

Making Alive, Life-giving, and Life-making

The word ζωοποιέω in the New Testament, which is usually translated “to give life,” or “to make alive,” conveys the notion of making something living and even of constituting with life. Ζωοποιέω means more than merely stimulating activity, but rather enlivening with a view to changing the constitution of the object being enlivened. This “lifing” involves not only an *event* of enlivening the physically dead but also a *process* of giving life to and enlivening the spiritually dead (the unregenerate), in order to constitute their whole tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body—with the divine life. This article first considers the literal meaning of the Greek word ζωοποιέω, its use, and the implications of the action or process of making alive in terms of the use of cognate words ζάω “to live” and ζωή “life” in the New Testament. It then argues that ζωοποιέω refers to a process that embodies the highest aspect of God’s salvation: To make or constitute the believers with God as *life*, making them the same as God is in His divine life, throughout their whole being.

The Meaning and Use of Ζωοποιέω

The word ζωοποιέω is a compound of two Greek words ζωός (alive, living) or ζῶον (a living being)¹ and ποιέω (to do, make, or produce). ζωός and ζῶον carry the notion of being alive or living as opposed to being dead. They are both derived from or related to the words ζάω (to live) or ζωή (life). Ζάω means to live (as opposed to being dead). Ζωή is used to refer to the divine, uncreated, incorruptible, indestructible, immortal, eternal life of God (1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 7:16; John 3:16), occurring at least forty-three times with the word αἰώνιος (eternal).

Ποιέω, like the English verb *make*, can function as a di-transitive verb that takes two objects, which may be two nouns, for example, to make *him a living being*; or a noun and an adjective, for example, to make *him living*. However, with the compound ζωοποιέω, one object (ζῶον or ζωός) is the first part of the word, and the second object is expressed or supplied from the context. Therefore, the literal meaning is to make “something living” or to make “something a living being.” This involves the process of imparting Christ as life through receiving and enjoying Him as the life-giving Spirit. The result of this process is the reconstitution of the believers’ entire being with Christ as life.

The Occurrences of Ζωοποιέω in the New Testament

Ζωοποιέω occurs thirteen times in the New Testament (Rom. 4:17; Gal. 3:21; John 5:21, twice; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:22, 36, 45; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 8:11), including two times in the compound συζωοποιέω (to make alive together).² It refers to a past event, a present process, or a future event. The subject or agent of the verb is the Triune God, and the objects of the verb are the dead (both spiritual and physical). Most English versions translate ζωοποιέω as “make alive” when it refers to a past or future event and “give life” when it refers to a present process or a general timeless action.³ Although ζωοποιέω includes the notion of imparting or giving life, it also implies making the object of the verb living and even life itself. Indeed, the notion of the mere giving of life can be more adequately expressed, by combining the verb δίδωμι (give) with the noun ζωή (life) (John 6:33, 51; 10:28; 17:2; Acts 17:25; 1 John 5:11, 16).

Many commentators consider that ζωοποιέω refers only to a past or a future event, such as the resurrection of the believers’ bodies. Though this is certainly true, ζωοποιέω more significantly refers to a present or timeless process, which began at regeneration and consummates with the resurrection of the body. As Bultmann states, “As eschatological ζωή is in some sense present...so the divine ζωοποιεῖν can also refer to the present. We see this in Jn. 5:21, in Col. 2:13, in Eph. 2:5..., and with reference to the ζωοποιεῖν of the πνεῦμα in 1 C. 15:45; 2 C. 3:6; Jn. 6:63” (875).

Now let us consider the specific occurrences of ζωοποιέω.

A Characteristic of the Triune God, One Who Gives Life—Romans 4:17

Abraham is considered the father of faith, both of the Jews and the New Testament believers. He was one who believed in God the Creator (who calls things not being as being) as well as one who believed in the God who gives life (τοῦ ζωοποιούντος) to the dead (who imparts His life into humanity).⁴ Abraham’s offering up Isaac and receiving him back can be considered an experience in type of God giving life to the dead. Isaac’s experience was a figure of Christ in His death and resurrection (Gen. 22; Rom. 4:17, 24-25; Heb. 11:19). Giving life to the dead not only

points to the eschatological event of the resurrection of the body, but it speaks of a general characteristic of God as One who enlivens and can be applied even to those spiritually dead. In particular, Paul identifies Isaac with the New Testament believers who believe into Christ to be organically united with Him (Gal. 3:16, 29).

