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Ἀρραβών as Pledge in Second Corinthians*

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This article argues that ἀρραβών in 2 Corinthians (1.22 and 5.5) does not mean 'down payment' or 'first installment' but 'pledge' without any sense of *pars pro toto*. After showing that the meaning of the word depends on its context, the study goes on to examine the two occurrences of the word, concluding that Paul either appeals to the Spirit as God's pledge for his apostolicity (1.22) or as a pledge for the surety of bodily resurrection (5.5). The common view that ἀρραβών depicts the Spirit as the present realization of salvation is thus exegetically unfounded.

Keywords: the Spirit, pledge, down payment, eschatology, apostleship, resurrection.

Introduction: Ἀρραβών in Paul's Eschatology

Paul twice depicts the Spirit as ἀρραβών in 2 Corinthians (1.22; 5.5). This metaphor is considered by most to be one of the strongest pieces of evidence for Paul's realized or inaugurated eschatology. Paul calls the Spirit ἀρραβών, and since the word means 'down payment' or 'first instalment', so the argument runs, he is in effect claiming that the Spirit is not merely a pledge for future salvation but is itself part of it, guaranteeing for that reason its full realization in the future.[1] Just as a down payment constitutes part of the whole payment, so the Spirit signifies actual, albeit partial, realization of the promised salvation. While its full

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1 To name a few, G. Vos, *Pauline Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994/1930) 165: 'Now the Spirit possesses this significance of "pledge" for no other reason than that He constitutes a provisional instalment of what in its fullness will be received hereafter'; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Black's NT Commentaries; Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1973) 80: 'The Spirit is the divine agent that realizes resurrection (i. 9), "eschatological existence," the life of the age to come, in the present'. Thus, M. J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 208 translates the term as 'a down payment and pledge'.

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realization still awaits the future, with the possession of τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος believers already possess salvation even in the present.[2] Not surprisingly, scholars find in this concept a beautiful expression of the eschatological tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet'.[3] Scholars may quibble with the details, but the overall contour of the interpretation presented above seems to be endorsed by most interpreters of Paul, which makes a detailed documentation pointless. The burden of this study is to demonstrate that this predominant interpretation is flawed on many counts.

Is ἀρραβών a Technical Term?

Perhaps one can begin by pointing out the rather obvious lexicographical slip involved in this widespread interpretation. This majority view pretty much depends on its decision to take ἀρραβών 'literally', namely, as a commercial *term. tech.* referring to 'down payment' or 'first instalment'.[4] The word is not used extensively in ancient Greek literature but those few occurrences cited and discussed in the standard reference works such as *TDNT*, *EDNT*, or *NIDDNT* just seem enough to show that the word can certainly be used in the sense of 'deposit', thereby giving the common view a *prima facie* probability. For example, Aristotle in his *Politics* (1259a) records a story about Thales who reportedly 'paid deposits for all the olive-presses in Miletus and Chios' (ἀρραβῶνας διαδοῦναι τῶν ἐλαιουργίων τῶν τ᾽ ἐν Μιλήτῳ καὶ Χίῳ πάντων) to secure a monopoly and made

2 V. P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968) 134: 'the first installment of the promised future inheritance'. J. Behm, 'ἀρραβών', *TDNT* I.475: 'The Spirit whom God has given them is for Christians the guarantee of their full future possession of salvation'. More recent interpreters also remain faithful to this line of interpretation, e.g., O. Becker, 'Gift, Pledge, Corban', *NIDNTT* II.39–40; T. Paige, 'Holy Spirit', *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993) 411; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996) 118. Also K. Erlemann, 'Der Geist als ἀρραβών (2 Kor 5,5) im Kontext der paulinischen Eschatologie', *ZNW* 83 (1992) 202–23.

3 G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 294: 'the unmistakable evidence of salvation as "already but not yet"'. C. K. Barrett, *Paul: An Introduction to His Thought* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 132:'the clearest of all the terms Paul uses to denote the place of the Spirit in his eschatological system'. J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 421. N. T. Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (London: SPCK, 2005) 146 presents the Spirit's being the ἀρραβών as 'one of the major eschatological tasks Paul ascribes to the Spirit'. From the way he expounds the theme, however, this is easily the most important meaning of the Spirit in Paul's theology as a whole (pp. 135–6).

4 P. V. Furnish, *2 Corinthians* (Anchor Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1995) 137: 'a technical term for the first installment of a total amount due'. In most cases, this is the only information about the word interpreters tell their readers. E.g., C. M. Pate, *End of the Age* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 152; Fee, *Presence*, 293.

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a great profit with it. Or, in the *Speeches* of Isaeus one hears of a certain Diocles who 'asserted that he had actually bought some of the requisites for the funeral and had himself paid a deposit for the rest' (τῶν δὲ ἀρραβῶν δεδωκέναι αὐτὸς φάσκων, 8.23).[5] In both cases, the stories involve real, monetary transactions and the word refers to a real monetary deposit which naturally constitutes a part of the full payment and in that way makes the transaction legally binding. Moulton and Milligan also produce many instances of similar usage from non-literary sources. For example, in *P. Oxy.*, 299 the writer asks the recipient of the letter named Apion to send him 8 drachmae, the money he had paid Lampon the mouse-catcher as the earnest money (ἀραβῶνα) for catching mice. In this case too, ἀρραβών refers to real monetary deposit (8 drachmae) which will be added to the remaining balance to complete the total payment. The authors, having surveyed many such instances in their sources, confidently conclude that the 'vernacular usage amply confirms the NT sense of an "earnest," or a part given in advance of what will be bestowed fully afterwards'.[6] With the meaning 'down payment' so clearly attested, there then seems to be no reason to question the *opinio communis*.[7]

