

## THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS





# THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

SALVATION AS JUSTICE AND  
THE DECONSTRUCTION OF LAW

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SHEFFIELD PHOENIX PRESS

2011

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Published by Sheffield Phoenix Press  
Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield  
45 Victoria Street  
Sheffield S3 7QB

[www.sheffieldphoenix.com](http://www.sheffieldphoenix.com)

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A CIP catalogue record for this book  
is available from the British Library

Typeset by Forthcoming Publications  
Printed by Lightning Source

ISBN 978-1-907534-22-5

*To Dave*



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## PREFACE

The interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans offered in this volume is governed by a postmodern hermeneutics of disclosure. As far as I am able to determine, it is the first of its kind. It is postmodern in the sense that it prioritizes a hermeneutics of subjectivity and, therefore, subordinates modernity's objectively oriented hermeneutics of the correspondence theory of truth.<sup>1</sup> Both are directed toward the elucidation of texts, both pursue intelligible meaning, both engage in establishing the truth of interpretation. But the fundamental dissimilarity between them, determined by their perspective on the ontological character of the Bible, on the one hand, and the ontological identity of the reader-interpreter, on the other hand, is critical for the interpretation of biblical texts. That critical difference not only sanctions a predisposition toward a hermeneutics of disclosure, but it legitimates a fundamental rejection of modernity's subject-object hermeneutics of correspondence. At the same time, however, the validity of the critical methodology that has been innovated and employed by those who have interpreted biblical texts under modernity's subject-object hermeneutics of correspondence is sustained. The pursuit of historical-critical knowledge and sociological-anthropological discrimination to ascertain the original context of the biblical texts is concomitantly indispensable, but it, along with the methodology that is utilized, is necessarily subordinated to a hermeneutics of disclosure, not only because a hermeneutics of disclosure is ontologically prior to a subject-object hermeneutics of correspondence, but because it offers a more adequate understanding of the truth of the texts.<sup>2</sup>

Modernity's hermeneutics of correspondence ascribes a distinctive character of 'being' to the Bible, the 'being' of an actuality, the 'being' of an object for scientific investigation. Subject-object hermeneutics, grounded in the empirical rationality of Age of Enlightenment philosophy and requiring the correspondence theory of truth, has dominated biblical interpretation for generations. A methodological 'how' governs the exegetical procedure to

1. For the difference between a hermeneutics of disclosure and the subject-object hermeneutics of correspondence, see Douglas R. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims: On the Role of Aporiai in Theology* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1997), pp. 328-78.

2. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 340.

enable the reader-interpreter to arrive at correct judgments by establishing correspondence between the intellect and the 'what is' of the Bible. But how these correct judgments can be verified to establish truth is the conundrum of the correspondence theory of truth, for the very issue at stake is the determination of the correspondence. Subject-object hermeneutics necessarily requires correspondence between the interpreter and the biblical text and depends on the comparison between the reconstructed context of a particular text and the text itself in order to reach a valid judgment about the relationship between them and the truth of the resulting interpretation. The identification of the text's historical context requires the utilization of interpreted parallel biblical, parabiblical and extrabiblical texts in order to achieve an historical determination of the text's time and place. Consequently, the process of the hermeneutical movement is necessarily circular, 'for what one takes to be true must be coherent with what one already holds to be true'.<sup>3</sup> The reconstructed context of time and place has to be assumed to be correct in order for the resulting interpretation to be true. Coherence is the sole criterion for the correspondence theory of truth.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, what is actually being compared is one kind of mental data with another kind, for there is no immediate access to anything external to the mind.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the hermeneutical process the interpreter, as the inquiring subject, is necessarily directed toward the biblical text as an actuality. The Bible is utilized as a thing, an object that is simply 'present-at-hand'.<sup>6</sup> The relationship that is established between the subject and the object by the correspondence theory of truth is based on the identity and difference of the 'is-ness' of the text. Consequently, under the subject-object hermeneutics of interpretation the Bible is nothing more than the object of a scientific autopsy that is investigated and analyzed by a host of critical methodological instruments. The outcome of the circularity of correspondence between the reconstructed context and the text continues to be an essentially historical interpretation that generally is rich in historical, religious, social, political and economic information. Yet the truth of the judgments that have been made to arrive at the text's context cannot be verified. And even more significantly, the whole or fullness of the text has not been taken into account because the concealed possibilities of meaning that necessarily belong to the actuality of the text remain invisible and undetected. The hermeneutics of correspondence lies in

3. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 336.

4. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 335, citation of Edgar Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1935), p. 59.

5. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 333.

6. The terms 'present-at-hand' and 'ready-to-hand' are derived from Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 129-38.

intellectual knowing; and ‘setting up knowing as a “relationship between subject and Object” [is] a procedure in which there lurks as much “truth” as vacuity’.<sup>7</sup>

Ironically, the human sciences in general and historical-critical scholarship in particular were predestined by Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* to operate under the epistemology of the natural sciences. In his third great Critique Kant secured a supra-empirical norm for the universality of the aesthetic judgments of natural and artistic beauty. Human creative freedom requires the construction of concepts and the self-legislation of principles ‘as if’ they were universal. By being grounded transcendently in radical subjectivization, human beings, in their aesthetic and historical consciousness, have the astonishing capacity to make *a priori* claims to independent validity and universality.<sup>8</sup> Nothing, however, can be known of the objects to which their judgments refer. Aesthetic and historical consciousness belong to the subjective realm of the free play of the imagination and understanding, but there are no empirical criteria, no universal principles, that could constitute knowledge.<sup>9</sup> Knowledge is limited to the theoretical and practical use of reason in the realm of empirical universality in which the categories of judgment and the forms of sensibility operate. As a result, ‘the methodological uniqueness of the *human* sciences lost its legitimacy’.<sup>10</sup> Truth in the interpretation of art and literature would remain unrealizable:

The transcendental justification of aesthetic judgment was the basis of the autonomy of aesthetic consciousness, and on the same basis historical consciousness was to be legitimized as well. The radical subjectivization involved in Kant’s new way of grounding aesthetics was truly epoch-making. In discrediting any kind of theoretical knowledge except that of natural science, it compelled the human sciences to rely on the methodology of the natural sciences in conceptualizing themselves.<sup>11</sup>

Subordinated to the epistemology of the natural sciences and the truth of objectivity, historical-critical biblical scholarship bracketed *a priori* understanding, the mode of understanding that is prior to all experience and that functions naturally and freely in the interpretation of all experience. As the bearer of prejudices, traditions and orientations to authority that are constituted through acculturation in a particular society, this inherently fundamental

7. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 87.

8. I am grateful to Douglas R. McGaughey for his helpful clarification of certain aspects of Kant’s Critique.

9. See Hans Georg Gadamer’s discussion of ‘The Subjectivization of Aesthetics through the Kantian Critique’, in *Truth and Method* (trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall; New York: Crossroad, 2nd edn, 1990), pp. 42–53.

10. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 41.

11. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 41.

*a priori* understanding was rejected as the deterrent to the establishment of objective truth. The distance between subject and object, between the interpreter and the biblical text, must necessarily be maintained because the Bible is historically, culturally and linguistically distant from contemporary reader-interpreters and, therefore, misunderstanding and even non-understanding are presumptive. Consequently, only the mode of an *a posteriori* understanding of the biblical text, the understanding that is constituted by the critical investigation and analysis of the text's context, can substantiate the truth of the interpretation; and, as already indicated, it requires the coherence between the biblical text's context and the texts themselves in order to certify the truth of the resulting exegesis. In his analysis of the correspondence theory of truth, Douglas R. McGaughey has observed:

For the correspondence theory of truth emphasizes the actual, the referent that is somehow accessible and 'obvious', as it tends to elevate sense perception to serve as a model and primary analogate for truth claims. Yet the correspondence theory of truth, even if it adds the further criteria of coherence and non-contradiction, is riddled with presuppositions and is dependent upon a radical mis-take. For the correspondence theory of truth can only *take* what is actual into account.<sup>12</sup>

Also inherent in the fundamental character of the subject-object hermeneutics of correspondence is the ontological identity that it imposes on the reader-interpreter of the Bible. The 'I' of the *Cogito*, the thinking analytical 'I', is prioritized. It is the 'I' that brackets the subjectivity of the *Sum*, the 'I am' of the reader-interpreter that depends on the *a priori* understanding, the understanding that is always prior to experience, the understanding that is necessarily engaged in interpreting whatever is being experienced at any moment. The thinking analytical 'I' of the *Cogito* directs itself toward that which is unintelligible, subject matter that is foreign and therefore outside of its horizon of experience. The biblical texts of past ages, originating in dissimilar cultures and preserved in ancient languages, are presumed to be relatively unintelligible and therefore easily misunderstood. The reader-interpreter's *a priori* understanding is presupposed to have no immediate access to what they are communicating, or, more correctly, to what they originally were intended to communicate to their addressees. Consequently, the subjectivity of the *a priori* understanding must be bracketed, and methodology appropriate to the retrieval of their original sense and significance of the text must be substituted in order to achieve understanding, indeed, an *a posteriori* understanding that will emerge after an exhaustive critical analysis has been undertaken by the thinking 'I'.

12. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, pp. 338-46 (343-44). The italics are his.

But who or what is this thinking analytical ‘I’ that has been divorced from the subjectivity of its own *a priori* understanding? It is the bloodless ‘I’ of the *Cogito* that transcends the ‘I am’ of the interpreter that is always and already existing in a circumscribed horizon, the horizon of its ‘Being-in-the-world’, a world into which it has been acculturated.<sup>13</sup> To what extent can such a bloodless ‘I’, divorced from the care and solicitude of its ontological reality of ‘Being-in-the-world’, actualize the meaning of a written text? What kind of *a posteriori* interpretation would such a bloodless ‘I’ produce through a methodological analysis of a biblical text? But then to what extent is it possible for a knowing subject to eject itself out of its ‘inner sphere’ in its subject–object relationship with the text and project itself into the presupposed external object of the text. Heidegger has stated the matter in this way:

Now, inasmuch as knowing belongs to these entities [human beings] and is not some external characteristic, it must be ‘inside’. For only then can the problem arise of how this knowing subject comes out of its inner ‘sphere’ into one which is ‘other and external’ of how knowing can have any object at all, and of how one must think of the object itself so that eventually the subject knows it without needing to venture a leap into another sphere.<sup>14</sup>

Yet the bloodless ‘I’ of the *Cogito* has continued to prevail throughout the centuries of critical biblical scholarship.

When the Bible is taken in hand as a tool and becomes an extension of the reader–interpreter, it is no longer simply a ‘presence-at-hand’. The subject–object relationship between the reader–interpreter and the biblical text is transcended and the ontological character of both the Bible and the reader–interpreter is transformed. The Bible becomes a tool, a piece of equipment that is ‘ready-to-hand’, and, as an actuality, it establishes the parameters of its own possibilities.<sup>15</sup> Possibility is higher than actuality.<sup>16</sup> Possibility is ontologically prior to actuality. It is the source of all invention, the origin of all the tools and equipment that human beings have devised to improve their lives and establish their well-being and security. Possibility always exists alongside of actuality as an invisible reality. It cannot be experienced until it is actualized by the use of the object to which it belongs. As a piece

13. ‘Being-in-the-world’ is a term derived from Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, pp. 78–86, and it signifies ‘a state of *Dasein*’, *being there*, that is, being in a particular world or residing within a circumscribed cultural horizon, an *a priori* ontological reality of understanding.

14. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 87. ‘Meaning’, as Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 193, notes, ‘is an *existentiale* of *Dasein*, an existential reality of *being there*, not a property attaching to entities, lying “behind” them, or floating somewhere in an “intermediate domain”’.

15. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 343.

16. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 63. On possibility, see pp. 263–64.

of equipment that is 'ready-to-hand', the Bible can be read-interpreted to actualize its inherent possibilities of meaning, its denotations and its connotations.

Taking the Bible in hand as a piece of equipment coincidentally alters the ontological identity of the reader-interpreter. The thinking analytical 'I' of the *Cogito* is reconstituted into the ontologically prior 'I am' (*sum*) of existence and experience. The bloodless 'I' of the subject-object hermeneutics of correspondence is compelled to return to its own circumscribed horizon of 'Being-in-the-world' in order to let the *a priori* understanding fulfill its primordial activity of interpretation. In this state of being, the primordial 'I' of the reader-interpreter is motivated by the ontological mode of solicitude to actualize the possibilities of existence.<sup>17</sup> Solicitude characterizes the very essence of being human and is directed toward the realization of self-fulfillment and life-enhancing achievements. Solicitude promotes the actualization of the possibilities of 'present-at-hand' equipment and activates the existential interpretation of biblical texts by engaging the reader-interpreter in an interaction with the biblical text that corresponds to their existential character. 'Putting [the texts] back in their historical context does not give us a living relationship with them but rather a merely ideative representation (*Vorstellung*)'.<sup>18</sup>

The actualization of the possibilities of existential meaning depends on the knowing of the *a priori* understanding, the knowing that is more or less circumscribed by the reader-interpreter's horizon of 'Being-in-the-world'. 'Meaning', as Martin Heidegger enunciated, 'is the "upon-which" of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception'.<sup>19</sup> Interpretations are never presuppositionless because they are predetermined by the *a priori* understanding. The fore-having of the *a priori* understanding is having something in advance, whatever the *a priori* understanding projects that is related to the subject matter of the text and is able to make the text intelligible. Fore-sight facilitates understanding by whatever fore-having enables the reader-interpreter to see in advance of what remains to be interpreted. Fore-conception grounds interpretation by whatever the *a priori* understanding can grasp in advance.<sup>20</sup> 'In so far as understanding and

17. The terms 'care' and 'solicitude' are taken from Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 157-59.

18. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 168. Earlier, on p. 167, Gadamer says, 'Reconstructing the original circumstances, like all restoration, is a futile undertaking in view of the historicity of our being'.

19. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 193. The italics are his.

20. On 'fore-having', 'fore-sight' and 'fore-conception', see Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 191.



interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the “there”, “meaning” must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding.<sup>21</sup>

The mode of interpretation that corresponds to the effect that the biblical texts attempt to achieve, namely existential integration, is the ‘*ready-to-hand*’ appropriation of the biblical text that relies on the fore-having, the fore-sight and the fore-conception of the reader-interpreter’s *a priori* understanding. That mode must necessarily include the textual realities of both possibility and actuality and that *requires* the prioritization of the literary-critical principles of *a close reading of the text* [in conjunction with the text’s original language] and *consistency building*.

The New Criticism of the middle of the twentieth century directed itself to a ‘close reading of the text’ that concentrates on the internal features of language, structure, coherence, style, and representation of reality. Literary works should be treated as autonomous and objective texts, and their explication is achieved by a literary-critical analysis of the collaboration and modification of their individual parts in the formation of a comprehensive aesthetic unity.<sup>22</sup> Its presuppositions, unfortunately, were still determined by the subject-object hermeneutics of *a posteriori* understanding, and therefore, application and integration were judged to be a separate undertaking and not to be confused with exegesis.

*A close reading of the text* is essential to the production of existential meaning, but it must necessarily include a subjective interaction with the text through the mediation of the reader-interpreter’s *a priori* understanding. As Wolfgang Iser established in *The Act of Reading*, the objective of the reading-interpretive process, arising out of existential care and solicitude, is the *experience* of existential meaning.<sup>23</sup> In addition to a *close reading of the text* in order to actualize the text as an event of experience, a reader-interpreter must grasp the text in terms of its structure and coherence through the process of *consistency building* that constitutes the event of involvement in the text.<sup>24</sup> The reading-interpreting process is an event, the event of the

21. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 193.

22. W.K. Wimsatt, ‘The Intentional Fallacy’, and ‘Explication as Criticism’, in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), pp. 3-18 and pp. 235-51.

23. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 129-34. See also Wolfgang Iser, ‘The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach’, in Jane P. Tompkins (ed.), *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 50-69.

24. Iser, *The Act of Reading*, pp. 118-34. It is surprising to read commentary after commentary in which these two literary-critical principles, a close reading of the text and consistency building, are not practiced.

convergence of text and reader that brings the literary work into existence.<sup>25</sup> Textual repertoires and strategies offer a frame within which reader-interpreters can construct for themselves the literary aesthetic object. The correlative literary-critical principles of a *close reading of the text* and *consistency building* through the interaction between the text and the reader ‘unconceals’ the possibilities of meaning that are latent in the actualities of the text, and the resulting integration corresponds to the existential effects that the biblical texts are intended to achieve.<sup>26</sup> The objective in and through interpretation is not a ‘correct’ reading of the text. That is unattainable. The goal is simply ‘a good reading [that] is congruent and a plenitude’.<sup>27</sup> ‘The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding.’<sup>28</sup>

Here, in this reading-interpretation of Paul’s Letter to the Romans, the production of meaning is actualized by the intersubjective engagement between the text and the reader-interpreter. Because the whole text of Romans cannot be perceived at one time, the reader-interpreter of the letter is necessarily involved in the synthesizing process of a ‘wandering viewpoint’. As Iser clarifies:

The relation between text and reader is therefore quite different from that between object and observer: instead of a subject–object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint which travels along inside that which it has to apprehend. This mode of grasping an object is unique to literature.<sup>29</sup>

To apprehend or grasp Romans by a ‘moving viewpoint’ requires a purposeful subjective interaction with the text grounded in the reader-interpreter’s *a priori* understanding in order to establish the text as a ‘correlative in the reader’s consciousness’.<sup>30</sup> A decisive example is already encountered in the opening three chapters of the letter. Romans 1.17 states that the justice of God is disclosed in the gospel—surprisingly, not in the law, as the reader-interpreter might have presupposed and, in fact, as many reader-interpreters have presupposed! Subsequently, the ‘wandering viewpoint’ confronts the reader-interpreter with 2.13, ‘For not the hearers of the law are just before

25. Iser, ‘The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach’, p. 50.

26. Iser, *The Act of Reading*, pp. 107–108. The subject–object hermeneutics of correspondence fails to take into account that a text conceals as well as reveals. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 340, states: ‘The truth of the foreground is inseparable, then, from that which is concealed in the background’.

27. Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 90–100. See also McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 343.

28. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 291.

29. Iser, *The Act of Reading*, p. 109.

30. Iser, *The Act of Reading*, p. 107.

God, but the doers of the law will be justified'. If the doers of the law will be justified, that would imply that they are able to actualize God's justice, and therefore the disclosure of God's justice in the gospel would be meaningless. In 3.9, however, the reader-interpreter encounters Paul's universal indictment, 'For we already charged both Jews and Greeks to be under *hamartia* (sin)'. If all are equally guilty of injustice, according to the scriptural quotations of 3.10-18 that reinforce 3.9, doing the works of the law—that is, doing justice—is impossible and therefore, in opposition to 2.13, no one can be justified. And that is finally the verdict that is encountered in 3.20, 'For from works of law no flesh will be justified before God, for through the law is the recognition of *hamartia* (sin)'. The denotation of 2.13 has been shattered by 3.9 and 3.20, but the reader-interpreter must nevertheless determine the basis of Paul's rationale in 2.13.

In any case, the 'wandering viewpoint' that travels along inside the text of the first three chapters of Romans has brought the reader-interpreter face to face with the judgment that the law cannot produce justice. It can achieve nothing more than an awareness of injustice and beyond that, the underlying condition of *hamartia* (sin), as 3.20 enunciates. At this point the apparent paradoxical structure of Paul's discourse may well have evoked the implicit question: If the law cannot generate justice, how can the gospel reveal it and possibly even produce it? Immediately beyond 3.20, the 'wandering viewpoint' of the text confronts the reader-interpreter with 3.21, which bears words that are reminiscent of 1.17:

For the *justice of God* (*dikaiosynē theou*) is being revealed in it [the gospel] *ek pisteōs eis pistin* (from faith into faith), even as it is written, 'The just one will live *ek pisteōs* (from faith). (1.17)

Now without law the *justice of God* (*dikaiosynē theou*) has been manifested, witnessed to by the law and the prophets, but the *justice of God* through the *pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (faith of Jesus Christ) unto all who believe. (3.21)

The phrase, *dikaiosynē theou* (justice of God) is reintroduced in 3.21, and with it the term *pistis* (faith). Paul had used the latter twice in the enigmatic double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, followed by the citation of Hab. 2.4 in which the first half of this double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs*, occurred. The denotation of Habakkuk's phrase, *ek pisteōs*, may be determined by Paul's earlier use of *pistis* (faith) in 1.5, 8 and 12, namely, 'through faith'; and that is how it is usually rendered in the English versions. It appears to be intended to serve as the frame of reference for the meaning of the first half of the double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, that precedes it. But what, then, is the significance of the second phrase, *eis pistin*, which is usually translated 'for faith'? If the denotation of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* is simply 'through faith for faith', what does the entire double prepositional phrase mean? Initially, at least, a movement is discernible, a movement

from something into something. But that simply raises the question: What is that something into something? According to Iser's 'wandering viewpoint', its meaning remains hidden as long as the frame of reference, offered by the quotation of Hab. 2.4, in relation to the previous verses of 1.5, 8, and 12, remains intact.

Denotation presupposes some form of reference that will indicate the specific meaning of the thing denoted. The literary text, however, takes its selected objects out of their pragmatic context and so shatters their original frame of reference; the result is to reveal aspects (e.g. of social norms) which had remained hidden as long as the frame of reference remained intact. In this way, the reader is given no chance to detach himself, as he would have if the text were purely denotative. Instead of finding out whether the text gives an accurate or inaccurate description of the object, the reader has to build up the object for him- or herself—often in a manner running counter to the familiar world evoked by the text.<sup>31</sup>

In 3.21 the 'wandering viewpoint' of the text begins to move the reader-interpreter beyond the denotated meaning of the double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, in its relationship to the phrase that precedes it in 1.17, *dikaiosynē theou* (justice of God). The justice of God, to which the law bears witness, is manifested *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (through [the] faith of Jesus Christ). If Habakkuk's phrase, *ek pisteōs*, offers a frame of reference for the first half of the double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, that would intimate that the movement, *from faith* (*ek pisteōs*) has its beginning in the Old Testament. In fact, Paul will attribute *pistis* (faith) to Abraham in 4.5 and apply the prepositional phrase *ek pisteōs* (from faith) to Abraham in 4.16. If the movement of *from faith* (*ek pisteōs*) in the double prepositional phrase, *from faith into faith* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*), begins with Abraham, its continuation must culminate in the second half of that phrase, *eis pistin*, as 3.22a intimates, that is, 'through [the] faith of Jesus Christ'. The gospel reveals the justice of God through the faith of Jesus Christ! The original denotation of the double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, is shattered by the 'wandering viewpoint' that travels along inside the text. The movement from something into something, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, is intimated to be *from the faith* of Abraham *into the faith* of Jesus Christ.