This verse points to a central characteristic of God in His economy: He desires to impart or dispense His life into humanity. This intention was indicated in Genesis with the placing of man in front of the tree of life with the thought that man would eat of it. The characteristic of giving life is a characteristic of the entire Triune God: the Father raises the dead and gives life (John 5:21), the Son gives life (v. 21), and the Spirit gives life (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6; John 6:63; Rom. 8:11).

God's Intention to Impart His Life into Humanity—Galatians 3:21

In Galatians 3:21 Paul touches on God's original intention to impart His life into humanity and constitute them life when he states, "If a law had been given which was able to give life (ζωοποιήσαι), righteousness would have indeed been of law." The law was added alongside, coming after the promise to Abraham, because of man's transgressions. It was in effect until the seed, Christ, would come, to whom God's promise was made (v. 19). Christ is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4), fulfilling and terminating the law (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 8:3-4). The law is impotent as far as giving life is concerned. In fact, the letter of the law kills, but it is the Spirit who gives life (2 Cor. 3:6). Since the law was weak through the flesh, it was necessary for God to send His own Son in order to make His life available to humanity (Rom. 8:3; John 3:16; 10:10).

The Father and the Son Giving Life—John 5:21

God was incarnated in the person of the Son who Himself was a recipient of the dispensing of God's life into His humanity. He lived a life dependent on the Father as the source of life. He also is able to give life like the Father. John 5:21 says, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life (ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ), so also the Son gives life (ζωοποιεῖ) to whom He wills." According to the context, giving life in John 5:21 does not refer just to the resurrection of the dead but to the enlivening or regeneration of the believers at the time of believing: "An hour is coming and it is *now*, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (v. 25, emphasis added). According to verse 24, which says, "He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life," the dead are those who are dead in spirit, who are made alive (see also Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). The phrase *it is now* in John 5:25

confirms that giving life does not refer just to a future event of the bodily resurrection of the dead, which is referred to in verses 28 and 29. The hearing of the Lord's voice comes with the hearing of His word and results in having eternal life through believing into Him.

Christ Being Made Alive—1 Peter 3:18

As part of the process of making His life available to humanity, Christ passed through death and resurrection. In this process He experienced an enlivening. He was made alive (ζωοποιηθεὶς) in the Spirit, the essence of His divinity, as He was being put to death in His flesh on the cross (1 Pet. 3:18). In resurrection, Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving (ζωοποιούν) Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). As such, He is the means for God to give life, make alive, and enliven redeemed humanity.

Made Alive in Christ, the Life-giving Spirit—1 Corinthians 15:22, 36, 45

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul deals with the matter of refuting those who reject the resurrection. He approaches resurrection not so much as an event but as a process which began with Christ's resurrection and consummates with the believers' bodily resurrection and glorification. He uses an analogy of sowing and harvesting from nature to illustrate the process. In this chapter ζωοποιέω occurs three times (vv. 22, 36, 45). Verse 22 says, "In Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." On the one hand, being made alive refers to resurrection of the body (v. 23), which is not just raised from the dead but also made alive. The mortal body is fully saturated with life, the resurrection life of Christ (Rom. 8:11). On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 15:22 can be taken as a general statement regarding the sphere in which enlivening takes place (Eph. 2:5-6). In union with Christ we experience His death (which terminated the adamic life—1 Cor. 15:45) and His resurrection (in which He as the life-giving Spirit enlivens us).

Verse 36 says, "What you sow is not made alive (ζωοποιεῖται) unless it dies." Paul uses an analogy drawn from nature to indicate the process and issue of resurrection. A seed (with one type of body) is sown into the ground and dies, and then it is made alive, coming out of the ground with a different body.⁵ It grows and matures as a plant with flowers or fruit containing many other seeds. So also is the resurrection. Human beings begin their life with a soulish body. They die and then will be raised with a spiritual body. The process begins with death and continues until glorification. In addition to the sowing of seed, Paul uses the illustration of a harvest. Christ's resurrection anticipates our resurrection. Christ is the firstfruits of the harvest (v. 23); those who are Christ's are the fullness of the harvest.