It is not as simple as that, however. From the fact that ἀρραβών can mean 'down payment' in certain circumstances, it does not follow that it must carry the same meaning all the time. While it is true that the word can certainly mean 'deposit' which 'pays part of the total debt', typically in a commercial context, it is equally clear that it can easily drop the sense of *pars pro toto* and simply becomes 'guarantee' or 'pledge'. This is especially the case when the word is used *figuratively* in *non-commercial* settings, where the ἀρραβών given now is not of the same kind as what it intends to secure. For example, when Christ is described as 'the ἀρραβών of our righteousness' in Polycarp, *Philippians* 8.1, the point is simply that Christ is the one who makes sure that believers 'will attain to righteousness at the last judgment',[8] not that Christ himself is part of that righteousness. Or when Antiphon (*Frag.* 123.6) describes 'skillfullness' (τὴν τέχνην) as 'ἀρραβών of life', his point is not that skillfullness constitutes part of life itself but simply that it is something that 'gaurantees' one's life.[9] These examples clearly show that the idea of *pars pro toto* is by no means something

5 These passages are referred to without discussion in *TDNT* and *NIDNTT*.

6 J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930) 76.

7 For an argument for the word's being a legal and religious technical term, see Erlemann, 'Der Geist', 203–8. However, from the fact that the word has a definite meaning in a certain area, it does not follow that it has to have the same meaning in other areas too.

8 In addtion to the references in *TDNT* and *NIDNTT*, also see Sand, 'ἀρραβών', *EDNT* I.158. The author of Hebrews describes Jesus as the 'ἔγγυος of a better covenant' (7.22).

9 This passage is cited in both *TDNT* and *NIDNTT* as 'figurative' and 'metaphorical' respectively. See n. 2. They also list Menander, *Frag.* 697 as another case of metaphorical use.

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innate in the word itself but something that can disappear when context does not require it.

More significantly, one can also observe that the word does not necessarily mean 'down payment' even in commercial contexts, for which the Septuagint provides an excellent case in point. In the only occurrence of the word in Paul's Scripture, the word clearly means 'pledge', not 'down payment' (Gen 38.17–20). The signet, the cord, and the staff Judah gave Tamar are 'pledges' for the promised young goat, namely, items to be returned on completion of the expected payment, not items intended as part of the real payment.[10] In a place where the deposit given is of a different kind from the promised payment itself (young goat), the notion of *pars pro toto* becomes pointless.

From our discussion above, it must be clear that ἀρραβών is by no means a commercial technical term as is typically claimed. The favored meaning of 'down payment' or 'first installment' is restricted to certain commercial settings where the word refers to literal (mostly *monetary*) 'deposit' which, being of the same kind (i.e., money) as the forthcoming payment, naturally forms part of the latter. On the other hand, in places where ἀρραβών is something other than money and thus what is given now is not of the same kind as the real payment to be made later, the thought of *pars pro toto* automatically becomes irrelevant even in a commercial context and thus disappears, leaving only the idea of 'guarantee' or 'pledge' on the stage.[11] The notion of *pars pro toto* is not a built-in component of the word itself but an idea generated by the nature of the transaction it refers to. It does make a transaction binding, but it is not necessarily part of the actual payment.

Thus, the scholarly habit of assuming the *literal* (i.e., commercial) meaning of ἀρραβών for Paul's *figurative* use of it is lexicographically ill-advised.[12] One is not justified to assume that since ἀρραβών means 'down payment' in certain commercial settings, it should also mean the same thing in Paul's theological argument where it is introduced as a figure of speech.[13] For the same reason, one cannot assume that the word should always carry the same meaning even in Paul, since the meaning of a metaphor will vary according to the kind of argument he

10 In both *TNDT* and *NIDNTT* the passage is referred to as the only case of such a meaning. P. Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 42 acknowledges this but ignores its exegetical significance.

11 See *LSJ* and *BDAG ad loc.*

12 Most exegetes seem to make this mistake, e.g., N. Watson, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Epworth Commentaries; London: Epworth, 1993) 14; J. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (SP; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999) 30 and most others.

13 An instructive case in point is J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Macmillan, 1895) 323 who imposes this point on Paul, claiming that the Spirit itself must be part of salvation. Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, 41 refers to him with approval.

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actually develops. The precise meaning of ἀρραβών should be worked out inductively, i.e., paying close attention to the way Paul actually develops his argument. The context determines the meaning of the word, not *vice versa*. One has first to grasp what Paul is doing with his figure of speech instead of assuming its meaning in advance and impose it upon his argument.

Advance Payment of Salvation or Pledge of Paul's Apostleship? – The Spirit as ἀρραβών in Paul's Apologia (1.22)

Paul's first use of ἀρραβών occurs in 2 Corinthians 1: 'But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment' (v. 22, NRSV). The NRSV reflects the majority view, rendering the word as 'a first installment', presumably of salvation which is expected to be given fully in the time to come. Is this reading, assumed to be obvious by most,[14] justified by the flow of Paul's argument itself?

As is widely acknowledged, the context is Paul's *apologia* for his apostolic integrity made necessary by his changed itinerary, an important point to remember for correct interpretation of Paul's line of argument. The paragraph (vv. 15–22) breaks into three parts: Paul's direct apologies in vv. 15–17 and in vv. 23–24, with vv. 18–22 intervening in between as a theological backup.