Undertaking a *close reading of the text* and *consistency building*, through the engagement of the *a priori* understanding, will also actualize the possibilities of meaning that are embedded in the metaphorical attributions of the text.<sup>32</sup> Metaphorical language, as a multi-valent form of speech, is

31. Iser, *The Act of Reading*, p. 109.

32. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 344, 'The truth of disclosure is "higher" than *adequatio intellectus et re* or the correspondence theory of truth, not because metaphorical truth teaches absolute certainties, but because metaphorical truth illuminates more of reality than the correspondence theory of truth'.

ontologically prior to steno or literal language; the figurative precedes the literal.<sup>33</sup> Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of disclosure promotes the interpretation of metaphor as a model of all interpretation. In *The Rule of Metaphor* he identified two principles of metaphorical explication that are applicable to the construction of meaning in the interpretation of these and other metaphorical attributions in Romans: *selection* as 'the progressive restriction of the breadth of the range of connotations', and *plenitude*, that is, 'All the connotations that can "go with" the rest of the context must be attributed to the [text], which "means all it *can* mean"'.<sup>34</sup> When Ricoeur speaks of 'the context', he is referring to *context* in the sense of the entire literary work that is being interpreted. He elaborates on these principles:

Are these two principles sufficient to exorcise the demon of relativism? If reading is compared to playing a musical score, then one could say that the logic of explication shows one how to give the poem a *correct* performance, even though every performance is *individual* and stands alone. If it is kept in mind that the principle of plenitude complements the principle of congruence and that complexity counterbalances coherence, it becomes clear that the principle of economy that rules over this logic does not just eliminate impossibilities. It also tends towards 'maximizing' the meaning, that is, towards getting as much meaning out of the poem as possible.<sup>35</sup>

The engagement of the *a priori* understanding in a 'ready-to-hand' interaction with Romans will disclose the possibilities of meaning that are embedded in the metaphorical attributions of the Septuagint texts of Gen. 3.16b and Hos. 2.18-25 that Paul intimates in Rom. 7.1-4, and the metaphorical implications of the revised Septuagint quotation of Exod. 9.16 in Rom. 9.17.<sup>36</sup>

Lastly, scribal interpolations also become pronouncedly visible through the utilization of a close reading of the text and consistency building in conjunction with the reader-interpreter's *a priori* understanding. The exposure of these interpolations will dramatize how effectively they have contributed to the distortion of explicating the theological thought of Romans and at the same time how tellingly they can promote the restitution of the Pauline text and the recovery of the integrated structure of Romans and its formulation of Paul's theology.<sup>37</sup> These interpolations are more numerous

33. McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 262. On p. 264, McGaughey states: 'The literal is only expressive of the actual'.

34. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 96. The italics are his. See also McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, pp. 261-327.

35. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 96. The italics are his.

36. See McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, pp. 263-86.

37. For a critical analysis of the many erroneous interpretations of Paul's letters, see especially Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), pp. 25-54 (Chapter 2, 'The Canonical Betrayal of

than has generally been acknowledged: 3.22b-26; 5.3-4, 11; 7.25b; 8.9b-10; 10.17; 15.4; 16.17-20, 25-27. Prior to the beginnings of the process of canonization around 150 CE, and even afterwards, interpolation was a tolerated feature of the transmission of the early Christian writings. As Günther Zuntz concluded,

The deliberate opposition to the progressive corruption of the current texts moreover would have required an attitude of mind almost opposite of that which, at the time, prevailed among Christians of all classes and denominations. The common respect for the sacredness of the Word, with them, was not an incentive to preserve the text in its original purity. On the contrary, the strange fact has long since been observed that devotion to the founder and his apostles did not prevent the Christians of that age from interfering with their transmitted utterances. The reliance of the believers upon the continuing action of the Spirit easily led them to disregard the letter. Where the two appeared to be at variance, the urge to interpolate what was felt to be true was not always resisted.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, it must also be said that the process of interacting with the text of Romans engaged with the ontological priority of *a priori* understanding necessarily comprehends all that has been derived from the disclosures of previous interpretations of Paul's earlier letters and has become incorporated into the *a priori* understanding of the reader-interpreter. The mutuality that

Paul'). Discussing interpolations in the Pauline letters, William O. Walker, 'The Burden of Proof in Identifying Interpolations in the Pauline Letters', *NTS* 33 (1987), pp. 610-18, reviews the issue of the burden of proof *vis-à-vis* the question of criteria by examining both literary-critical and text-critical considerations. He concludes: 'it appears highly likely that some or even all of the Pauline letters, as we now have them, contain interpolations'. He ends by stating that 'the burden of proof still rests with any argument that a particular passage is an interpolation'. In his analysis of the 'literary-critical considerations', he has not included a critical examination of the hermeneutical differences between the subject-object analysis of Paul's letters and the ontologically prior interaction of experience that combines both a close reading of the text and consistency building. See also Walker's footnotes, pp. 616-18, for more bibliography on the issue of interpolations. Also Leander E. Keck, 'Romans 15:4: An Interpolation?', in C.H. Cosgrove, J.T. Carroll, and E.E. Johnson (eds.), *Faith and History: Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 125-36.

38. Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1953), p. 268. See also pp. 267-70. In this context it is also worth quoting Kurt Aland, 'Glosse, Interpolation, Redaktion und Komposition in der Sicht der neutestamentlichen Textkritik', in *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Textes* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1967), p. 55, 'Warum sollten nicht Glossen in die Paulusbriefe und die anderen Schriften des Neuen Testaments eingedrungen sein? Warum sollte nicht am Text des Johannesevangeliums wie die anderen Schriften des Neuen Testaments später manipuliert worden sein? Das alles kann nicht grundsätzlich abgewiesen werden.'



emerges between them elevates a sensitivity to Paul's language and thought forms that aid in the identification of scribal interpolations and therefore also the recovery of the 'structured prefigurement' of the authentic integrity of the text of Romans.<sup>39</sup>

An awareness is induced of the issues of the earlier letters that have not been included in Romans: the Lord's Supper, the *parousia*, gender, marriage, sexuality, circumcision, glossolalia and Paul's apostolic authority. All of them are local matters of controversy within the individual congregations that Paul addressed in his earlier letters. The absence of these practical matters in Romans, compared to the fundamental issues of historical existence: salvation, justice, the human condition of infection, law, trust, reconciliation, the reality of a New Humanity, a new indebtedness, the immense sinfulness of sin, the gift of God's Spirit, the problem of Israel, and the ethics of God's New Humanity, establishes the Letter to the Romans as a singularity among the letters of Paul. Nothing comparable to it has emerged in the Christ movement that subsequently identified itself by the name 'Christian'.

The interpretation which the present volume offers is also the product of interaction with the students who participated in my courses and seminars at San Francisco Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union, as well as countless lay-people in conferences, retreats and Sunday morning Bible studies. To them, whom I cannot name, I remain deeply grateful.

I am indebted especially to Professor Ted Jennings, Jr, for his book, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul: On Justice*, which I read after I had completed the second draft of my manuscript. His Derridean analysis of Paul's theology offers language that more effectively conveys the Apostle Paul's critical deconstruction of law, his representation of the indebtedness of the new being to enslavement to justice, and God's love as 'the law of law' or 'the law beyond law' that replaces the code of Sinai.

More recently, as I approached the end of my work on Romans, I was pleased to find and read Alain Badiou's monograph, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. As the result of the subjectivist hermeneutics that has guided me in producing this commentary, I find that my interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans bears a certain resemblance to his 'through and through subjective reactivation of Paul'. My exegetical movement through Romans coincides with his determination that Paul, as distant as he may be removed from us, both in terms of time and his captivity within the Christian Church (Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox), is our contemporary, indeed, our contemporary perhaps especially in the secular world, by a singular formulation of the foundation of universalism that has the potentiality of establishing the justice of God in our world.

39. The phrase 'structured prefigurement' is derived from Iser, *The Act of Reading*, p. 107.

I continue to owe much to my good friend and fellow journeyman, Professor Douglas R. McGaughey of Willamette University, for the influence that his writings and our email exchanges in the areas of epistemology and ontology continue to exert on the development of my hermeneutical perspective. I remain grateful to the late Dr Patricia Codron, who read an earlier draft of the manuscript of this book and offered critical suggestions that improved the clarity of my interpretations. I thank my friend Dr Royce Truex for stimulating conversations on many theological topics, including Romans, over many Tuesday morning breakfasts. Finally, I am indebted to Professor David Clines for accepting the manuscript of this book on behalf of Sheffield Phoenix Press and to Professor Clines and my copy-editor, Dr Duncan Burns, for his indispensable role in editing and preparing it for publication.

Most of all, I am indebted to my wife, Mary, who has been my dialog partner throughout this long struggle to achieve a unified understanding of Romans. Her insights and challenges have been invaluable and have compelled me to rethink parts of my exegetical work. For all that she has contributed through her wise and gracious judgments, her inspiration and her love, I thank her profoundly.

I am grateful to our daughters, Thembisa and Elaine, who have continued to be a source of support through their unflagging interest and affirmation.

Finally, I acknowledge our son Dave who, generously giving of his time and expertise, encouraged and guided me in the production of a viable manuscript. It is to him that I dedicate this book.

Herman C. Waetjen  
San Anselmo, California  
Epiphany January 6, 2011



## ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CH	<i>Church History</i>
EvT	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
GNB	Good News Bible
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuaginta
MT	Massoretic Text
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTIME	J.B. Phillips, <i>The New Testament in Modern English</i>
NTIELT	<i>Das Neue Testament in einem erneuerten Luthertext</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.), <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (trans. Geoffrey Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976)
TWNT	Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.) <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> (10 vols.; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1932/33–1965)
TLZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Of all the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote—the general consensus is seven!—his Letter to the Romans is a singularity. What makes this letter what it is, is its theology of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> Its content is its singularity! But there are certain coincidental features that amplify its distinctiveness. Paul's theology of the gospel is communicated in the form of a letter that has a coherent core and a contingent context.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, beyond its contingent context it is already contingent in its very form as a letter, because as such it is 'much closer to oral dialogue and the living word'.<sup>3</sup> In its contingency as an occasional letter it bears a temporal historical relevance, but its theology of the gospel conveys a complexity of Paul's thought that is both timeless and universal. That essentially is its aporetic character, which characterizes its singularity among the letters of Paul.<sup>4</sup>

In all likelihood this was his last letter, and therefore it may aptly be considered to be his 'last will and testament'. That, however, is not the only characterization or classification by which the letter has been distinguished. It has been designated 'an ambassadorial letter', 'a manifesto', 'a philosophical diatribe', 'a theological treatise', 'a letter of self-introduction', 'a circular letter', and more. To one extent or another, most, if not all, of these distinctions are applicable to Romans; and all of them, of course, are

1. Leander E. Keck, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', in David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology. III. Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 3-29 (23).

2. This is Beker's characterization of Romans; see J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 33.

3. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 62.

4. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 69, after a discussion of the contingent character of Romans, stresses the circumstances of the Roman addressees of Paul's letter and only minimally the situation of Paul: 'If Romans is indeed a situational and particular letter, it can no longer be treated as the compendium or essence or confessional monologue of Paul's thought to which the other letters are purely fragmentary contributions'. This has continued to be a dominant perspective in the interpretation of Romans.

determined by an explicit identification of the letter's contingent historical context and the relationship of that context to its coherent core. Whatever genre is finally ascertained to be appropriately adequate, it must be correlated with the resolution of two critical issues: (1) what Paul communicated to the Romans, and (2) what he intended to accomplish by doing so.<sup>5</sup>

Romans, like Paul's earlier writings, is a 'situational letter' that originated within a particular set of circumstances. But what kind of 'situational letter'? Is it to be interpreted in the light of the situational context of its addressees? Or in the light of the circumstances of Paul himself? Or both? His earlier letters—1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, the fragments of various letters to the Corinthians contained in 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, and Galatians—were addressed to the contextual realities of these respective communities that had been founded by his own apostolic evangelization. These letters were designed to resolve internal disputes and controversial issues of the individually designated congregations, and their content, therefore, would be immediately intelligible to their addressees. To read them today is analogous to listening to one side of a telephone conversation, and, unless there is some comprehension of the subject-matter that the letters convey, their intelligibility is limited.

The recent preponderance of critical scholarship interprets the Letter to the Romans analogously in the light of the contextual conditions of the Roman churches, while also acknowledging Paul's circumstances.<sup>6</sup> The motivation of the letter is determined primarily by the problems that prevail in those communities and only secondarily by Paul's concrete situation. Paul's projected visit to Rome, his ambition to evangelize in Spain, his impending visit to Jerusalem and especially the internal problems of disunity among the Roman believers, as reflected particularly in chs. 14–15, characterize the occasional content of the Letter to the Romans. J. Christiaan

5. Keck, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', p. 29, has made this critical differentiation. Moreover, Keck (p. 23) says, 'It is one thing to reconstruct the catalysts that prompted Paul to write, another to account for what he wrote'. In other words, it is the letter's aporetic character of its contingency and its coherent core.

6. Karl P. Donfried, in his 'Introduction 1991: The Romans Debate since 1977', in Karl P. Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, rev. and exp. edn, 1991), pp. lxi–lxxii, summarizes the state of the debate as of 1991: (1) 'Without question a consensus has been reached that Romans is addressed to the Christian community in Rome which finds itself in a particular historical situation. How that historical situation is described varies, but many would point to the polarized house-churches as being a key factor leading to turmoil among the Christians in that metropolis'; (2) 'It is unwise to speak of a single purpose in Paul's writing to Rome'; (3) Rom. 16 is viewed by the majority as an integral part of Paul's original letter; (4) one can no longer argue against the historical specificity of Romans based on the use of diatribe; (5) Rom. 9–11 form an integral part of Romans.

Beker's interpretation is representative of both contexts, but, like many others, it emphasizes the Roman situation:

The letter is not only written from a specific situation but also addressed to a specific situation; therefore, its arguments and structural form are dictated by specific needs and circumstances, so that Romans is not simply a summary or dogmatic substance of Pauline thought. Such a view discards the problem that the letter form raises for canonical—'catholic' universality, because in that case Romans ceases to be a letter and becomes instead a dogmatic essay, a *summa theologica* that summarizes the occasional content of the other Pauline letters.<sup>7</sup>

It is essentially the internal conditions and circumstances of the Roman church, as they are reconstructed from Paul's letter, that have continued to determine the interpretation of Romans. It is theorized that conflict between the so-called weak and the strong, between Jewish and Gentile believers, was fracturing the community life of the congregations at Rome. 'Paul wrote to counter (potential) divisions within Rome among Christian house churches, particularly the danger of gentile believers despising less liberated Jewish believers.'<sup>8</sup> This perspective of a polarized church is believed to possess considerable strength and is widely supported within the community of Pauline scholars.<sup>9</sup>

Both of these groups within the Roman house churches, Gentile and Jewish believers, are readily identifiable at the very beginning of the letter, and it may be inferred from 1.6-7 that they are being addressed separately:

...through whom we received grace and apostleship unto the obedience of trust among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name, among whom you also are called of Jesus Christ, to all who are in Rome beloved of God, called holy...

7. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 70. The italics are Beker's.

8. James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC, 38a; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), I, p. lviii. He adds, 'The alternative view that no detailed knowledge on Paul's part of the situation in Rome need be assumed, and that 12.1-15.6 simply provides a general parenthesis in which Paul sums up the teaching and lessons he had learned elsewhere, particularly Corinth..., can hardly command much support, in view of the background outlined above'. William S. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context: Jew and Gentile in the Letter to the Romans* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), p. 133, says '...Paul seeks to bring about a change of attitude in all Christians in Rome—not just in those of Jewish origin; that he will oppose all boasting and all misrepresentation from whatever source, and present contrary arguments to bring about harmony among the house churches in Rome'.

9. For example, J. Christiaan Beker, Paul Minear, Karl Donfried, Francis Watson, Robert Jewett, William S. Campbell, and others. This perspective is advanced in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, specifically in Donfried's 'False Presuppositions in the Study of Romans', pp. 102-25; Peter Stuhlmacher's 'The Purpose of Romans', pp. 231-42, and 'The Theme of Romans', pp. 333-45; Robert Jewett, 'Following the Argument of Romans', pp. 265-77.

There appear to be no intimations here of a divided community. Indeed, nothing here or within the letter indicates an awareness of two separate congregations divided ‘by mutual hostility and suspicion over the question of the law’.<sup>10</sup> Initially Paul is referring to the Gentile believers among his addressees.<sup>11</sup> Since he has qualified his apostleship as one that is specifically directed to the ‘obedience of trust among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name’, it naturally follows that the Gentile believers would recognize themselves in v. 6 as those ‘among whom you also are called of Jesus Christ’.<sup>12</sup> Verse 7, then, is more inclusive, as the adjective *pasin* (to all) indicates—‘to all those who are in Rome’—and that would enclose the Jewish believers in the community. Together, as Jews and Gentiles, they are acknowledged to be ‘beloved of God, called holy’. The term *ekklēsia* (gathering of the called out) is absent in the salutation of vv. 5-7, but that in and of itself does not legitimate the interpretation that the congregation consisted of two opposed factions.<sup>13</sup> Both groups, according to vv. 6-7, are *called* (*klētoi*). The Gentiles are *called of Jesus Christ*; both Jews and Gentiles are *called holy*.<sup>14</sup>

10. This is the presupposition of Francis Watson, ‘The Two Roman Congregations: Romans 14.1–15.13’, in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 203-15, based largely on his interpretation of 14.1–15.13. On pp. 207-12, Rom. 16 is construed as a confirmation of ‘the existence of a separate Jewish congregation at Rome’. On p. 214, he says, ‘Rom. 1.11ff. and 15.23ff. also provide hints of a longer-term aim: having won over the Roman Jewish Christians by means of this letter, he would be able to use the Roman church as a base for mission in Rome (1.13ff.) and in Spain (15.24, 28)’.

11. Ben Witherington III, with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), p. 8, maintains, ‘In sum, Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles is primarily addressing Gentile Christians in Rome, although he is happy for Jewish Christians to overhear this conversation. It is Gentile Christians in Rome that he feels mainly need exhorting, and it is Gentile Christians in Rome he feels he has some claim on, since he is the apostle to the Gentiles.’ Also p. 35.

12. Robert Jewett, ‘Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission’, in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 89-108 (96), also identifies those addressed as ‘called of Jesus Christ’ in 1.6 with the Gentiles, but adds that they ‘formed the majority of the membership of the house- and tenement-churches at the time of writing Romans’. Paul’s address, ‘beloved of God’, in 1.7 he judges to be a ‘unification formula’ that reflects the factions in the Roman community.

13. Watson, ‘The Two Roman Congregations: Rom. 14.1–15.13’, p. 214, suggests that the absence of the word *ekklēsia* in 1.6 may be significant, implying that ‘there was no single Roman congregation, but two opposing groups’.

14. Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 103, considers 1.6-7 to be a hint that ‘the relationship of the Jewish Christian addressees to the Gentiles is to be the main theme of the letter’.

The text of Rom. 14.1–15.13 is judged to be the principal evidence of controversy and conflict between these two groups of Gentiles and Jews in the Roman church.<sup>15</sup> But it has effectively been argued that, ‘Romans is addressed to a church of which Paul has no first-hand knowledge, and his discussion of “the strong” and “the weak” in 14.1–15.13 reads like a generalized adaptation of a position he had earlier worked out respecting an actual, known situation in Corinth’.<sup>16</sup> The juxtaposition of Romans 14–15 and 1 Corinthians 8–10 exposes the extraordinary extent to which Rom. 14.1–15.13 repeats, rephrases and echoes the arguments of 1 Corinthians 8–10. The expansions that are evident in Paul’s generalized adaptation of 1 Corinthians 8–10 are ‘concerned to show how an established community can maintain its unity despite differences of opinion’.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the research on the parenesis of Romans 12–15 illuminates the relationship between 12–13 and 14.1–15.13.<sup>18</sup> Together Romans 12–13 and 14.1–15.13 present Paul’s ethics of God’s New Humanity by which Jewish and Gentile

15. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, in the subsection entitled, ‘The Two Roman Congregations: Rom. 14.1–15.13’, pp. 94–98. William S. Campbell, ‘The Rule of Faith in Romans 12:1–15:13: The Obligation of Humble Obedience to Christ as the Only Adequate Response to the Mercies of God’, in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 260–63, is also convinced that the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ refer to real groups in the Roman churches. N.T. Wright, ‘Romans and the Theology of Paul’, in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 30–67 (34–36), also is inclined to relate Rom. 14–15 to internal problems in the Roman church that may subvert Paul’s design ‘to use Rome as his base of operations in the western Mediterranean’. This is a possibility rejected by Keck, ‘What Makes Romans Tick?’, p. 19. Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), pp. 64–70, interprets Paul’s letter entirely from the perspective of an internal situation of conflict between two kinds of house churches in Rome. See his profile of ‘The Social Structure of House and Tenement Churches in Rome’. In his essay ‘Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission’, p. 90, Jewett maintains this perspective but combines Paul’s missional purpose with his situational view of the letter: ‘The theological and parenetic arguments of the letter all serve this end, aiming at uniting the Roman house-churches so that such cooperation would be possible’. J. Paul Sampley, ‘Romans in a Different Light: A Response to Robert Jewett’, in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 109–29 (121), concurs with Jewett, ‘And why shouldn’t Paul consider himself the logical one to intervene in the Roman house-churches’ struggles?’ See also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 239.

16. Robert J. Karris, ‘Romans 14.1–15.13 and the Occasion of Romans’, in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 65–84 (71), is quoting Victor P. Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 115. For similar views on Rom. 14–15, Karris cites Bornkamm, Leenhardt, Fitzmyer, Sanday-Headlam and Conzelmann.