Finally, in verse 45, "The first man, Adam, became a living

soul'; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν)." Here Paul contrasts Adam as a living soul having a soulish body with Christ as the life-giving Spirit having a spiritual body. He uses the believers' experience of Christ as the life-giving Spirit to prove the resurrection of Jesus. As Dunn states,

Clearly πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν means also or at least includes the idea of σῶμα πνευματικόν—otherwise the citation would not really be relevant; as Adam's existence as ψυχή ζῶσα means a bodily existence vivified and determined by ψυχή, so the risen Christ's existence as πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν means a bodily existence vivified and determined by πνεῦμα. But the reason why Paul writes πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν is not simply to achieve an aesthetically pleasing parallel with ψυχή ζῶσα, for that could have been achieved as well by writing πνεῦμα ζῶν. The principal reason is that Paul wishes to ground his assertion about the spiritual embodiment of the risen Christ *in the experience of the believing community*. Hence he characterizes Jesus not simply as πνευματικός but as πνεῦμα, not simply as ζῶν, but as ζωοποιῶν. In other words, *the believer's experience of the life-giving Spirit is for Paul proof that the risen Jesus is σῶμα πνευματικόν*. (158)

Since Christ in His resurrection became the life-giving Spirit, He is now the means for the life of God to be dispensed into the believers.

The Believers Being Made Alive— Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13

At the time of Christ's resurrection, the believers, who were once dead in offenses, were made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13). This state of deadness is a spiritual deadness in the human spirit, involving alienation from the life of God (Eph. 4:18). The enlivening of the believers transpires through regeneration. From the divine perspective, regeneration was accomplished in Christ's resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3; John 20:17). In the believers' experience, however, regeneration takes place when their human spirit is born of the Spirit of God (John 3:6). At regeneration, the believers receive and have eternal life through believing into Christ (vv. 15-16, 36; 5:24, 40; 6:47; 20:31; 1 John 5:12, 13). As a result of regeneration, a believer's once deadened spirit becomes life (Rom. 8:10).

The Bread of Life Processed to Be the Spirit Who Gives Life in John 6

Life-giving is associated with eating in John 6, and it is portrayed as a process, a habitual action, which issues in the believers being constituted with life to become the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. The believers are able to sustain their life through partaking of and enjoying Christ as the bread of life processed to

become the life-giving Spirit, who is the Spirit who gives life (ζωοποιῶν, v. 63). In John 6, Christ reveals Himself as the bread of life (vv. 35, 48), the bread of God (v. 33), the bread from heaven (vv. 41, 50), and the living bread (v. 51). If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever (vv. 51, 58). This bread is His flesh (v. 51). Unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood, we have no life in ourselves (vv. 53-58). The separation of His flesh and blood implies Christ's death in which His blood was separated from His body. This indicates that the incarnation of Christ, in which He partook of blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14), and the death of Christ, in which His blood was separated from His flesh, are both necessary to accomplish redemption on our behalf. Without His incarnation and death, it would not be possible for human beings to partake of the life of God (Rev. 22:14). However, in order to indicate that even His sinless flesh cannot give life, the Lord directed the disciples to the consummation of His process, His becoming the life-giving Spirit in resurrection: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The divine life is not supplied by partaking of His physical flesh or blood; it is supplied through the experience and enjoyment of Christ as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45).

According to the semantics of the verb *eating*, eating is a habitual activity in contrast to a once-for-all act.⁶ This is stressed both by the verbs for *eating* and by the issue of the eating. John employs two verbs in chapter 6 for *eating*, ἔφαγον, which occurs in the aorist form in verses 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, and τρώγω, which occurs in verses 54, 56, 57, 58. The second verb τρώγω is particularly striking, meaning to chew or masticate. The issue of eating is to receive nourishment for living and for constitution (i.e., we are what we eat). We live by Him whom we have received as spiritual food, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (v. 57). Eating changes our constitution and issues in an organic union with Christ, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood *abides in Me and I in him*" (v. 56, emphasis added). The eating of Christ brings in a mutual abiding of God and man (also a key notion in John 15, which reveals the mutual abiding of the vine and the branches). John 14 echoes the same thought: "Because I live, you also shall live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (vv. 19-20).

