progression of renewal towards its climax in the New Jerusalem, according to the Apocalypse of John

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Introduction

Human life according to the biblical usage is not an inherent quality, independently possessed by mankind; it is a gift, first given in creation and

147. It is with great appreciation that Jan A. du Rand's contribution forms part of this publication. Jan presented the concept of the chapter during a mini-conference in preparation of this publication and subsequently submitted this chapter. Since then he fell ill and passed away on 09 March 2021. We believe that with his passing, Jan could delightfully embrace the glory of which he tangible wrote in this chapter.

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again in redemption (cf. Burge 2008:655). God gives life with the possibility that it might be eternal. Therefore, biblical life is not a by-product of nature although God endows the world with natural life. The first Adam was created from the earth and then God breathed into his nostrils 'the breath of life' (Gn 2:7). The second Adam, Jesus Christ, became man to demonstrate real life.

The Apocalypse of John as a dramatic narrative (Du Rand 1994:557) is hermeneutically analysed as an integral part of the New Testament message as a whole. The research focus and the understanding of the eschatological role of human life swings between a literary approach and the theological-canonical interpretation of the Apocalypse. The occurrences of life in the Apocalypse are investigated from the viewpoint of a process of renewal: the old has to make eschatological room for the New. Therefore, it is necessary to define the 'old' from the Old and New Testaments (cf. Van der Watt 1986:295).

Broadly spoken, life is not a static gift by God but a dynamic entity, progressing to reach its climax in the description of life in the New Jerusalem, according to the Apocalypse of John. The process begins at *natural creational* life, then moves to *true* or *real* life, then to the *new life,* and completes the biblical circle with the *afterlife*.

As a point of departure, the classical Greek view of determining the value of life depends on the faculties of the human being, to independently work out someone's own destiny. Such a point of departure represents an unacceptable idealistic and humanistic view. Instead, the biblical view of life emphasises the God-given purpose of human life.

The research question focuses on the biblical process of the development of life in its manifestation to be transformed to the real life, leading to the new life. Is there such an integral theological process with the climax in the Apocalypse? In what format of manifestation does life expose the purpose of God, according to the Apocalypse? Is the dramatic narrative of the Apocalypse willing to theologically and ethically display the dynamic process of life? Is the angle and viewpoint of departure in describing life as a process of renewal, legitimate and proven?

The purpose of this research is to describe the eschatological process of the concept life under the umbrella of 'newness' with its climactic destination of meaning in the metaphor of the New Jerusalem. In other words, life is the eschatological vehicle in the soteriological sense of depicting God's destiny for those whose names are in 'the book of life'.

From text to meaning: A narrative theology of life

To understand the role and meaning of life in the Apocalypse requires a hermeneutical methodological approach to communicate this dramatic narrative. This apocalyptic narrative originated in a particular rhetorical crisis situation that convinces the reader to come to a new understanding of the functional meaning of life. The arrangement of the narrative presented a certain plot in which the theological and ethical meanings of life function in progression. To trace the meaning of life through the occurrences of the concept definitely is not only a sectarian answer to a crisis but a theological narrative to accommodate the reader to come to grips with the appeal of the development of the process of spiritual life (Du Rand 1993:299). By way of association and admiration, the reader finds catharsis in understanding God's purpose for this world through experiencing the living of life.

The theme of the macro-narrative of the Apocalypse of John could be formulated as 'the unfolding and recognition of God's reign on earth as it is in heaven' (cf. Du Rand 1994:567).

This acceptance of the reign of God is empowered by living the new life in the following three 'acts', as the proposed literary framework of the Apocalypse of John (cf. Barr 1986:247; Du Rand 1993:146):

- Experiencing life in the church, because of the Christ event (Rv 1–3).
- Experiencing life in the cosmos, the unfolding of God's salvation and judgement on grounds of the Christ event (Rv 4–11).
- Experiencing life in history, because of the Christ event (Rv 12–22).

It seems clear that living the new life in Christ binds different threads in the dramatic narrative of the Apocalypse. Therefore, associating with the story of the Apocalypse may be called a narrative theology. The thread binding this macro-narrative of the Apocalypse can be called apocalyptic theology. In the meantime, we have to distinguish between narrative coherence and the theology of the Apocalypse, in which form and content are integrated. The concept life functions in an identity enhancing dramatic narrative with the emphasis on God's commitment with his own, the church, the cosmos and history. The overarching and existential commitment with the theological narrative helps the believing community to make sense of life and to recognise that life in their society makes sense.

It is hermeneutically helpful to distinguish amongst three levels of narrativity in the Apocalypse of John (cf. Boring 1992:704) but to keep in mind that more than one level of narrativity can simultaneously be present at a certain point in the narrative. The first level narrates the experiences of *John and the churches*; the second narrative level described the *divine and cosmic* story,

sharing the visions of God, Christ and the heavenly throne room, as well as the realisation of the seals, trumpets and bowls as part of God's judgement; the third narrative level contains the underlying meaning of the macro-narrative and can be called the theological story. The purpose of this research is to formulate the role of life in the progression of narrative theology as a literary vehicle.

The narrative concerning the *present* starts with the overwhelming expression that God is the *Alpha and Omega* who created all things (Rv 4:11; 3:14). It is because of the sin of humans against God at creation that the 'book of life' has come into existence (Rv 17:8). God is also the origin of salvation by providing the Lamb, Jesus Christ (Rv 5:13; 7:10). The born Child, according to Revalation 12:1–5, brought new life with salvation. Christ is God's provided atonement, accomplishing historical and cosmic victories. The climax of this narrative theology is the climactic destination of life in the New Jerusalem.

The churches' life on earth shows a particular identity because the glorified Son is in the midst of the churches (Rv 1:9–20). God is the ruler of the universe because he is sitting on the throne (Rv 4:1; 5:1). The core of the narrative theology moves to the foreground because God's reign in heaven is already a recognised reality on earth. He is sitting on the throne and the faithful, experiencing their life and identity through faith, are called a kingdom and priests, to serve him (Rv 1:6). Being a Kingdom of God means to recognise his kingship on earth as it is in heaven. Life only becomes more adventurous when God as ruler sees to the sealing of the 144 000. This military language (Rv 7:1–8; 14:1–5) reminds the reader that life is an ongoing battle and the victory lies ahead.

To live the new life as citizen of the Kingdom of God has brought security. God cares for his own (Rv 11:11; 12:14). Life is according to the Apocalypse an ongoing festivity of celebration (cf. Rv 7:11; 8:2; 14:7). God gives room for celebrations (Rv 7:14). He is praised for his justice (Rv 16:7). The way to praise God is to live life in worshipping him who sits on the throne (Rv 22:9). The Christian experience of the present is not a count down between Christ's first and second coming, but a participating living life as God's gift, acknowledging his reign and his caring on earth.

The *future activity* of God focuses on the eschatological coming and not so much on the historical future. Christ functions in the same role as God (Rv 3:11; 22:20; cf. Boring 1992:718). Life is described in futuristic terms: a future resurrection, a future announcement of judgement, the eschatological coming of Christ on the clouds and the future descending of the New Jerusalem (cf. Rv 1:17–18; 2:5, 16–27; 3:5–11; 14:14; 16:15; 19:7ff.; 20:1ff.; 21:9; 22:7, 20). Life has a bright future to be incorporated into God's climactic destination in the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:2, 10). The believers are privileged to participate in these eschatological events (cf. Rv 9:14; 10:7; 15:1, 2; 16:1). This is an ongoing breath-taking experience

for believers and lifts life to a higher spiritual level. It is also part of the divine path to devour the hostile nations (Rv 16:1–18:24). The followers of the beast from the sea will come under God's judgement (Rv 14:10).

The harvest of the earth will happen on God's command (Rv 14:15, 19) and the prostitute Babylon (representative of Rome) will meet the fury of God's wrath (Rv 16:19; 17:17; 18:5). This will be followed by the *parousia* of Christ and judgement (Rv 19:14; 20:11). In all of this, Christ will be the agent of God in judgement and salvation like in creation. From his throne, God will declare 'it is done' (Rv 16:17) after the final symbolic battle (Rv 16:14). Then God, the ruler, will be praised for his salvation, glory and power (Rv 19:1, 5, 6).

God's commitment to his own will be demonstrated in the heavenly scene of the multitude, crying out: 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.' The measuring of the temple and altar and worshippers, depicting them as God's own and the 'breath of life' into the nostrils of the two witnesses allow them to stand on their feet (Rv 11:1–19). The praising of God and the Lamb by the 144 000 on Mount Zion emphasises God's commitment to his own (Rv 14:1–5). The rejoicing in heaven (Rv 19:1–5) and the marriage feast of the Lamb underline God's caring for his own. In the New Jerusalem, God himself will be the temple and he will provide the light to the city (Rv 21:22). His presence will be experienced by those whose names are in 'the book of life' (Rv 20:12, 15, 27) and whose ownership is recognised as God's. And those who have been alive as part of the first resurrection will be priests of God (Rv 20:6).

To summarise, God and the Lamb are and will be the protagonists to make life and everything new. The Apocalypse's macro-narrative is a narrative theology of newness. In the process of life renewal, the theological point of departure is God's creation of natural life. The role of the Lamb, through his death and resurrection, to define new life, is described as victory, demonstrating the power of God on the throne, providing his followers with identity and power in this world. Through the Spirit (seven Spirits), God's presence and everlasting caring for the life of his followers will bring history to an end. The purpose is to celebrate God's kingship on earth as it is already recognised in heaven.

The greatest fulfilment of living the new life is to confess God's reign on earth. In that moment, the three narrative levels of the life of the churches, the cosmic life experience of salvation and judgement, and the historical realisation of life come together. The macro-narrative of the Apocalypse derives its meaning from the theological narrative. This latter narrative theology of the Apocalypse emphasises God's reign from creation to *eschaton* with the defining moment, the death of the Lamb and his resurrection as the Christ. This pivotal moment has given meaning to human life, to those whose names are in 'the book of life.'

Usage of the concept 'life' and semantic groupings in the Apocalypse of John

The predominant word group for life in the Apocalypse of John is ζωή which appears 17 times and can be seen as life of the highest quality, created by God (Rv 2:7; 22:2, 14; cf. Aune 1997:ccvii; Burge 2008:655; ed. Renn 2010:595). Another prominent term to translate life in the Septuagint is *yhr; the* Greek equivalent is the word ψυχή which is used seven times in the Apocalypse. Life, according to the New Testament in some instances, refers to life [ζωή] as a natural experience. When Jesus raises Lazarus from death, the dead man regains his natural life (Jn 11). Life is also used in the transient sense of fleeting: 'We cannot expand our life [ψυχή] through many manipulations (Mt 6:25)'.

The New Testament mainly focuses on the character of life with Jesus and with God. God alone is the creator and sustainer of life. God is the living God (Mt 16:16). John frequently refers to life [ψυχή] as *common* or *natural* life on earth that is lost at death (Jn 10:11, 15, 17; 12:25). Those who believe in Christ gain the *real* life in Christ in a spiritual sense (Eph 2:1). Humans have the choice: to live 'in the first Adam' or to live 'in the second Adam', Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15: 22) [ζωή]. Union with Christ is according to Romans 6, a union with his death; it is to be buried with him so that a new life might emerge from the tomb in the order of Christ's resurrection (Rm 6:1–4). It is the Spirit who then gives the new divine life to the believer.

Anyone who is in Christ, '[…] is a new creation […] everything has become new (2 Cor 5:17)'. This does not mean *natural life* needs repair; it definitely needs spiritual transformation! Christians live in an interim period, already experiencing the *new life*, completely but not yet perfect. Then, the next phase is *immortal life*, sharing in the life hereafter, the eternal glory of Christ (1 Cor 15:43; 2 Tm 1:10).

The 17 occurrences of the Greek term ζωή in the Apocalypse can be grouped as follows: Six times John speaks of 'the book of life' (Rv 3:5; 13:8, 15; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27), four times of 'the tree of life' (Rv 2:7; 21:27; 22:2, 14; 22:19), and four times of 'the water of life' (Rv 7:17; 16:3; 21:6; 22:1; 22:17). One occurrence each of 'the crown of life' (Rv 2:10), 'the breath of life' (Rv 11:11), and 'living organism' (Rv 16:3). In the case of the concept ψυχή for life, five of them refer to human 'souls'/'lives' (Rv 6:9; 18:13, 14; 20:4). and three of the occurrences can be translated by 'living organisms' (Rv 8:9; 12:11; 16:3). The focus in this study falls on the occurrences on ζωή in the Apocalypse.