Even in the middle, theological, section (vv. 18–22), Paul's aim remains the same: he attempts to lend more weight to his self-defense by appealing to the trustworthiness of God and Christ.[15] As an apostle appointed by the will of God (1.1), Paul's apostolic disposition carefully imitates the simplicity[16] and trustworthiness of God Himself (1.12). Surely, God is faithful; by clear implication, the same goes for Paul and his associates too (1.18).[17] Moreover, Paul, as God-appointed apostle, preaches the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Once again, this Christ, proclaimed by Paul and his associates, is one who is utterly trustworthy, since it is in him that all God's promises find their confirming 'Yes' (vv. 19–20).[18] Now it is in

14 See n. 12 above.

15 This is frequently observed by commentators. E.g., F. J. Matera, *II Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003) 54–5.

16 Or 'holiness'. The textual problem here does not concern us.

17 So Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 146.

18 As N. A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 112–36 argues, the point is confirmation or validation, not fulfilment (cf. 7.1). *Contra* most exegetes such as Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 34–5; Best, *Second Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1987) 18; R. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1986) 27; Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 146–7. Even in Galatians, Christ comes to the picture as the carrier or reinstater, not the fulfiller of the promise of the land, as I have argued in Y.-G. Kwon, *Eschatology in Galatians: Rethinking Paul's Response to the Crisis in Galatia* (WUNT II/183; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 101–29 (122–5).

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this Christ that God establishes Paul together with the Corinthians (v. 21a). Being thus established in the trustworthy Christ, Paul himself cries 'Amen', thereby praising God's mighty glory (v. 21b). What Paul tries to say with all this is that it is impossible for him, commissioned by the faithful God and preaching the trustworthy 'Yes' of Christ and standing firm in him, to be inconsistent as some of the Corinthians accuse him.[19] It is in this apologetic context that Paul refers to the Spirit as an ἀρραβών. Thus, the immediate purpose of Paul's referring to the Spirit is to add yet another, pneumatological, weight to this theological and Christological *self-defense*, a point well acknowledged by most interpreters.

Verses 21–22 (cf. 5.5; Gal 3.5) give a fourfold description of what God did or does to 'us'. Since Paul carefully distinguishes between 'you' on the one hand and 'me' or 'us' on the other throughout the passage (vv. 12–22), the 'us' in these verses too must refer to Paul (including his associates under his auspices).[20] To be sure, it is 'together with you' that God establishes Paul in Christ,[21] but even there the immediate object of God's action is 'us' which stands in clear distinction from 'you'.[22] All the other dimensions of God's action, i.e., 'anointing', 'sealing', and 'giving the ἀρραβών of the Spirit', are strictly reserved for 'us', without 'you' entering the picture at all. That is, in vv. 21–22 Paul is describing what God has done and is still doing to himself (and his associates), and therefore, his reference to the Spirit in v. 22 should also be taken in the same way, namely, as concerning his apostolic status, the very issue presently at stake between him and his Corinthian converts.[23]

Paul says that he has been anointed and sealed by God. Here 'anointing' clearly refers to God's act of appointing him to the office of apostleship (cf. Isa 61.1).[24] In a similar vein, 'putting a seal' upon him signifies God's act of confirming his ownership of Paul as his apostle (cf. NIV).[25] Given the natural association of

19 Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 35: 'his reliability in this matter participates in the reliability of his gospel proclamation, in the faithfulness of Christ and God'. This is acknowledged by most commentators.

20 Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, 43, among others.

21 For many this phrase provides the grounds for taking vv. 21–22 as including the Corinthians or believers as a whole. E.g., S. J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians* (NIV Application Commentaries; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 85.

22 *Contra* Fee, *Presence*, 289–96, who, while acknowledging that the reference is primarily to Paul, still takes vv. 21–22 broadly.

23 It is well acknowledged, as by Fee, *Presence*, 289. And yet the point is mostly forgotten in their actual exegesis which often treats Paul's *apology* as if it were a *theological* discussion (of the Spirit).

24 *BDAG*, 1091. 'Anointing' may refer to baptism, but in Paul's case the latter practically coincides with his commission.

25 *BDAG*, 1091 and 980 respectively. Debate about a possible reference to baptism is irrelevant for us.

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both 'anointing' and 'sealing' with the gift of the Spirit, it seems reasonable to suppose that all three aorist participles refer to what happened at conversion (or baptism) which was typically accompanied by the outpouring of the Spirit (1 Thess 1.5–6; Gal 3.2–5; 1 Cor 2.1–5). Both 'anointing' and 'sealing' then explain the significance of that experience, with the bestowal of the Spirit providing a visible sign for it (cf. Luke 4.18; Acts 10.38; Eph 1.13).

It is in this context that Paul calls the Spirit ἀρραβών. Taking, with most exegetes,[26] τοῦ πνεύματος to be epexegetical, one is bound to ask: ἀρραβών of what? While Paul himself does not bother to define it, most exegetes assume that here Paul means ἀρραβών of *salvation*, taken broadly.[27]

However, the abrupt appearance of the idea of salvation in the middle of Paul's apostolic self-defense seems quite out of place. Both up to this point and in the following one fails to find the idea, since Paul's singular concern throughout is defending his apostolic authenticity, not expounding his soteriology. He has been saying that God's anointing is 'a further pledge' of his trustworthiness, and that '[h]e who carries the impress of the seal of the Spirit of truth is not faithless and insincere',[28] statements which serve Paul's apologetic purpose most effectively. In an argument like this, the talk of a down payment of salvation is uncalled-for and thus ill fits the context of Paul's self-defense.

