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Paul's Eschatological Ethics for the Global South: The Application of Romans 13:11-14

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Abstract

The article argues that Paul's exhortation to live a higher ethical life in Romans 13:11-14 is confirmed, given the eschatological view of believers' final salvation. Paul's eschatological perspective in Romans indicates the glorification of believers despite the current suffering that stands against Christian life (Rom. 8:28-36; 12:2). According to Paul, the path to glorification is through suffering, and the motivation for perseverance and obedience to the higher ethical life is the eschatological expectation and the final salvation of believers (Rom. 5:1-11; 8:18-25). Paul's argument for the relation between eschatology and ethics seems clearly stated in 13:11-14, insisting on moral obligation in view of eschatology (Keck 2005:333-334). Therefore, Paul's view of eschatological ethics in this text is vital for the higher ethical life to be applied in the church of Africa and beyond. The study uses a socio-rhetorical analysis as a fruitful methodology to explore how Paul's use of eschatological expectation is motivational for a higher standard of Christian life in the presence of challenges and suffering in the first century. This could teach the way to live a Christian ethical life in the presence of contemporary challenges in Africa and beyond. With the aim of articulating the role of eschatology for Christian ethical life in Paul in the designated text, the article attempts to review some related literature, considering the history of research. Romans 13:11-14 is analysed using socio-rhetorical analysis to establish Paul's main message to attest to how ethics is connected with the eschatological expectation. Paul's view of eschatology and ethics in this text shows the link between eschatology and ethics.

Therefore, the article argues that the relationship between eschatology and ethics in Romans 13:11-14 is essential, showing how eschatological ethics is motivational and can teach an ethical Christian life for the contemporary African church and beyond.

Introduction

Paul's view of eschatology and ethics is an important issue that can be observed throughout his letters. For instance, Paul's use of *salvation* in Romans is largely in terms of future salvation, as indicated in some verses (Rom. 5:9-11; 8:23; 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:8-9; Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:18) within the framework of salvation in three tenses: past, present, and future (Colijn 1990:29). Paul's eschatological ethics is emphasised in a significant number of verses in the Pauline corpus (Rom. 15:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 15:32-34; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; 7:1; Gal. 5:22-23; 6:7-9; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:21-23; 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:8-11; 2 Thess. 2:14-15). The connection between future salvation and the present ethical life seems more clear and common in the Epistle to the Romans and the text we designated. The clear portrayal of eschatology and ethics is established in Romans 13:11-14 vividly. It seems that Paul's motivations for different Christian ethical activities are inspired by the eschatological perspective and the main text that could show this reality is the text we have designated in this interpretive analysis. The article aims to show how Paul's eschatological ethics is confirmed in this text and depict its significance for the global south for the Christian ethics to transform church and society at large.

Terms like *eschatology* and *ethics* need to be defined for the proper use of the terms throughout the article. The term *eschatology* in this article focuses on Paul's use of the future hope as it is demonstrated in the Old Testament of the messianic expectation of the Jews (Wood 1911:79). Paul's use of eschatology is in the sense of the kingdom of God in the future aspect (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; Wood 1911:86). Christian eschatology is Christ-centred and is not simply a set of beliefs about the future. However, it is about how God sums up all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). The kingdom of God is not also abstract because the Christian eschatology is about the victorious coming of Christ again (1 Cor. 15:45) that

anchors all biblical history and the kingdom of God is about the rule of God (Ladd 1990:22).¹

The method employed in this research is the socio-rhetorical method because of its significance both for the biblical context of the text and the context in which scripture will be applied (Robbins 1996a:18-40 and 1996b:1-6). This method uses five texture analyses: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture. However, in this research inner texture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture analysis will be used for their sufficiency in understanding and applying our specific text. Because of limited time and space, these three texture analyses are enough to better understand the text. The reason I have selected this method is that the method uses different methods from the historical-critical, the literary critical, and other methodologies together in a coherent manner in a single interpretive framework (Robbins 1996b:1-2; Gowler 2010:194). Inner texture focuses on the literary textual flow of the text and intertexture emphasises the texts used within our specific text from other texts. The social and cultural texture analysis emphasises the social and cultural issues employed within this text.

In the first part, I will interact with some related literature to identify the gap and demonstrate the contribution the paper would bring. In the second part, I will show a socio-rhetorical overview of Romans 13:11-14 whereas the third part focuses on Paul's view of eschatology and ethics in context to confirm Paul's view in context. In the fourth part, the focus is on articulating the relationship between eschatology and ethics in context to argue how the issue of eschatology is the motivational factor for Christian ethical life. Finally, I will point out lessons for the global south in terms of ethical obligations for the transformation of the church and society. The bible version is used from the

¹ The kingdom of God is the reign and the rule of God manifested in this age and the age to come which means the realised kingdom and the not-yet aspect of the kingdom of God. The Pauline expectation aspect of the kingdom of God is the not-yet aspect. Therefore, the hope of the coming of the kingdom of God is an eschatological expectation. In the present reality, ethics is the life that reflects our identification with Christ manifested by holiness and right action in every dimension of life based on the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 5-7).

New Revised version unless otherwise specified (Meeks, Bassler, and Society of Biblical Literature 1993).