The 'book of life' contains the list of people who have received the gift of life from God. This metaphor refers to the city register which was kept in each city, a record of every citizen (Koester 2009:661). God, as Creator, can inscribe people in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Rv 13:8; 17:8). The

Apocalypse emphasises the relation between God's grace and human accountability. At the last announcement of God's judgement, the book of deeds will be opened and those whose names are in the book of life (Rv 3:5; 20:12–15; 21:27), will be saved. In the metaphor 'book of life', eschatology and soteriology come together.

The '*tree of life'* in the prophet Ezekiel refers to 'the trees that will grow in the restored city of Jerusalem' (Ezk 47:12) (Declaisse-Walford 2006:661). Ezekiel 47 elaborates on this by saying:

> [*T*]here will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh food every month [...] their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing. (v. 12)

We find verbatim the same thought in Revelation 22:

> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life. (vv. 1–2)

Like in the Psalms and 1 Enoch, Revelation deserves the tree of life for the righteous, those who 'wash their robes and will have the right to the tree of life and who may enter the city by the gates' (Rv 22:14–15, 19). The tree of life is eschatologically and exclusively reserved for the righteous as a reward. The Ancient Near East suggests that the tree of life is a metaphor for life, longevity and fertility, like in the Apocalypse. To eat its fruit is to gain eschatological life and longevity.

The expression 'water of life' (Rv 7:17; 21:6; 22:1; 22:17) has another meaningful theological reference to the usage of water in the Bible. The relationship between God and his creation, particularly people, is often expressed by the metaphor water. The description of the eschatological restoration of Israel is often linked to expectations of accessible water sources and rain patterns (cf. Is 35:7; 41:18; 49:10; Zch 10:1). The provision of water is seen as an eschatological reality to look forward to. The references to water of life in Revelation echo the stream of water flowing from Eden (Gn 2:10). The river of the water of life (Rv 22:1) symbolises God's caring for the righteous. Building on the tradition of the eschatological provision of water, '[...] the thirsty for the water of life may come and receive this water for free' (Rv 22:17). The water of life has gained an eschatological theological meaning because God the Creator gives the water of life.

Revelation 11 tells the story of the two witnesses, being killed by the beast. 'After the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet [...]'. The divine activities of judgement and creation are often described in terms of 'breath' (Aker 2008:1:501). The usage of breath in Job 33:4 illustrates God's creational power when Job says: 'The Spirit (*ruach*) of God has made me; the breath of *Shaddai* gives me life'. God's Spirit gives life according to the rest of the New Testament.

The Holy Spirit manifests as a 'breath' in Romans 8:11, as well as in Acts 2:2–4 as the Creator of the church at Pentecost. God created life according to Genesis 2:7, and in the same way, God creates life by breathing into the nostrils of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:11. God's 'breathing' is a metaphor to describe the birth of new life.

Another meaningful occurrence of life comes in the combination *crown of life,* to awaken our attention. In the letter message to the church in Smyrna, it says in Revelation 2:

> Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the *crown of life*. (v. 10)

The crown is used for the headdress worn by kings and metaphorically for a person's position or as a prize. The crown (Greek: *stefanos*) of life refers in the eschatological sense to someone's prize and identity and everlasting destination.

Life according to Revelation in its eschatological sense provides the vehicle to describe the progression of the believer's identity towards the climax of life in the New Jerusalem. Life belongs to God, therefore human life has to be lived in constant fellowship with God. This is illustrated in life as eschatological reality, depicted in the metaphors: book (identity and destination), tree (sustenance), water (maintenance), breath (prize and creational life) and crown (reward for eternal life). In each one of them, the eschatological frame of mind is hermeneutically the key to understanding. Only Jesus Christ can bring new life and eschatological immortality. Most of the themes of redemption in Revelation are linked to life, progressing towards the climax of life in the New Jerusalem.

Life within an eschatological framework

A prophetic and apocalyptic eschatological referential frame

Human life according to the Apocalypse of John is not a human characteristic or human possession. Life's newness story fits into the narrative of creation, fall, divine rescue and redemption and ultimate redemption through resurrection. Seen as a gift of God, life is a prominent participant in the progression of renewal. This renewal happens when God guides life through history on its way to the climax in the New Jerusalem (Wright 1999:143). The main concern of life in the Apocalypse of John is to embody apocalyptic eschatology to acknowledge God's kingship on earth as it already exists in heaven. This is a dynamic process of renewal which means human life is in an ongoing progression, striving towards the climax of life in the New Jerusalem.

The Apocalypse of John plays a pivotal role in the framework of a prophetic *and* apocalyptic eschatology (Bauckham 1993a:28; McNicol 2008:42). The eschatology within an apocalyptic frame, like in the Apocalypse of John, is prophetic and apocalyptic. God is acting in and through history and human life. The macro-narrative of the Apocalypse of John can be interpreted as apocalyptic, depicting an otherworldly journey causality, '[…] the transcendence of death by attainment of a higher angelic form of life' (Collins 1974:43). Prophetic eschatology focuses on the first historical coming of the Messiah and apocalyptic eschatology mainly on the second coming of Christ. An expression, uttering the hope for a life beyond death, characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology, is found in Revelation 2:11 (ESV): 'The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death'. The same can be concluded about Revelation 3:4: '[…] and they will walk with me in white garments for they are worthy'. Life in white garments symbolises that the human body will be transformed and replaced by a spiritual body.

Typical eschatological markers in the Apocalypse

The following markers are defining life's participation in the eschatology of the Apocalypse of John:

- *Signs of the times*: Satanic opposition to God and Christ will cause a period of unparalleled tribulation (cf. Rv 3:10; 7:14)
- *The coming of Christ*: Revelation 1:7 describes Christ's coming (*erchetai*): 'Behold, He is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him'. He will come to destroy the evil forces and to gather his own, living and dead.
- *The resurrection*: Revelation 20:4–5 speaks of '[…] those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus […] They came to life […] This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection'.
- *Life beyond death*: The final enemy, death, is destroyed by Christ's resurrection and life as proclaimed by Revelation 20:14: 'Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire'. Through prosecution, the physical body may be killed although this cannot destroy the real life of the believer.
- *Judgement*: Judgement expresses the holiness of God. Those who have the mark of Christ on the forehead are already judged. Revelation 20:12 clearly states: 'And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened which is the book of life' (cf. LaRondelle 1983:187).
- *Hell*: This is the final destiny of the unbelievers (Rv 20:14). Hell is the destiny of Satan, the demons, the beast from the sea and the false prophet.
- *The new creation*: God's purpose for life in this world is that it be renewed after evil is destroyed. Part of this renewal is the eschatological banquet,

> paradise restored and the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:1, 22:5). The object of life's hope and fulfilment is not the millennium but the new creation. The climax of human life is the new creation. The function of the millennium is to express the final triumph of Christ over evil and the full vindication of his own who suffered.

The apocalyptic end-time dawned with Jesus and the eschatological consummation of life is with the appearance of Jesus. Revelation 1:7 takes up a prominent position in the apocalyptic structure of the Apocalypse. The text refers to Jesus's '[…] coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him […]'. This thematic announcement carries the apocalyptic theology of life right through the Apocalypse of John. The repetition in Revelation 22:20 finishes off the pivotal theme when we read: 'He who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming soon'. This enclosure of *Jesus' coming again* defines the apocalyptic eschatology of the Apocalypse as a whole (cf. Bauckham 1993a:133; Du Rand 2013:134) and functions as the matrix of apocalyptic eschatology (Aune 2006:95; Wright 2008:106).

The well-known dialectic description of 'already', referring to the accomplished fulfilment in the Christ event, and the 'not yet', the future reality when Christ comes again, defines the earthly and heavenly dimensions of the Apocalypse of John's apocalyptic eschatological message. The Greek verb *erchetai in 22:20* can be taken as a *praesens futurum instans* (Aune 1997:50), meaning to appear into a particular state or condition, implying a process *to become* (Louw & Nida 2013:50). The process of the appearance of Christ has been set in motion. In other words, it is an anticipation of God's *new creation* that had already begun (Wright 2008:26).

Human eschatological life according to the Apocalypse is Christologically and soteriologically engaged in three moments concerning Jesus/the Lamb:

- His coming (Rv 1:7; 12:1–6).
- Slaughtered as the Lamb (Rv 12:11).
- Exalted to heaven (Rv 7:9f.; 14:1–5).

The crucial moment for salvation in human life is the narrative of the birth of the male child, according to Chapter 12 (Du Rand 2011:556; Yarbro Collins 1984:152, 1986:234). John intertwines the story behind the story with his own apocalyptic narrative. For example, the basic story is traced back to the expectational prophesies and the birth of the Messiah, and is narrated as eschatological apocalyptical fulfilment.

John narrates the present oppression and persecution of the followers of the Lamb in the images of Israel's oppressors, like Pharaoh, Babylon and the four empires of Daniel's vision (cf. Rv 13:2; 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:1–24). And the three series of plagues of judgement correspond with the 10 plagues in Israel; the paradise with the New Jerusalem; and the exodus of Israel with the new

exodus of the bride into the New Jerusalem. Such comparison gives historical and prophetic character to the apocalyptic fulfilment of life.

The eschatological historical progression of life in hope is remarkable. In exile in Babylon, God raised a prophet to announce life's 'new thing' in the future (cf. Is 43:19; 65:17). In the progression of the eschatological conscience of his followers, regarding life, the followers' hope deepens when Jesus commissioned his disciples to prepare the people of God for this new world.

The apocalyptic eschatological process describes life in three Christological stages (Stuhlmacher 2000:319) to define the progression of life in Christ: the *first* is the resurrection of Christ, a prominent event in the process of rectification of life after the creation; the *second* is his *parousia* when the faithful will rule with Christ; and the *final* stage is the *telos*, when God will complete his redemption of life with the totally new creation. God has not given up on human life after the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Instead, he started a process of progression which ends in the climax with the New Jerusalem. God is in control, sitting on the throne, guiding and transforming human life according to eschatological newness.

The eschatological tension between 'already' and 'not yet'

The '*already' or earthly historical eschatological* perspective is represented through the following: The emphasis is on earthly *history*; typical *prophetic* formulas and the unfolding of *judgement* in the present. In the history of this world, *seals*, *trumpets* and *bowls* are part of the earthly phase; judgement of evil *Rome* happens during this world order; God's eschatological *macro-narrative* unfolds in earthly history; *conversions* of nations part of earthly history; and *martyrdom* plays out in the earthly existence of the church.

The '*not yet*' or *future apocalyptic eschatological* perspective is represented by the following: Much greater emphasis on transcendence and the focusing on out worldly journeys; prominent role of the seer and his visions; dialogues with transcendent figures; the breaking through of the new world order; more focusing on future and the supernatural; receivers are in typical crisis; typically determined outcome foreseen; revealing of heavenly mysteries and unveiling of secrets; transcendence of death; more encouraging and consoling in crisis situation; emphasis on spiritual body and clothing, white garments; emphasis on the resurrection; progression towards new heaven and earth; climax fulfilled in New Jerusalem; the final battle is spiritual; and the announcement of judgement in heaven and the greatest climax is the *adventus* (*parousia*) of Christ.

From these two paragraphs, characterising the dualistic emphases of the eschatological 'already' and 'not yet', we move to the narrower contexts of the

climax of life, portrayed by the Apocalypse as the final prophetic eschatological as well as the apocalyptic eschatological events: On the earthly historical side, Revelation concludes with the bowls judgement (Rv 15:7–16:17), followed by the judgement of the prostitute Rome (Rv 17:1f.), thereupon the lamentations of the kings, merchants and the shipmasters (Rv 18:9–21). Then, John fell down at the feet of the angel to worship (Rv 22:6, 8–11), receiving the message to only worship God. The final and climax earthly event is the *adventus Christus* (Rv 22:7, 12–21).

On the 'not yet' in future apocalyptic eschatological side, we may kick off with the heavenly multitude's hallelujah chorus in the final stretch to the climax of life (Rv 19:1–5) and the heavenly announcement of the marriage of the Lamb (Rv 19:6–8), followed by the heavenly vision of the judging Christ on a white horse (Rv 19:11–16). Then comes the vision of the message by an angel that the evil beast and false prophet are thrown into the pool of fire (Rv 19:17–21), followed by the bounding and defeat of Satan (Rv 20:1–10) and the final judgement announcement in heaven. The climax of life happens when the new heaven and earth is sealed in the ultimate climax of the New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven (Rv 21:1–22:5).