Here one can ask how a reference to his possessing (partial) *salvation* can support his claim of sincerity. Hughes speculates that sincere faithfulness is 'absolutely central to such a transaction' of salvation (cf. 1 Cor 3.15), but such a far-fetched explanation only accentuates the awkwardness of the idea in the present context. Martin, assuming that the section is 'Paul's theological exposition of God's covenantal faithfulness', tries to turn Paul's apology into theology by suggesting that Paul 'has more to defend than his reputation'.[29] But both vv. 15–17 and vv. 23–24 which bracket our passage do not show any sign that Paul wants to go beyond the immediate purpose of defending himself. Thus, Lambrecht, detecting this logical incongruity, considers the whole of vv. 19–22 to be 'a remarkable theological digression' about Paul's 'vision of salvation history and

26 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 28; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 30, and most others.

27 Furnish, *Ethics*, 134; Paige, 'Holy Spirit', 411; Harris, *II Corinthians*, 208; M. E. Thrall, *2 Corinthians 1–7* (ICC; Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1994) 158. Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 137 even speaks of 'the present *fulfillment* of . . . salvation' (emphasis original). Harris, *II Corinthians*, 208, perceives the ambiguity in Paul's language here, but resolves it by a reference to the data in Eph 1.14.

28 P. E. Hughes, *Second Corinthian*, 41.

29 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 26–7. He thinks that Paul here makes 'a cryptically written apologia respecting his apostolic ministry', but what about this apology is so cryptic?

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Jesus Christ'.[30] But why do we have to bring in the unwarranted idea of salvation in the first place only to complain of a digression?[31]

Put in the context of a self-defense, the most natural meaning of ἀρραβών seems to be that of 'pledge' in relation to Paul's apostleship: the Spirit is God's own pledge that he has indeed 'anointed Paul and put a seal upon him' as his entrusted apostle.[32]

Of particular importance in this respect is Paul's association of ἀρραβών with other commercial metaphors such as 'confirming' and 'sealing', a rhetorical move clearly designed to magnify the force of his claim.[33] Here the common denominator of them all is the idea of 'guarantee' or 'pledge', while the thought of *pars pro toto* (down payment), potentially present only in ἀρραβών, is missing in the other two. Thus, as these related figures work in concert with one another to produce the intended, accumulated effect, it is inevitable that the common idea of 'guarantee' or 'pledge' receives the intended rhetorical momentum, while the idea of 'down payment', not found in the other two, is dropped out as irrelevant. In short, Paul's point is simply that the Spirit means God's confirmation and authentication of his apostolic integrity.[34] The Spirit as the 'down payment' of future salvation is an idea not found in Paul's apology in vv. 21–21.[35]

Our conclusion receives further confirmation from Paul's repeated affirmation of the same point in the letter. For example, the claim made in v. 21–22 is resumed in chap. 3.[36] Here the polemic gets much more biting, as Paul pits his

30 So Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 35. Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 145 considers it as 'a kind of theological excursus', but he is much more sensitive to the apologetic function of the section.

31 Interestingly, D. J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999) 189 n. 14 thinks the word ἀρραβών is 'an awkward concept to apply to a salvation' which he considers to be something not yet earned.

32 Living Bible seems to perceive this point: 'as guarantee that we belong to him'. This insight is immediately muddled up, however, by the addition that reproduces the common view: 'as first instalment of all that he is going to give us'. Though the focus is somewhat different, Kerr's distinction between 'a contract for services' and 'a contract for sale' is of considerable merit in exposing the problem of the dominant view. See A. J. Kerr, 'Notes and Studies: ΑΡΡΑΒΩΝ', *JTS* 39 (1988) 92–7 (95).

33 Cf. Fee, *Presence*, 290–96.

34 G. M. Burge represents a rare exception in that he clearly perceives this point: 'Here, however, he aligns *arrabōn* with "seal" (*sphragis*, *sphragizomai*), implying that this Spirit is not only a pledge for the future but God's mark of ownership. And in this particular case, it is a seal of apostolic ministry'. 'First Fruits, Down Payment', *DPL*, 301.

35 Woodcock clearly perceives that ἀρραβών here cannot mean 'down payment', but regrettably, he too misses the context of Paul's self-defense. E. Woodcock, 'The Seal of the Holy Spirit', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (1998) 139–63, especially 150–56.

36 Beside commentaries, also see S. J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996). The apologetic function of Paul's argument is summarized in the

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own ministry of life and righteousness against Moses' ministry of death and curse. As in 1.21–22 the issue is ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν, Paul's apostolic authority. His apostolate comes from God (v. 5) since it is God himself, not any human agent (cf. Gal 1.1) who has empowered him to become διάκονος καινῆς διαθήκης (v. 6). This empowering commission, of course, is given him οὐ μέλανι ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θεοῦ ζῶντος (v. 3) or οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος (v. 6). Thus, here too, the Spirit is appealed to as the hallmark of Paul's apostolic ministry.[37] Empowered and supported by this Spirit Paul worked as God's apostle, of which the undeniable result is the founding of the Corinthian church. For this reason he calls them his 'letter' of recommendation (v. 2),[38] meaning that the very existence of the Corinthian church, established through the work of the Spirit, ratifies that he is indeed God's true apostle.[39]

Paul makes the same point in 12.11–12 too. He complains that he should have been commended by the Corinthians (v. 11), which is practically the same as saying that they are, or should be, his letter of recommendation (cf. 3.2). He insists that the real sign of a true apostle is not a letter written by humans but 'signs, wonders and miracles (powers)', which is just another way of referring to the powerful manifestation of the Spirit mediated by Paul to the Corinthians (v. 12).[40] Once again, the Spirit, clearly working in Paul's ministry, proves the authenticity of Paul's apostolic commission.

