

“For on Him We Depend”

Considerations of Philology and Motif in Acts 17:28

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Abstract

Most scholars have interpreted Acts 17:28a–c (“for in him we live and move and are”) within the context of the Aratus quotation in 17:28e. Yet in doing so, they overlooked the precise meaning of this statement and how it fits within the argument. This article considers the philological aspects and motifs contained in Acts 17:28a–c within their context. Thus, the statement expresses dependence on God by use of the Greek phrase ἐν τῷ εἶναι, which appears widely across Greek literature. By taking the evidence from these sources into consideration, it becomes clear that the concise statement of Acts 17:28a–c bundles up various ideas of the Areopagus speech into one thought.

Keywords

Acts 17:28 – Areopagus speech – phraseology – Greek – dependency – God

The Mediterranean Sea has long represented both promise and peril to those travelling on it. Therefore, people in antiquity invoked the help of the gods to ensure safe travels across the unpredictable waters.¹ As Hesiod, *Op.* 669 put it, “in them [meaning Poseidon and Zeus] was the result of good or bad alike” | (ἐν τοῖς γὰρ τέλος ἐστὶν ὁμῶς ἀγαθῶν τε κακῶν τε). What Hesiod means by “in them” is that the outcome of the ship journey *depended* on the deities since they were capable of controlling the forces of nature and granting safe passage for sailors.

Just the same, there exists a wide sea of literature on Acts 17:28. This is partly so because the well-crafted Athens episode in Acts 17:16–34 has drawn considerable attention,

¹ With regards to seafaring, there is evidence of the worship of Poseidon, Athena, and other gods in Athens; cf. R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 409–411.

especially over the last century.² Even more so, verse 28e contains a direct quotation of an ancient Greek author (τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν, Aratus, *Phaen.* 5), which is introduced explicitly in the text (ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν, Acts 17:28d).³ Great progress has surely been made. Yet at the same time, the extent of scholarly opinion threatens to drown any fresh perspective on the matter. In fact, one interpretation of Acts 17:28 that was hinted at in the past has been widely overlooked since: the correlation between Acts 17:28a–c (ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν) and the Greek phrase that was mentioned at the beginning expressing a hierarchical relationship.⁴ As it turns out, this kind of construction employing the preposition ἐν appears frequently in Greek literature from the archaic up until the imperial period: an individual or group is at the mercy of another individual or group, their actions, or the outcome of an event. These notions also appear in Acts 17 where people are said to be dependent on God as their creator. In the passage from Hesiod, those sailing the sea should be aware of their dependence on the gods Poseidon and Zeus. Here, the dative object of the ἐν construction is the article τοῖς referring to the two deities. The phrase employs ἐστίν as its predicate and τέλος [...] ἀγαθῶν τε κακῶν τε as the subject. In Acts 17:28, the dative object of the ἐν construction is the personal pronoun αὐτῷ referring to the Jewish God, the finite verb is ἐσμέν,⁵ and hence the subject “we” (meaning all people). Thus, the dative objects in Hesiod and Acts are both personal (two deities or God) and the only difference in phrasing between these two references is their subject—in Hesiod the abstract noun τέλος and in Acts 17:28 “we.” |

Therefore, the following investigation seeks to show it is plausible that Acts 17:28a–c employs this common Greek phrase that can be summarised as ἐν τινι εἶναι to express all people’s dependency on God for everything. I will argue in this way without letting my investigation be drowned by previous findings on Acts 17. Instead, I will allow these results to inform the current study and avoid diving too deeply into intricate matters. As the phrasing is most similar between Acts 17:28c (ἐν αὐτῷ [...] ἐσμέν) and ἐν τινι εἶναι, this third part of the triad will be addressed first by regarding the linguistic parallels between them. I will then highlight the similarities between the motifs employed in Acts 17 and the Greek passages of ἐν τινι εἶναι before adding some final comments on Acts 17:28a–b. Each section will also show how the close NT parallel to Acts 17:28a–c—Paul’s being “in Christ” phrases—supports the argument, as these ἐν Χριστῷ⁶ phrases make use of ἐν τινι εἶναι too.⁷ But first, a brief outline of Acts 17:16–34 will follow.

² Cf. esp. the seminal work on the Areopagus speech by E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913).

³ The division of Acts 17:28 into five parts (a–e) is mainly to make it clear which part is referred to and does not deny their close connection.

⁴ Cf. B.E. Gärtner, *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation* (ASNU 21; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1955) 186–188; R. Renehan, “Acts 17.28,” *GRBS* 20 (1979) 347–353, at 352; C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles: Vol. II Introduction and Commentary on Acts XV–XXVIII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 846–847. Others opt for Luke having incorporated a Stoic tradition here following Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 22.

⁵ For the interaction between the three verbs ζᾶω, κινέω, and εἰμί see below.

⁶ In the following, ἐν Χριστῷ will encompass all other variants of these phrases (e.g., ἐν κυρίῳ) unless indicated otherwise.