Systemising selected moments of life's eschatological journey

The human life of every believer according to the Apocalypse listen to the mainly prophetic reports of visions and oracles (Rv 1:8; 22:12–13) (Bauckham 1993a:3f.). The hearers listen to the seven-letter messages as oracles, delivered as Christ's words to the churches (Rv 2:1–3:22). The parousia pronouncement (Rv 1:7), emphasising Christ's second coming, is a conflation of Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10 (Osborne 2002:69). From the beginning of the narrative of human life, life has to be understood within the eschatological framework.

The *world view* of the Apocalypse fits into prophetic eschatology, according to the acts of divine judgement and redemption (Du Rand 1997:64; Osborne 2002:154; Stuhlmacher 2000:324). The expectation of judgement at the end has always been part of eschatological expectations. And the epic of the exodus motif is an example of an anthology of judgement. According to the Apocalypse, the wicked will seek to hide and are shut out of God's presence (Rv 6:15–17; 21:27; 22:15); the righteous are waiting with anticipation and experience God's presence forever (Rv 6:9, 10; 21:3–4; 22:14). The 144 000 righteous followers are sealed on their foreheads as God's own (Rv 6:10–11; 7:1–8). Judgement is part of God's eschatological cleansing of this world towards the end (Rv 20:11; 21:1). The grape (Rv 14:17–20) and grain harvest (Rv 14:14–16) are examples of God's ongoing judgement. The destruction of Rome (the prostitute) and Satan and the beasts are the climax of God's judgement.

On the other hand, God will protect his own in the hour of trial (Rv 9:4; 16:6) (Mounce 1998:272; Talbert 1994:106).

John learn of God's secrets through the *visions*. The first vision describes the exalted Christ amongst the lampstands, the churches (Rv 1:9–20). He is the fulfilment of apocalyptic hope (Boring 1989:269–281). The second vision of God's heavenly throne room confirms Who is the Creator in control and Who is the saviour (Rv 4:1–5:14). God and the Lamb are worshipped (Rv 4:1–5:14). Christ the Lamb has restored history through the scroll (Rv 5:1), while the beast is worshipped by his followers (Rv 13:4, 8, 12). A bowl angel, in response to the martyrs' cry (Rv 6:9–11), shows John the fall of Rome and the descent of the New Jerusalem.

In the meantime, the vision of the great multitude before God and the Lamb's throne is a transcendent encouragement to human life on earth (Rv 7:9–17). Life before God gets improved meaning in this throne vision. When the heavenly temple was opened, the *eschaton* has arrived and the covenant has become an apocalyptic-prophetic reality (Koester 2001:78; Stuhlmacher 1992–1999). The glimpse of 144 000 saints with the Lamb on mount Zion (Rv 14:1f.) sketches a picture of the final future destination of the righteous.

The final judgement and destruction of the evil forces will play out in three stages (Du Rand 2011:538): Christ returns as judge on the white horse to destroy the nations (Rv 19:11–16); the carrion birds were invited to the 'great banquet of God' to feast on the nations and the third, in the final battle, the armies of the beast are slaughtered (Rv 19:19–21).

The Lamb is the conquering figure (Rv 5:5–6) but also the bridegroom (Rv 19:6–8) and he is the judge on the white horse (Rv 19:11). Christ is the destroyer of evil (Rv 19:15), and he treads God's winepress of wrath (Rv 19:15). Experiencing life is to know the apocalyptic truth that the armies gather to fight but no battle takes place (Rv 19:19; cf Osborne 2002:670). The most prominent announcement of the difference between the old and the new order is the eschatological resurrection. The probable theological contribution of Revelation 20:1–6 is functional only to announce Satan's binding as the final chapter of evil and the arrival of the *Eschaton* (cf. Rv 20:16; 20:10). Life experiences the elimination of Satan and the indication of the righteous (cf. Rv 6:11) (cf. Du Rand 2004:72; Rossing 1999:264).

The arrival of the new heaven and new earth concludes the road of life as the final result of the climax as a result of the judgement of the righteous. The final series of events is the *parousia* of Christ, Armageddon, the millennium, the final announcement of judgement and the arrival of the new heaven and earth and the descent of the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:1–2). New Jerusalem is the climax of life and the tangent point as the fulfilment of the prophetic and apocalyptic eschatological perspectives.

Manifestations of life in the Apocalypse of John

The progression of life towards the climax in the New Jerusalem slips through many manifestations, depicting the frame within which life flourishes in the Apocalypse.

Life within the framework of the transcendent God

Life is prominently part of the relationship between man and the *transcended God*. The strength of investigating the concept 'life' in the Apocalypse of John, on a communicative level, does not only lie in language, symbolism, historical perspectives or composition but in its theologically evocative power (Du Rand 1994:559; Hanson 1975:5). It is a function of the Apocalypse to link life with the elaboration of God and the Lamb's power. Life could be lived to the full, realising God the King is on the throne (Rv 5:1). The sovereign *kingship* of God functions in an eschatological theological framework (Decock 2012:3; cf. Malina 2000:258). Life can be characterised as the eschatological blueprint of the unfolding of the kingly rule of God on earth as it is in heaven, involving the followers of the Lamb's participation. They see their world in the perspective of the greater purpose of its transcended Creator and Judge.

Life takes hands with hope and restoration

The eschatological road map of life includes encouragement of the second-generation marginalised Christians. This encouragement is called *hope*. Hope is also part of the apocalyptical eschatological life. The Christians have to look forward in hope to the imminent irruption of God into the old order and the establishment of a new creation (Bauckham 1993a:148; Wright 2008:106).

Typical of pre-Christian apocalyptic eschatology is the orientation towards the future (Scott 2008:294; Wright 2008:129). The day of YHWH is by anticipation already reached in Christ. The expectations of the Messiah and the restoration of Israel have defined Jewish eschatology. Revelation 1:7 demonstrates one of the approaches of the first-century Christians' expression of its eschatological hope. From the time of the Babylonian exile, the hope of salvation was very much an issue in the mind of the people of God (Is 43:19; 21:4).

Life is prominent to characterise Christian identity

A prominent participant in the Christian's life's eschatological process is to express *identity* in prayer. The occurrences of prayer in the Apocalypse are obvious. According to Revelation 4:1–5:14, the 24 elders and the living creatures

fall down before him in prayer (cf. Rv 4:8; 5:8). In Revelation 6:9–10, the martyrs pray with loud voices calling it out: 'to avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth'. Later on in the narrative, an angel stood at the altar to offer the prayers of all the saints (Rv 8:3–4). The identity of the righteous as God's own are emphasised by the 144 000, marked on the forehead, singing the song of the Lamb and the hallelujah song, and to gather on mount Zion together with the Lamb (Rv 7:1f.; 14:1f.; 19:1f.).

The identity of the 144 000 as followers of the Lamb is symbolised as an army (Bauckham 1993a:78; Koester 2015:5). The identity of the two witnesses is symbolising the church (Rv 11:3–13) whose witness and death are instrumental and functional in the conversion of the nations of the world.

Living from tension to transformation

The second-generation Christians in Asia Minor round about 95 AD were experiencing a social and economical *crisis*. *Conflict* with the Roman authorities and Jewish religious synagogues characterises everyday life (Kraybill 1999:34; cf. Da Silva 1992:379; Pohlmann 2015:7). The threats of emperors Nero and Domitian, the tension between the new church and the state, and the sporadic persecution and emperor veneration put the Christians under enormous tension. Therefore, the theological narrative of the Apocalypse has the function of a spiritual transformation of life. This spiritual reading of the narrative alleviates the tension (DiTommaso 2007:257f.) Conflict is a dimension of this transformation – each one of the seven-letter messages climaxes with a promise to the one who conquers. The Christians have to be freed from oppression, tension and conflict to explore the celebration of the covenantal relationship between the bride and the Lamb in the climax of life, the New Jerusalem.

Life in martyrdom with expectations

Evil and *death* are unavoidable realities of life during of the second-generation Christians in Asia Minor at the end of the first-century AD. The outcry of the *martyrs* under the altar (Rv 6:9–11) has created an awareness of persecution *stress* amongst the Christians. They suffered for their faith. Antipas of Pergamum has been killed (Rv 2:13). The martyrs utter a cry that has appeared on the lips of many generations to come. The outcry reminds the reader of the theodicy question and can be defined in a rational (Eichrodt 1967:68) or a social-religious (Berger 1970:84; cf. Lee 1990:183) way. The two witnesses (Rv 11:3–14) contribute to martyrship by dying and their resurrection. Living as martyrs means suffering, not because they are sinners but because they are faithful. Through the mercy of God, the righteous martyrs will receive their reward in the eschatological New Jerusalem, although it is sometimes difficult to understand the present setbacks and evil.

Living in a state of war

Life according to the Apocalypse of John consists of fighting at the forefront of a Messianic *war* to achieve two goals: witnessing the coming of the Kingdom of God, and fighting with Satan and the beasts. The Messianic war framework takes up the Jewish hope for a Messiah, a descendant of David and anointed by God as king and military leader of his people (Bauckham 1993b:67). The Messiah would fight a war against the Gentile oppressors to liberate Israel. John himself is a Jewish Christian prophet, heavily depending on this tradition (cf. Rv 1:17–18; 22:13). Titles like 'the root of David' (Rv 5:1), the 'Morningstar' (Rv 2:28; 22:16) are well-known references to King David. Allusions to Psalm 2, depicting the 'kings of the earth' and 'the Lord and the Messiah' (Rv 5:5) are part of war terminology. The term conquering plays a pivotal role in life within a war framework (cf. Klauck 1992:164). The war process emphasises the establishment of God's kingdom on earth as in heaven. The decisive victory has already been won by Christ but the final victory still lies in the future (Rv 12:11; 15:2; 17:14).

An eschatological ethos of life

Life in the Apocalypse of John forms an important part of the eschatological *ethos* of Revelation. Internal dangers such as false teachers and the struggle with authority create a daily struggle to keep up a Christian lifestyle (Du Rand 2006:567). This caused a 'lukewarmness' of faith (Rv 2:4–5; 3:15–16). A life dedicated to the Roman emperor is not true life. Even in their lifestyle, the Christians have to show their identity (Rv 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). *Witnessing* and *martyrdom* are the ethical response, being a follower of the Lamb. Real life as Christian ethos means victory in the Name of the Lamb (Rv 2:3; 6:9). When an eschatological ethos has to be formulated and practised, real life becomes visible. Real life has to include works of love, faithfulness, righteousness, patience, service and endurance (Rv 2:23; 18:6; 10:12–13; 22:12). The dynamics of an ethos of real life, according to Revelation, lies in a life of resistance and endurance through witnessing till the end (Rv 11:3–14). The ethos of life does not rest on power but on justice (cf. Barr 1984:45, 1986:252).

Eschatological life is an ode to newness

Real eschatological life is not static but in a progression of development with a definite *destination*. To investigate life within an apocalyptic eschatological framework means that we have to take as a point of departure that the beginning of Christian history was perceived by the first Christians as the beginning of the end-times. When Revelation 21:5 echoes Isaiah 43:19 and 65:17, it has to be kept in mind that it is part of prophetic witnessing that the main object of Isaiah and the Apocalypse is to renew. And this renewal includes

the new heaven and earth, the New Jerusalem and the new creation to emphasise what newness really should be. The progress of life in the Apocalypse influences a new revelation with God and the Lamb (Aune 1998a:1179); the New Jerusalem means everything to life: the new exodus, eternal life, no more death, abundant provisions, complete healing and absolute security, all of this made possible by the sovereign presence of God and the Lamb

The climax of renewal: Life in the New Jerusalem

Life's long runway to renewal

The dominant narrative of life imposes upon the believer a consistent and often a particular view of reality. And believers are compelled to fit their vision of life according to such a reality. The power of the narrative of life in the Apocalypse of John is such a reality and influence. This story of divine Revelation has the power and function to give structure to the reader, both for the present and the future (cf. McNicol 2008:42; Wright 1999:23). The heartbeat of human life is guaranteed within the framework of eschatology.

Centuries before the birth of Jesus when the people of God were in exile in Babylon, God raised a prophet who announces that God will create a 'new thing' in the future (Is 43:19; 51:6; 65:17). Isaiah probably had the return of the people of God to Jerusalem in view. Immediately the resurrection of God's people begins to be expected (Is 26:19; Dn 12:1–2). It would mean that from Zion, the Lord will rule his people and the nations (Is 52:7). This prophecy persists in more than one format amongst the people of God. This narrative of renewal has become a serial story through history with prominent markers like the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his *parousia* and finally, the faithful will experience the fully renewed creation (Rm 8:18–39). This has been the essence of Christian life, the Christian *hope*. The Apocalypse of John confirms this soteriological purpose that God the Redeemer will not give up on his creation. The expectation is kept alive that the people of God and the whole creation will be transformed like the resurrected Jesus and life will experience the new and restored creation.