Gathering our discussion thus far, we can draw the following conclusion: Paul's point in 2 Cor 1.21–22 then is that the Spirit, given by God and manifest in

conclusion, especially pp. 444–51. His earlier work on 3.1–3, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14–3:3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) is also worth consulting.

37 Here the Spirit comes into the picture as a 'functional concept', as Hafemann, *Suffering*, 206 notes.

38 M. Hooker, '"Beyond the things that are written": St Paul's use of Scripture', *NTS* 27 (1981) 295–309 calls this 'a brilliant metaphor' (296).

39 This seems to explain the rather cryptic 'in our hearts' in 3.2. The Spirit given 'in our hearts' (1.22) has 'written' Paul's letter of recommendation, the Corinthian church, and for that reason Paul can say that the letter is written 'in our hearts' (3.2).

40 It may be true that 'Paul is also noticeably reticent in his reference to the "signs, portents and miracles" which he had performed', but it is wide of the mark to pit this 'display of the Holy Spirit and powers' (1 Cor 2.4–5) against the hardship Paul had endured. *Contra* Watson, *Second Corinthians*, 138 and Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 212. As Hafemann rightly concludes, 'it becomes impossible to pit Paul's suffering against his possession of the Spirit', since in Paul's thought they are 'not in tension with one another'. *Suffering*, 227 and 208 respectively. Paul consistently presents the powerful working of the Spirit as *the* hallmark of his apostolic ministry, as he does in 3.1–18 and 12.12 (cf. Phil 3.3; Rom 15.17–18), which is well reflected on his unmistakable preoccupation with the Spirit in his ministry (e.g., 1 Thess 1.5–6; Gal 3.1–5; 1 Cor 2.1–5).

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his ministry with the Corinthians, is God's confirmation and pledge of his apostolic integrity. It is in this sense that he speaks of God's giving him τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος.

First Installment or Pledge?: The Spirit and Resurrection (5.5)

Paul uses ἀρραβών one more time in 2 Cor 5.5 in a context where he contemplates on his life in the present and the one after death or at the *parousia*. Expressing a strong hope for his future, he confidently declares that 'God has prepared us for this very thing and given us τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος' (5.5). Once again, the genitive seems epexegetical, meaning that God has given the Spirit itself as an ἀρραβών.[41] Here the Spirit is presented as the ἀρραβών of αὐτὸ τοῦτο, the object of Paul's hope, described as 'over-clothing of the heavenly dwelling' or the 'swallowing up of death by life' (v. 4). In the following verses, Paul expresses the same hope in terms of 'being at home with the Lord' which is set in contrast to his present life in which he is 'away from the Lord' (vv. 6–7). Despite some ambiguities,[42] it seems safe to say that this hope focuses on the final event of 'bodily resurrection' (4.14; 5.10). Thus in this context Paul introduces the Spirit as the ἀρραβών of the future resurrection of the body (cf. 1 Cor 15.50–57; Phil 3.10–12). Then, unlike in 1.21–22, the context is now clearly soteriological.

Do we then find evidence for Paul's view of the Spirit as a 'first instalment', i.e., a real, though partial, fulfilment of the promised hope, as is typically assumed? NRSV is somewhat cautious here, translating the word 'a guarantee'. But Martin, as most others, goes much further, reading out of it an idea of 'a down payment, something to assure that the "final installment will come"': 'God gave part of himself to be enjoyed now, as well as offering us the assurance that eternal life awaits the Christian'.[43] Matera sums up the dominant interpretation succintly.

> By saying that God has prepared believers for resurrection life by giving them the Spirit as a "pledge," Paul means that the presence of the Spirit in the life of believers is the first installment or down payment of the fullness of life that will come with the resurrection of the dead.[44]

As Fee puts it, our glorious future is guaranteed 'precisely because the down payment of that future, the Spirit himself, is already our present possession. . . . Thus, we live in the present, "already" but "not yet"'.[45]

41 See n. 26 above.

42 See the discussion in Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 97–102. Our point, however, does not depend on one's decision about the precise nature of the future Paul is expecting.

43 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 108. Also Harris, *Second Corinthians*, 392.

44 Matera, *II Corinthians*, 123.

45 Fee, *Presence*, 326. Not surprisingly, a reference to 'the new age' is not hard to find. Paige, 'Holy Spirit', 411; Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 149; Harris, *Second Corinthians*, 393–4.

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This is fine theology, but one drawn almost exclusively from the assumed sense of the word ἀρραβών itself which is invariably taken to mean 'down payment' or 'first instalment'. As in 1.21–22, Paul's use of the word is *figurative* but scholars insist on the *literal* sense of 'down payment' without arguing for it. As we observed at the beginning section of our study, however, the word falls far short of being a technical term; the meaning 'down payment' cannot be assumed, unless required by the thrust of the argument itself. Is the common view supported by what Paul actually says in the passage?