The Ministry of the Spirit Who Gives Life— 2 Corinthians 3:6

Through the constitution of the life-giving Spirit, the believers become ministers of the new covenant. According to 2 Corinthians 3:6, the ministry of the new covenant is a ministry not of the letter which kills, but of the Spirit who gives life (ζωοποιεῖ). The ministry is the inscribing of the Spirit of the living God on the tablets of

the hearts of the believers to make them a letter of Christ (v. 3). The inscribing is actually the supplying of the Spirit who gives life into the believers. The ministry is not just concerned with initial salvation, but it involves an ongoing process of supplying the believers with spiritual nourishment for their living, their transformation (3:18), and their growth for the building up of the Body of Christ (10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Eph. 4:12, 16). Just as the Mosaic ministry of the letter was concerned with the living of the recipients of the ministry (Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Ezek. 18:9; 20:11; Gal. 3:12), so also is the ministry of the Spirit. Christ as the life-giving Spirit is ministered into the believers, making them alive and giving them life so that they would live as a letter of Christ, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, being transformed into the image of Christ.

The Spirit of the One Who Raised Christ from the Dead Giving Life to Our Mortal Bodies—Romans 8:11

The impartation of God as life extends even to the mortal bodies of the believers. According to Romans 8:11, “If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life (ζωοποιήσει) to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.” Most consider that this verse is a reference only to the resurrection of our bodies after death. However, the fact that ζωοποιέω (give life) is used rather than ἐγερεῖ (raise), indicates that not just the resurrection of the body is in view (Alford 390). In addition, the apostle Paul did not say “dead bodies” but “mortal bodies.” As Murray points out, “the term ‘mortal’ describes the bodies of believers from the aspect of the mortality that belongs to them in this life prior to the event of death” (291). The indwelling Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is not only a guarantee of and the means to accomplish our future bodily resurrection but is also a foretaste of and the means to impart resurrection life to our mortal bodies while we are living on earth today. Our mortal bodies, subject to weakness, tiredness, and sickness, are enlivened so that we can present our bodies a living sacrifice (12:1), walk in newness of life (6:4), present ourselves as alive from the dead with the members of our body as weapons of righteousness (v. 13), and serve in newness of spirit (7:6).

Having Life and Living

The notion of being made alive and being constituted with the divine life, as a present reality, is confirmed by the use of the two cognate words ζῶν and ζάω. Through regeneration, the believers receive and have eternal life through believing into Christ (John 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24, 40; 6:40, 47; 10:10, 28; 17:2; 20:31; 1 John 5:12-13). Having eternal life is also conditional on eating the Lord’s flesh and drinking His blood (John 6:53-54). Having eternal life is implied in

Paul’s quotation of Habakkuk 2:4: “The righteous shall have life and live by faith” (ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). The believers also live in faith (ἐν πίστει ζῶ, Gal. 2:20) and live to righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24). This living has its source in and is sustained by the Triune God and His word. Human beings live upon every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). Those who eat Christ as the bread of life also shall live because of Him (John 6:57). We have life and live through Him (1 John 4:9), we live with Him (Rom. 6:8; 2 Tim. 2:11), live together with Him (2 Cor. 13:4; 1 Thes. 5:10), and live to Him (2 Cor. 5:15; Rom. 14:8; 6:10; Gal. 2:19).⁷ We also live by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). We even live Him (Phil. 1:21), and because He lives, we also shall live (John 14:19), since Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

All of these verses refer to the current condition of the believer. Some verses also indicate the possession of eternal life and the living of believers in the future. For example, “inherit eternal life” (Matt. 19:29) and “he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live” (John 11:25; Isa. 26:19), and “the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). This refers to the inheritance and enjoyment of eternal life in the future (Matt. 19:29). The believers will enter into eternal life. This is related to the reward of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age (18:8-9; 19:17, 23), which is a realm of God’s eternal life.

The Result of Ζωοποιέω— Life in All Three Parts of Our Being

As a result of the action of ζωοποιέω, or being made alive, our entire being eventually becomes saturated with life and even becomes life. Through the initial action of being made alive at regeneration, the spirit of the believers becomes life through the indwelling of Christ (Rom. 8:10), who is the Spirit of life (v. 2). With the continual dispensing of life through Christ as the life-giving Spirit in conjunction with our cooperation by our mind being set on the spirit, our mind becomes life (v. 6). This is the mind saturated and renewed by the Spirit (Eph. 4:23). Another way of cooperating with the life-giving Spirit is seen in Romans 8:13, which says, “If by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.” This process of the enlivening even affects the body. The mortal body is given life by the Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead indwelling us (v. 11). When the faculties of our soul are saturated with life and become life through the indwelling of Christ as the life-giving Spirit (Eph. 3:16-17), this affords the way for life to be given to our mortal bodies. Eventually, at the resurrection our bodies will be transfigured and become saturated with the life of God.