⁷ Early on, A. Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel “in Christo Jesu”* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1892) 93–95 suggested a correlation between the triadic phrase of Acts 17:28 and ἐν

1 Paul in Athens (Acts 17:16–34)

The section consists of a narrative frame (17:16–22a, 32–34) that highlights the subsequent reactions to the Areopagus speech in verses 22b–31. On his second missionary trip, the Lukan Paul must flee Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:10, 14–15; 1 Thess 2:14) and now finds himself waiting for his companions in Athens (Acts 17:16). Unsettled by the many idols he finds in the city, the Lukan Paul argues with people both in the synagogue and on the Agora | (vv. 16–17), proclaiming Jesus and the resurrection (v. 18). As these are foreign to his audience and as Athenians are typically curious about the latest teachings (vv. 18, 21), some of those adhering to the philosophies of Epicureanism and Stoicism ask Paul to speak more about this to them (vv. 18–20). Therefore, they take him to the hill of Ares, the Areopagus, to present his teaching in front of them (v. 19).⁸ In the speech, Paul first connects with his audience by acknowledging their religious devotion, because of which they had even set up an altar to an unknown god. This is the God Paul will now proclaim to them (vv. 22–23). He is creator of everything and therefore not in need of people’s worship or having to dwell in a temple (vv. 24–25). Instead, he created humanity from one man (Adam) and set up boundaries for their existence, all so they would seek and be able to find him—as in fact they can, because he is not far from them (vv. 26–27). The triad of verse 28 (“for in him we live and move and are”) and the Aratus quotation serve as reasons or proof (γάρ in vv. 28a, e) of this: people are so close as to be *in* him (v. 28a) and they are his offspring (vv. 28e–29a), revealing their unmediated connection to him. God is unlike any of the humanly made things by which they might worship him (v. 29). After having disregarded people’s ignorance of him thus far, he now orders them to repent in the face of his coming judgement, which he will administer through Christ, whom he had raised from the dead (vv. 30–31). The mention of the resurrection divided the Athenians’ opinions: some scoffed at Paul, others started to believe and joined him (vv. 32–34).

2 Ἐν τινι εἶναι in Greek Literature and Acts 17:28c

Besides Hesiod, who was mentioned in the beginning, various other authors expressed dependence on the gods by employing the phrase Ἐν τινι εἶναι.⁹ Homer does so in a scene

Χριστῷ, both expressing a spatial relation (cf. also C. Breytenbach and C. Marksches, eds., *Adolf Deissmann: Ein (zu Unrecht) fast vergessener Theologe und Philologe* (NT.S 174; Leiden: Brill, 2019). Later, he even suggested that the expression in Acts derived from Paul’s pre-Christian, Jewish mysticism as inspired by the LXX (cf. A. Deissmann, *Paulus: Eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Skizze* [2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1925] 116). Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 23 denied such a connection and highlighted the importance of the terminology at hand, pointing to the Stoic conceptions in Acts 17 (in support of this view, cf. also A. Wikenhauser, *Die Christumystik des hl. Paulus* [BZfr 12,8–10; Münster: Aschendorff, 1928] 33; A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930] 6–8). Any direct connection between Acts 17:28a–c and Paul’s ἐν Χριστῷ phrases is uncalled for. Instead, both authors independently made use of the common Greek phrase Ἐν τινι εἶναι. On the history of research on ἐν Χριστῷ, cf. B. Beyer, *Determined by Christ: The Pauline Metaphor ‘Being in Christ’* (NT.S 191; Leiden: Brill, 2024) 7–46.

⁸ Cf. K. Haacker, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (ThKNT 5; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2019) 296–297; D. Marguerat, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022) 618 also argues against the earlier interpretation that the speech represented a defence at court.

⁹ According to conceptual metaphor theory, there is no sharp distinction between a word or phrase being figurative as opposed to literal (cf., e.g., E. Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse* [Cambridge: Cambridge

where Hector, the champion of the Trojans, rises to challenge the Achaeans in order to send one of their champions to fight him. While the rest of the Achaean army is frozen with fear, Menelaus stands up, reproaches them, and volunteers to face Hector. He does so by acknowledging | that it is still up to the gods to whom to grant victory (αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε νίκης πείρατ' ἔχονται ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν, *Il.* 7.101–102). Just like Hesiod, Pindar too confesses that the outcome of an event depends on god (ἐν θεῷ γε μὴν τέλος, *Ol.* 13.104–105)—in this case the result of sports competitions. In another of his odes, it is the outcome of all deeds that Zeus controls (πᾶν δὲ τέλος ἐν τιν ἔργων, *Nem.* 10.29–30). Moreover, Demosthenes ascribes the results of what took place as a consequence of Philip of Macedonia's victory in battle to god and not himself (ἐν γὰρ τῷ θεῷ τὸ τούτου τέλος ἦν, οὐκ ἐμοί, *Cor.* 193). Finally, Josephus employs the phrase ἐν τινι εἶναι to express that the salvation of the Israelites in the desert depended on God alone (ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ εἶναι τὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ, *A.J.* 3.23). In all of these cases, the object of ἐν is one or several deities, the predicate is explicitly or implicitly εἶμι, and the sentence subject is an abstract noun, mostly τέλος. In their sovereignty, deities are said to be able to determine various situations that exceed people's abilities. Therefore, mortals should acknowledge them and expect them to intercede.

It seems that ἐν τινι εἶναι was one of Euripides' favourite phrases, which he made his characters declare at crucial points in the story. Thus, in trying to encourage him for battle, friends of Polynices state that it was on him to set up the wooden image of Zeus (ἐν σοὶ Ζηνὸς ὀρθῶσαι βρέτας τρόπαιον, *Phoen.* 1250–1251). A life-and-death matter is expressed by Agamemnon, whose daughter Iphigenia must be killed to save the Greeks. The two have the ability to determine the freedom of their people (ἐλευθέραν γὰρ δεῖ νιν ὅσον ἐν σοί, τέκνον, κάμοι γενέσθαι, *Iph. aul.* 1273–1274). In another of Euripides' works, Iphigenia seeks to silence the women of the Chorus to secure her fate (καὶ τᾶμ' ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστὶν ἢ καλῶς ἔχειν ἢ μηδὲν εἶναι καὶ στερηθῆναι πάτρας, *Iph. taur.* 1057–1058). And a particularly dramatic episode is described between Alcestis and her husband Admetus: the latter pleads with her not to die in his stead, because it is her that he and their children depended on (ἐν σοὶ δ' ἐσμὲν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μῆ, *Alc.* 278).¹⁰ There are more, but these examples show that, in order to strengthen the urgency of the situation, often two parties or options are opposed. Moreover, infinitive constructions frequently appear with ἐν τινι εἶναι. Moreover, γίγνομαι may also replace εἶμι. Finally, the subject—that which depends on people—in most cases is impersonal, but it can also be a person | like Alcestis or the seer Tiresias in Sophocles, *Oed. tyr.* 314. Just like Euripides, Sophocles also enjoyed placing the phrase strategically in his dramas.¹¹