Review of Related Literature

Paul in the context of Romans 13 demonstrates important ethical issues which are confirmed by obedience to the government (13:1-7), fulfilling the law by loving one another (13:8-10), and living by holiness (13:11-14). These all are ethical issues that the Christian community is called to live in the present reality of the first century. It seems that the motivation for performing the above issues in Paul's argument is the statement that is attested in verse 11 saying, "Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed." (Rom. 13:11, ESV)

Different scholars see the issue of the relation between ethics and eschatology differently. I will sketch some important perspectives in the modern exegetical traditions. For instance, according to Andres Nygren (1983:438-440), Paul's ethics in the context of Romans 13:11-14 are not directly connected with eschatological salvation rather he has established the unique uses of his ethics in this specific context. However, Paul J. Achtemeier (1985:210) has argued pointing out that: "If verses 8-10 reflect the words of Jesus about love as the fulfilment of the law (see Mark 12:28-31), verses 11-14 reflect the words of Jesus about the impact of the future on present activity."

Achtemeier seems to connect the context of Paul with the tradition of Jesus about eschatological explanation in his teaching and how it influences the present living. It seems correct that Paul's theological articulation of eschatology and the ethical obligations as an imperative are derived from the teaching and the life of Jesus Christ as attested in the gospels.

Leander E. Keck (2005:329) has also argued that Romans 12-13 in general shows that moral imperatives in this context are demonstrated, given the impending salvation which is explicitly given strong emphasis in Romans 13:11-14. Keck (2005:331) argues also the coming of the day of salvation towards us is an important motivation to live a life that rejects vices and appropriates the virtues of a Christian ethical life. Peter Stuhlmacher's (1994:212) view also

strengthens the above views and argues for the presence of a clear relationship between Romans 13:11-14 and other Pauline texts such as 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Colossians 3:1-11, and Ephesians 5:18-20 where texts are linking eschatology with ethical life. On the other hand, Käsemann (1980:362) has seen it differently, attesting that the imminent expectation is the foundation for the Christian reproach and proper conduct in the present reality of Christian living. John Toews (2004:327) has also outlined the textual context of Romans 13:11-14 in two important points: the reason for the proper ethical life and the imperatives for the Christian ethical life. Toews affirms that the eschatological expectation demonstrated in the view of the tension between what is and what will come is shown by different imageries that lead to the imperative of Christian ethical life.

According to Wright (2002:727), Paul's portrayal of Christian ethical life opened in 12:1-2 is closed in 13:11-14 showing that the final salvation and end time are approaching. Dunn (2002:784) has also pointed out that the opening verse, 13:11, embeds the eschatological perspective and it is a foundation for the Christian identity. Dunn's view is much more about the Christian identity rather than a Christian ethical life which is motivated by the eschatological perspective and the end time, claiming that Christian virtue is not separated from Christian identity. Richard N. Longenecker (2016:981) argues that the message of these verses as a whole conveys the nature of the Christian ethical life in the present time where the age to come and the present existing age are overlapping, referencing four important things like the Christian gospel, the teaching and the example of Jesus, the appeal of God's spirit, and the continuous renewal of the mind. The need to realise that Christians are living in the eschaton is an important issue that Longenecker has attested to in his exegetical analysis of the text. These exegetical traditions are more from a Western context and lack the consideration of the African context that needs to be addressed by eschatological views for the proper ethical life. James Nkansah-Obrempong (2013:106) claims that spirit is the foundation for Paul's ethics, referring to Romans. Even if he raises a significant number of issues as the foundation for African theological ethics, the issue of eschatology is not emphasised.

The above scholars have addressed the issue of eschatology and ethical Christian life in one way or another. However, the strong tie between the

eschatological expectation and the end of salvation in the present Christian ethical life and its vitality is not emphasised. The main burden of the text Romans 13:11-14 nourished this issue that we need to address in our exegetical analysis. Eschatological salvation is essential in this context and other parts of Romans because Paul wanted to show the tension between the present reality (this age) and the future reality (the age to come). Scholars who worked on Paul and ethics are not only lacking in connecting eschatology and ethics but also avoid analysing this specific text that might better show how Paul uses eschatology as motivation for the Christian ethical life (Rosner 1994:33). Moo (2002:189) is correct in his explanation of the passage where he argued this text shows how New Testament ethical behaviour is tied to the age of salvation that God has brought into being through Jesus Christ attesting to the framework of old age and new age.