The Issue of Ζωοποιέω—Unto Eternal Life

The issue or goal of the process of making the believers

alive is to constitute them into a living organism, the city of life, the New Jerusalem. The fact that the destination of the believers is to become the city of life is implied in the expression εἰς ζωὴν, “into or unto life.” The preposition εἰς implies a destination or goal and even becoming the object of the preposition. Εἰς occurs with ζωὴν (life) more than eighteen times in the New Testament. It is used to refer not only to the initial experience of salvation but also to the consummate issue of salvation.

Occasionally εἰς ζωὴν refers to the initial experience of life; for example, “We know that we have passed out of death *into life* because we love the brothers” (1 John 3:14, emphasis added; John 5:24). “To pass out of death into life is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of life. This took place in us at our regeneration” (Recovery Version, 1 John 3:14, note 1). Acts 11:18 also mentions God granting repentance *unto life* to the Gentiles. More significantly, εἰς ζωὴν refers to the enjoyment of the divine life in this age that issues in the New Jerusalem as the city of life. Life is one of the outstanding characteristics of the New Jerusalem. Within it are the river of water of life and the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2). Even its jasper green color (21:11) speaks of life, which is also a characteristic of the God of life (4:3). Only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life can enter into it (21:27), and those who wash their robes have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city (22:14). Conversely, those who take away the words of the book of prophecy lose their part from the tree of life and out of the holy city (v. 19).

The apostle John, who saw the New Jerusalem as the eternal life, also records that those who drink of the water that the Lord will give them shall by no means thirst forever; but the water will become in them a fountain of water springing up into eternal life (John 4:14). Here eternal life is the New Jerusalem as the totality of the divine life wrought into the believers. This reveals that the eternal life, the New Jerusalem, is the destination of the flowing Triune God—the Father as the fountain of life (Jer. 2:13), the Son as the spring of life, and the Spirit as the river of life (John 7:37-39). As the Triune God, as this life-giving water, saturates the believers, they become so constituted with eternal life that they even become eternal life, the constitution of eternal life through their eternal dependence on the Spirit as the river of water of life (Rev. 22:1-2).

In this light, in the present age we need to sow to the Spirit so as to reap eternal life (Gal. 6:8). Believers need to sow and reap the seed of the gospel, receiving wages and gathering fruit unto eternal life (John 4:36). We need to “lay hold on the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Tim. 6:12). We also need to work for the food that

abides unto eternal life (John 6:27) and hate our soul-life in this world to keep it unto eternal life (12:25). We need to walk through the narrow gate and on the constricted way that leads to life (Matt. 7:14). Finally, Jude 21 says that we need to keep ourselves “in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Conclusion

Ζωοποιέω is rich in meaning. It literally means to make alive or make living. It implies a giving or a dispensing of life and even imbuing regenerated believers with the qualities of that life, making them the same as God in life and nature but not in the Godhead. This is the eternal economy of God. Abraham believed in God as the One who gives life to the dead. The law given 430 years after, entering alongside God’s eternal economy, was unable to give life (Gal. 3:17, 21). The Father as the source of life gives life to the Son, and the Son also gives life. Through His process of human living, death, and resurrection, in which He was Himself enlivened, He became the life-giving Spirit to impart life into the believers (who were spiritually dead). We have eternal life and can live by eternal life in this age as eternal life is imparted to our spirit, soul, and even mortal bodies. This implies a process in which our entire tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body—becomes life. The ultimate consummation of this process is our becoming the New Jerusalem, the city of life, strongly implied in the expression unto (εἰς) eternal life.

by Roger Good

Notes

¹There is some uncertainty whether ζωοποιέω is related to the adjective ζωός or the noun ζῶον. According to the spelling ζωοποιέω (used in Nestle-Aland’s 27th edition Greek text) it would seem that it is related more directly to the noun ζῶον. However, ζωοποιέω is also spelled ζωοποιέω (lacking the iota subscript, as in Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon) which would relate it more directly to the adjective ζωός. Regardless of the source of the prefix, both words are related to the noun ζωή.

²In 1 Timothy 6:13 the word ζωοποιέω occurs in some manuscripts. However, most manuscripts read ζωογονέω (preserve alive) or (bring forth alive.)