17. Karris, ‘Romans 14.1–15.13 and the Occasion of Romans’, pp. 71–77.

18. Karris, ‘Romans 14.1–15.13 and the Occasion of Romans’, pp. 81–84 (69–70), rightly contends ‘that the history of religions approach to the origins of the Roman church and to “the weak” and “the strong” communities in Rome is bankrupt’.

believers are to be united in actualizing the justice of God. *A close reading* of Romans reinforced by *consistency building* convincingly establishes that nothing in the letter discloses a rhetorical effort to refute false teaching or to mediate conflicts between Jewish and Gentile believers.<sup>19</sup> The rhetoric of Romans does not convey a defensive disposition, and there is nothing in the content of Paul's letter that indicates that 'its arguments and structural form are dictated by specific needs and circumstances of the Roman church'. It is questionable whether the time is really over for reading Romans as a last testament of Paul's theology.<sup>20</sup>

Paul's addressees are members of a community of believers that he did not found, and who, for the most part, he does not know personally.<sup>21</sup> He addresses them as a stranger with an unsolicited letter of an instructional discourse on his theology and ethics of the gospel; it is the 'coherent core' of Romans.<sup>22</sup> His carefully worded reasoning for including such a lengthy theological treatise in a letter notifying them of the possibility of an imminent visit and the attendant hope of continuing his apostolic mission in Spain conveys a sense of reservation as well as a nuance of uncertainty about the reception he hopes for. Accordingly, he acknowledges that they are 'full of goodness, having been filled with all knowledge and able to instruct each other'. Paul wrote more boldly, as he says in 15.15, to enable them, in their own advanced theological understanding, to call to mind what they already know. In their reading of his letter, they will encounter his rhetorical efforts to share his understanding of the human condition and its resolution and the consequential theological and ethical determinations that he draws from it. Exhortations are offered along the way, but they appear to be spontaneous and natural within the contexts in which they are made.

19. See the Preface, above. Harry Gamble, Jr, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 52, on the basis of literary criticism, maintains, 'It has to be acknowledged that in chs. 1–15 we find no suggestion of the actual and present existence of false teaching or resultant schism within the Roman community'.

20. As maintained by Jewett, *Romans*, p. 90; and Sampley, 'Romans in a Different Light', p. 117.

21. It is difficult to reconcile ch. 16 as an authentic conclusion of the letter to Rome. The manner in which the addressees are greeted by Paul and his co-workers discloses a relationship of intimacy and affection that could never emerge and burgeon in a voluntary grouping of honor/shame culture. See below, 'Conclusion of the Letter Sent to Ephesus'.

22. David E. Aune, 'Romans as a Logos Protrepitkos', in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 278–96, focuses specifically on the letter's central section (1.16–15.13), the core, and proposes the genre of 'Logos Protrepitkos', a speech of exhortation Paul has employed to convince the Roman Christians, or remind them, of 'the truth of *his* version of the gospel and to encourage a commitment to the kind of lifestyle which Paul considered to be consistent with his gospel'. The italics are Aune's.



What Paul has written to them was prompted, as he goes on to say, ‘by the grace that was given to me by God so that I am a *leitourgon* of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, serving the gospel as a priest of God so that the offering of the Gentiles becomes acceptable, consecrated by the holy Spirit’. It is important to note that in this fresh self-introduction he has chosen not to re-identify himself as an *apostolos*, the designation that distinguishes his office as an *apostle* of Christ Jesus, which he employed in his salutation in 1.1 and then again in 11.13. What he has written is determined primarily by God’s grace that has qualified him as a *leitourgos* of Christ Jesus. The restrained character of both his letter and his apostolic authority confers an ambassadorial character on Romans.<sup>23</sup>

Romans has ‘a coherent core and a contingent context’.<sup>24</sup> It is indeed a ‘situational letter’! But it is the contextual circumstances of the author himself and not those of his addressees that motivated him to write it and that accentuates its distinctiveness. Paul’s immediate existential situation determined what he wrote and, at the same time, what he intended to achieve by writing. He specifies his circumstances in 15.19-26:

For this reason also I was thwarted often to come to you. But now, no longer having a place in these regions and having a longing for many years to come to you, with a view *I might proceed* (*hōs an poreuōmai*) into Spain; for in passing through I hope to *take you in with my own eyes* (*theasasthai*) and to *be sped on my journey* (*propemphthēnai*) there, if first I may to some extent (*apo merous*) enjoy your company.

Paul is in Corinth, as the house guest of Gaius, one of the first Gentile converts he had baptized at the beginning of his ministry in Corinth. He has closed his ministry in the regions of the eastern Mediterranean. Conceivably, these provinces are being saturated with mission activity, and the communities of believers that he established in their cities have begun to engage

23. This is Robert Jewett’s characterization of Romans, based on his analysis of the diplomatic language of the letter. ‘The content of Paul’s letter to Rome, setting forth the equality of Jews and Gentiles under sin and grace and stressing the inclusive reach of faith, can be grasped in its entirety as an expression of missionary diplomacy’. But his characterization presupposes ‘ideological adversaries’ in Rome as the occasion of the letter. ‘Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter’, *Interpretation* 36/1 (1982), pp. 5-20. Also Jewett, *Romans*, p. 44, where he adds ‘subtypes in the genre: the parenetic letter, the hortatory letter, and the philosophical diatribe’. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. lix, considers Jewett’s model of an ambassadorial letter ‘as the most impressive suggestion’, but he enlarges the purpose of Romans to include: a missionary purpose, an apologetic purpose and a pastoral purpose; and in conclusion, pp. lv-lviii, states, ‘all three of these main emphases and purposes hang together and indeed reinforce each other when taken as a whole’.

24. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, pp. 15-18.

in evangelizing their rural districts. Paul, therefore, in view of his acknowledged apostolic principle not to build on another foundation, is unable to continue his apostleship to the Gentiles within this geographical circle of his former activity.

He is now looking westward, and his immediate hope and expectation, as he expresses it in 1.10, is to visit his Roman addressees. He has wanted to do that for a long time; indeed, as he voices it in 15.24, he wishes ‘to *take you in with my own eyes (theasasthai)*’.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, in his disclosure of this prospect, he expresses a discernible uncertainty in his announced intention, for he is praying that ‘somehow now at last I shall succeed by the will of God to come to you’. He longs to see them, so that he can impart to them a spiritual gift, or rather, as he adds, ‘to be encouraged together among you through your faith and mine’. The earlier sense of uncertainty that he conveyed in 1.10 about visiting his addressees in Rome is now extended to the prospect of evangelizing in Spain, for his rather abrupt announcement is expressed in terms of contingency or indefinite time.<sup>26</sup> Yet the fulfillment of his endeavor to reach Spain will be dependent on the good will and generous support of the Roman congregations. Their hospitality and their cooperative effort in his contemplated mission to Spain may be determined by how they will respond to his letter. Its core, that is, his theology of the gospel, is intentionally designed to serve both as a letter of self-introduction and as ambassadorial credentials and perhaps also, if only indirectly, to correct any misrepresentations of his theology of the gospel and his apostleship.<sup>27</sup>

More immediately, however, as he informs his addressees in 15.25, ‘But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints’. Yet it is not until he closes his letter in 15.30-32 that he confides his anxiety to his addressees about possible eventualities that he may encounter during the fulfillment of this ministry in Jerusalem:

25. Frederick William Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3rd edn, 2000), p. 445.

26. The adverbial conjunction *hōs* in 15.24, followed by the particle *an*, which expresses indefiniteness or contingency, requires the use of the subjunctive mood in the verb *poreuōmai* (I might proceed).

27. C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), II, pp. 817-18, after exegeting the entire letter in two volumes, concludes that ‘...the appropriate way [for Paul] to introduce himself would be to set before them a serious and orderly summary of the gospel as he had come to understand it’. This is acknowledged by Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 403, who nevertheless prefers to regard the letter as ‘a theological legacy’.

Now I beg you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in prayers toward God on my behalf that I shall be delivered from the disobedient in Judea and my ministry unto Jerusalem becomes welcome to the saints, so that coming to you in joy through the will of God I shall be refreshed among you.

Paul's anticipated journey to Rome and his work as an apostle to the Gentiles that he hopes to continue in Spain will be in jeopardy in Jerusalem. The apprehension that he acknowledges in 15.30-32 is supported by Acts 23.12-14:

In the morning the Jews joined in a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who joined in this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, 'We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food until we have killed Paul'.<sup>28</sup>

Although he does not explicitly say so, Paul must confront the stark reality that he may be killed by 'the disobedient' in Judea and Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, he is preparing his addressees for the prospect that he may not be able to fulfill his hopes and plans beyond Jerusalem. He may never reach Rome and be able to continue his apostolic career in Spain.

Would Romans have been written if Paul had not projected a new mission in Spain?<sup>30</sup> It would be more correct to ask whether Romans would have been written if Paul had opted for immediate travel to Rome without an intermediate trip to Jerusalem?<sup>31</sup> What is Paul's existential situation that

28. See also Acts 25.3.

29. As Jerome Murphy-O'Connor has observed, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 341-42, 'The verb [*rhysthō*] he [Paul] uses connotes a vivid sense of danger'. The question Murphy-O'Connor raises—'Why should Paul now take it for granted that Palestinian Jews would be hostile to him?'—is answered at some length. 'Emissaries from Antioch, as we have seen, had been on Paul's heels for four years, challenging his attitude towards the Law. In Galatia they had the opportunity to read Paul's letter to the churches there, and it is far from impossible that they sent a copy to Antioch. In any case, it is unlikely that they stayed away for several years without reporting back to their home base. At least an oral report of Paul's radical antinomianism reached Antioch. Regular contacts between Antioch and Jerusalem can be safely assumed.'

30. This is Keck's question, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', p. 22. He goes on to say, 'If the two factors that energized Paul to write chaps. 1-11 and 14-16 were Spain and Rome, respectively, then the historical factor that unites them is Paul's construal of his apostleship, which lies beneath the surface of the whole text. It is this sense of identity, and what he takes to flow from it, that grounds the sovereign authority with which he writes, in effect asserting himself, uninvited, into the Roman situation in order to make possible his next mission.'

31. Jürgen Becker, almost alone in his clear grasp of Paul's existential situation, asks the same question in *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John

elicited this extensive discourse on theology and ethics? And, attendantly, to repeat the two critical issues that were posed earlier: (1) what did Paul want to communicate to the Romans and (2) what did he intend to accomplish by writing Romans?<sup>32</sup>

The existential reality of Paul's more immediate prospect is the possibility of his martyrdom in Jerusalem. The objective of his imminent journey is his effort to fulfill the promise he had made at the end of the Jerusalem Council to remember the destitute by presenting the collection of the churches he founded to the saints of Jerusalem. That is the contingency of his situation, and it necessitated the contingency of a letter, the only literary form he had consistently used in his correspondence with the churches that he had founded:

Before his Jerusalem journey, with which everything can be won or lost and where his life and his commission as apostle to the Gentiles in the one church of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians are at stake, Paul lays his theological testament before the Romans, to whom he will come next if everything goes well. If he should no longer be able to come, they will have ahead of time, in writing, what he would have to say to them upon his coming.<sup>33</sup>

On the one hand, his letter enabled him to inform his Roman addressees of his anticipation of a visit with them, and eventually, at the close of his letter, to reinforce that hope and, at the same time, to share his intention to continue his apostolic mission in Spain. On the other hand, his stated anticipations required the qualification of an imminent journey to Jerusalem to deliver the monetary gift of the communities of faith that he had established.

Yet more was warranted. Indeed, something of Paul himself! That would be the 'coherent core' of his letter! The necessity was for a formulation of his theology of the gospel that he had been proclaiming throughout his apostolic career that would serve as a self-introduction and possibly also as a corrective of the misrepresentations of his theology of the gospel. But that 'coherent core' is not simply a summation of the theology that he had developed during his apostolic career in the eastern Mediterranean. The contingency of martyrdom that he confronted evoked from within him a theological testament that would hopefully serve as a manifesto for the future of the Christ movement.<sup>34</sup> If the worst of Paul's fears is actualized and

Knox Press, 1993), pp. 349-50, and he answers it in the light of 15.30-31: 'It may well be that as a result of this trip Paul will not be able to come to Rome at all and will thus be prevented again from making the trip'.