The vision of the climax of life: The New Jerusalem

The underlying thread in the God-narrative of the Apocalypse of John is God's story of salvation. The vision of the New Jerusalem can be seen as the consummation or pinnacle of the divine macro-narrative of salvation (Du Rand 1987:60, 2004:1–42). The broader picture of the sequence of events, the

destruction of evil, leading to the climax of the New Jerusalem, gives theological perspective. See the following diagram:

- 12: Satan thrown from heaven to earth
- 13: Beast and False prophet are conquering
- 17: Harlot rides on the beast
- 17: Harlot destroyed by the beast
- 19: Beast and False prophet conquered
- 20: Satan thrown from earth into the abyss.

After the destruction of Satan and the beasts, in the narrative, the co-text Revelation 21:1–22:5 can be divided into two parts (cf. Bauckham 1995:8):

- *First part*: Antithetical parallel between the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:9–22:5) and Babylon the harlot (Rv 17–18). The destruction of Babylon, symbolic of Rome, is the negative climax of the destruction of evil, including the death of the three seven-series and the evil Trio.
- *Second part*: Revelation 19:11–21:8 describes a remarkable transition from Babylon (Rv 17:1–19:10) to the New Jerusalem. The radical newness of life is seen in the new creation (Rv 21:1), the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:2) and the radical new relationship when God's dwelling place is with men (Rv 21:3–8).

For the sake of understanding, the most obvious parallels between the two parts are:

- The same angel, handling the seven bowls (Rv 17:1), shows to John the bride (Rv 21:9).
- The harlot was adorned with jewels (Rv 17:4), the New Jerusalem was full of jewels (Rv 21:11, 18, 19–21).
- Life is personified as a woman: a harlot (Rv 17:1, 3–4), or a bride (Rv 21:2, 9).
- A name on the forehead of the harlot (Rv 17:5), and God's name on the forehead of his servants (Rv 22:4).
- The great city is burning (Rv 17:18) and the holy city, the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:2, 10, 14–23).
- The harlot's cup is full of abominations, impurities of her sexual immorality (Rv 17:3–4), such unclean and sexual immoral idolaters are not permitted to the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:6).
- The great lustful harlot (Rv 17:1) and the bride adorned for her husband (Rv 21:2. 9).
- The dwellers on earth whose names are not in the book of life (Rv 17:8) and those who belong to the New Jerusalem whose names are written in the book of life (Rv 21:27).

The dissonant echoes of conflict and judgement in the narrative make way for the vision of the new heaven and earth. John has a glimpse of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven in the distance. The readers are told of its walls, gates, the river of water of life, the throne of God and the Lamb, the trees bearing fruit and the leaves for the healing of the nations (Rv 21:1–22:5).

Without elaborating on the detail, some prominent themes have to be mentioned. The climax of life envisions the salvation of creation. The new creation is the purpose of God's road to salvation (Lee 1990:174). In pious visions, the creation is the scene of conflict but in Revelation 11:15, we read: 'The Kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever'. The power struggle is over, life is redefined. The resurrection of all the dead brought an end to death (Rv 20:14). In the new creation, there is an *absence* of death, pain, mourning and crying (Rv 21:3–4).

At the same time, the new creation is characterised by the perfect *presence* of God and the Lamb. The dwelling of God amongst his people (Rv 21:3) marks the fulfilment of Ezekiel 17:27. God has made all things new (Is 43:19). The climax of life is particularly defined in Revelation 21:7: 'The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son'. This formulation defines the climax of life in the new heaven and earth (Beale 1999:248; Coetzee 1993:268; Smalley 2005:296).

John has written about the 'Tale of two cities'. The holy city becomes the home of the holy people after their struggle and being pursued by the dragon (Rv 12:1–6, 13–17). The bride is the New Jerusalem as people, entering the holy city through 12 gates (12 tribes of Israel) being built on 12 foundations (12 apostles of the Lamb) (Rv 21:12–14). This is a vision of perfect life with God, the climax of newness. While Babylon is filled with impurity and deception (Rv 17:4–5; 18:23), there is nothing impure or false in the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:27).

The harlot makes the nations drunk on idolatry and sin (Rv 17:2; 18:3); the bride invites the nations to drink of the water of life (Rv 22:1–5). The New Jerusalem's holiness and absolute perfection are symbolically portrayed in its form as a cube (Rv 21:16). And the glory of God and the Lamb is manifested in the river of life, flowing from the throne (Rv 21:6; cf. Ezk 40:1–4; 43:1–5; 47:1–12). God's glory is all over the holy city because the entire city is God's sanctuary (Rv 21:23–24) and all worshippers with God's name upon their foreheads (Rv 22:4) gather around the throne to worship.

Life thrives and enjoys the climax of glory in the New Jerusalem

The final culmination of expectations and the climax chapter of *salvation* has come to live in the New Jerusalem. A few conclusive and exegetical contours are as follows:

- The historical city Jerusalem only reach fame in the biblical world when it became the residence of the king and the Ark of the covenant. Jerusalem as a religious symbol became the symbol of God's faithfulness to his chosen people. The promises of God are only to be fulfilled at the end through an

eschatological act of God in Jerusalem (cf. Böcher 1980:113; Rissi 1972:43). After the devastating experience of 70 AD, the future of Jerusalem became even more eschatological when it was seen as a heavenly reality. It was believed that salvation would be restored by the coming down of the heavenly city.

- John identifies the harlot Babylon with Rome (Rv 17–18) after contemporary references, Old Testament connotations and a form of the combat myth, rebellion against God (cf. Collins 1977:337). Rome carried with it the connotation of the epitome of ungodly power.
- According to Revelation 11:1–13, Jerusalem is identified with Sodom and Egypt (cf. Is 1:9–10; Ezk 16:46, 55), the image of the great city (*megalē polis*) which has been given over to the Gentiles. Whatever the interpretation, the narrative of the two witnesses definitely points progressively to heavenly salvation.
- The image: 'the camp of the saints' (Rv 20:9) corresponds with Israel's journey in the wilderness (cf. Ex 14:19f.; Dt 23:14). It symbolises the divine rule in this world, which means the Kingdom of God in some sense is sealed in history and experienced by human life.
- Through interpretation the comparison is between the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly Jerusalem and Rome which can be called Vanity Fair (Rv 21:9–22:5). The contrast lies in the corruption of this profane world against the incorruptibility of God.
- It is noteworthy that Augustine calls the church already *regnum Christi regnumque caelorum* (De. Civ. Dei 20,9).
- The heavenly Jerusalem (Rv 21:9–22:5) represents to life more than a literary and historical product but also affects the believer's consciousness theologically and psychologically through its power to conduct and direct psychic energy (cf. Lurvey 1983:23). In such a way, the symbolism gets a life of its own. We have a very strong polarity between the holy of holies (the church) and Babylon (the sinful world). The symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem portends a uniting church and culture (Jews and Greeks).

We find semantic polarities, to be interpreted theologically in the narrative of the end: Babylon/holy of holies; Babylon/Paradise; patriarchs/apostles; and masculine/feminine in marriage. Remarkable is the emphasis on implicit reconciliation of faith, represented by New Jerusalem as paradise and Babylon, representing the world of pagans. The kings who were once enemies in Chapters 16 and 19 became worshippers in Chapter 21.

Conclusion

The bride is the church as heavenly Jerusalem which comes down from heaven at the end from the perspective of the *parousia* (Bauckham 1980:77). The contrast is not between visible and invisible churches, it is between present

and eschatological realities. It is the Lamb, bearer of the book of life, who brings differentiation and judgement, although he is the Johannine symbol of atonement (Rv 5:6). In my view, the integration of Judaism and Christianity is remarkable of understanding the climax of life in the prophetic eschatological New Jerusalem. In that sense, life is 'already' as well as 'not yet' fulfilled as the characteristic blessedness of God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem. The progression of life is from natural life to real life, followed by new life and to reach its destiny in the afterlife.

Chapter 11

A Biblical Theology of Life: A synopsis of life in Scripture

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Introduction

In the introduction of this two-volume publication, we stated that one of the advantages of investigating the concept of life in Scripture in book-by-book fashion is that it avoids being simplistic or 'hopelessly reductionist' (Goldsworthy 2012:24). Coming to the end of this investigation after 22 thought-provoking chapters, it is now possible not only to confirm that life is indeed a major concept in Scripture (a major 'longitudinal theme' according to Kruger [2021b], more comprehensive than 'the theme of covenant, communion and kingdom') but also to give a fair and informed synopsis of the contours and major trajectories of life in Scripture. This is the aim of the current chapter by providing a summative theological perspective of the

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development of the concept of life through the Old and New Testament by synthesising the discussions of previous chapters.

The chapter starts by discussing the concept of life in the Old Testament by providing an overview of the occurrence and basic meaning of 'life' in the Old Testament, presenting a synthesis of major themes of life and tracing possible developments or emphases of the concept. Subsequently, the same discussion is provided for the concept of life in the New Testament by providing an overview of the occurrence and basic meaning of 'life' in the New Testament, presenting a synthesis of major themes of life and giving an overview of nuances of the theme of life by the different authors of the New Testament. With these overviews as departure point, the chapter then gives an overview of the concept of life in the whole of Scripture, amongst others by indicating lines of development of the concept. The chapter ends by reflecting on the implications of these findings for academia and the church, with the focus of the latter especially on reformed theology in Africa today.

The concept of life in the Old Testament

An overview of the occurrence and basic meaning of 'life' in the Old Testament

The primary root employed to refer to 'life' in the Old Testament is חיה. The root is often found in the form of the verb חָיָה [to live/be alive], the noun חַיִּים [life] and the adjective חַי [alive]. 'Life' is often juxtaposed and used antithetically with 'death'/'to die'. Secondary references to life in the Old Testament include נֶפֶשׁ [person, innermost being],[148] בָּשָׂר [flesh], נְשָׁמָה [breath] and דָּם [blood].

The root חיה is found throughout the Old Testament. While the '[e]xact count differs because of different interpretations of certain forms and text-critical issues' (Van Rooy 2021, referring to the count in the Psalms, with his comment ringing true for the rest of the Old Testament), the root is primarily found in the following books and corpora:[149] Genesis (with 125 occurrences according to Kruger [2021a], about 16% of all occurrences in the Old Testament), Deuteronomy (with 39 occurrences according to Coetsee [2021]), Samuel (with roughly 52 occurrences according to Firth [2021]), Kings (with approximately 71 occurrences according to Firth [2021]), the Major Prophets (with more than 160 occurrences according to Van der Walt [2021], of which the majority [more than 60%] is found in Ezekiel [cf. Gerleman TLOT 1:413]), the Psalms (with 31 occurrences of verbal forms according to Van Rooy [2021], and approximately 50 nominal forms according to Gerleman 1997)

148. For the misnomer of translating נֶפֶשׁ as 'soul', see Kruger (2021a).

149. See Gerleman (TLOT 1:412–413) for a table that gives an overview of the occurrences of the root חיה in the Old Testament.

and Proverbs (with 38 occurrences according to Branch [2021]). Apart from this, 'life' also 'functions as a continuous theme in the book of the Twelve' (Snyman [2021]). Strikingly, life-related words are found quite infrequently in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah (Boshoff [2021]).

The majority of references to 'life' in the Old Testament is used in relation to human beings. Humans are considered to be 'alive' and 'living'. The preconditions for human life, according to Kruger (2021a, 2021b), are light, water, food, land, communion and fertility. God is viewed as the source of all life, with God, amongst others, depicted and described in the Old Testament as 'the living God' (more on this in the section that follows).

In the Old Testament, animals are considered as 'living'. The noun חַיָּה often refers to living creatures, especially wild animals (e.g. Gn 7:14; Dt 7:22; Ps 104:11). Humans and animals 'are entities that, to different degrees, can move, socialise, recreate, act and make decisions' (Kruger [2021a]). Interestingly (to the modern ear at least), plants are not viewed and called 'living' in the Old Testament. Kruger (2021a) indicates that this is probably 'because they [plants] do not move on their own accord'. Plants are, however, considered lifelike. Life is also attributed to water in the Old Testament (e.g. Gn 26:19; Zch 14:8). This, however, does not imply that water possesses life, but that flowing water emulates life by moving.