As judicial scenes carry a high potential for revealing levels of power and possibility, they frequently employ the expression ἐν τινι εἶναι at key points of the argument. This is the case in Demosthenes' speech just mentioned, and it is also true of Antiphon, 1.31: here, the decision on the verdict depends on the judges (ἐν ὑμῖν δ' ἐστὶ σκοπεῖν τὰ λοιπὰ πρὸς

University Press, 2008] 1–34). Thus, ἐν τινι εἶναι (and Acts 17:28) can literally depict someone as being in another person while the phrase figuratively expresses dependency.

¹⁰ Cf. G.A. Seeck, *Euripides: Alkestis* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008) 97, who thinks their children are included here even though the plural is poetic. L.P.E. Parker, *Euripides: Alkestis: With Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 111 takes the plural to only refer to Admetus.

¹¹ As, for example, in *Phil.* 963–964 and *Oed. col.* 422–423, among others.

ὑμᾶς αὐτούς και δικάζειν τὰ δίκαια). The object of ἐν are people, while the sentence subject is an infinitive construction.

In historical treatises, ἐν τινι εἶναι could mark the results of events such as selecting a new king¹² or driving out mutineers from a war camp,¹³ or it could describe people's characteristics.¹⁴ Moreover, the personal exchange in letters reveals that the authors made use of the phrase in order to point out the addressees' ability to act in a certain way.¹⁵ This is also done in the Aesop novel: the slave Aesop points out to his future master Xanthos that he is in control of making sure that Aesop will not flee if he treats him well.¹⁶

These references reveal the great flexibility of ἐν τινι εἶναι. It appears most frequently in texts from the classical period but was still in use in the imperial period and after. Whether the subject or object of ἐν was personal (mostly expressed through pronouns) or impersonal (expressed by abstract nouns, subordinate clauses, etc.), each instance indicates a situation of dependence. A decision, outcome, verdict, group of people, etc., hangs on the actions of someone or something else.

Similarly, Paul's references to "being 'in Christ'" also employ a personal dative object (Χριστός, κύριος, αὐτός, etc.) with the preposition ἐν and are very flexible as to their subjects, which may be abstract nouns (e.g., ἀπολύτρωσις, Rom 3:24) among other possibilities.¹⁷ Most similar to Acts 17:28c and the references to ἐν τινι εἶναι are those occurrences which speak of people being "in Christ" and therefore make use of a personal subject. The verb εἰμί may be explicit (τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ναρκίσσου τοὺς ὄντας ἐν κυρίῳ, Rom 16:11) or implicit (οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, Rom 8:1), or exchanged with γίνομαι | (οἱ και πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ, Rom 16:7) or ζᾶω (ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, Rom 6:11); resp. ζῶῃ (τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, Rom 8:2). And just as in the non-Scriptural references ἐν τινι εἶναι expresses dependence on gods, rulers, slave masters, husbands, or anyone responsible, in Paul's letters "being 'in Christ'" points to Christ determining and controlling the believers:¹⁸ Christ is Lord (Phil 2:11) whom the believers are subject to. Through his actions, they are saved and now find themselves in a new

¹² Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.85: ἐν τούτῳ τοῖ ἐστι ἡ βασιλέα εἶναι ἡ μή.

¹³ Polybius, *Hist.* 11.26.7: ἐν αὐτοῖς γὰρ ὑπέλαβον ἔσσεσθαι τὴν πλείστην ἐξουσίαν.

¹⁴ Polybius, *Hist.* 38.18.1: ἐν τοιοῦτοις ὄντος τοῦ διαβουλίου.

¹⁵ Lysias, 1.34: ἐν ὑμῖν δ' ἐστὶ πότερον χρῆ τούτους ἰσχυροὺς ἢ μηδενὸς ἀξίους εἶναι; Libanius, *Ep.* 71.2: τῆς τοίνυν διὰ τῶν κνηγετῶν ὑπερβολῆς ἐν σοὶ τὸ πλείστον.

¹⁶ *Vita Aesopi* G 26: τὸ δὲ δραπετεύειν ἐν τίνι ἐστίν, ἐν σοὶ ἢ ἐν ἐμοί; ὁ Ξάνθος. "δῆλον ὅτι ἐν σοί." ὁ Αἴσωπος. "οὐ, ἀλλ' ἐν σοί." ὁ Ξάνθος. "διὰ τί ἐν ἐμοί;".

¹⁷ Cf. Beyer, *Determined by Christ* for more details on ἐν Χριστῷ and ἐν τινι εἶναι.