In his presentation of connecting eschatology and ethics, Paul seems to show the nature of the kingdom of God in the present reality considering the realised and the not-yet aspect (Witherington 2004:321). The article also tries to fill the gap in how the eschatological vision might shape the African context because the African cultural orientation despite its diversity is past-oriented and does not give much emphasis to the future (Widlok, Knab, and Van Der Wulp 2021:3). The socio-rhetorical overview of the section will show how the eschatological expectation and the end salvation are motivational in this context and other parts of Romans such as 8:18-25; 15:1-4, and others. Despite different views being entertained, the need for an eschatological perspective on ethical obligations in Africa is critical because the African context is much more past-oriented than future-oriented, which may affect the Christian ethical practice in different aspects (Mbiti 1970:21-24 and 1975:33-34).² The current article might fill the academic gap addressing two critical issues. The first is studying the text using socio-rhetorical analysis, pointing to the

² John S. Mbiti (1970:21-23; 1970:33) has argued that the African idea of time concerns mainly the present and the past, and has little to say about the future, which in any case is expected to go on without end. Others also claim that the African timeframe is much more past-oriented than future-oriented. However, all do not agree that Africa is past-oriented because of disagreements among scholars((Widlok, Knab, and Van Der Wulp 2021, 400-402). In Ethiopia's socio-cultural context, it is also observed that the gold time is considered in the past. It might be clear that Africa has no uniform cultural makeup and the understanding of time might not be the same.

relationship between eschatology and ethics in this context. The second is the significance of Paul's eschatological ethics for the global south for transforming the church and society to make an application for what we have interpreted.

Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Romans 13:11-14

Socio-Rhetorical Overview

The socio-rhetorical interpretation uses five texture analyses: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and theological texture, as we have pointed out in above (Robbins 1996a:18-20 and 1996b:1-4). However, in this analysis, we use only the first three interpretive, analytical methods to understand Romans 13:11-14 and show how eschatological expectation and the end salvation are tied with the present Christian ethical life in this context. This interpretive framework acknowledges different aspects of the text, such as the historical, the literal, and the contextual in which the text will be applied. Essential keywords and phrases in the context are explained, considering inner texture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture analysis as the interpretive tool. The detailed analysis of the method and direct employing of the methodological activities are not apparent because of limited space.³ However, the explanations and the analysis of the keywords and phrases are in consideration of this methodology.

A socio-rhetorical interpretation of Romans 13:11-14 can be analysed employing inner texture analysis in various ways, such as through the identification of repetition, progressive texture, open-middle-closing texture, as well as narrational and argumentative texture. The use of these analytical techniques allows for a comprehensive understanding of the inner texture of the passage. While there are not many significantly attested repeated words within the context, the words 'salvation' and 'flesh' are repeated throughout Romans. The phrase 'the hour to come' also appears in different parts of Romans, often in an eschatological sense. These three usages can be considered as keywords in interpreting the textual context. The noun form of

³ Socio-rhetorical criticism in the broad framework and research is employed, indicating step-by-step analysis. However, the current article has page limitations; I do not employ the process. However, at the back of interpreting and analysing texts, I use the method as an interpretive framework with a special emphasis on inner texture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture analysis.

the word 'salvation' appears five times in Romans, while the word 'flesh' appears thirteen times. Additionally, the progression of the argument can be observed by examining the opening of Romans 12:1-2 which is closed in 13:11-14, indicating the ultimate goal of a transformed life that is lived with a view to the eschatological end time. Although the broader sense of the opening is found in 12:1-2 and closes with Romans 13:11-14, this small text also contains its own opening-middle-closing structure, further emphasising the eschatological end as the overarching theme of the passage. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Romans 13:11-14 can also be analysed using sociological and anthropological theories, which can provide valuable insights into the meaning and significance of the text (Robbins 1996b:71).

The keywords and phrases that should be attested in this context are *kairos* (the time) of salvation (verse 11), the expression 'Put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light' (verse 12), 'walk properly as in the light' (verse 13), and 'Put on Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh' (verse 14). These four phrases are the focus of the analysis to argue that Paul's eschatological view is connected to the ethical exhortations in his letters, with a particular emphasis on the designated text. The flow of the text is organised under one reason (verse 11) and three imperatives (verses 12-14). The reason is that the time of salvation has approached, which is the block's overarching idea as Ben Witherington (2004:317) has called it 'eschatological sanction'. However, all three imperatives are nourished by the use of metaphors for plain communication to the first readers. These elements are shown in the Christian ethical life, which is demonstrated by the imperatives of put off, walk, and put on. By the use of a socio-rhetorical analysis, I will attempt to establish the overarching idea and elements in summary, focusing on the main elements, following Paul's sentence flow logically. The aim of analysing the text is to make an application within the African context even though the African context is not homogeneous; I only emphasise the main issues that Africa might have in common.

Καῖρός (Kairos) as Eschatological Time

The term *kairos* is a keyword not only for this specific text but in Paul's usage in Romans; it is essential. The term *kairos* is studied together with the term *chronos* because both can be translated into English as 'time' (Thiselton 2016:232). However, the two terms are different because the term *chronos*

indicates time as duration while *kairos* is a critical time or the appointed time (Thiselton 2016:233). The term *kairos* has a theological significance in the New Testament, especially in Pauline letters. The term is used thirty-one times in Pauline letters referring to the time to come despite sometimes overlapping with the temporal aspect of *aion* (age) (Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid 1993:978). The term *kairos/time* is described with a striking mixture of metaphors in the flow where the term serves as an opening in the flow of the text of Romans 13:11-14 (Toews 2004:327). Andria (2011:154, 245) has argued that the term *kairos* refers to the time of the return of Christ rather than the chronological time and how hope for Africans can give meaning and a goal to life.