Major themes of life in the Old Testament

Taking the 12 chapters on life in the Old Testament published in Volume 5 of this series (eds. Coetsee & Viljoen 2021) as departure point, the following can be deduced as the major 'life'-related themes in the Old Testament:

God as the source of all life

The Old Testament opens with a description of God as the source of all life. Without any profound theological discussion on the origin of God (as might be the case in modern discussions on the origin of life), the Bible starts by indicating that God created everything by merely speaking. This includes life with all of its biological diversity, also man, who became a living being when God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils.

Regarding the origin of God, the Bible nowhere addresses the issue. Rather, it unanimously states that God has no beginning or end. When revealing his name to Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3), God refers to himself as I AM ([אֶהְיֶה]; Ex 3:14), suggesting 'that he exists in absolute sense' (Kruger 2021b). On the other hand, the oath formulas 'as I live forever' (e.g. Dt 32:40; cf. Zph 2:9) or 'as the Lord lives' (2 Chr 18:13), not only confirms the truth or outcome of the oath made (cf. Snyman 2021; Boshoff 2021) but stresses his eternality. '[T]here is no end to or diminishing of his life' (Coetsee 2021). He 'lives forever' (Dn 12:7).

Being the origin of all life, God is also depicted in the Old Testament as having control over both life and death. He 'both gives and takes the breath of life' (Kruger 2021b). This is made clear in various expressions that state that he kills and makes alive/brings to life (Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6;[150] 2 Ki 5:7; cf. Jos 14:10),[151] as well as depictions of God's Spirit as 'giving life to people and causing death when withdrawn' (Kruger 2021b; cf. Gn 6:3–4; Ezk 37:1–14). These references stress the absolute power and authority of YHWH when it comes to life and death. This is made clear in a number of practical examples in the Old Testament, amongst others the death of the Egyptian firstborns (and the life of the Israelites) in the tenth plague (Ex 12:29) and the recovery of Hezekiah from his illness (2 Ki 20:1–7). Arguably two of the most dramatic examples of YHWH's power over life and death are found in the Elijah and Elisha narratives, where YHWH grants life to the deceased sons of the widow of Zarephath (1 Ki 17:17–24) and the Shunammite (2 Ki 4:18–37). Although YHWH is not explicitly mentioned in 2 Kings 13:21 where the man who was thrown into Elisha's grave was restored to life, he is the implied agent (cf. Firth 2021). YHWH is consequently praised in the Old Testament as the fountain of life (Ps 36:10 [MT]), and life is viewed as a gift from him (Jn 2:6).

☐ God as the owner of life

Not only is God depicted in the Old Testament as the origin of life but also its owner. Kruger (2021a) aptly states:

> Once God had created living beings, he did not surrender his ownership of all that live and thus also the life that he has given to them. God remains the owner of life. (p. 33)

This is made especially clear in Genesis 9:5–6, where God states that he will require a reckoning for human life from every animal and human being. The same idea is found in numerous stipulations 'regarding unnatural death in the Mosaic law', which 'is based on the premise that human life is sacrosanct' (Kruger 2021b) and that it is God's sole right to take life.

☐ God as the sustainer of life

A major theme in the Old Testament is that of God as the sustainer of life. Arguably, the biggest evidence of this is found in the broad salvation historical

150. See Firth (2021) for an indication on how foundational 1 Samuel 2:6 (especially the reversal of fortunes motif) is for the interpretation of the Former Prophets as a whole. He views Hannah's prayer as 'the lens through which the motif is principally developed', 'a hermeneutical key' (Firth 2021).

151. Along the same line, Firth (2021) argues that the implication of the jussive in the exclamation 'Long live the king!' (e.g. 1 Ki 1:25; 2 Ki 11:12) is the wish that YHWH should grant the individual long life.

lines of the Old Testament. From generation to generation, God 'sustains the life that he has given', making 'sure that life continues' (Kruger 2021a). In the Universal History, this is clear in God sustaining Adam's line through Noah up to Terah (cf. Gn 1–11). In Genesis 12–50, God sustains the life of Abram and his descendants, who were to become the people of Israel. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, we read how God sustains his people during the exodus events, the time of the judges and the monarchy, as well as prior, during and after the exile. God sustains his people despite life-threatening issues like oppression, drought and famine.[152]

The theme of God as the sustainer of life, albeit through human agents, as well as various sub-themes related to it (e.g. provision of life; protection of life; the transgenerational continuation of life; famine; fertility; disasters; restoration; survival and way of life), is on the foreground in the Scrolls, especially in the books of Ruth, Lamentations and Esther (cf. Kotzé 2021). One of the primary themes of the book of Daniel is God's sovereignty over the kingdoms of mortals (cf. Van Deventer 2021), which links on to God as the sustainer of life. The genealogical lists in 1 and 2 Chronicles 'imply life and the continuation of life' (Boshoff 2021), with God as the implied sustainer of life. God saving and protecting his people, as well as the prayer for the preservation of life, are also major themes in various Psalms (cf. Ps 30:4; 33:19; 41:3; 56:14; 64:2; 88:4; 103:4; 118:17; 119:17, 25, 37, 77, 88, 116, 144; 138:7; 143:11 [all MT]).

☐ God as the living God

References to God as the 'living God' is found throughout the various corpora of the Old Testament (cf. Dt 5:26; Jos 3:10; 1 Sm 17:26, 36; 2 Ki 19:4, 16; Is 37:4,17; Jr 10:10; 23:36; Hs 2:1 [MT]; Ps 42:3 [MT]; 84:3 [MT]; Dn 6:21,27 [MT]). While the phrase links on to the theme of 'God as the source of all life', it does not refer in the first place to God as the origin of all life, his existence in an absolute sense or his eternality. The phrase has 'more to do with his works than with his being' (Snyman 2021, referring to Preuss 1991:279). This is evidenced in the fact that the phrase is used in contexts that refer to God's deeds (cf. Kruger 2021a), emphasising that he is 'actively at work' (Coetsee 2021). As such, the phrase is often used to make 'a contrast between the God of Israel and the idols of the nations' (Coetsee 2021), demonstrating his ability to act and to accomplish what no other god can do (cf. Snyman 2021). He is 'capable of acting decisively under all circumstances and in all geographic locations' (Van der Walt 2021). It is YHWH, and not Baal or any other god, that gives rain and life (cf. Firth 2021).

152. Kruger (2021a, 2021b) fittingly refers to God replicating life through procreation (fertility; [ילד]) and sustaining procreation.

Human life in an ontological sense

Countless references to 'life' in the Old Testament refer to the physical life or existence of humans. These can be considered as '[s]traightforward instances where someone was able to live rather than die' (Firth 2021), linking on to the basic meaning of being human, namely 'to be a living person in the physical sense of the word' (Snyman 2021). This includes references to being 'alive', 'living', 'lifespan' and 'the land of the living'. Per definition, these references are often explicitly or implicitly juxtaposed with the concept 'death' or 'dying' (e.g. the wisdom teachings found in Proverbs). While the Old Testament acknowledges that humans, being mortal, cannot live forever (Ps 49:10 [MT]), and while the brevity and value of life are questioned in Ecclesiastes (cf. Kotzé 2021), a 'long life was seen as a blessing from God' (Van Rooy 2021).

Human life in a qualitative sense

In the Old Testament, a good life is often linked to health, longevity, fertility, progeny, wealth, prosperity, family, community, security and a good reputation. This is made explicit in the list of covenant blessings in the Torah (Lv 26:1–13; Dt 28:1–14), as well as the depiction of Job's life in the prologue of the book (which Hawley [2021] fittingly calls 'the good life in the extreme').[153] Consequently, life in the Old Testament has both an ontological and qualitative sense (cf. Hawley 2021). The value of life, in the Old Testament sense of the word, 'has little to do with simply being alive' (Hawley 2021). Quality of life is related to all the elements listed above and more.[154]

Human life as a fulfilled life when lived in relationship to YHWH

While the concept of life in the Old Testament is most often employed to refer to physical human existence, and while the 'good life' in the Old Testament is often expressed in terms related to prosperity and longevity, there are numerous instances where the context makes it clear that more than this is in view. Rather than referring to the mere temporary existence or survival of man, with '[n]ot dying' as 'the minimum requirement for life' (Firth 2021), or rather than implying what some would mistakenly view as the Old Testament equivalent of the prosperity gospel, these references imply 'a complete and fulfilled life' (Van der Walt 2021) or a life that is both 'fulfilled and fulfilling' (Firth 2021).

153. See also Van der Walt (2021), who deduces elements of the ideal life by reading Isaiah 53:1–6 antithetically.

154. Hawley (2021) finds that the book of Job 'presents the goal of life as living with integrity before God no matter the outcomes', and being content. Branch (2021), in her chapter on advice on how to live well according to the book of Proverbs, suggests that 'the highest personal satisfaction in life is this: A good marriage and a happy home'.

These references to life are always linked to a relationship or communion with YHWH, often expressed in covenantal terms. This is made explicit in the numerous references in the Old Testament that link life to obedience or covenant loyalty to YHWH. These are references 'where life is described as the consequence or result of obedience to YHWH' (Coetsee 2021). Reflecting on life in the Chronistic History, Boshoff (2021) states that '[l]ife sprouts from obedience to the laws of God' (Boshoff 2021).

While this employment of the concept of life is one of the most unique and distinguishable features of the book of Deuteronomy, it is frequently found in both the Major (cf. Van der Walt 2021; Is 55:3; Jr 21:8–9; 39:18; Ezk 3:18–21) and Minor Prophets (cf. Snyman 2021; Hs 6:2; Am 5:4, 14), as well as in the Psalms (cf. Van Rooy 2021; Ps 119:17). Despite the infrequent occurrence of life-related words in the Chronistic History, this employment of the concept of life is also found in 2 Chronicles (cf. Boshoff 2021).

The fullness of life, according to the Old Testament, 'comes from living in relation and obedience to' YHWH (Coetsee 2021). 'To know God, to walk with God, to belong to God and similar expressions are used to indicate life in its fullness' (Kruger 2021b). 'Life means to live in the presence of YHWH' and 'is best lived in a relationship with' him (Snyman 2021). Such a life strives for righteousness within the parameters provided by the covenant (cf. Van der Walt 2021) and is 'lived under the context of Yahweh's sovereignty' (Firth 2021).

In a way, this links on to the striking words of Psalm 63:4 (MT), where the poet relativises life by stating that God's 'steadfast love [חֶסֶד] is better than life' – a statement which Van Rooy (2021) views as 'possibly the most important statement contained in the psalms' teaching on life and death'.

The fullness of life, however, is not automatically experienced by all of God's people. According to Deuteronomy 30:15–20 and various passages within the Old Testament prophetic literature, such a life is a choice. Consequently, for the Old Testament people of God to experience the fullness of life, '[t]he only sensible route to follow – in fact, the only route there is – is to deliberately choose wholehearted obedience to YHWH' (Coetsee 2021).

☐ God's revealed will as the source of a fulfilled human life

Taking the previous theme of life into consideration, it comes as no surprise that God's revealed will is sometimes referred to as the source of a fulfilled human life. According to Deuteronomy 8:3, man 'does not live (physically) by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord'. By providing Israel with his revealed will, 'YHWH gives to Israel everything they need to live, namely, to obey him and consequently receive his blessing' (Coetsee 2021:91). Closely related to this, Deuteronomy 32:47 refers to the

words of God's law as 'your very life', indicating that '[b]y obeying YHWH's revealed will, Israel will enjoy his blessing' (Coetsee 2021:93).

While the Torah reveals how life should and should not be lived in the covenantal relationship with YHWH, it is especially the book of Proverbs that instructs the reader (or hearer) on how to live well in a practical, everyday sense. Viewing life from the foundational concept of the fear of the Lord (e.g. Pr 1:7; 8:13; 10:27; 14:27; 19:23), Proverbs reflects on issues of daily life by stressing personal responsibility in life's choices, confirming that life is dependent on God's providence and suggesting that '[s]uccess in life is not a goal but an ongoing, lifelong balance of spiritual, physical, and ethical matters' (Branch 2021).

☐ Human life in relation to other human beings

It almost goes without saying, but human life is lived in relation to other human beings. Various laws in the Torah explain how people were to live amongst one another, indicating what their conduct should (and should not!) be. Strikingly, various prophets bemoaned Israel's walk of life amongst their fellow Israelites, charging them for neglecting social justice and righteousness (cf. Snyman 2021 on Am 5:14–15). The Old Testament also often views Israel as a corporate identity, 'where the life of one is dependent on the life of the people, and the life of the people is dependent on the actions of the individual members of God's people' (Van der Walt 2021). Consequently, according to this view, the people of God are not supposed to live self-centred, individual lives, but lives that are for the benefit of their fellow human beings.

☐ Sexual life

While legislation on sexual life is found in the Torah, 'the erotic side of the human experience of life' is positively praised in Song of Songs (cf. Kotzé 2021).