32. As already indicated, Keck, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', p. 29, has made this critical differentiation.

33. Becker, *Paul*, p. 350.

34. The term 'manifesto' is taken from T.W. Manson's essay, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 31 (1948), p. 18; repr. in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 3-15 (15).

he is killed, the Roman community of faith would at least know of his cherished desire to visit them. It would also be aware of a projected mission into Spain. But above all, it would possess what he hoped to accomplish by this letter, a 'theological testament' that would inspire and instruct them into the future as members of God's New Humanity of the Body of Christ.<sup>35</sup> It would be his personal legacy to *those called out* by God through his apostolic ministry and beyond, the future *ekklēsia* of the Israel of God.

As a 'theological testament', the letter to the Romans transcends Paul's earlier writings. Its circumstances, its epistolary form, its diatribe rhetoric, and its content constitute its singularity. It is not simply a summation of the theological position that he and his friends may have reached at the end of a long controversy.<sup>36</sup> Implicitly, in the light of its content, specifically its keynote of salvation as justice, its deconstruction of law, and its counter-cultural ethics, Romans belongs to 'resistance literature'. It is not 'Paul's theodicy project'.<sup>37</sup> Paul is not engaged in vindicating God or God's faithfulness to Israel on the basis of God resurrecting Jesus from the dead, inaugurating a new age and fulfilling the prophetic promises to Israel. As his last will and testament, Romans presents his impassioned concern to establish a foundation that will finally unite Jews and Gentiles under a gospel that can actualize God's justice and consequently enable them to transform the world.<sup>38</sup> God's justice was introduced into human history by the Jews, and, if God's

35. Günther Bornkamm, 'The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament', in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 16-28, on the basis of his analysis of 15.30-31, pioneered the theory that Romans is pre-eminently interpreted as a theological testament. Becker, *Paul*, p. 350, appears to have adopted his theory: 'Now they know: he not only wanted to go to Spain but in the face of all the threatening events that could come in Jerusalem he wanted to make the Romans witnesses to his *theological testament*'. Donfried, 'False Presuppositions in the Study of Romans', p. 124, has difficulty letting go of Romans as a 'testament': 'Could it not be argued, on the basis of the letter-essay, that as Paul the authority writes to the Romans ("you") he undoubtedly also has the "they" (all the Christian churches) in mind, as becomes clear from Rom. 15.22-33?' Sampley, on the other hand, echoing Jewett, claims in 'Romans in a Different Light', p. 117, that 'the time is over for reading Romans as a last testament of Paul's theology'. How, then, is Romans to be read beyond a subject/object hermeneutics that precludes a Cartesian cogito of subjectivity that is empty of all substance?

36. Contrary to Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', pp. 17-18 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, pp. 14-15). Also Bornkamm, 'The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament', p. 22; Becker, *Paul*, p. 348.

37. J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), pp. 9-13, 56-57, 175-80, 204.

38. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel*, p. 21, in spite of believing that the 'weak' and the 'strong' refer to real groups in the Roman churches, acknowledges Paul's emphasis on the equality of Jews and Gentiles in the condition of sin, in a common patriarch Abraham, and in a common salvation; and to this extent he is closer to the purpose of Paul's theological testament.

justice is to be constituted throughout the world, Jews and Gentiles must be united in this divine enterprise. Consequently, Paul cannot be charged with attacking Judaism. Both his theology of the gospel and the religion of Judaism are directed toward salvation, but a salvation that is based on 'justification by faith' and not on the righteousness of the works of the law. Salvation, according to the Jewish understanding of faith, is grounded in membership in the covenant community and the prescriptions of atonement.<sup>39</sup> Presupposed is God's election of Israel and Israel's acceptance of that election. God, in the role of King, gave Israel commandments which are to be obeyed as best as possible. Obedience is rewarded, and disobedience is punished. In case of failure to obey, however, Jews who acknowledge their participation in this covenant have recourse to divinely ordained means of atonement. Repentance, of course, is a necessary correlate. As long as Jews resolve to remain in the covenant, they have a share in God's covenantal promises, including life in the world to come. 'The intention and effort to be obedient constitute the condition for remaining in the covenant, but they do not earn it.'<sup>40</sup> This religious way of life that is inherent in first-century Palestinian Judaism has been designated 'covenantal nomism'.<sup>41</sup>

What, then, is the difference between Paul's theology of the gospel and the religion of Judaism? Does Paul's formulation of his theological testament constitute a new covenant that is diametrically opposed to 'covenantal nomism'? Is it a basically different system of truth from that of his fellow Jews?<sup>42</sup> Is Paul posing an antithesis between faith in Christ and his Jewish heritage? Does his treatment of the law and its place in God's purpose produce 'an abrupt discontinuity between the new movement centered in Jesus and the religion of Israel'?<sup>43</sup> Is Paul leaving behind Judaism because it is not Christianity?<sup>44</sup>

39. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 147-82.

40. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 180. The italics are his.

41. This is Sanders's formulation, p. 75. See also pp. 422-23.

42. This is the sharp critique that James D.G. Dunn, 'The New Perspective on Paul', in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), pp. 185-86, directs at Sanders's 'new perspective on Paul'. He maintains 'The Lutheran Paul has been replaced by an idiosyncratic Paul who in arbitrary and irrational manner turns his face against the glory and greatness of Judaism's covenantal theology and abandons Judaism simply because it is not Christianity'. See also Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), pp. 69-71, who is not only critical of Sanders's 'new perspective', but also generally of the so-called New Perspective on Paul. For Wright's views of the New Perspective on Paul, see N.T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), pp. 8-13.

43. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, p. 188.

44. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 552, has verbalized it in this way, 'In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity*'. The italics are his.

If ‘covenantal nomism’ is an appropriate designation of Palestinian Judaism contemporaneous with Paul, his Letter to the Romans conveys a fundamental deconstruction of law, not only the law of the Sinai covenant but all law.<sup>45</sup> There is no evidence that his rejection of ‘works of law’ was restricted to circumcision, food laws and feast days.<sup>46</sup> ‘The law’, as Paul states in 4.15, ‘works wrath’; it is essentially punitive and violent, as evinced by the laws that were imposed on Jesus to condemn him to death by crucifixion. The prosecution of the law entangles human beings in cycles of cause and effect that cannot redeem or rehabilitate. Neither the Jews of Judaism nor the Jews (as well as Gentiles) of the Christ movement are justified by ‘works of law’. Both are justified by their faith and their faithful membership in God’s covenant. The Jews and Gentiles of the Christ movement are not only justified by their faith/trust ‘into Jesus Christ’, however, also by their death and resurrection in baptism. The reality of that experience in baptism, however, does not transfer them into a new religion, but it does terminate their submission to the law of Sinai, as Paul enunciates in 7.4:

...so that, my brothers and sisters, you were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ, so that you belong to another, to the one resurrected from the dead.

At the same time, it enables them to enter into a relationship with God that empowers them through the gift of the holy Spirit to become ‘life-giving spirits’. Paul does not impose the name ‘Christian’ on this new humanity of the Last Adam, a humanity that, according to 1 Cor. 15.47-48, originated from heaven and bears the image of the heavenly.<sup>47</sup> According to Gal. 6.15-16, he names this New Humanity ‘the Israel of God’. It is still ‘Israel’, but through death and resurrection it has transcended the humanity that Adam and Eve inaugurated, and therefore it is ‘the Israel of God’.

Nevertheless, Sanders’s judgment that Paul is opposed to Judaism’s covenantal nomism is quite correct. Paul goes beyond the Sinai covenant to the covenant that God constituted with Abraham.

45. See Theodore W. Jennings, Jr, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul: On Justice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 19-53, on ‘Justice Beyond the Law’. See Witherington’s critique of Sanders’s ‘covenantal nomism’ (*Romans*, pp. 102-107) and his conclusion, ‘I would further maintain that Paul himself is far closer to the notion of covenantal nomism in his own theology than Sanders realizes’ (p. 106).

46. As maintained by Dunn, ‘The New Perspective on Paul’, p. 191.

47. The Roman designation, ‘Christianoi’, according to Acts 11.26, originated in Antioch of Syria and probably in order to differentiate Jews from Jewish followers of Jesus Christ. Since Paul labored under the sponsorship of the church at Antioch, it seems likely that he was familiar with this identification. But he never employs it, and probably deliberately, because giving the Christ movement such a name would lead to its differentiation as a new and different religion—which, of course, is what eventually occurred and continues to this day.



In actuality, as Paul will disclose in his Letter to the Romans, the New Humanity of the Israel of God is the divinely ordained culmination of Judaism, the fulfillment of the divine promises transmitted by the Law and the Prophets. Paul has not abandoned Judaism, but he is convinced that God's objective for humanity is the actualization of God's justice that can only be realized by the united community and communion of Jews and Gentiles. To promote that objective, he has, in his freedom, enslaved himself, as he says in 1 Cor. 9.19-23, in order that he may gain more human beings for this New Humanity:

To the Jews I became as a Jew so that I gain Jews. To those under the law, as one under the law, yet not I myself being under the law, so that I gain those under the law. To those outside law as one outside law, not being outside God's law but in the law of Christ, so that I gain those outside the law. To the weak I became weak so that I gain the weak. To all I have become all things, so that by all means I save some. I do it all on account of the gospel in order that I become its participant.

Initially, in order to establish a foundation for the unity of Jews and Gentiles, Paul proceeds to implicate both in the universal condition of *hamartia* (sin). His analysis of the human condition in 1.18–3.20 culminates in the charge: 'For we already charged both Jews and Greeks to be under *hamartia* (sin)'. Subsequently, both are united through a common ancestor, Abraham, the primordial pioneer of faith/trust, 'who is the father of us all'. Moreover, Abraham's son, Isaac, born out of an existential struggle 'against hope in hope' in Abraham's trusting commitment to God who makes the dead alive, establishes the possibility of the fulfillment of God's promise in the coming of Abraham's seed, the Christ. It is this gospel, established by the Christ event, which discloses the justice of God by linking the trust of Abraham, the patriarch of both Jews and Gentiles, to the trust of Jesus Christ. Concomitantly, it is this gospel that eschatologically unites both Jews and Gentiles in the Christ event that results in the abolition of *hamartia* (sin), the infection that generates the evils of human society. And it is this gospel that unites both Jews and Gentiles in the actualization of justice and the reconstitution of the creation. As Paul professes in 1.17,

For the justice of God is being revealed in it [the gospel] *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*), even as it is written, 'The just will live *out of faith* (*ek pisteōs*)'.

Traditionally, of course, law discloses justice; indeed, justice is the objective of law. The law of the Sinai covenant, therefore, should disclose the justice that God requires. But Paul startles his addressees by enunciating that God's justice is revealed in the gospel, not, as may have been presupposed, in the law of Sinai or in any system of law.