The context of our designated text shows the age to come, though the sense is the appointed time. Fitzmyer (1993:682) demonstrates that the term *kairos* is 'the period of Christian existence when Christians are called upon to manifest by their action that they are such and to conduct themselves suitably'. On the other hand, Wright (2002:786) has verified the term *kairos/time* shows 'a special moment rather than mere Chronological time'. However, Dunn (2002:785) strengthens the significance of the term by attesting that the term recapitulates what is said before gathering and summarising all together in harmony in this actual textual context. Käsemann (1980:362) also seems to validate in the same way but with a different expression, arguing that the term shows 'the moment of destiny' while Fitzmyer (1993:682) attests to the 'eschatological deliverance of Christians as the fulfilment of the pledge'.

Paul's use of the term *kairos* shows the eschatological expectation as the turning point that prepares for the imperatives demonstrated in the proceeding verses (12-14). The eschatological perspective is common for the people of God in the era of the New Testament. The teaching and the principle of the kingdom of God (the rule of God manifested in the present and future) in the tradition of Jesus are nourished with eschatological expectations (John 14:3). The aspect of the kingdom of God is manifested, having the future elements beyond the presently realised aspect. This eschatological expectation as motivation is vital in Paul's use of the term *salvation* in Romans, especially in the verses Romans 5:9-11 and Romans 8:18-25 which are the most vital expressions. For instance, Jewett (2007:363) has attested to the first

text pointing out that '[t]he future tense is all the more heightened by the emphatic position of *nu`n* ("now")'. In addition to this, Jewett (2007:508) also points out regarding Romans 3:26 that '[t]he reference to the sufferings "of the present critical time" employs the expression found in 3:26, *nu`n kairov*, representing the eschatological period inaugurated by Christ'. The place of the future in Paul's theology is strong. However, Paul also never ignores the past and the present in salvation history. Paul does not over-emphasise the future but sees the future expectation as a motivational hope that encourages living a worthy life in the present reality.

The text that Paul is presenting in the literary context of 13:11-14 has the aim of motivating an ethical Christian life whereas in Romans 3:26 it is generally the era of the new eschatological beginning started by Jesus Christ. Important terms in 13:11-12a like the present time (τὸν καιρὸν), the future hour (ᾠρα), and the future salvation (ἡ σωτηρία) indicate how Paul's expression of salvation is an eschatologically oriented presentation (Longenecker 2016:982). However, according to Jewett (2007:820), Paul's use of 'roused from a sleep' should be also interpreted in the eschatological context that strengthens the above elements. These eschatological expressions in this text coincide with the use of Jewish eschatological uses demonstrated by the terms 'this age' and 'the age to come' (Longenecker 2016:982; Thiselton 2016:233). It is possible to argue that Paul's future expectation is similar to the Jewish expectation of the golden time in the future (Ladd 1974:51). However, Paul's eschatological expectation is final consummation and the glory of believers who continuedly followed and obeyed Jesus.

Paul's use of eschatological salvation as a framework seems very important in this context because it is the reason for the higher standard of the Christian life. Paul's use of *kairos* is an eschatological time that has been begun by the coming of Christ but will be expected in the future, fulfilled by the second coming of the Messiah (Jewett 2007:819). This expectation of eschatological salvation in the future served as the foundation for the ethical exhortation as a motivational in Paul's presentation. In a context where the golden time is considered as the past like in the African context, eschatological expectation in the future tense is a very important theological premise for the global south (Mbiti 1970:34 and 1975:27-28). The Pauline exhortation for higher ethical life in this context focuses on the future eschatological expectation which seems

to focus on the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is cosmic and that addresses the whole of God's created world. Elias K. Bongmba (2020:507) is correct in his analysis of how Paul's eschatological perspective can shape the African timeframe in God's salvation history because Paul preaches a futuristic eschatology that is cosmic and embraces the entire creation for God's redemptive purpose. Even though there is no uniformity in African culture and timeframes, an emphasis on the past is observed in some cultures of Africa. Therefore, the importance of eschatological expectation is immense because it calls for an ecclesial community to live an ethical life with proper social relations with others (Bongmba 2020:511). Even if the active works of God in the past were completed by Christ, and though the ongoing provision of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ's believing community is important, the future expectation is crucial for the higher Christian ethical life. Without ignoring other important issues like the work of the Holy Spirit, as Nkansah-Obrempong (2013:106-107) has pointed out the role of eschatological expectation and the future salvation is important for the Christian ethical life.

Paul's Ethical Exhortations that Arise from an Eschatological View

a. Put on the Armour of Light

The first figurative expression that depicts Paul's first exhortation of higher ethical life is 'putting off the works of darkness' and 'putting on the armor of light' (verse 12). The use of the metaphor of day and night communicates the contrast of two lifestyles; insisting to live a higher Christian life is the first concept. Paul used this concept with metaphors in different parts of his letters (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:4-5). Paul's use of the above concept coincides with other usages both in the Old Testament and New Testament (Ps. 43:3; Isa. 2:5; 9:2; 42:6; Luke 16:18; John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; Acts 26:18; Thiselton 2016:233). The expression the 'night has gone' shows not only the change of domain but points to the approaching of the eschatological end time. However, Paul's use of 'armor of light' is military terminology that might show going beyond living in good deeds and that might indicate participating in spiritual warfare for the Lord (Moo 2002:189). Paul intends to show the need to struggle in the midst of the corrupt system to shine a Christian virtue. Moo has correctly demonstrated the nature of the armour of light, pointing out that Paul's use of the weapon of light is appropriate for those who have been rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the domain of the

kingdom of God to share them in the inheritance of the saints in light (Moo 1996:824). Paul has demonstrated salvation as the transfer from the domain of darkness to the domain of the kingdom of his son (Col. 1:13-14). Conversion for Paul is the transfer from the domain of darkness to the domain of light.