³The word ζωοποιέω is translated “give life” (John 5:21 (twice); 6:63; Rom. 4:17; 8:11; Gal. 3:21; 2 Cor. 3:6) and “make alive” (1 Cor. 15:22, 36; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; 1 Pet. 3:18). In the Old Testament ζωοποιέω translates the piel of *hayah* (to live) meaning “to cause to be alive.” It has the sense of giving life and making alive, especially when referring to God in a general way as the One who gives life to all creation (Neh. 9:6) and the One who puts to death and makes alive (2 Kings 5:7). Sometimes it also has a meaning similar to ζωογονέω (to preserve alive) (Job 36:6; Eccl. 7:12). The noun derived from

ζωοποιέω, ζωοποιήσιν, occurs twice (Ezra 9:8, 9) and has the sense of a reviving. Older English versions such as the King James Version and Darby's New Translation mostly use the word *quicken* to translate ζωοποιέω. *Quicken* is a causative verb derived from the adjective *quick* (from the Old English *cwicu* meaning "alive"), and it means "to make quick, to make alive," or "to vitalize." This sense is lost on most modern English readers who would take quicken at first glance to mean "to make more rapid" or "accelerate" or perhaps "to enliven" in the sense of "to stimulate or motivate activity."

⁴Some commentators also consider that "God who gives life to the dead" refers to giving Abraham and Sarah the ability to beget and bear Isaac (cf. Rom. 4:19), in addition to the resurrection of Christ (vv. 24-25), for example, "St. Paul has in his mind the two acts which he compares and which are both embraced under this word, (1) the Birth of Isaac, (2) the Resurrection of Christ" (Sanday and Headlam 113). However, the birth of Isaac may be better taken as an example of God's creative ability in the natural realm, of His calling things not being as being.

⁵John also alludes to the same fact of nature employed by Paul to prove the resurrection when He likens the enlivening of the believers through Christ's resurrection to a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying to bring forth much fruit (John 12:24).

⁶According to the view of many Catholic scholars, life-giving through eating Christ as the bread of life takes place during the partaking of the elements at the Lord's table (the Holy

Communion or Eucharist). Protestant scholars largely reject this interpretation and consider that eating has spiritual significance related to believing in Christ and His raising us up in the last day (John 6:54, 39, 40, 44).

⁷In addition, Acts 17:28 states, "In Him we live and move and are" (ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν). This does not indicate regeneration per se, but rather God's sustaining of all human life. Ζάω is used in its classical Greek sense here to indicate life as opposed to death.

Works Cited

- Alford, Henry. *Alford's Greek Testament, an Exegetical and Critical Commentary*. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980.
- Bultmann, Rudolph, "ζωοποιέω." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Christ and the Spirit*. Vol. 1. Christology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Murray, John. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.
- Lee, Witness. *Footnotes*. Recovery Version of the Bible. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 2003.
- Sanday, William, and Arthur C. Headlam. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895.

Footnotes from the Recovery Version of the Bible

"So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living **soul**'; the last Adam became a life-giving **Spirit**. But the spiritual is not first but the soulish, then the spiritual: The first man is out of the earth, earthy; the **second** man is out of heaven." (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

Soul, Spirit: Through creation Adam became a living soul with a soulish body. Through resurrection Christ became a life-giving Spirit with a spiritual body. Adam as a living soul is natural; Christ as a life-giving Spirit is resurrected. First, in incarnation He became flesh for redemption (John 1:14, 29); then, in resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit for the imparting of life (John 10:10b). Through incarnation He had a soulish body, as Adam had; through resurrection He has a spiritual body. His soulish body has become a spiritual one through resurrection. Now He is a life-giving Spirit in resurrection, with a spiritual body, ready to be received by His believers. When we believe into Him, He enters our spirit, and we are joined to Him as the life-giving Spirit. Hence, we become one spirit with Him (6:17). Our spirit is made alive and is resurrected with Him. Eventually, our present soulish body will become a spiritual body in resurrection, just like His (vv. 52-54; Phil. 3:21).

Second: Christ is not only the last Adam (v. 45) but also the second man. The first Adam (v. 45) is the beginning of mankind; the last Adam is the ending. As the first man, Adam is the head of the old creation, representing it in creation. As the second man, Christ is the Head of the new creation, representing it in resurrection. In the entire universe there are only two men: the first man, Adam, including all his descendants, and the second man, Christ, comprising all His believers. We believers were included in the first man by birth and became a part of the second man by regeneration. Our believing has transferred us out of the first man into the second. In regard to our being part of the first man, our origin is the earth and our nature is earthy. In regard to our being part of the second man, our origin is God and our nature is heavenly.