¹⁸ For other scholars who have suggested an understanding of ἐν Χριστῷ phrases as "being determined by Christ," yet without the underpinnings of the Greek phrase ἐν τινι εἶναι, cf. C. Tuckett, "The Church as the Body of Christ," in *Paul et l'unité des chrétiens* (ed. J. Schlosser; SBen 19; Leuven: Peeters, 2010) 161–191, at 177: "the phrase must mean something like 'in the power of,' or 'under the dominion of': to be 'in Christ' is to be in the realm where Christ reigns as Lord, to be subject to him, and to be obedient to him as sovereign." Similarly, cf. (among others) F. Neugebauer, *In Christus EN XPICTΩI: Eine Untersuchung zum Paulinischen Glaubensverständnis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961) 42; A. du Toit, "In Christ', 'in the Spirit' and Related Prepositional Phrases: Their Relevance for a Discussion on Pauline Mysticism," in *Focusing on Paul: Persuasion and Theological Design in Romans and Galatians* (BZNW 151; ed. C. Breytenbach and D. du Toit; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007) 129–145, at 132; M. Wolter, *Paulus: Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie* (3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021) 242–246. The connection of ἐν Χριστῷ in Paul and ἐν τινι εἶναι has similarly been supported by T. Morgan, *Being "in Christ" in the Letters of Paul: Saved through Christ and in His Hands* (WUNT 449; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020) esp. 11–22.

existence in which he determines their lives. While ἐν τινι εἶναι was most often employed to provoke a future action, ἐν Χριστῷ describes the present state of the believers. Since Christ has already predestined, chosen, and called them (Rom 8:28–30), the believers' future is certain should they continue to live accordingly (Rom 5:21–6:2; Phil 1:6). Christ is in complete control over their present and rules as their loving Lord (Rom 8:35, 39).

As stated above, Acts 17:28c is linguistically similar to these instances of ἐν τινι εἶναι: the phrase combines the preposition ἐν, a personal dative object (“him,” meaning God), the verb εἶμι, and a personal subject (“we”). Moreover, there is a strong notion of hierarchy expressed in the Areopagus speech. The Lukan Paul hangs his arguments on the peg of having noticed the many “cultic monuments” (σεβάσματα, v. 23).¹⁹ More specifically, the Athenians had set up a place to worship an unknown god (ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ, v. 23) whom they worshipped (εὐσεβεῖτε, v. 23). Veneration implies acknowledging that the worshipped deity is in an elevated position as opposed to oneself—they are more powerful and sovereign. This fits well with the references of ἐν τινι εἶναι that express dependency on gods. |

Without drawing on ἐν τινι εἶναι, other scholars have also argued that Acts 17:28a–c expresses dependence.²⁰ But the philosophical underpinnings to the entire passage represent exactly the main opposition to this line of interpretation: if in verse 28e (τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν) the author quotes the Stoic poet Aratus, employs many allusions to Socrates within the narrative framework²¹ and the speech,²² makes use of Jewish concepts,²³ and alludes to Stoic and other philosophical conceptions,²⁴ should this not suffice to explain ἐν αὐτῷ [...] ἐσμέν and the entire triadic formula in verse 28a–c? This is especially likely, since being in a deity is a Stoic concept.²⁵ Finally, for many scholars the

¹⁹ Cf. BDAG s.v. σεβασμα.

²⁰ Cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AncB 31; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1998) 610, who denies that the triadic formula in Acts 17:28a–c “expresses the immanence of human beings in God; it merely formulates the dependence of all human life on God and its proximity to him.” Similarly, C.S. Keener, *Acts* (NCBIC; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2020) 444 regards 17:28a–c as “the threefold expression of dependence.” Cf. also L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SaPeSe 5; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992) 316. C.R. Holladay, *Acts: A Commentary* (NTLI; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016) 345 n. 121 translates as “by his power,” thereby alluding to a concept of dependency.

²¹ Cf. J.W. Jipp, “Paul’s Areopagus Speech of Acts 17:16–34 as *Both Critique and Propaganda*,” *JBL* 131 (2012) 567–588, at 569–575; T. Jantsch, “‘Sokratische’ Themen in der Areopagrede: Apg 17,22–31 im Kontext der antiken Philosophiegeschichte,” *Early Christianity* 8 (2017) 481–503, at 487–490.

²² Cf. Jantsch, “Sokratische Themen,” who carved out the Socratic themes within the speech.

²³ Cf. S. Vollenweider, “‘Mitten auf dem Areopag’: Überlegungen zu den Schnittstellen zwischen antiker Philosophie und Neuem Testament,” *Early Christianity* 3 (2012) 296–320, at 319, who convincingly pointed out that the use of Jewish and Hellenistic-philosophical traditions throughout the speech need not be mutually exclusive.

²⁴ Such as the tradition of Epimenides (cf. C.K. Rothschild, *Paul in Athens: The Popular Religious Context of Acts 17* [WUNT 341; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014]; C.S. Keener, *Acts Vol. 3: 15:1–23:35* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014] 2657–2659) or (Middle-)Platonism (cf. J.M. Hubbard, “Paul the Middle Platonist? Exegetical Traditions on *Timaeus* 28c and the Characterization of Paul in Acts 17:16–31,” *HTR* 115 [2022] 477–495). On concepts from popular philosophy, cf. also Holladay, *Acts*, 339, 345.

²⁵ Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.15.5. Cf. also J.C. Thom, “Cleanthes’ ‘Hymn to Zeus’ and Early Christian Literature,” in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy. FS Hans Dieter Betz* (ed. A.Y. Collins and M.M. Mitchell; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 477–499, at 497 (italics by the author): “If we take ἐν αὐτῷ in a locative sense (‘in him’), the formula expresses the pantheistic Stoic idea that we have our being *in* God.”

triad serves as a steppingstone for the Aratus quotation, thereby limiting its own potential meaning. The insertion ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν (v. 28d) would also suggest this, pointing the readers to what follows. |

Therefore, ἐν τινι εἶναι still challenges the interpretation of Acts 17:28 and does not appear to fit smoothly within the context. Because of this discrepancy, it is essential to consider the motifs employed within the passage to perceive how all the pieces fall into place.