A sober look at Paul's argument suggests that the answer has to be in the negative. A few observations are in order. First, as is widely noted, Paul's discussion is marked by a series of sharp and consistent contrasts,[46] even opposition: outer/inner, momentary/eternal, light/weighty, groaning and troubles/glory, seen/unseen (4.16–18), earthly/heavenly, unclothing/clothing, being in the body/being with the Lord, faith/*eidos* (5.1–10). This sort of contrastive diction usually demands a clear-cut, disjunctive either/or type of thinking rather than a harmonizing or dialectic combination of the two, and it is certainly better to avoid the line of interpretation which hampers this antithetical clarity, unless required by the logic of the argument itself. Paul's use of ἀρραβών, itself an ambiguous metaphor, provides no such indication. Nowhere in the context do we find any clear sign that he is smoothing over his own antithetical logic.

Secondly, in line with his antithetical thinking, Paul's description of the present is marked by a consistent eschatological reservation.[47] He explicitly says that the future glory is still 'invisible' in contradistinction to the suffering which is very much 'visible' in the present (4.17–18). This explicit denial of the visibility of future glory would be a highly unlikely, if not impossible, move to make, if he considered the present possession of the Spirit as an 'advance enjoyment' of that glory. If he wanted to remind his readers of its present, albeit partial, realization, why would he mislead them by saying that this glory is still 'invisible'?

Likewise, the present life 'in the body' is also depicted as one in which he is 'away from the Lord' (5.6). Once again, this is quite a striking statement to make which naturally renders any suggestion of present fulfilment out of place. In effect, saying that he is away from the Lord amounts to saying that the expected future is not visible yet.[48] One may wish to qualify Paul's statement in light of his

46 It is widely noted, e.g., Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, 156ff.; Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 80; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 97. Significantly enough, however, this observation is not brought to bear on their actual interpretations of ἀρραβών.

47 This led some interpreters to the view that Paul here fights against the 'over-realized' eschatology of the Corinthian Teachers. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 107–8, referring to A. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* (SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983) 67.

48 Martin's comment that 'God gave part of himself to be enjoyed now' flies in the face of what Paul says in 5.6.

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theology as a whole, but it will not do to attempt in this particular context to blunt the polemical edge produced by such a 'drastic' manner of speaking.

Thirdly, the repeated references to 'groaning' further heighten the note of 'not yet' (5.2, 4). Simply taken, the imagery of groaning in suffering does not go well with the idea of present fulfilment at all. Some argue that such groaning, prompted by the Spirit, is itself the very sign of our having the foretaste of what we long for, [49] but that is a speculation which finds no exegetical ground in the text.

Finally, the reference to the final judgment also adds to the note of eschatological reservation (5.10–11). The statement that in the future one *will* have to receive what is due one according to one's performance makes any suggestion of present possession hollow and therefore out of context. The resurrection Paul is hoping for is not the continuation, extension, or consummation, of what believers already possess but the recompense which will be meted out as the result of what they do in their present life.[50]

One may point to those places where Paul seems to reveal the common view of the 'already and not yet'. For example, does not Paul's talk of 'our ongoing inner renewal' (4.16) which is said to be 'from glory to glory' (3.18) suggest 'an already present participation in that future glory'?[51] This is not the case, however. Paul uses 'glory' in many different senses;[52] it does not have to be the same 'eschatological' glory all the time. In fact, Paul even attributes 'glory' to the ministry of Moses which he unabashedly denigrates as ἡ διακονία τοῦ θανάτου and ἡ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως in opposition to his own ministry of life and righteousness (3.7, 9). Then, is this 'glory' too some sort of advance manifestation of that eschatological glory that Paul is anticipating to experience in the future, namely, bodily resurrection (5.1–5)?

49 Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 212 and 214 who speaks of both 'positive' and 'negative' groanings. Similarly, Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 104; H. Balz, 'στενάζω', *EDNT* III.272. That believers' 'groaning' comes in the context of strong expectation does not change the fact that 'groaning' itself depicts the reality of 'not yet' rather than 'already'. In Romans 8.22–23, the creation, which does *not* have 'the first fruit of the Spirit', 'groans and suffers' all the same, just like 'us' who *do* have it. As v. 4 ('weighing down') makes clear, '[t]he reason for groaning is first of all the suffering'. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 84.

50 Even though Harris, *Second Corinthians*, 208 notes, 'As long as, but only as long as, that heritage of glory remains unpossessed and an object of hope, the Spirit functions as its deposit and, guarantee', he still renders the word as 'down payment'.

51 Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 81; Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 191. R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 2007) 503 appeals to this passage in his discussion of Rom 8.17 to argue that the glory there is 'both a present and a future bonus'.

52 Though her concern is different, Morna Hooker ('Paul's use of Scripture', 298) perceives the different nuances in Paul's use of 'glory': 'Paul is using the idea of glory in two different ways in the two paragraphs'.

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However one interprets 'from glory to glory',[53] the 'glory' of Christ which believers are presently 'seeing as in a mirror' (3.3.18; 4.4, 6)[54] must not be confused with the 'glory' associated with future bodily resurrection and thus still 'invisible' (4.17–18; 5.7).[55] As is indicated by a comparison of 4.10–12 and 4.14, the inner, moral, renewal in the present and the resurrection of the body at the judgment, though necessarily related, are not the same, just as the present manifestation of the life-giving power is not identical with eternal life which is to be given as the reward for our life in the Spirit (Gal 6.7–9; Rom 6.22–23; 8.6, 10, 13). The final transformation or the resurrection of the body *follows* our moral transformation as the reward for that life-long process, not as the consummating part of that process itself.