The works of darkness and the armour of light are not the same but contrastive, which shows life in the domain of Satan in the fallen world and the domain of the kingdom of God. Light and darkness are imageries of two lifestyles showing life in old age and the new eschatological age started by the coming of Jesus Christ. The term *put off* is the complete rejection of worldly practice because it stands against that with the Christian life in Christ. The Ethiopian scriptural tradition shows these two eras, which are the time before Christ and the time after Christ, or the era of the law and the era of the gospel (Adamite 2022:156). The Ethiopian interpretive tradition uses contextual interpretive mechanisms by being sensitive to the Ethiopian context, identifying three eras that are the era of unwritten law, the Torah, and the era of the law of gospel (Belay 2020:73). However, most of the modern and Western exegetical traditions, like Toews, show that the expression attests to 'abandoning vices and replacing them with virtues and for discontinuing immoral conduct and pursuing moral conduct' (Toews 2004:327). Dunn (2002:787) also believes that these contrastive imageries indicate putting off vices and putting on virtues. Therefore, it seems clear that, in context, the term is attested because of the motivation of eschatological salvation, the future expectation to live a Christian ethical life in Christ, and the norm of the kingdom of God following the model of the life and practice of Jesus Christ.

b. Walk in Daytime

The second issue Christians are advised to do is to walk in the light (daytime) which might symbolise a higher Christian life following the pattern of Jesus Christ (verse 13). This hortatory is also presented in imagery and by the contrastive phrases, indicating how life in the light looks against life in darkness. This phrase is also imagery that conveys the importance of being the agent of transformation. Jürgen Moltmann (1993:328) has pointed out the mark of the Christian community being an arrow of hope that points in the right direction guiding the community towards moral life. Paul's advice of walking in daylight is an example of higher Christian ethical life that can be demonstrated in different ways in a hostile world that might include the

exportations attested in 13:1-7 and 8-10. Paul's use of the term *walk* is widespread in his letters elsewhere to show the appropriate Christian daily conduct following the footsteps of Jesus Christ (Moo 1996:824; Jewett 2007:825). Thiselton (2016:234) is correct in affirming that Paul's use of *walk* is confirmed within the Christological context, which is very Jewish for practical Christian conduct. This exhortation is an essential element in the midst of many challenges and problems in Africa and beyond; as Andria (2011:154) has pointed out, suffering and hope exist in the midst of African Christianity. Therefore, walking in the daytime is the calling of the Christian community, to live a higher standard of Christian life in which the exemplary life can manifest.

In the second place, the contrast is between night and day, which aims to exhort to walk in the right Christian life rejecting the practices attested by the imagery of night. The contrast might be to show what Christians should do and what they should reject. The expression of darkness shows this through the practice of what people do in the dominion of darkness. The Christian moral life is proven to be living in the light and avoiding the experience of darkness, which is named as orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality, sensuality, quarrelling, and jealousy. These six things are the experiences of life in the domain of darkness apart from Christ. Wright (2002:729) tries to connect these practices, referring to Romans 1:18-32, arguing that these vices indicate the abuse of one's own body and others. However, Thiselton (2016:234) seems to connect these vices with Paul's use of the work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19. However, these paired vices that Paul has listed are used against a Jewish background and in a Graeco-Roman context, appropriating them in this literary context that Christians might reject the works of the fallen world and follow the examples of Jesus Christ by practising virtues (Moo 1996:824-825; Jewett 2007:826-827). These practices are not only challenges for the first-century Christians but also the wider and the contemporary Christian community; and the African context might have more challenges since there is a growing amount of Christianity. Therefore, the urgent needs of African Christianity must be addressed, articulating how the eschatological vision might shape the attitude that enables us to reject vices manifested in different ways. If the African Christian community develops a futuristic perspective, this might enable the eradication of these vices, which is the sign of life in darkness. Since there is a quantitative growth of Christianity, the qualitative growth of the

church can be addressed by actively engaging in biblical teaching of the future expectation.

c. Putting on the Lord Jesus

The third imperative given for the Christian community based on the eschatological perspective is putting on the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 14). This expression is the climax of the argument because the standard for the Christian life is Jesus Christ, who has shown the right way, walking as the model and dying at the cross to enable his followers to live a higher standard of life. Dunn (2002:791) has argued that usage here is similar to Paul's Adam-Christology/soteriology articulation in 1 Cor. 15:53-54. Toews has demonstrated Paul's use of the term and its meaning, 'Putting on Jesus Christ', excitingly. According to Toews (2004:329), the meaning of the term is that '[t]o put on Christ is to live under his lordship and within his community'.