3 Similarities of Motif between ἐν τινι εἶναι in Greek Literature and Acts 17:22b–31

As could be observed earlier, ἐν τινι εἶναι is used to express an asymmetrical relationship in which one party or thing rests on (the decision of) another. If the latter is a person, they are often gods or people in elevated positions who hold some degree of power or ability to control. This notion of sovereignty is also very prominent in Acts 17:22–31: it is what most of the motifs in the speech boil down to. The Lukan Paul is proclaiming a God who is incomparable, self-sufficient, and superior to all the gods of the Athenians and in his actions he reaches out towards people.

Initially, the reason the Lukan Paul commences his vigilant activity of preaching and arguing daily in the synagogues and the market (Acts 17:17) is because he was upset about their many idols (17:16, 23).²⁶ This contradicts his faith in the one Jewish God whom he believes to be the only true god (14:15; 19:26). During his address in the middle of the Areopagus, he unfolds this conviction by employing concepts that were common both in Jewish as well as in Greek thinking.²⁷ Since God created the world and everything in it (cf. Acts 4:24; 14:15–16), he is Lord over heaven and earth (οὐτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος, 17:24).²⁸ The temples people build with their hands could not contain him or deserve his indwelling (17:24, 29). In his sovereignty, he does not require people's worship or devotion, because he is self-sufficient (17:25). On the contrary: every person received the gift of life itself from him, even | more so—they were given everything by him (αὐτὸς διδοὺς πᾶσιν ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα, 17:25). He created all human beings from one man (Adam) for them to dwell on the earth and he set up the conditions of their living, so that they would seek him (17:27). Therefore, the first verses contain a strong notion of God being the creator of everything, especially people. Their very existence is due to him and they depend on him for everything. God does not need anything (17:25)—but people need God. This is what ἐν αὐτῷ [...] ἐσμὲν in Acts 17:28c expresses: “we” human beings depend on God who is the sovereign creator of everything.

²⁶ On the Jewish polemic against the worship of many gods, cf. Exod 20:2–3; 2 Sam 7:22; Isa 44:9–20; Wis 13–15. For more references, cf. Holladay, *Acts*, 338 n. 82.

²⁷ Cf. Vollenweider, “Mitten auf dem Areopag,” for a concise overview of the various concepts.

²⁸ Thus, throughout Acts, this designation “serves to demonstrate God's power over the enemies” and “God's power over history” (J. Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* [New Testament Theology; Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1996] 19). On God as creator in Acts, cf. C. Breytenbach, *Paulus und Barnabas in der Provinz Galatien: Studien zu Apostelgeschichte 13f.; 16,6; 18,23 und den Adressaten des Galaterbriefes* (AGJU 38; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 60–66. According to G. Delling, *Die Bewältigung der Diasporasituation durch das hellenistische Judentum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987) 91–92 n. 611, the designation of God as creator was fundamental in Hellenistic Judaism.

This same notion of God as creator also appears in 2 Cor 5:17 in close proximity to an ἐν Χριστῷ phrase. According to Paul's Jewish faith, God created the earth (Rom 1:20, 25; 8:19–22, 39; 9:21). But through the death and resurrection of Christ for everyone (2 Cor 5:14–15), they have died too and can now live for Christ (2 Cor 5:15; cf. also Rom 6:11; 14:7–8; Gal 2:19). This new life Paul calls “new creation” and it is the reality for all who are in Christ (εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις, 2 Cor 5:17).²⁹ The believers depend on Christ and his rulership as risen Lord over their lives. He has proven his love towards them by dying for them, therefore Christ's love for Paul controls him (ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, 5:14).³⁰ Thus, the notion of God as creator of all humanity (or the new creator of the believers) is closely connected to people depending on him.

Since Acts 17:27 employs καί γε in a causal sense,³¹ the affirmation that God is “not far from anyone of us” (οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα) proves the preceding statement that God can be sought and found by humanity. God's nearness is a concept in popular philosophy as well as in Jewish | theology.³² In Acts 17, it may be connected to the idea of humans being related to God as his children (esp. in 17:28e).³³ The following verse referring to people living, moving, and being “in him” (17:28a–c) is closely connected to God being near: they are figuratively situated “in him,” which implies that he must be close, therefore they can find him (cf. also Rom 10:20 quoting Isa 65:1). The spatial designation ἐν αὐτῷ is reminiscent of conceptions from popular philosophy that depict God to be in everything and everything to be in God in a pantheistic sense.³⁴ Similarly, both ἐν τινι εἶναι and Paul's ἐν Χριστῷ language envision people or things to be situated in another person, meaning that they depend on them. Therefore, the statement does not necessarily refer to this pantheistic conception but can be read within the framework of

²⁹ Since the first part speaks of *someone* or *anyone* who is in Christ the statement refers to the individual believer (cf. R. Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther* [KEK.S 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987] 146) as opposed to the entire created world. An anthropological interpretation of καινὴ κτίσις (cf., e.g., C. Breytenbach, *Versöhnung: Eine Studie zur paulinischen Soteriologie* [WMANT 60; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989] 131; M.E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: Vol. 1 Introduction and Commentary on II Corinthians I–VII* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994] 426–428) is to be favoured here over a cosmological one (cf., e.g., V.P. Furnish, *2 Corinthians: Translated with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* [AncB 32A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1984] 333).