Wider Contextual Considerations

Wider contextual considerations further reveal the problems inherent in the *opinio communis*. First, it is instructive to observe that the idea of 'down payment' or 'first instalment' necessarily requires corresponding concepts such as 'wholeness' or 'fulness', concepts *not* found in Paul, either in our passage or in any other places. Typical is Best's statement: believers 'already possess the first instalment of the *fulness* of God's salvation and are certain to receive it in its *totality*'.[56] Paul talks in opposite pairs, playing one off against the other, while scholars are busy reconciling the two, trying to make it only a matter of mere difference in degrees within a gradually developing process.[57] So the sharp contrast between suffering and glory slips into talks of partial glory and its full possession; the antithesis between what is visible and what is invisible, or one between faith and εἶδος, is explicated in terms of relative difference between the limited vision in the present and the full, unlimited one in the future. The opposition between 'away from the Lord' and 'with the Lord' is also explained as meaning the gradual advancement from 'partial fellowship' into the 'full' enjoyment of it.[58] It almost

53 Fee, *Presence*, 318 suggests that the point is the transition from 'the glory of the old' to 'the glory of the new'.

54 The contrast suggested by 'mirror' is that between indirection and immediacy, not between invisible and visible. Fee, *Presence*, 316–17.

55 In 1 Cor 15.40–41 Paul talks about the 'glory' of heavenly bodies before moving to the eschatological 'glory' in v. 43. And vv. 51–52 suggests that the transition is an instantaneous, not gradual, transformation.

56 Best, *Second Corinthians*, 19 (italics added).

57 Typical is J. D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 421: 'the beginning of the salvation process' and 'the *arrabōn* of the process of transformation' or Fee, *Presence*, 293: 'the beginning of the process'.

58 Best, *Second Corinthians*, 46–7; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 110; Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 191, 211, 215. More generally, Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 469: 'wholeness of salvation'. Similarly, P. Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 134,

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seems that scholars are more intent on qualifying Paul's straightforward statements than explaining them, a phenomenon made inevitable by the postulation of the Spirit as the 'down payment'. Is it really the case that Paul has expressed himself so poorly as to require such extensive clarifications and qualifications by modern scholars?

Secondly, at times scholarly 'clarifications' even make Paul mean the opposite of what he actually says. For example, commenting on 4.18, Best states:

> We now see the new age, though not with the physical eyes. We see it in ourselves as our Christ life takes shape, and we see it in the life of the Christian community. The "unseen" things are there but visible only to those whose inner nature is being renewed.

It is 'invisible' but that applies only to our physical eyes. Paul says 'invisible' but as a matter of fact it is visible to those whose inner nature is currently under renewal.[59] Does that then mean that here Paul is speaking as one whose inner nature is not under renewal, as one who only sees through physical eyes? Best's words sounds more like an exposition of, let's say, 1 Cor 2.6–16 rather than of our passage.

We observe that the same thing happens in 5.6 too, as scholars take great pains to prevent readers from taking Paul at his word. That we are being 'away from the Lord' does not mean that we do not have fellowship with Christ; our 'being with the Lord' cannot mean to be with him for the first time but only the full enjoyment of the fellowship we already have with him.[60] If that is the case, one wonders, why did he put things in such a stark antithesis in the first place, instead of making its part–whole relationship more explicit, as he did, for example, in 1 Cor 13.9–12?

Thirdly, the hope Paul describes here most probably concerns the definite event of bodily resurrection (4.14; 5.10; cf. 1 Cor 15.51–52). Since this idea does not go well with the usual dialectical interpretation of ἀρραβών, scholarly comments at this point tend to become paradoxical or even contradictory. Once again, Best states that 'God has prepared *the new garment* and as a guarantee that Paul *will some day* wear it he has already given him *the first installment*, the Spirit'.[61] That the Spirit guarantees Paul's future possession of that garment is clear, but the

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commenting on Paul's use of *aparchē* in Romans 8, says that the Spirit, being the firstfruit of the redemption of the body, 'raises . . . the expectation of being able to experience the *complete fullness*, of that same redemption'.

59 Similarly, Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 82: 'the future invisible realities that, however, by way of anticipation are already present'. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 92 further elaborates that 'Paul deliberately averts his gaze from what is to be seen by eyesight to the invisible world of God's providence and rule'. How does Martin know that Paul actually means 'God's providence and rule'?

60 E.g., Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, 176–8; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 110.

61 Best, *Second Corinthians*, 47.

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claim that Paul has already received (part of) that garment which he 'will some day wear' defies understanding. Martin too acknowledges that 'glory for Paul will come only at the Parousia' and that the present life is shot through suffering rather than the glory of ecstasy'.[62] But one cannot but wonder how such acknowledgment can go along with his interpretation of the Spirit as the 'first installment' of that hope. If believers are to receive their 'heavenly bodies' only after death or at the Parousia, what does it mean that they have already received its 'first installment'?

Fourthly, it is thus inevitable that scholars tend to manipulate the way they put the matter in such ways that avoid such a stark contradiction. Martin says that what believers possess as the 'down payment' is 'the saving power that raised Jesus from the dead'.[63] But the saving power is the *means* to the resurrection, not the resurrection itself.[64] Hafemann too affirms that Paul's exclusive concern is 'the future resurrection at the judgment seat of Christ', but in his explanation of ἀρραβών, he turns the matter into 'a down payment of *his presence*' and 'the fullness of the resurrection *glory*' instead of future resurrection itself.[65] But the question still remains unanswered: what does it mean that believers already possess the 'down payment' or 'first instalment' of the future resurrection?