☐ Life in nature

As stated in the overview of the occurrence and basic meaning of 'life' in the Old Testament above, animals are considered as 'living' in the Old Testament. Not only are all living creatures created by God (cf. Gn 1:20–25) but the Old Testament considers them all to be under God's control and in his service (cf. Snyman 2021). In the execution of his judgement, he sometimes makes use of wild animals (Hs 2:14; [MT]), or he depicts his judgement in imagery referring to devouring animals (Hs 13:8) or wild and domestic animals roaming where people once lived (Zph 2:14–15;

Snyman 2021). Hawley (2021) convincingly indicates how the divine speeches in the book of Job suggest that '[a]ll living creatures, domestic and wild, appear to have positive value in God's eyes', challenging 'humanity's egocentric view of the cosmos' and decentring 'humanity as the purpose and sole focus of divine work'.

Tragically, the Old Testament confirms that sins related to human life can have a devastating effect on life in nature (cf. Hs 4:3).

Resurrected life

A final life theme in the Old Testament deduced from the above-mentioned chapters is that of resurrected life. While 'your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise' in Isaiah 26:19 could be understood as a metaphor for national restoration, bodily resurrection seems to be implied, making Isaiah '[t]he first prophet to proclaim resurrection' of the dead (Van der Walt 2021).

Apart from Isaiah, the theme of resurrected life is also found in the vision of Ezekiel 37:1–14. The theme, however, is made explicit in the final chapter of the book of Daniel, stating that '[m]any of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Dn 12:2). Here, life 'appears to be a reward for those who remained faithful during their "first" lives' (Van Deventer 2021), suggesting that a life lived in relation to YHWH extends 'even beyond the grave' and 'that there is a reality of another life beyond the grave'.

Although this theme is not developed in great detail, it does seem to provide the germ of the more fully developed theme in the New Testament.

Possible developments of the concept of life in the Old Testament

God as the living God

Snyman (2021) reflects on the significance of references to God as 'the living God'. He correctly indicates that God is not called 'the living God' in the so-called 'classic formulations of who God is in the Old Testament' like Exodus 34:6–7 or Deuteronomy 26:5–9. As such, the argument can be made that the idea of God as 'the living God' developed over time in Old Testament thought. Snyman (2021), however, seems to be correct when he indicates that '[t]he reason for the absence of statements on YHWH as the living God is probably because of the fact that it was something that was assumed and never really contested'.

Resurrected life

According to Van Deventer (2021), the reference to resurrected life in Daniel 12:2 can be considered as a major 'theological development' and even a 'theological leap'. In his view, many consider the reference to resurrected life 'not only to be the pinnacle of the theological development in the book of Daniel, but also of the Hebrew Bible in totality' (Van Deventer 2021).

It is argued that the idea of bodily resurrection originated and developed in the face of persecution (cf. Van Deventer 2021), giving perspective to religious suffering. While this seems like a good explanation, from a biblical–theological perspective, it should be understood within the developing and progressing line of God's revelation in Scripture.

Spiritual vs physical life

In Christian circles, a distinction is often made between the physical and spiritual life of the believing community. Van der Walt (2021) fittingly indicates that the 'dualistic notion that the natural and spiritual world is separate from one another, is not found in the Biblical view of life'. Snyman (2021) argues more or less the same by warning that:

> Modern readers should be careful to make a distinction between life in the physical sense of the word and spiritual life. The investigation did not find any trace of such a distinction in Old Testament faith. (p. 173)

While this cannot be labelled as a possible development of the concept of life in the Old Testament, it is noted here for the discussion of the concept of life in the New Testament that follows.

The concept of life in the New Testament

An overview of the occurrence and basic meaning of 'life' in the New Testament

'Life' words that are most commonly employed in the New Testament are βίος, ζωή and ψυχή, and their derivatives.

The noun βίος is rarely used in the New Testament, occurring only 11 times. The word is generally used with reference to a person's daily human life or existence (Lk 8:14). In some cases, βίος may also be understood as a person's possessions, property or livelihood (Mk 12:44; Lk 21:4). The verb βιόω occurs only once referring to one's earthly existence (1 Pt 4:2).

Ζωή is most commonly used to refer to life and occurs 135 times in the Greek New Testament. It refers to the state of one who has vitality or is animate (Ac 8:33; Rm 8:38; Ja 4:14; 1 Pt 3:10). It implies vitality as the opposite to sickness, death and condemnation. It refers not only to natural life but also to

existence beyond the earthly sphere, namely, eternal and immortal life (Mt 7:14; Mk 9:43; Jn 3:16). Ζωή comes from and is sustained by God's self-existent life, and he shares this life with his Son (Jn 5:26). The Lord shares his gift of life with people. Jesus is the bread of life (Jn 6:35, 48) and the Spirit gives life (Jn 6:33). The verb ζάω [live], which is related to the noun ζωή [life], is also used quite often. It refers to the ability to be alive and to do things, as opposite of dying [ἀποθνήσκειν] or being lifeless and dead [νεκρὸς] (Lk 20:38; Rm 8:38, 2 Cor 5:4; 1 Tm 5:6; Rv 1:18).

Ψυχή occurs 101 times in the New Testament, of which 37 times in the Synoptic Gospels. Ψυχή [soul] is etymologically related to ψύχω [blow]. The ψυχή is regarded as the direct result of God breathing ('blowing') his gift of life into a person. This would make a person an 'ensouled' being (Ac 2:41; Rm 2:9). It is regarded as the decisive mark of a living creature. It denotes the vital and immaterial force that resides in a human's body. It comes to expression in breathing. The ψυχή differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (Mt 10:28; Ac 2:27; Ja 5:20; Rv 6:9; 20:4). Once a person dies, the ψυχή leaves the body (Lk 12:19–20). A ψυχή is regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life. Ψυχή is an omnibus term for human thought, will and emotion, and forms the essential core of a person. It is the seat of the feelings, desires, affections and aversions (Mt 11:29; 12:18; 22:37; Lk 1:46; 2:35; Jn 12:27).

Major themes of life in the New Testament

In this discussion of the themes of 'life' in the New Testament, a distinction is made between the life of the Divine and that of creation.

Divine life

The New Testament provides perspectives on divine life with regard to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, respectively.

The living God is the source of life

- **The God of Israel is a living God:** The New Testament takes it as a point of departure that the God of Israel is the living [ζῶν] God (e.g. Mt 16:16; 26:63; Ac 14:15; Rm 9:26; 14:11; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16; 1 Th 1:9; 1 Tm 3:15; 4:10; Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22). He has life [ζωὴ] in and of himself (Jn 5:26). Life is essentially an attribute of him and part of his divine nature (Rv 4:9–10). All life begins with God and true life can only be with God. He lives eternally and life belongs to him (Jordaan 2021). He is totally different from dead gentile idols (Ac 14:15). He is a real God who acts in history and cares for his people (Müller van Velden 2021). The expression 'living God' carries the connotation of 'God's life-giving power' (Rm 9:26) (Du Toit 2021).

- **The living God gives life:** The living God has life in himself and is the source of life. It is he who gives life to all creation as he is the creator and sustainer of life (Ac 17:25; 1 Tm 6:13) (Genade 2021; Müller van Velden 2021). He is the God in whom Abraham believed, the one who gives life [ζῳοποιέιν] to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist (Rm 4:17) (Du Toit 2021). God is the Alpha and Omega who created all things (Rv 4:11) (Du Rand 2021). God is the sole provider of life, not only of the earthly life but also of a new eternal life. In his great love, mercy and grace, he is the source of new life (Cornelius 2021).
- **God sustains his gift of life:** Life is a gift of God and he sustains it. He does this with bread and his word (Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4; Mt 6:33) (Viljoen 2021). James reprimands those who make plans 'in arrogance' without recognising the sovereignty of God over all of life (Ja 4:16). Both the earthly life and the eschatological life are sustained solely by God's power and sovereign will.
- **God has unlimited power over life:** God holds the ultimate power of life and death (Mt 10:28). With his incomparably great power and mighty strength, he is the one that can make alive and can kill. Because life is his gift, he alone can grant it and withdraw it (Viljoen 2021). Having unlimited power, he can save his people from the most serious threats to life.

□ *God's Son*

- **God shares life with his Son:** Divine life is an attribute of God which he shares with his Son. The Son of the living God [ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος] could therefore declare: 'As the Father has life in himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life [ζωή] in himself' (Jn 5:26). The Son is called the Logos [ὁ λόγος], the revelation of God. In him, the Logos, the world may see and come to know God, because the Logos is God himself. The Logos is also a revelation of the life [ζωὴ] that is in God and comes from God (Jn 1:1–4) (Jordaan 2021).
- **Creation came into existence through the Son:** All creation came into existence through the Logos (Jn 1:3) (Jordaan 2021). A hymn in honour of Christ (Col 1:15–20) states the role of Christ in creation. Christ is the head of the Church, and all things in the heavens and/or earth have been created in him [ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη] (Cornelius 2021). God created the world through his Son (Heb 1:2b). He is the origin of God's creation (Rv 3:14).
- **The Son gives his life as ransom:** The Son of God did not come to be served, but to serve. As a glorious figure, he humbles himself and gives his life [ψυχή] as ransom and substitute for many (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28) (Viljoen 2021). The good shepherd lays down his life [ψυχή] for his sheep (Jn 10:11, 15, 17) (Jordaan 2021). He counteracts the effects of the Fall at the cost of his own death. He suffers the pangs of death so that his followers can be saved for eternal life [ζωή αἰώνιος] of bliss.

- **The Son conquers death:** The Son was raised from death and in such a manner conquered death in order to obtain indestructible life [ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου] (Heb 7:16) (Steyn 2021). Jesus promises that the powers of death will not conquer his followers (Mt 16:18; Rv 2:11). Death has lost its power over them (1 Cor 15:54–57) because they will be protected by the 'living God'. He thus received the honorary title of 'The living One' [ὁ ζῶν] (Lk 24:5; Rv 1:17).
- **The Son is resurrected to live:** By the work of God, Jesus was resurrected and subsequently lives (Ac 2:24, 32; Rm 4:24–25). The resurrection of Jesus forms a central affirmation of the Christian message in the New Testament. Without Christ's resurrected life, the gospel would be meaningless (1 Cor 15:12–19). Believers will be saved by Christ's 'life' [ζωή], which implies his resurrection life (Rm 5:10) (Du Toit 2021). Christ's life is closely related to both his bodily resurrection and the awaited bodily resurrection of believers (Ac 26:23). Thus, Christ's resurrection not only is the foundation of the hope and belief that believers will be resurrected but also serves as its guarantee (1 Th 4:14).

  In post-resurrection scenes, Jesus is called 'The Living One' (Lk 24:5). His resurrection constitutes a new order of life as an irrefutable demonstration of the end of death. The participle 'The Living One' [ὁ ζῶν] is meant as a title. Jesus is the Son of this living God [ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος]. Yet, he died but was raised to eschatological glory and thus received this glorious title. He is alive in an eschatological sense (Viljoen 2021).
- **He ascends as 'The Living One':** With his ascension, Jesus transcends the boundaries of the here and now material experiences of the earthly presence towards his heavenly reign. The Son is exalted to eschatological glory as he enters into glory as the 'The Living One' [ὁ Ζῶν]. His resurrected status implies that he takes the position as exalted Lord, seated at the right hand of God, as the eternal living Lord (Rv 11:15). His ascension breaks open the potential of an indestructible life. Jesus, the resurrected, living Lord, fulfils a unique role and purpose. The book of Acts significantly demonstrates the impact of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus on the lives of the apostles and early church (Müller van Velden 2021).
- **Jesus gives life to the world:** Jesus, the resurrected, exalted living Lord, fulfils a unique role and purpose as he gives life [ζωή] to the world (Jn 6:33, 51, 53; 15:13). He reveals himself to mankind as the way to life [ζωή] (Jn 14:6). The testimony of Jesus as the way to life is testified by God himself and is absolutely trustworthy (1 Jn 5:9). Through his own resurrection, he paved the way for resurrection of the dead (Jordaan 2021). Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation and everything has become new (2 Cor 5:17). As a judge, the resurrected Lord will determine who lives and will be raised by God (2 Tm 4:1; Rv 19:11).
- **Basis of Christology:** Jesus' resurrection is central to and forms the basis of New Testament Christology. It centres around the significance of Jesus' resurrection for his followers. Christ's resurrection forms the basis for

walking in the newness of life (Rm 6:4). Through Christ, Christians can be in a living relation with God and life can be enjoyed (Cornelius 2021). Their eschatological life is based on his soteriological achievement.