³⁰ On συνέχω, cf. W. Rebell, *Christologie und Existenz bei Paulus: Eine Auslegung von 2. Kor 5,14–21* (AzTh 73; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1992) 20. The genitive τοῦ Χριστοῦ is subjective; cf. C.F.G. Heinrici, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 6; 8th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900) 202.

³¹ Cf. BDR §425 n. 4.

³² Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 610 for references.

³³ Cf. E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK 3; 7th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 504; J. Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; 3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010) 263; Keener, *Acts* (NCBIC), 446.

³⁴ Cf. J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) 449. An instrumental reading of ἐν αὐτῷ is strictly rejected by M. Dibelius, *Paulus auf dem Areopag* (SHAW.PH 1938/39 2; Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1939) 25, yet found plausible by R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte Bd. 2: Apg 13–28* (EKK 5/2; Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1986) 139; Thom, “Cleanthes' ‘Hymn to Zeus,’” 497; Holladay, *Acts*, 345 n. 121. In this case it would highlight the notion of God as creator. M. Grundeken, *Der eine Gott, der durch alle ist: Epheser 4,6 im Kontext antiker Diskurse über Gott und die Welt* (WUNT 445; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020) 198–200 highlights the similarities between Eph 4:6 (διὰ πάντων) and the “Hymn to Zeus” in Cleanthes, *Frag. 12–13* (ὁς διὰ πάντων φοιτᾷ). They both express the Stoic concepts of god's sovereignty and pervasiveness.

God determining people's very existence.³⁵ Most likely, the triad in Acts 17:28a–c alludes to verses 2–4 of the poem by Aratus which Acts cannot quote directly as they speak of Zeus:³⁶ all streets, markets, the sea, and the harbours are full of Zeus (μεστὰὶ δὲ Διὸς πᾶσαι μὲν ἀγυαί, πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγοραί, μεστὴ δὲ θάλασσα καὶ λιμένες, *Phaen.* 2–4). This also fits well with the nearness of God as portrayed in Acts 17:27. But more importantly, “always we all have need of Zeus” (πάντη δὲ Διὸς κεχρήμεθα πάντες, *Phaen.* 4).³⁷ To say that “we depend on him” (ἐν αὐτῷ [...] ἐσμέν, Acts 17:28c) is just another way of expressing one's need for God, which strongly supports the proposed interpretation. Therefore, deriving the triad from the verses in Aratus' poem, which precede the direct quotation, | blends in nicely with the notion of people being dependent on God or needing him: he is everywhere (*Phaen.* 2–4) and not far (Acts 17:27).

The following quotation from Aratus states that “we are his offspring” (τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν, *Phaen.* 5; Acts 17:28e–29a) and serves as proof of the preceding triad.³⁸ The thought that God (or Zeus, in the case of pagan literature) is the father of humanity appears both in pagan as well as in Jewish literature,³⁹ and it is closely connected to the motif of God having created human beings.⁴⁰ Again, this thought fits well with the concept of people depending on God: as his children, they owe their existence to him and depend on him to provide for them. Acts does not employ the designation of God as father often (1:4, 7; 2:33). However, this is probably because it is so closely linked to what Jesus called God.⁴¹ Yet it appears more frequently in Luke (2:49; 6:35–36; 9:26; 10:21–22; 11:2, 13; 12:30, 32; 15:11–32; 22:29; 23:34, 46; 24:49),⁴² and in general it is the designation for God most widely attested in the NT.⁴³ Paul also speaks of God as the father of the believers (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) and links their being in Christ and depending on Christ to being God's children (πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, Gal 3:26).⁴⁴

Acts 17:29 picks up the concept from verses 24–25 about God not requiring cultic worship or veneration of things that people themselves have created. The speech climaxes in God's action of reaching out to people, commanding them to repent before the coming judgement (17:30–31). This eschatological trial will be performed by Christ, who is worthy to judge because God raised him from the dead (17:31). These statements portray God as the one who has already decided on the coming day of judgement (ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ᾗ μέλλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, 17:31a), appointed the one through whom the

³⁵ The claim that the triad was pantheistic (cf. H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HNT 7; 2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1972) 109) or panentheistic (cf. Dibelius, *Paulus*, 25) used to be prominent among earlier scholars, but was already rejected by Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 23 n. 3.

³⁶ Cf. Haacker, *Apostelgeschichte*, 301.

³⁷ Translation by G.R. Mair, *Aratus: Phaenomena* (LCL 129; 2nd ed.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955).

³⁸ Cf. Haacker, *Apostelgeschichte*, 301.

³⁹ Cf. C. Zimmermann, *Die Namen des Vaters: Studien zu ausgewählten frühchristlichen Gottesbezeichnungen* (AGJU 69; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 41–73.

⁴⁰ Cf. Haacker, *Apostelgeschichte*, 301 also referring to Luke 3:38; Gen 1:26–27.

⁴¹ Cf. Zimmermann, *Namen des Vaters*, 97–98.

⁴² Cf. Zimmermann, *Namen des Vaters*, 91–98.

⁴³ Cf. Zimmermann, *Namen des Vaters*, 41.

⁴⁴ In Gal 4:1–7, Paul extends the imagery of heritage further. Cf. also being or living in Christ Jesus in Rom 8:1–2 and the imagery of the believers as God's children in verses 14–15.

judgement will take place (ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὤρισεν, 17:31b), and has raised Christ from the dead. Thus, God has proven his power in determining the future and the past. This shows that he is also sovereign to determine people's present. They depend on his just judgement at the end of time and on his saving action through Christ (Acts 4:12). Just so, Josephus used ἔν τινι εἶναι to express that | Israel's salvation depends on God and no other (ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ εἶναι τὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἄλλῳ, *A.J.* 3.23). Moreover, ἔν τινι εἶναι frequently appears in judicial contexts to express that a decision is up to someone (Demosthenes, *Cor.* 193; Antiphon, 1.31).