On the other hand, Thiselton (2016:235) connects the term with the baptismal terminology of Galatians 3:27, signifying the term shows being clothed in Christ, which might also show embracing Christ again and again in faith, loyalty, and obedience. Moo (1996:325) also confirmed that our relationship with Jesus Christ is manifested in two ways: first, a conversion that enabled us to be incorporated into Christ, sharing his death, burial, and resurrection, and second, living out the new life that we gained by being in Christ. Keck (2005:333) has also pointed out the absence of the spirit in this context, "because for Paul, the Spirit is the means by which the risen Christ exercises his power over those who are 'in' him".

However, the traditional Ethiopian interpretation indicates that putting on Christ is following the footsteps of Christ, glorifying him, and having fellowship with him (Adamite 2022:156). However, Romans' commentary in the African context interprets the term 'following his [Christ's] example and behaving like him' (Andria 2011:246). It seems correct because the idea conveys that putting on Christ is imitating Christ and his character with a proper fellowship. Following and imitating Christ requires denying the fleshly desire that goes with the domain of Satan and the fallen world.

Paul's presentation indicates here that putting on Christ enables Christians to reject the provision of human nature in its fallenness. Jewett (2007:828)

contends that the term is found in a legal, administrative, and business context, although Paul is using it in this context to communicate that Christians would reject the twisted system of honour and shame which produces the works of darkness. However, Moo (1996:826) points out that Paul's imperative here indicates that Christians would not lead a 'licentious lifestyle' but rather hold Jesus Christ to get victory over flesh through his provision of the Spirit.

In general, the eschatological salvation perspective motivates new thinking that enables us to live with standard Christian behaviour set by the life and the work of Christ (Toews 2004:330). In this context, we have argued that this eschatological motivation enables Christians to obey three imperatives, which is the mark of the virtues of the Christian life. The first is putting off the works of darkness and putting on the armour of light. This shows living in a community set by a higher standard of Christian life. The second is walking in light/daylight which indicates being a model in the midst of the community. The community would like to have a model that guides it towards a standard life. The calling of a Christian community is pointing a proper direction for society – where to go and what to do – and rejecting the practice of darkness manifested in different vices. This walk is the practical Christian life manifested by doing a Christian virtue and ignoring the life of darkness and the fallen world practice of living a life that Christ models. Paul's eschatological-oriented exhortation in this context underlines the need to undergird all Christian thinking and action to be an agent of transformation (Longenecker 2016:984). Finally, the third imperative is the climax, which conveys following Christ closely and having fellowship with him, leaving the corrupt system and the fleshly desire. The mark of Christianity is being in Christ, and the power to overcome vices is having a continuous relationship with Christ that manifests by faith in Jesus and testifies through the Christian baptism.

Paul's View of Eschatology and Ethics in the Broader Context

In the context of Romans and other parts of his letters, Paul sees the eschatological perspective as a motivational power that shapes the present reality. Since Paul shares the Jewish eschatological hope of the coming of God, futuristic salvation is manifested in different parts of Pauline letters. Paul's exhortation to stand firm in the midst of persistent suffering manifested by

higher ethical life is because of the eschatological expectation. The strong expression of future salvation motivates one to boast in suffering (Rom. 5:3-11). Thiselton (2016:126) has pointed out how Paul has attested to the new way of seeing suffering and even boasting because of suffering and the reason that suffering has no way to alienate us from God, who gives hope. However, Moo (2002:102) points out that the reason for a godly response to suffering is that the Christian faith is anchored by the hope that is manifested in Christian virtue. Jewett (2007:355) has also correctly argued that the connecting hope in Romans 5:5 correlates with Paul's use of boasting in suffering in 5:2-3 and that this boasting emanates from the hope. Therefore the strong expression of the eschatological salvation in Romans 5:9-11, which is attested salvation in past and future tenses in parallel, indicates how the future enables the present Christian living (Käsemann 1980:138-139). Keck (2005:141) has affirmed his interpretation of Romans 5:9, indicating Paul has pointed out the future salvation from the wrath of God.

The context of Romans 8:18-25 is another essential element that shows the future eschatological salvation and motivates standing firm in the midst of the present suffering. Keck (2005:209) has shown how the present suffering is linked with the future glorification of believers. The expectation of future glory frames the need to stand firm in the midst of suffering in this context (Rom. 8:18, 30). Moo (1996:508) has correctly argued that Paul used the term *glory* in the above two verses as an inclusion to show the future Christian inheritance and the present status of Christianity. The future glory in these texts indicates eschatological salvation, which is strong motivation to live a life of virtue despite the present suffering. These verses indicate the future glory and attest to the future salvation in context.

Paul's use of eschatology is not limited to the above texts of Romans. However, many texts in the Pauline corpus serve as a general framework to motivate the Christian ethical life. We can observe some essential texts in the Pauline corpus, for example 1 Corinthians 15:1-58, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Colossians 3:1-11, and Ephesians 5:8-20. Close reading of these texts shows that Paul's ethical life is grounded in the eschatological expectation, despite a significant number of exegetical works not identifying how Paul's eschatological view has affected his articulation of the Christian ethical life. Gordon Fee (2010:16) has pointed out how the eschatological framework is strong in Paul's theology of

1 Corinthians, raising the issue at the beginning and at the end. The reference to the final Christological revelation in 1:7 is an opening and at the end the issue of eschatology is attested in 15:54-7. Joseph A. Fitzmyer (2008:91) has pointed out how 1 Corinthians uses the eschatological terms distributed throughout different chapters (1:7-9; 6:14; 7:29-31; 15:1-58) where Paul encourages and challenges to live a higher Christian life. Other Pauline texts like 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Colossians 3:1-11, and Ephesians 5:8-20 are also clear in showing the role of an eschatological perspective on the proper Christian life.