☐ *The Holy Spirit is the life-giving breath*

The power that enables life from death is the power of the living God himself. God creates life with his breath. God's 'breathing' is a metaphor to describe the birth of new life. The Holy Spirit manifests as this 'breath of life' [πνεῦμα ζωῆς] (Cornelius 2021).

For humans to receive this life, they have to be regenerated (Jn 3:3). By the power of the Holy Spirit, God works faith in human hearts (Jn 6:63). The spiritual rebirth is effected by the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, life gains new meaning. The individual believer can live a new way of life through the living presence of the living God. The Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in believers and will 'give life' [ζωοποιέω] to their mortal bodies on the basis of Jesus' resurrection (Rm 8:11) (Du Toit 2021).

☐ Life of creation

The New Testament recognises human life as a physical bodily existence. However, it accentuates that life entails much more.

☐ *Life as physical and biological existence*

The concept of life in the New Testament (referenced by the roots βίος and ζωή) refers in the first instance to physical, biological life. It denotes the organic functioning of all living beings. Human life is unique in that a human is capable of self-realisation and is open to formative influences. Life as a gift from God (Ja 4:15). Ζωή tends to refer to life as a vital, natural force in humans and animals, as opposed to inanimate objects. Animals are referred to as 'living beings' [ζῴων] (Heb 13:11 (Steyn 2021). John normally makes use of the word ψυχή to refer to life as a physical reality (Jordaan 2021). Epaphroditus risked his 'life' [ψυχή] to complete that which is lacking in the congregation's service to Paul (Phlp 2:30). Life also refers to what is needed to sustain one's life. The poor widow put her whole livelihood (ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς; πάντα τὸν βίον) in the treasury ('her whole life; all the life that she had') (Mk 12:44; Lk 21:4). The father divided his life [βίος] between his two sons, and the youngest son squandered this life [βίος] (Lk 15:12, 30) (Viljoen 2021).

☐ *Life of two aeons*

However, life entails more than what a human experiences here and now. Life is viewed as consisting of two aeons. The first is temporal and the second is eternal. During the temporal aeon, people live with the eschatological

expectation of the eternal aeon. The rich young man or ruler (Mk 10:17; Mt 19:16–17; Lk 18:18) seeks 'aeonian life' [ζωὴν αἰώνιον], while the expert of the Law asks Jesus how to find 'aeonian life' (Lk 10:25) (Viljoen 2021).

Two ways of living

Life in 'this aeon' can be spent in two ways, metaphorically described as walking on one of the two roads, with two diverse destinations. The one road is wide and easy to follow, and the other road is narrow with many difficulties. The wide road leads to eschatological destruction [ἀπώλεια], and the narrow road leads to eschatological life [ζωὴ]. Following the narrow road implies commitment and effort, and only a few follow this road. On the other hand, the road leading to destruction is attractive and is followed by many. The rich man spends his life [ζωὴ] in such a foolish manner (Lk 12:20). Jesus exhorts his listeners to enter through the small gate and to follow the narrow road in order to reach eschatological life, in contrast to the wide gate and broad road that leads to eschatological destruction (Mt 7:13–14) (Viljoen 2021).

Eternal life

Natural life is not an end in itself. Paul bewails the pitiful end that results from having hope in this life only (1 Cor 15:19). The concept of 'life' in Christ overlaps with 'eternal life'. The one implies the other (Rm 5:17–21) (Du Toit 2021). Believers will enter the future eternal life [ζωή αἰώνιος] when their mortal bodies are resurrected in a transition from death to life, never to see death again. Eternal life is a glorious and never-ending fellowship with God that follows after death. It is a life in which believers may eternally experience the joy of beholding the glory of the Father (e.g. Rm 1:17; 2:7; 5:17–18, 21; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 2:16; 3:6; 4:12; Gl 2:19, 20b; 3:11–12, 21; Phlp 2:16; 4:3; 1 Th 3:8; 5:10). Eternal life is grounded in Jesus, the resurrected one (Jn 3:16) (Jordaan 2021). Death is no longer a threat. Christians' immortality finds a reality in the risen Christ (1 Cor 15). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis for the hope of Christian believers of their own future resurrection and immortality (Du Toit 2021). Someone who loses his or her bodily existence for the sake of Jesus will gain eternal life (Mt 10:39; Mk 8:35–37). Those who receive life from Jesus truly have life (Jn 5:40; 8:12; 10:10; 20:31). On the day of judgement, the believers will receive 'eternal life', whereas the unbelievers will be condemned to death (Jn 5:29). To have eternal life, one needs to be reborn by the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:3, 7; 1 Pt 1:3, 23).

Spiritual life

Humanity can be divided into two groups: those who are biologically alive (but spiritually dead) and those who are biologically alive and have also been brought to spiritual life through belief in Christ (Eph 2:1–10). Human life begins

as biological life, of which God is the creator. Yet, this life is corrupted by sin which results in death. Living people die because of sin. Paul sometimes uses σάρξ in context of a way of life or existence in the old era under law, sin and death. Such way of life stands in contrast to a way of life and existence in the new era in Christ under the rule of the Spirit [πνεῦμα]. Bodily life should be in service of real life, which is eternal life in Christ (Du Toit 2021). Through Christ, God grants new life to those who confess that they were dead because of sin (Rm 8:10–11). Spiritual life flows from spiritual rebirth (Jn 3:3). The spiritual rebirth is grounded in the saving grace of God as manifested in the salvific work of Jesus Christ and is effected by the Holy Spirit. From this spiritual rebirth, the Christian believer embarks on a life pattern that is guided by the sanctification of the Spirit (1 Pt 1:2) (Goede 2021). The new order of life in Christ and the Spirit transfers believers from a life under bondage of the law, to a life of faith in the freedom of the Spirit. Life in the Spirit, therefore, enables believers to live ethically and to do God's will (Du Toit 2021). The new spiritual life is given through faith, and therefore, life is a choice between the dark and the light, between a life based on worldly principles and a life worthy of God (Cornelius 2021).

Living 'already' yet 'not yet'

The resurrection of believers is a past event so that eternal life is 'already' a present reality. However, there is still a 'not yet' side to their lives. Believers have indeed been raised with Christ (Col 2:12; 3:1), but they have not yet appeared with him in glory (Col 3:4). Although they already have life, they have a hope that is still stored in heaven (Col 1:5). Yet, God's redemptive act of salvation is not merely an afterlife reassurance of the future resurrection of the dead; its impact is already felt in the present by all who step into its significance, here and now (Müller van Velden 2021). Christians, therefore, live in an interim period, 'already' experiencing the new life (2 Cor 5:17), but 'not yet' perfect (1 Cor 15:43; 2 Tm 1:10) (Cornelius 2021). The Christian life is lived on this mystical tightrope of the already-and-the-not-yet; the now-life and the life to come (Genade 2021).

New creation

The climax of life envisions the salvation of creation. The new creation is the purpose of God's road to salvation (Rv 11:15). The Apocalypse of John confirms this soteriological purpose that God the Redeemer will not give up on his creation. The people of God and the whole creation will be transformed like the resurrected Jesus and will experience the new and restored creation. It implies the end of the power struggle when life is redefined. The resurrection of all the dead will bring an end to death (Rv 20:14). In the new creation, there

will be an absence of death, pain, mourning and crying (Rv 21:3–4) (Du Rand 2021).

Nuances of the concept of life by the different authors of the New Testament

Because of the short time span in which the New Testament was written and the issues regarding the dating of its books, it seems problematic to observe a development in the concept of life as can be done in the Old Testament. It seems more profitable to identify nuances of the concept by the different authors of the New Testament.

The Synoptic Gospels frequently refer to life as mere existence such as the woman suffering from haemorrhage who spent all her life [βίος] on physicians (Lk 8:43), the poor widow who put her whole livelihood [βίος] in the treasury (Mk 12:44; Lk 21:4) or the rich fool whose life [ψυχή] is demanded from him (Lk 12:20). A key theme in these Gospels is how one spends one's life: Does one follow the broad and easy way which leads to destruction [ἀπώλεια], or the narrow and difficult way that leads to eternal life [ζωή] (Mt 7:14). A person on the narrow and difficult road must be willing to sacrifice (Lk 14:26). The youngest brother who squandered his father's life [βίος] (Lk 15:12, 30) in the far country was biologically alive but spiritually dead [νεκρὸς]. He became alive again [ἔζησεν] when he realised that he had done wrong and repented (Lk 15:24, 32). True life is like the hidden treasure that the man found or the precious pearl that the merchant found (Mt 13:44–45). It is worth leaving everything else in order to gain it. Besides the biological life and ethical nuances of life as exhibited in these Gospels, prominence is given to the blissful eternal life (aeonian), life which has an endless duration in the age to come (Mk 10:17; Lk 10:25). Only the faithful followers of Jesus will enter the aeonian life. To accomplish this, Jesus gave his life [ψυχή] as ransom (Mk 10:45). He did not come to be served, but to serve. These Gospels give an extensive and vivid description of the passion of Jesus for the sake of his followers (Viljoen 2021).

The Johannine literature (Gospel and letters) emphasises the life of the new creation. The Gospel of John opens with divine life [ζωή] that was incarnated (Jn 1:1–4). As God brought life to the world with creation, he now brings new life with recreation through Jesus, his Son. Jesus is the resurrection and the life [ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή] (Jn 11:25). 1 John states that Jesus is the true God and eternal life [ζωὴ αἰώνιος] (1 Jn 5:20). He is the source of life for humanity. Whoever believes in him already has eternal life [ζωή αἰώνιος] (Jn 6:51). One appropriates this life by faith (Jn 6:40, 47; 1 Jn 5:12) and 'eating him' (Jn 6:57). Believers experience eternal life already in this life. Life in eternity is

a continuation of divine life already found in this life, but in full glory (Jn 17:24) (Jordaan 2021).

The Corpus Paulinum[155] communicates that all of humanity can be divided into two groups: those that are biologically alive but spiritually dead [νεκροὶ] and those who are biologically alive but have also been brought to life [συνεζωοποίειν] through faith in Christ (Eph 2:1–10) (Cornelius 2021). Adam's sin brought death [ὁ θάνατος] to all (Rm 5:12–14; 1 Cor 15:22a). To remain in Adam is to remain dead. However, those in Christ are made alive [ζωοποιῆσαι] (Rm 5:14–17; 1 Cor 15:22b) (Du Toit 2021). Christ's resurrection brings the possibility for humans to share in his resurrection. Life [ζωὴ] can only be gained by burial. Union with Christ implies union with his death and burial in order to be resurrected with him (Rm 6:1–5). Living people are those who confessed that they were dead because of sin, but are now alive thanks to the power that brought Christ from the grave (Rm 8:10–11). Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation [καινὴ κτίσις] (2 Cor 5:17). The new life is eschatological. Nevertheless, those who are alive through faith, still struggle with sin and mortality (Rm 7:7–25). Christians live in an interim period where the new life is a reality, yet another reality is hidden in Christ (Col 3:3) (Cornelius 2021). Christians anticipate to one day fully share in the eternal glory [ἡ δόξα αἰωνίου] of Christ (1 Cor 15:43; 2 Tm 2:10). Christians have a blessed hope of the appearing of God and saviour and should therefore live a distinguished ethical life (Tt 2:13).

Hebrews admonishes Christians to live in a personal relationship with the living God in worship (Heb 9:14) with an eschatological expectation of the city of the living God (Heb 12:22). Christ's office as an eternal living high priest enables those who approach God through him to be saved and enter the eternal rest (Heb 4:1; 7:25). Jesus has conquered death. Through his resurrection, heavenly life has become a reality. His mediating role and his intercession are directly connected to this eternal state of life. Apostasy, on the other side, results in eschatological judgement when one falls into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31) (Steyn 2021).

James shares the fundamental perspective of all Scripture that God is the sole giver of life. James's particular nuance to the theme of life is found in the way he develops an ethical argument based on the fundamental reality that all of life comes from God. James places a strong emphasis on how one's eternal (eschatological) destiny is affected by the way one lives one's earthly life (Button 2021).

155. For this sake of this discussion, the undisputed, disputed (so called 'Deutero-Pauline) and Pastoral Epistles are grouped together as the Corpus Paulinum. For a motivation of the division of the Pauline Epistles in this publication, see 'The structure of the chapters of this publication' in Chapter 1 of Volume 5 (Coetsee & Viljoen 2021).

According to Peter and Jude,[156] the biological life of the Christian believer progresses towards a spiritual life, with eternal life as the endpoint (Goede 2021). The importance of a godly life is emphasised.