Similarly to Acts 17:30–31, 2 Cor 5 features references to the eschatological judgement in combination with the call to repentance and people's dependence on God (or rather Christ): Paul was appointed as ambassador by God to extend reconciliation to people (2 Cor 5:18–20).⁴⁵ Instead of referring to people's need to repent (μετανοεῖν, Acts 17:30), Paul states that God no longer counts the believers' trespasses (μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, 2 Cor 5:19) and made the sinless Christ to be sin for "us" so that "we" through Christ would become God's righteousness (τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ, 5:21). These verses follow immediately after the declaration that anyone who is in Christ (meaning "dependent on Christ") is a new creation (5:17).

Thus, the Areopagus speech in Acts 17:22b–31 has many similarities of motif to the references to ἔν τινι εἶναι. They express that people are determined by the past, present, and future actions of God. His sovereignty is displayed in his role as creator, Father, judge, and bringer of salvation. It is no wonder then that people depend on him for their very existence and every need.

4 "In Him We Live and Move" (Acts 17:28a–b)

Thus far, the spotlight has been on the third element of the triad in Acts 17:28, ἐν αὐτῷ [...] ἐσμέν. This was for comparative reasons, as it bears the greatest resemblance to ἔν τινι εἶναι, but of course the first two phrases are equally significant. Now that the possibility of regarding the verse as expressing people's dependence on God has come to the forefront, it is all the more pressing and plausible to regard the entire statement within this framework. This comes down to two things: on the one hand, the meaning and use of the two other verbs, ζάω and κινέω, with a (personal) ἐν construction, and on the other hand, the interaction between the three verbs εἰμί, ζάω, and κινέω. I will begin by addressing ζάω. |

As mentioned above, one of the Greek references to ἔν τινι εἶναι that is most similar to the NT usage in Acts 17:28c and Paul appears in Euripides, *Alc.* 278. Like Sophocles, *Oed. tyr.* 314, it employs both a personal subject and personal object in connection with ἔν τινι εἶναι. Admetus' utterance reads: "we depend on you, whether we live or not" (ἐν σοὶ δ' ἐσμέν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μὴ).⁴⁶ Thus, this passage also reveals a close connection between ἔν τινι εἶναι and

⁴⁵ Cf. C. Breytenbach, "Salvation of the Reconciled: With a Note on the Background of Paul's Metaphor of Reconciliation," in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J.G. van der Watt; NT.S 121; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 271–286, esp. at 282–283. The first-person plural throughout verses 18–20 refers to Paul, while in verse 18a ἡμᾶς more generally includes all believers.

⁴⁶ D. Kovacs, *Euripides: Vol. I Cyclops Alcestis Medea* (LCL 12; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001) 183 translated: "[w]hether we live or not is in your power."

ζάω; they are used largely synonymously.⁴⁷ Moreover, Admetus' and his children's dependence on Alcestis is because of their shared love (σὴν γὰρ φιλίαν σεβόμεσθα, 279). Christ's love for Paul is also what moves him to action (2 Cor 5:14), and God showed his benevolence in salvation through Christ and by overlooking people's ignorance (Acts 17:30–31). Moreover, God himself is the saviour (28:28) and works out his will in history, thereby revealing his faithfulness towards his people, Israel (3:18). Salvation takes place for those who believe in Jesus (15:11) and participate in the people of God (2:36–41; 5:31; 13:23, 36). It is the purpose of the Pauline mission to spread this message (14:26; 20:24),⁴⁸ and the Areopagus speech is a prime example of the Lukan Paul's missionary preaching.⁴⁹

“Living ‘in God’” is attested in Philo, *Fug.* 61–62, where the life in God is opposed to wickedness (ἀθάνατον δ' ἐν τῷ παρ' ἡμῖν βίω, ἐπεὶ πρὸς γε τὴν ἐν θεῷ ζῶν ἄψυχον καὶ νεκρὸν καὶ “κοπρίων,” ὡς ἔφη τις, “ἐκβλητότερον.”). In *Det.* 48, Abel, who was killed by his brother, is now living the happy life in God (ὥσθ' ὁ Ἄβελ, τὸ παραδοξότατον, ἀνήρηται τε καὶ ζῆ· ἀνήρηται μὲν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἀφρονος διανοίας, ζῆ δὲ τὴν ἐν θεῷ ζῶν εὐδαίμονα).⁵⁰ Passages that also combine ζάω with an ἐν construction are Dio Cassius, 62.13.2 (ἐν γὰρ σοὶ καὶ ἐγὼ ζῶ καὶ διὰ σὲ βασιλεύω) and 51.12.4 (ἀλλ' ἐν τούτῳ καὶ σὺ μοι ζῆς), yet they function slightly differently: in the first one, Nero links back his existence and life to his mother; therefore an instrumental reading of ἐν in accordance with the following διὰ σέ is more appropriate. In the second case, Cleopatra claims that her deceased Caesar continues to live on in the new emperor. Though different from Acts 17:28a and Paul, these references attest to a broader usage of ζάω with an ἐν construction.