Paul's theology and ministry seem to be grounded in eschatological hope centred on his conception of the future as we have seen in the above texts. In addition, Christianity, according to Paul, has a beginning but does not have an end to this reality. However, the perspective of life in Africa is more on the past and might affect our view of the future, even though it is difficult to ascertain the whole of Africa because of the diverse cultures and people groups. The African past-oriented culture can be challenged and shaped by Paul's eschatological perspective to have a balanced life without ignoring the past because God's revelation and his salvific work are a past that has a present effect on our life. However, the past work of God and the continued work through the Spirit might encourage us to see the future. This futuristic perspective also encourages us to live a worthy life in the present reality with the eschatological expectation.

Paul's ethics are part of his theology of salvation because salvation is attested in three tenses, past, present, and future. The present reality of salvation is demonstrated by obedience as attested to work out your salvation (Phil. 3:12). There is a transfer from the domain of darkness to the light of God's son (Col. 1:13-14). Paul's use of salvation in 1 Corinthians 1:18 is an ongoing reality as it is the past reality, because the term *salvation* is in the sense of the present continuous tense. The role of preaching the message of the cross in this context enables us to grow in our salvation as obedient children demonstrating our Christian life in virtue as we follow Jesus Christ. We can generally observe Paul's view of eschatology and ethics as part of the Christian experience. The first is a perspective that enables us to do different things; the second is the Christian experience modelled by Jesus Christ. As we have argued in the exegetical observation part, both his eschatological perspective and the ethical

life modelled by Jesus Christ are shown. These two critical issues demonstrated in Romans 13:11-14 are firmly embedded in Pauline theology in different parts, which is significant for the global south to transform the church and community.

The Relation Between Eschatology and Ethics

The relationship between eschatology and ethics in the Christian experience is crucial because it is one of the motivating factors to live in view of the future. It is clear that it is not the only motivating factor in Pauline theology because there are different factors that motivate for the Christian ethical life such as the role of the work of the spirit and others. The relation between eschatology and ethics is explicitly attested in the textual context of Romans 13:11-14 which clearly shows how these two theological issues are connected. The importance of the eschatological perspective is attested as motivational for Christian ethical life, demonstrating three essential things. First, the relation between eschatology and ethics in the context is established strongly. The context of Romans 13:11-14 is one of important examples that connect eschatological expectation with the present ethical life. Toews (2004:327) has correctly pointed out that eschatology is the reason for a Christian ethical life in the present reality that motivates a practical life. Longenecker (2016:982) also affirms that Paul uses many common eschatological expressions of his day to introduce the imperative that Christians would obey. The notion of the relation between eschatology and ethics is not only limited to the above text but also a significant number of Pauline texts affirm this reality as we have seen in the above section. The issue of reason indicates that Christian eschatological expectation is the underpinning factor for proper obedience and high moral standards.

In addition, eschatological expectation is giving the means of new thinking. Toews (2004:330-331) has pointed out that an eschatological perspective is also motivational for new thinking and behaviour, claiming that Paul's letters' purpose of eschatological teaching is about the end of history intending to show ethical exhortation. The Christian mind and practice are inseparable because the Christian virtue action starts from the transformed mind and is demonstrated in a godly way. Therefore, the relation between ethics and eschatology in the life of Christian mentality and behaviour is vital. Nygren

(1983:438-439) also affirms this position claiming that Paul's ethics are the ethics of a mind that cannot express generally accepted categories, social ethics but not equalitarian ethics. On the other hand, according to Jewett (2007:819), Paul has built his ethical exhortation on eschatological premises to live a worthy life in the context of the conflicting communities of Rome. Jewett (2007:819) further points out that 'its present context includes the expectation of the Messiah's return in the eschatological love feast'. The strong theological premise of the coming of Christ and the consummation of salvation drives a Christian to practise positive obedience demonstrating a Christian virtue.

Dunn (2002:785) also pointed out the relationship between Paul's eschatological view and the Christian ethical life, claiming that "Paul is keen not to move on from his more general parenthesis without specifically underscoring the eschatological context of all Christian ethics."

The claim anchors that the eschatological perspective is a fertile ground for Christian ethical imperatives to be applied in every dimension of the Christian life. As different scholars demonstrate, the connection between eschatology and Christian ethical life is vital. It is correct that the eschatological perspective of Paul is a motivation for ethics and a foundation for doing different Christian practices, making Christ a model to follow in his footsteps. Paul has organised his argument to convey his imperatives under the framework of an eschatological perspective that can teach today to guide our lives based on our future expectations as attested in the Bible.