The stark contrast between present and future advises strongly against taking ἀρραβών as 'down payment'. In 5.6 Paul juxtaposes faith and εἶδος side by side. That clearly calls back to the previous antithesis between 'what is seen' and 'what is unseen' in 4.18. In turn, that what is seen is temporary and what is unseen is eternal tells us that v. 18 takes up the immediately preceding antithesis between the brief suffering in the present and the eternal glory in the future in v. 17. The most natural conclusion from this would be that 'what is seen' refers to the suffering Paul is experiencing in the present, while 'what is unseen', the εἶδος, refers to the glory which will be given only in the future.[66] This conclusion is further supported by the use of σκοπέω, 'to regard as your aim' in 4.18, a cognate of the word used in Philippians in a clearly eschatological setting (Phil 3.14).[67] As a further confirmation, we can also point to Romans 8 where Paul virtually repeats the same points with a slightly different metaphor but in virtually the same sets of

62 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 101.

63 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 101, 108. Similarly Hughes, *Second Corinthians*, 174–5.

64 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 108 acknowledges that the Spirit is God's 'instrument' for inner renewal but ignores it by switching to the meaning of the Spirit as 'God's presence'.

65 Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 211, 214–15.

66 The uncertainty concerning the precise time reference (*parousia* or death) is not important for us.

67 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 93, himself acknowledges this.

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antithesis: present suffering vs. future glory and what is now visible vs. what is invisible (Rom 8.18, 24–25).[68]

The Spirit guarantees the surety of the hope of resurrection but it is not the down payment or the first instalment of that resurrection itself. Throughout the passage Paul keeps saying that 'we do not despair' (4.1, 8–9, 16; 5.6, 8; cf. Gal 6.9; 1 Cor 15.58). He can have such confidence, not because we already possess (part of) what we hope for[69] but because the Spirit confirms our status as sons-heirs and guides us through the thickets of present suffering toward the promised and thus eagerly awaited, destiny of ours (Gal 5.5; Rom 5.5; 15. 13; Eph 1.14).[70]

Conclusion

From the discussion above, an important conclusion has been drawn: Depicting the Spirit as ἀρραβών, Paul does not mean to say that the Spirit is a down payment or the first instalment of future salvation but God's pledge of it. In our first passage (1.22) it refers to the Spirit as God's personal pledge of Paul's apostleship, and in the second (5.5) that of future resurrection. In neither of these two passages do we find the idea of the Spirit as a present 'down payment' of the salvation to be given fully in the future. The idea of the Spirit being part of salvation itself must be something scholars themselves impose upon Paul's text, not

68 There Paul calls the Spirit ἀπαρχή (8.23). Most scholars take it to be a virtual synonym of ἀρραβών, finding in both the idea of *pars pro toto*. Space precludes any extensive treatment but a few words seem in order. First, the word is not a technical term; the sense of *pars pro toto* is not a fixed part of its meaning. Like ἀρραβών, ἀπαρχή too can carry a wide variety of meanings (see the entry in *LSJ*, for example), and in this case too the context should be the key to its specific meaning. Secondly, the word occurs very heavily in LXX, usually meaning 'choice portion' set apart for offering (Ex 22.28[H 22.29]; 23.19) or simply 'offering' (Ex 25.2–3; 35.5; Deut 12.6, 11, 17). Significantly, there the word typically connotes the idea of (cultic) *separation* rather than that of *pars pro toto*, a point that mostly escapes scholarly observation (see Num 15.19–21 for an example). The same goes for the two instances in the NT (Jas 1.18; Rev 14.4). Thirdly, as noted above, the thrust of Romans 8 is also marked by a sharp contrast between the present suffering/groaning and the future glory, and that makes any talk of the 'present realization of salvation' out of context. True, 'we have been saved' but only ironically so, since the believer's salvation is 'in hope' (v. 24), namely, in the hope of 'adoptions as sons' which is another way of saying 'the redemption of our bodies' (v. 24). Paul's telling reminder of the invisibility of that hope flies in the face of the common attempt to make it present, i.e., visible (vv. 24–25). The idea of the Spirit as a partial fulfillment of salvation itself is not found in Paul's argument. As we have seen, it is not found in the word itself either. Where then have scholars found such a notion?

69 Actual possession, even partial one, would render Paul's repeated emphasis on the surety of hope rather pointless and even puzzling (cf. Rom 8.24–25).

70 This applies to Pauline theology as a whole. For Galatians, see my *Eschatology*, 107–15, 138–43.

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something they have drawn out of it.[71] The gift of the Spirit is God's personal pledge that believers will surely be saved, and that explains the reason why Paul could posit the same Spirit as the hallmark of his apostolicity.

With this conclusion in mind, one can further ask if Paul's view of the Spirit, or his eschatological thinking as a whole for that matter, is really as dialectical as most scholars believe. Following Paul's discourse of the Spirit, one can easily find Paul trying his best to make sense of his (believers') present suffering in the light of God's sure victory in the future. However, does that mean, as scholars usually claim, that he ignores the commonsensical notion of time and sees the breaking-in of that future in the form of the Spirit? Is it a mere accident that Paul tends to make ample use of time references in his discussion of the Spirit, especially such words as accentuate the idea of 'not yet'? (e.g., Gal 5.5; 6.8–9; Rom 8.11, 13; 18–30; 15.13) Is it that we are forced to invent such a dialectical concept of 'overlap of time' or 'overlap of the ages' in order to make sense of Paul's otherwise cryptic statements, or that we ourselves are at pains to read his fairly simple talks in the light (or darkness) of such notions we have acquired from somewhere else?

71 I already made the same point in relation to the notion of a 'new age' in Paul and the role of the Spirit in Galatians in *Eschatology*, 138–43.

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