Life is not a static gift by God but a dynamic entity according to the Apocalypse of John. It begins with natural creational life, which moves to true or real life, then to the new life, and is completed with the afterlife. The expectation of judgement at the end forms part of this eschatological expectation. The wicked will seek to hide and are shut out of God's presence (Rv 6:15–17; 21:27; 22:5), while the righteous are anticipating to experience God's presence forever (Rv 6:9,10; 21:3–4; 22:14). The vision of the New Jerusalem can be seen as the consummation or pinnacle of the divine macro-narrative of salvation (Du Rand 2021). The salvation of creation will entail the absence of death, pain, mourning and crying (Rv 21:3–4).

The concept of life in Scripture

With the overviews of the concept of life in both the Old and New Testament as the departure point, the current section aims to give an overview of the concept of life in the whole of Scripture, amongst others by indicating lines of development of the concept.

Both the Old and New Testament stress that God is the origin or source of all life (cf. Gn 1; Ps 33:6; 36:10 [MT]; Ac 14:15; 17:25; 1 Tm 6:13; Rv 4:11). God himself is referred to as 'the living God' (e.g. Dt 5:26; 1 Sm 17:26; Mt 16:16; Heb 12:22). He has no beginning or end; he exists in absolute sense (e.g. Ex 3:14; Rv 4:9–10); he lives forever (Dt 32:40; Dn 12:7). He has life in and of himself (Jn 5:26a) and is able to do what no other (dead) god or idol can do (cf. Is 44:9–20; Ac 14:15).

The New Testament reveals that the Son too is eternal. As the Father, he has life in himself (Jn 5:26b). He is the agent through whom God created everything (Jn 1:3; Heb 1:2; Col 1:16; Rv 3:14).

As the origin of life, God is also the owner (Gn 9:5–6) and sustainer of all life (Ac 17:28). He acts in history and cares for his people (Ps 41:3 [MT]; Mt 10:29–31), even in life-threatening situations such as drought, famine, oppression and persecution. He has control and absolute authority over both life and death (cf. Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6; Mt 10:28), and he is able to grant life and withdraw it. The latter is also stated in reference to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, with the Spirit depicted as giving life, causing death when withdrawn (Gn 6:3–4; Ezk 37:1–14).

156. For this discussion, Jude and Peter are grouped together because of the similarities between Jude and 2 Peter. Again, see Chapter 1 of Volume 5 (Coetsee & Viljoen 2021) for this motivation.

A number of references to life in Scripture refer to animal life. Both the Old and New Testament confirm that God is the creator of all living creatures (Gn 1:20–25; Rv 4:11), that all of creation is valuable in his eyes (Job 38–41; Rm 8:19–23) and that all living creatures are under his control and in his service (Hs 2:14 [MT]; 13:8; Mt 17:27).

Most references to life in Scripture, however, refer to the physical life, vitality or existence of humans. Humans are (prior to death) alive and living. Life in Scripture, however, often refers to more than mere existence, taking on a qualitative sense. In the Old Testament, a good life is amongst others linked to health, longevity, prosperity, and relationships. That being said, the Old Testament as a whole stresses that a complete or fulfilled life can only be lived in communion with God. To experience life in its fullness, humans have to live in relation to God and in obedience to his revealed will (cf. Dt 8:3; 32:47; Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4). This is clear from various references that link life to obedience (cf. Dt 4:1; 5:33; Is 55:3; Jr 21:8–9; 39:18; Ezk 3:18–21; Hs 6:2; Am 5:4, 14; Ps 119:17). Consequently, human life has an ethical dimension, with the covenant blessings of God ensuing from obedience and his covenant curses from disobedience (cf. Lv 26; Dt 28). As fullness of life is linked to communion and obedience, which is a choice humans are confronted with (Dt 30:15–20), the fullness of life is not experienced by everyone.

In the New Testament, a radical new dimension of life is on the fore, namely eternal or eschatological life. Such life refers to existence beyond the earthly sphere. While the germ of eternal life can be traced to the Old Testament, specifically to the few passages that refer to bodily resurrection (Is 26:19; Ezk 37:1–14; Dn 12:2), as well as the teachings of life after death around the time of the Pharisees and early rabbis,[157] it is expounded in much more detail in the New Testament.

Building on the Old Testament depiction of sin and the Fall, the departure point of the New Testament is that life is corrupted by sin, which results in death. All human beings are dead in sin and deserve God's eternal judgement (Rm 3:9,19; 5:12–14; Eph 2:1–3). God, however, in his grace and mercy, has provided the perfect solution: he sent his Son to give his life as ransom and substitute for the sins of human beings (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28; Rm 3:24–26; Eph 2:4–7). The New Testament states that Jesus counteracted the effects of the Fall at the cost of his own life. He suffered death so that his followers can be saved to eternal life. By the work of God, Jesus was resurrected from the

157. The Pharisees taught that the עוֹלָם הַזֶּה ('present life on earth') will be followed by the עוֹלָם הַבָּא ('life in the world to come'). While the former is full of misery and injustice, the latter will consist of a restored world of joy and justice. The rabbis taught that those who lived according to the 'halakhah' would experience life in the עוֹלָם הַבָּא, while the unjust will be condemned. Judgement would happen with the coming of the Messiah (Jewish Virtual Library, Olam Ha-Ba, viewed 20 January 2021, from https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/olam-ha-ba).

grave (Ac 2:24), ensuring the justification of sinners (1 Cor 15:17, 19; Rm 4:25). His death and resurrection constitute a new order of life, with his followers sharing in his death and burial in order to be resurrected spiritually here and now to eternal life (Rm 6:2–4). Consequently, Jesus reveals himself as the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25), and the way to life (Jn 14:6). He is eternal life (1 Jn 5:20).

The salvific work of Christ is attributed to human beings who are 'in Christ' (1 Cor 15:22; cf. Rm 5:17–21), namely, those who believe in and follow him obediently (Jn 6:40, 47, 51), and is effected by Holy Spirit who regenerates human beings (Jn 3:3, 7; Rm 8:10–11; cf. 1 Pt 1:3, 23). The Spirit also enables human beings to live according to God's will (1 Pt 1:2), and believers should respond by living a godly life (Gl 5:22–26).

While the new life in Christ is a present reality enjoyed by all believers (2 Cor 5:17), there is a 'not yet' side to their lives. While they have been raised with Christ (Col 2:12; 3:1), they have not yet appeared with him in glory (Col 3:4). Moreover, while they are alive through faith, they still struggle with sin and mortality (Rm 7:7–25). The complete salvation of believers still lies in the future at the return of Christ with the consummation of all things. This dimension of the 'already' but 'not yet' life encourages believers to persevere in obedience to God despite persecution and hardship (Mt 10:39) and to strive to conform more and more to the image of the Son (Rm 8:29).

At the consummation, the bodies of the dead will be raised, with the followers of Christ receiving eternal everlasting life, whereas the unbelievers will be condemned to eternal death (Jn 5:29; Rv 20:11–15). The climax of life will then be reached with the new heaven and the new earth (Rv 21:1), with God dwelling amongst his people, and death, mourning, crying and pain being no more (Rv 21:3–4).

Just like physical life, the New Testament stresses that eschatological life is solely provided and sustained by God's power and sovereign will (Mt 10:28). Moreover, just like the Old Testament's emphasis for a fulfilled life, the New Testament stresses that eternal life is tightly bound up with a relationship with and obedience to God (through Christ and the Spirit). A fulfilled life is, therefore, one which strives first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (Mt 6:33).

In the end, there are but two ways of living, namely, the broad way that is easy to follow but that leads to eschatological destruction, or the narrow but difficult way leading to eschatological life (Mt 7:13–14). The correct choice, while being simple and clear, comes at the cost of a lifelong devotion to God, the origin, owner, sustainer and fulfiller of life.

Conclusion

Having discussed the concept of life in Scripture on both a micro level and a macro level in this chapter and all those preceding it, it is fitting to conclude with some reflective thoughts on the implications of these findings for academia and the church. A biblical–theological investigation on a major concept of Scripture such as this can hardly end in another way (cf. Schultz 2002:96).

The implications for academia

First and foremost, theology should recognise that 'life' is a major theme in Scripture. As stated earlier, Kruger (2021) goes as far as to say that it is more comprehensive than the themes of covenant, communion and kingdom. As such, the biblical concept of 'life' should enjoy more attention in the Old and New Testament studies, as well as systematic theology, ethics, pastoral studies and missiology. A balanced view of life in Scripture as a whole can greatly contribute to the advancement of the research of all these disciplines.

Secondly, the popular view that there is an apparent emphasis shift between the Old and New Testament in terms of physical versus spiritual life, calls for more nuanced investigation and formulation. While this study found that the New Testament indeed introduces and emphasises eternal or eschatological life, there is a greater degree of continuity between life in the Old and New Testament than meets the eye.

The implications for the church

The implications of this biblical–theological investigation of the concept of life in Scripture for the church are manifold and can be expressed in a variety of ways. Taking reformed theology in Africa as our departure point, the implications of this study for the church can be captured with the aid of the following mnemonic device:

Comprehend

The church should comprehend two things even better, namely, who God is and what he does, and what life really is:

- God is the eternal living God, the origin and owner of all life. The Son gave his life as ransom for our sins so that we can have eternal life. The Holy Spirit binds us to Christ and regenerates us.
- Life is much more than mere physical existence. To truly live in the biblical sense is to live a fulfilled life, which is a life lived in relationship with God based on his revealed will in Scripture. Such a life strives for sanctification

by fighting against sin, conforming to the image of the Son and seeking the Kingdom of God.

☐ Comfort

The church can be comforted by the fact that God is the sustainer of life and has complete control over life and death. As the 'living' God, he can do what no other god can do. This is a major comfort in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.

The church can also be comforted with the hope of eternal life, knowing that God is en route with his church to the new heaven and new earth.

☐ Commitment

Based on who God is and what he does, as well as the comfort he provides based on his being and work, the church should respond with reverent awe, praise, worship and obedience.

☐ Change

The biblical concept of life calls the church to change in a number of ways, addressing a number of issues, amongst others:

1. ***Individualism***: Human life is not meant to be lived in a self-centred, individualistic way. In the biblical view, we are to live a life that is for the benefit of our fellow human beings.
2. ***Injustices***: The biblical view of life condemns a plethora of injustices, including racism, sexism, ageism and all forms of discrimination. Striving for this change is especially important in the South African context, which is historically known for various injustices.
3. ***Ecology***: As life with all its biological diversity was created by God, and as all of creation is valuable in his eyes, creation should be protected and respected.
4. ***Dichotomy***: Scripture makes no sharp distinction between the physical and spiritual life of human beings. All of life comes from God and should be lived to his glory.

☐ Communicate

The church can proclaim the biblical view of life anew, namely, what it means to live in the biblical sense of the word and how this life was made possible by Christ.

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This book is the second in a two-volume publication on *A Biblical Theology of Life*. These two volumes trace the concept of life throughout Protestant canon, working with the final form of the biblical books in Hebrew (volume 1) and Greek (volume 2) Scripture. This is done by providing the reader with a book-by-book overview of this concept. This second volume concludes with a final chapter synthesising the findings of the respective investigations of the Old and New Testament corpora in order to provide a summative theological perspective of the development of the concept through Scripture. It is clear that life forms a central and continuous theme throughout the Biblical text. The theme begins with the living God that creates life, but is shortly followed by death that threatens life. Despite this threat, God sustains life and awakens life from death. The text concludes with the consummation depicting eternal life in the new heaven and earth. The biblical theological approach that has been taken entails a thematic approach as it investigates the concept of life, with contextual foci on what individual books of Scripture teach about life, joined diachronically with an investigation of the progressive use of the concept of life in Scripture, while providing a theology of Scripture as a whole, investigating the concept of life in all sixty-six books of the Protestant canon.

These two volumes (5 and 6) undertake a comprehensive study of the understanding of life in the Bible from a Reformed perspective. The study uses the insights of modern linguistics, as well as those of more than one exegetical methodology, to undertake a detailed, up-to-date, biblical theological investigation of one of the most important concepts in the Bible. To accomplish its goal, it surveys the different terms used for to life in the various books of the Bible and describes how different aspects of life are developed in the shorter collections of literature in the Bible. It then synthetises these insights in terms of the Old and New Testament, as well as the Bible as a whole, before describing the implication of these theological insights for the contemporary church. Together, the two volumes provide a valuable contribution to the theological understanding of both the coherence and the differentiation evident in the Bible regarding how life should be lived in relation to God. The result is a comprehensive contribution to the field of the theological study of the Bible that was meticulously planned and executed.

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