Generally, the relation between eschatology and ethics is shown in two ways. The first is the motivational reason for Christian ethical life manifested differently. The second relation between eschatological expectation and Christian ethical life is that the eschatological perspective gives a new thinking that affects the day-to-day practice of Christian living. The issue of motivation and the creation of new thinking is a foundation for a proper Christian ethical life.

Lessons for Ethics for the Global South

Paul's use of eschatology as a motivation for a higher Christian ethical life is essential to drive lessons for the ethical life of the Christian community in the

global south, to transform the church and community at large. Richard Hays (1989:168) has pointed out how Paul's use of the eschatological perspective in 1 Corinthians 10:11 informs the scriptural interpretation. If Pauline eschatology is informing scriptural interpretation, it is possible to argue that it also informs the scriptural application to ethical life because the purpose of interpretation is application. Christiaan Mostert (2000:11) has argued there are significant implications of eschatological perspectives for the holistic growth of the church because the church is an eschatological community. E. F. Scott (1914:225) has also pointed out how eschatological teaching is important for modern believers.

The above expiations indicate how the eschatological expectation is important in a precise manner. In the African context, the philosophy of time has affected to have a minimal perspective towards the eschatological vision. This might guide us to focus much more on the past and the present reality than future expectations. The importance of an eschatological perspective in the future tense seems clearly attested in the Bible in general and specifically in the text we have seen so far. The eschatological perspective for the New Testament believers was motivation to live the higher standard of the Christian life demonstrated in Christian virtue. A balanced view of the future is crucial for the Christian higher standard of life as demonstrated in the Bible in our specific text and other Pauline texts. The futuristic view seems important for our work ethic, in engaging towards the future that arises from the eschatological expectations, because at the end God will transform the whole universe. The community needs to engage in development and transformation with the energy of future expectations.

First, the eschatological-perspective-oriented ethical life attested in Romans 13:11-14 is essential for the global south and beyond because we can drive important lessons in transforming Christian life, exiting from the old corrupt system and heading to the new ethical life modelled by the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In Africa, the system of corruption is observed in different ways addressing the religious, political, and social of the continent despite variations from one country to another country. The eschatological perspective might be one element that enables one to reject the corrupt system aroused by the eschatological perspective and future expectations.

Second, the eschatological perspective not only helps to exit from the old and corrupt system of the fallen world but also enables us to live a life as the light to our surroundings. Living in the light is the right way of walking and contributes to being a model to the community to transform in different ethical issues. The African continent has different challenges: corruption, immorality, abuse of authority, and others in the church and the community. However, in Paul's eschatological motivation and imperative, we can learn by being a future-oriented community to live the imperatives to transform the church and community. It is clear that Africa as a continent is not uniform, but an eschatological expectation and future-oriented view are important for transformation.

Third, Paul's view of eschatology as outlined in Romans 13:11-14 could have implications for Christians in the global south because it can provide hope and guidance in the face of difficult circumstances. There seems to be a strong relationship between eschatology and social justice, Paul's view of the end times relates to issues of poverty, oppression, and inequality, and how Christians in the global south can apply this view to their work for social justice. Further, the contemporary relevance of Paul's eschatological view in Romans 13:11-14, especially in light of current global challenges such as climate change and political instability.

Finally, the eschatological premise enables us to follow Christ closely and have fellowship with him, rejecting the systems that stand against Christ. Africa needs to follow Christ closely and build a strong fellowship with him to be transformed and be the agent of transformation in and out of the church. The life that Jesus Christ pioneered transcends the past-oriented community's decay and corruption. Even though cultural sensitivity is essential to address the needs of the people, the new model by Jesus Christ that entered into the world should guide the Christian community to bring change and transformation in every dimension of life.

Conclusion

The article has argued that the eschatological perspective in Romans 13:11-14 is vital for understanding eschatological ethics in Romans and considering the New Testament at large. We have argued that Paul's use of eschatological

salvation is motivational for Christian ethical life manifested in different ways. First, as we have interacted with different scholars, our socio-rhetorical overview has proven that Paul outlined his idea of an eschatological perspective to enable a Christian community in Rome to live an ethical Christian life. Therefore, we articulated the review of related literature focusing on some scholars concentrating on our specific text. We have identified a gap in which the strong tie between eschatology and ethics is not underlined. In addition, the significance of eschatological ethics for a past-oriented community like Africa (though there is no uniformity of culture in Africa) is capitalised on because scholars did not address it based on the exegetical analysis of Romans 13:11-14.

We have outlined three essential things based on the framework of eschatological salvation that enabled the first readers. These three essential issues are the imperatives of the ethical Christian life motivated by eschatological salvation. The socio-rhetorical analysis of the text has affirmed three critical imperatives: to put on the armour of light, walk in daylight, and put on Jesus Christ as an expression of a Christian virtue rejecting vices. To strengthen our position, we have argued the presence of eschatology and ethics in the broader context of Romans and other Pauline epistles. Our text has pointed out the strong ties and the relationship between eschatology and ethics. We have highlighted lessons for the global south and for the term formation of the church and society. Since Paul's eschatological perspective has motivated the first readers to obey and live a higher Christian ethical life, the lesson could teach the importance of the eschatological perspective to shape African culture and be useful both for spiritual enrichment and all-inclusive development.

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