Finally, Paul also alters his ἐν Χριστῷ language in Rom 6:11 and 8:2 by employing ζάω or ζωή instead of εἶμί, thereby highlighting the necessity for a lifestyle that matches the newly received standing. |

Thus, the use of ζάω combined with εἶμί in Acts 17:28a–c does not carry significantly different connotations: in the Greek sources ζάω highlights that someone is alive—either in the present (Euripides, *Alc.* 278) or coming world (Philo, *Det.* 48)—or taking actions (Philo, *Fug.* 61–62; Rom 6:11), while εἶμί highlights a person's mere existence. Therefore, in Acts 17:28 ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν underlines that people's lives were created by God and ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμέν underlines the continued dependence of their existence on him.

This is where the matter of how the three verbs εἶμί, ζάω, and κινέω interact becomes pertinent. As early as in the seminal work by Eduard Norden, the close link between the lexemes has been noted.⁵¹ The connection between life and movement was pertinent

⁴⁷ A.M. Dale, *Euripides: Alcestis: Edited with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954) 73 holds that καὶ ζῆν καὶ μῆ is “an epexegetic addition.”

⁴⁸ Cf. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, 92–93, 104–105.

⁴⁹ Cf. Marguerat, *Apostelgeschichte*, 612.

⁵⁰ On these uses in Philo, cf. also Wolter, *Paulus*, 245.

⁵¹ Cf. Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, 19–24. However, the triad has received various interpretations as to how it represents a climax or progression in thought. Thus, e.g., H. Hommel, “Platonisches bei Lukas: Zu Act 17 28a (Leben—Bewegung—Sein),” *ZNW* 48 (1957) 193–200, at 198–199 claims that ζῶμεν refers to the physical life, ἐσμέν to the spiritual life, and κινούμεθα elevates both into the cosmic realm. Or cf. R.I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2009) 438: “[t]he first [vitality] is shared with plants, the second [movement] with animals, while genuine existence characterizes human beings—who alone possess ‘souls.’”

among the Stoics, but appears already in Plato, *Tim.* 37c.⁵² Moreover, κινέω can more generally designate “movement and activity; therefore, it may be possible to translate κινούμεθα as ‘we come and go’ or ‘we move about’ or even ‘we do what we do.’”⁵³ Robert Renehan has pointed out that the structure in Acts 17:28 is a tricolon, a “collocation of several verbs as an emphatic means of expressing existence” which frequently employs verbs such as εἰμί, ζάω, or κινέω.⁵⁴ Thus, “[t]he triad [...] is used to bring out all sides of man’s absolute dependence on God for life.”⁵⁵

Moreover, Acts 17:25 is shaped similarly to Acts 17:28: the creator God has given everyone life, breath, and everything (αὐτὸς διδοὺς πᾶσιν ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα), thus moving from the more concrete ζωή to the more abstract τὰ πάντα. In addition, the second element of the triad, “breath,” is a sign of the first, “life.” Similarly, Acts 17:28 moves from the more concrete ζάω to the more abstract εἰμί, and κινέω can be viewed as a sign or expression of life. Therefore, in both Acts 17:25 and 17:28 the triads encompass terms that are similar in meaning and should not be distinguished too sharply. |

As a result, the three phrases ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν do not differ substantially in meaning.⁵⁶ They all express that people’s existence depends on the God who created everything and who is near them, since he is their Father and author of salvation.

5 Conclusion

Analysing texts that have had such a long history of interpretation holds the great reward of bringing to light some of the red threads that may have been missed over the years. Now, they stand out clearly as one leans back and regards the broader picture in its entirety. It is very plausible, therefore, that Acts 17:28a–c makes use of the Greek phrase ἔν τινι εἶναι and thereby expresses dependence on God for everything. While Paul also employs this phrase, he never speaks of ἐν θεῷ.⁵⁷ Instead, the notion of dependence relates solely to Christ. Luke, then, turns out to be more theo-logically driven, which is in line with his general theological outlook highlighting the role of God much more than that of Christ.⁵⁸

Many Greek authors placed ἔν τινι εἶναι at crucial points within their stories or arguments, thus putting strong emphasis on the statement that a circumstance, decision, etc., was *on* someone or something. This prominent position is also true of Acts 17:28a–c. Just before the direct quotation in verse 28e and toying with the philosophical and Jewish

⁵² Cf. Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles*, 847. Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, 196–197 lists Jewish references that show the correlation between movement and life.

⁵³ Louw/Nida 15.1.

⁵⁴ Cf. Renehan, “Acts 17.28,” 348–349. He lists a number of references.

⁵⁵ Gärtner, *Areopagus Speech*, 195.

⁵⁶ While thus far no clear references for a connection of ἔν τινι εἶναι and κινέω could be found, this does not imply their incompatibility. After all, early Christianity could adapt Greek language and ideas to fit their purposes, just like Paul altered ἔν τινι εἶναι (in the form of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) in Rom 6:11; 8:2.

⁵⁷ On 1 Thess 1:1, cf. B. Bosenius, “Ein alter Interpunktionsvorschlag zu 1Thess 1,1 neu beleuchtet: ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη,” *ZNW* 109 (2018) 138–147. The ἐν is dependent on the verb in Rom 2:17; 5:11; 1 Thess 2:2. In contrast, cf. Eph 3:9; Col 3:3; 2 Thess 1:1.

⁵⁸ Cf. Jervell, *Theology*, 21.

conceptions that emerged throughout the entire passage, the concise, parallel triad ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν bundles various ideas up into one thought: that on God alone as creator and Lord of everything, Father, and benevolent bestower of salvation do people depend for their entire existence. Explaining their need of him whom they do not even know (17:23, 30) is the Lukan Paul's aim for employing ἐν τινι εἶναι.