How, then, or in what ways, does the gospel reveal the justice of God? According to 1.17, its disclosure is directly related to the phrase that immediately follows: *ek pisteōs eis pistin*. But the meaning of this enigmatic double prepositional phrase, translated as ‘through faith for faith’, has continued to elude commentators. Obviously, at least, it appears to presuppose a movement from something into something that, according to the citation that concludes v. 17, is anticipated by Hab. 2.4, ‘The just one will live *from/out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*)’. That would intimate that the beginning of the movement of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* already occurs in the Old Testament. Its very beginning, in fact, is attributable to Abraham, as Paul indicates in 4.16:

On account of this [it is] *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) so that [it is] according to grace in order that the promise might be effective to the entire seed, not only to [those] out of law but also to [those] *out of the trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of Abraham.

And it is already anticipated in Gal. 3.6-7:

Even as Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him unto justice. You know consequently that those *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) these are the sons [and daughters] of Abraham.

If Abraham *trusted* God and it was credited to him *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*), according to Paul’s quotation of Gen. 15.6 in Gal. 3.6-7 and Rom. 4.3, Abraham must have lived *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*).

The second half of Paul’s double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *eis pistin*, which concludes the movement that began with *ek pisteōs*, does not appear in any of Paul’s other letters. An intimation of its significance, however, emerges in 3.21:<sup>48</sup>

Now *without law* the justice of God has been manifested, witnessed to by the law and the prophets, but the justice of God *through the trust of Jesus Christ* (*dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*) unto all who believe.<sup>49</sup>

If the justice of God is disclosed *through the trust of Jesus Christ*, 3.21 can be correlated with the declaration of 1.17 that ‘the justice of God is being revealed in it [the gospel] *ek pisteōs eis pistin*’. The latter phrase, *eis pistin*,

48. The double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, will be interpreted at greater length below. In that context more will also be said about the genitive construction of the phrase of 3.21, *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*, which continues the unfolding of 1.17 toward Paul’s exposition of salvation as justice.

49. The critical analysis of similar genitive constructions in Gal. 2.16, 20 and 3.22, 26 by Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3.1–4.11* (SBLDS, 56; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 62-64, evinces that the phrase *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* should be construed as a subjective genitive and translated as *through the faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ*.

determined by the dynamic preposition *eis*, must conclude that movement, namely, the *trust of Jesus Christ*. It would appear, then, that the double prepositional phrase *ek pisteōs eis pistin* anticipates the shift *from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ*.

In chs. 4 and 5, specifically 4.1 through 5.21, Paul, in fact, will move from God's justification of Abraham into God's justification through Jesus Christ. However, in this effort to elaborate the meaning of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* in 1.17, 'trust', rather than 'faith', is preferable as the more appropriate translation of Paul's term *pistis*. Faith, as it is generally used, tends to be a one-way relationship of dependence that inveterately involves some kind of expectation. Faith is also something that a person has, such as a creed and, perhaps, a style of life that naturally originates from it. Trust, on the other hand, is something a person does. Trust involves a mutual interdependence between two human beings that leaves them vulnerable to each other. The relationship that developed between God and Abraham, according to Paul's characterization in 4.1-22, is more validly defined as an interdependence of mutual trust. Abraham trusted God, and God trusted Abraham. Their relationship began when Abraham responded in trusting obedience to God's call to leave Haran and journey 'to the land that I shall show you', and 'in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed', as Gen. 12.1-5 attests. That naturally engendered a condition of vulnerability on both sides: Abraham in his obedience trusting God for guidance and protection, and God trusting Abraham to fulfill God's hope and expectation. More explicitly, trust, as a more effectual rendition of *pistis*, is authenticated by Paul's existential characterization of Abraham as believing 'against hope in hope' that God would fulfill the promise of an heir through whom he would 'inherit the world'. That trust became the ground on which God established a testament of inheritance with Abraham 'to be the ancestor of a multitude of nations', according to Gen. 17.2-8, the text that Paul presupposes in Rom. 4.13.

Abraham is Paul's supreme Old Testament representative of an interdependent relationship with God that is based on mutual trust, and, as the pioneer of that interdependent relationship of mutual trust, he is also 'the father of us all'.<sup>50</sup> The prepositional phrase *ek pisteōs* refers to the

50. The power of God, as Kathy Ehrensperger contends in *Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), p. 164, is to be perceived in the Old Testament as relationality. But, relationality on the basis of the purity code of Leviticus and the reciprocity code of Deuteronomy is a relationship determined by law. When the laws of purity and reciprocity are not fulfilled, God punishes. Law is not the basis of the mutuality between God and Abraham, and she acknowledges this: 'It is a mutuality that needs to be distinguished from reciprocity' (p. 165). But 'Grace as Mutual Empowerment' (discussed on pp. 78-80) is not possible until the human condition of *hamartia* is healed and the holy Spirit is

interpersonal relationship of trust between God and Abraham, certified by a testament of inheritance, that would culminate in *eis pistin*, that is, *into the trust* of Jesus Christ. Both testaments are united in this double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*. Paul will disclose the relationship between these two trusts and their culminating possibility of actualizing ‘God’s justice *through the trust of Jesus Christ* unto all those who believe’ (Rom. 3.21).

But before Paul can disclose the relationship between the trust of Abraham and the trust of Jesus Christ, he must expose the extremity of the human condition as the presupposition of the gospel of salvation: ‘For the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven on every impiety and injustice of human beings who bind the truth by injustice’. According to Paul’s use of the term *orgē* (wrath) in other contexts of Romans, the wrath of God is the intra-historical reality of God letting the consequences of the cause and effect chain of individual and social idolatries and injustices operate in historical existence without divine intervention. God hands human beings over to the consequences of their deeds, and, according to 1.18–32, the result is both the death of living and the death of dying, a condition from which humanity cannot extricate itself. Paul expands his analysis of the human plight in 2.1–3.20 to include the Gentile ethicists and the Jews, ‘who rest upon the law’, in order to establish the universality of the indictment that he enunciates in 3.9, ‘For we already charged both Jews and Greeks all to be under *hamartia* (sin)’. *Hē hamartia* is *the condition* that infects all human beings and engenders idolatry and injustice which in turn infect the institutions that they constitute, such as ‘the higher placed authorities’ of the Roman government, and systemic structures of the Roman empire and its organization of oppressive and exploitative provincial rule by proconsuls, governors and client kings.<sup>51</sup>

granted to those who have been baptized into Christ. Unfortunately, she does not include Paul’s gospel of salvation as ‘being justified from *hamartia*’ through the baptismal experience of death and resurrection and the gift of God’s Spirit as the foundation of ‘grace as mutual empowerment’.

51. The cosmic dimensions of the salvation of the gospel may be intimated in Paul’s employment of the verb *apokalypsetai* in 1.17. Douglas A. Campbell, ‘Romans 1.17—A *Crux Interpretum* for the *Pistis Christou* Debate’, *JBL* 113 (1994), pp. 265–85 (276), says, ‘Paul tends to use the verb *apokaluptō* (and related words) to describe cosmic eschatological disclosures and, in particular, the primary eschatological disclosure that is the gospel’. On Rom. 1.18–3.20, see Robert Hamerton-Kelly, ‘Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire: Paul’s Interpretation of Adam’s Sin in the Letter to the Romans’, in Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (eds.), *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), pp. 40–47. Hamerton-Kelly concentrates his analysis of certain parts of Paul’s letter on the Adam story, utilizing René Girard’s theory of religion, but he does not develop the fall of the ‘Watchers’ of Gen. 6 in conjunction with its source, *1 En.* 6–8, and its myth of the origin

Romans 5.1-11, presupposing the trust of Abraham that God credited toward justice (4.3), introduces the first beneficence of God's work through Jesus Christ, namely, the grace of at-one-ment with God through the death of Jesus Christ. As Paul professes in 5.8, 'God confirmed his love unto us that while we were still sinners Christ died on our behalf'. Even in a disposition of trust toward God, as Abraham manifested, the alienation that the consciousness of *hamartia* arouses must be terminated, if the justice of God and its salvation is to be actualized in daily life. Through the justification of reconciliation the shalom of wholeness is established as an ongoing state of being. Alienation must not prevent the realization of God's justice. Paul's second use of the verb *dikaiōthentes* in 5.9 refers to the death of Jesus through the shedding of his blood that terminates the moral order of the old creation that originated with the Fall of Adam and Eve:

Therefore, *being justified (dikaiōthentes)* now by his blood, how much more shall we be *saved through him from the wrath*. For if being enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, being reconciled, shall we be *saved by his life* (5.9-10).

To 'be saved through him from the wrath' and 'to be saved by his life' refer to a future reality, that is, a continuing future reality within historical existence that commences with a resurrection from the dead. That regeneration is actualized by the holy Spirit, God's gift of grace that, as Paul acknowledges in 5.5, pours God's love into the hearts of the reborn and empowers them to begin to fulfill the justice of God in their participation in the movement from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. That of necessity requires a death and resurrection baptism by which those who have been raised from the dead are incorporated into the moral order of God's New Humanity. Having been set free from *hamartia* and its enslavement, they are subject to a new indebtedness:

But now, being set free from *hē hamartia* and being enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto consecration and the *telos* (end/goal) is everlasting life.

Ironically, this new enslavement is *the freedom to be what they have become*, new human beings who have been reconciled to God, liberated from *hamartia* and its consequence of death, and journeying with others on the road toward the realization of the justice of God.

The law of Sinai, according to 3.21, is only a witness to God's justice. Like all law, it is directed toward justice, but it is unable to actualize it. What

of the evils of the systemic structures of empire. See *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch* (commentary and textual notes by Matthew Black; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), p. 28. Also George W.E. Nickelsburg, *A Commentary on the Book of I Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 182-86.

it succeeds in achieving is an awareness of injustice, and beyond that the underlying reality of *hamartia*. Justice becomes unthinkable, indeed, the impossible possibility, 'the experience of what we are unable to experience'.<sup>52</sup> As a witness to God's justice, the law, according to Paul's determination, is a codicil that is not to be destroyed but relativized; and Paul relativized it by 'temporalizing the law relative to promise'.<sup>53</sup> That promise is the testament of inheritance that God established with Abraham, according to Gal. 3.15. The law, therefore, '...is secondary not only temporally but also "legally" because the law does not supersede the promissory contract that preceded it':<sup>54</sup>

To be invested with its categorical authority, the law must be without history, genesis, or any possible derivation. That would be the law of the law... The very attempt to inscribe law within a narrative brings law into question. As law it can have no origin, that is no temporal origin. For in that case what is threatened is the 'law of law', its being universal and thus timeless.<sup>55</sup>

Paul distinguishes that 'law of law' as the 'law of God', a phrase that he selectively uses only in 7.22 and 8.2, 7 in order to differentiate it from the law of Sinai or law in general. 'The law of God', is the law beyond law. It is the law that God's Spirit writes on the tablets of the human heart, according to 2 Cor. 3.3. The law that God's Spirit writes on the tablets of human hearts, the law that is not inscribed in any narrative, the law that has no temporal origin, the law that is universal and timeless is the law of love. It is the love that originates from God, the love, according to Rom. 5.5, that 'is being poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit given to us'. That is the gift; it is the gift of God's love.<sup>56</sup>

That gift or grace that God's Spirit pours out into the hearts of those who participate in the 'trust of Jesus Christ' makes it possible to actualize the

52. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 25. Law does not have a definable meaning, and therefore no interpretation is ever final. Justice, the objective of law, is indeconstructible.

53. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 42.

54. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 21.

55. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 20-21. The first half is a quotation Jennings has drawn from Jacques Derrida, 'Before the Law', in *Acts of Literature* (ed. Derek Attridge; New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 191.

56. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 99, has reached the same conclusion. In his reading Derrida's *The Gift of Death*, he identifies love as 'the duty beyond debt' and quotes Derrida's comments, 'On what condition does goodness exist beyond all calculation? On the condition that goodness forget itself, that the movement be a movement of the gift that renounces itself, hence a movement of infinite love. Only infinite love can renounce itself and, in order to *become* finite, become incarnated in order to love the other, to love the other as a finite other'. See Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 50-51.

impossible possibility of God's justice. Attendantly, it introduces them to 'something like obligation beyond the economy of debt and exchange'.<sup>57</sup> The duty beyond debt is the enslavement to justice that through participation in the trust of Jesus Christ takes the place of 'enslavement to *hamartia*'. Reciprocity is canceled because those who participate in this interdependent relationship of trust are God's daughters and sons. The new indebtedness is not the discharge of a debt, but the natural actualization of the ontological identity that has been constituted through the death and resurrection experience of baptism. The duty beyond debt is living and acting in accordance with the new identity of being reborn into God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits:

The most general and therefore the most indeterminate form of this double and single duty is that a responsible decision must obey an 'it is necessary' that owes nothing, it must obey *a duty that owes nothing, that must owe nothing in order to be a duty*, a duty that has no debt to pay back, a duty without debt and therefore without duty.<sup>58</sup>

The justice of God that the gospel reveals is the justice that is 'beyond the fatality of vengeance', and therefore 'beyond repayment'.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, Christ, as the end of the law, according to Rom. 10.4, establishes the eschatological possibility 'for everyone who has faith', or preferably, 'for everyone who trusts', to begin to engage in actualizing 'the justice of God'.<sup>60</sup>

Those who participate in the trust of Jesus Christ are no longer subject to the law of Sinai and the indebtedness that it imposes. In 7.1-6 Paul, specifically addressing his Jewish brothers and sisters, qualifies their baptismal experience: 'So that, my brothers and sisters, you were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ'. Why is death to the law and specifically the law of Sinai a necessity, if, as Paul will enunciate in 7.12, 'the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good'? The law of Sinai is directed toward the actualization of God's justice, but the human *condition of sin* (*hamartia*) prevents its realization. Moreover, the law of Sinai—like all law—activates 'the passions of sins', and, in accordance with its punitive character, proceeds to impose the justice of retribution on those who transgress. Ironically, therefore, the law is holy and the commandment is holy, just and good, but, as Paul acknowledged in 4.15, 'The law works wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression'. Consequently, to be

57. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 96.

58. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 98. Cited by Jennings, but the italics belong to Derrida. See Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Crossing Aesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 16.

59. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 32-33.

60. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 43.

put to death to the law through the Body of Christ constitutes the coincidental realities of freedom from *the power of sin (hamartia)* and freedom from the cause and effect wrath of the law.

This radical salvation that the gospel communicates, the eradication of the human condition of *sin (hamartia)*, the justice of healing and restoration through the law of love, and the deliverance of the creation from its bondage to destruction, is directed to both Jews and Gentiles who are united in and by the very same human condition and its resolution.<sup>61</sup> 'There is one gospel and only one, for all.'<sup>62</sup> Paul, therefore, must of necessity turn to the issue of his Jewish contemporaries who reject Christ's salvation of justice that the gospel offers. Jews and Gentiles are bound together unconditionally by (1) the infection of *hamartia* (sin) that generates idolatry and injustice, (2) Abraham as their common ancestor, and (3) the salvation that Abraham's heir, the Christ—has constituted that makes the actualization of justice possible. These realities should unite them forever in God's New Humanity. Yet, throughout his apostolic ministry Paul has experienced the painful grief of God's elect people simultaneously refusing to abandon the justice that is based on the law of Sinai and repudiating the justice of God that God's unconditional love can actualize.

Chapters 9–11 are devoted to an interpretation of Israel's history that is based on the dialectical relationship between the pattern of affirmation and negation, as it is manifested in Abraham's choice between Ishmael and Isaac, and the criterion of reversal, as it is illustrated by Jacob's displacement of Esau, that subverts the pattern of affirmation and negation and makes restoration possible.<sup>63</sup> Some are in and others are out, but those who are out, excluded because they were negated for one reason or another, are unexpectedly included by the principle of reversal that shatters the continuum of the dualisms of affirmation and negation.

The gospel is 'to the Jew first', because the gospel that is God's power unto salvation originated from the Judaism of Israel. The 'inheritance of the world' that God promised Abraham and his linear descendant, the Christ, to benefit all humanity originated from Israel's history. The New Humanity that God inaugurated was pioneered by the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, whom God legitimated as the First Final Human Being by resurrecting him from the dead.

61. Romans is not directed against Judaism, nor is it a defense of Israel against the Gentiles. See the discussion of Campbell, 'The Rule of Faith in Romans 12:1–15:13', pp. 260–63.

62. Keck, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', pp. 24–27.

63. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 308, intuitively Paul's dialectical interpretation of Israel's history by breaking 'earthly continuity' through 'selection' again and again.



Jesus' resurrection is inferable in 9.17 as God's demonstration of power and the ensuing proclamation of God's name throughout the world. The first Exodus event of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian enslavement is more immediately intimated as a continuation of the duality of affirmation and rejection. But implied within Paul's construction is the supreme example of the criterion of reversal and God's predisposition to justice. It is inferable in Paul's quotation of Exod. 33.19, the words God spoke to Moses on Sinai: 'I mercy whom I mercy, and I compassion whom I compassion'. God's mercy is conferred in freedom without a predetermination of human will or striving, but it is always directed toward those who are suffering injustice and marginalization.<sup>64</sup> God's mercy emanates from God's justice. That reality is manifested in the typology of the Exodus. In the first Exodus God's justice mercied the Israelites by raising up the Egyptian Pharaoh, the enslaver of the Israelites, to demonstrate God's power so that God's name would be proclaimed throughout the world. Paul, citing Scripture as the personification of God's voice in 9.17, presents his adaptation of Exod. 9.16 that bears a metaphorical attribution to another king and another Exodus:

For Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very thing *I raised you up (exēgeira)* so that I might demonstrate in you my *power (dynamis)* and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth'.

Presupposing the context of Exod. 9.16 and its conflict between Moses, who represents the Israelites, and the Pharaoh, who personifies the Egyptians, Paul draws upon Exod. 4.21 in order to reformulate the principle that he had articulated in v. 16: 'Consequently then, whom he wishes he mercies, and whom he wishes he hardens'. Although the pattern of affirmation and negation is very much in evidence here, God's innate being of justice is still pre-determinative of God's actions. God affirms the Israelites in mercy because of their enslavement, and God negates Pharaoh by hardening his heart because of his refusal to release the Israelites from their bondage. God, of course, is not the ultimate cause of the Pharaoh's hardening of heart, but only the mediate cause in as far as the Pharaoh is the object of God's wrath. By his own vital decisions as the oppressor and exploiter of the Israelites, he is delivered over to the cause and effect cycle of his injustices, and, as a result, his heart, the seat of his will, is crippled and turned into stone.<sup>65</sup> God

64. Beyond Jewett's focus on 'the mercy of divine selectivity' in 9.15 in *Romans*, p. 582, is the divine selectivity that focuses mercy specifically on those suffering injustice and, therefore, on those who have been deprived of their divine heritage, as it is expressed by Ps. 8.4-8.

65. Hans Walter Wolf, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 40-45.



mercied the Israelites by delivering them from Egypt and conducting them to Sinai to become God's people through the mediation of Moses. The Pharaoh, on the other hand, the one who embodied the many of the Egyptian people, became 'a vessel of dishonor', suffering God's judgment through the ten plagues and through his drowning in the Sea of Reeds.

Embedded in Paul's substitution of the verb *exēgeira* (I raised you up/I brought you into being) in place of the aorist passive *dietērēthēs* (you were preserved) in its bearing on the Egyptian Pharaoh is an implied criterion of reversal. For what is not explicitly stated but metaphorically implied is another Exodus and another king beyond the Pharaoh, that is, the New Exodus that God inaugurated by raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus, as the king and the personification of the Jewish people, who died as 'the vessel of dishonor', was *brought into being* by God through his resurrection from the dead 'so that in you I might demonstrate my power so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth'.<sup>66</sup> In and through the Exodus from the moral order of the old creation and its disease of *hamartia*, God unites *the vessels of mercy* that includes both Jews and Gentiles in order to 'liberate the creation from its bondage to destruction'. 'Those who are not my people', the Gentiles, have become 'My people' by grasping the justice that is actualized *out of the trust* of Jesus Christ. The Jews, the descendants of Jacob, who have the divine birthright and therefore are first, as Paul has stated several times, have been dispossessed—ironically, like Esau. Yet they are the honored recipients of *the law-giving*. They are able to approve the things that really matter, and, by the Sinai law they received, they are or should be aware of *hamartia*. Their Scriptures reveal a seemingly never-ending history of God's favor. They can rightly claim an incredibly rich heritage. But the law does not serve them as the *guide* (*paidagōgos*) to Christ in order to claim the reconciliation and restoration that 'the trust of Jesus Christ' has accomplished. Israel has been pursuing the law in order to actualize justice, as Paul acknowledges in 9.31, but Israel did not attain 'unto the law'. That is, Israel has not arrived at the justice that the law projects. Yet the continuity of the dualisms of affirmation and negation encountered unendingly through the course of history are shattered again and again by God's iconoclastic activity, but always subject to God's justice and directed toward God's salvation. God's foreknowledge, God's call, God's justification and God's glorification converge in and through the second Exodus in the

66. The Messiah christology that Wright emphasizes is metaphorically implied here in Paul's revision of Exod. 9.16 in Rom. 9.17. But the emphasis is not on 'Christ, the dying Messiah', but on the resurrected Christ in whom God demonstrates his power. See N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 238-39.

election of both Jews and Gentiles for universal salvation. They are 'the Israel of God', the name that Paul applied to the new creation in Gal. 6.16.<sup>67</sup>

The third principal component of Romans is committed to ethics. It seems appropriate that Paul's comprehensive theologizing on the human condition and its divine resolution, followed by his astonishing eschatological perspective of a cosmic tree of life into which all humanity will ultimately be incorporated, should culminate in an ethics that is directed toward the fulfillment of God's objective in history: 'that God may be all things in all things' (1 Cor. 15.28). For that to be realized, the justice that is innate to God's being, namely liberating and restorative justice, must be universally actualized. How that can be implemented in every-day life is the objective of Rom. 12.1–15.13.

The ethics that Paul formulates presupposes the community of God's New Humanity, the people of 'the Israel of God', who are participants in the moral order of the new creation that God established through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through their eschatological death experience they are no longer fated by the power of *hamartia*, and they are no longer indebted to law. Indeed, the law of Sinai, or, for that matter, any system of law, no longer has any jurisdiction in their lives. Their terrestrial destiny, as citizens of God's commonwealth, is to fulfill the legacy of Jesus Christ, to 'rule in life' by exercising God's rule on God's behalf in order to establish the justice of God on earth. That is their debt beyond the indebtedness they have left behind through their death experience. It is simply *to be* and *to act* according to their identity as God's daughters and sons and, as such, to fulfill God's hope of delivering the creation from its enslavement to destruction.

What reinforces the singularity of Paul's Letter to the Romans is the circumstantial evidence of its original character as a *circular letter*. A tantalizing measure of text-critical data, attendant to the character and content of the letter, endorses the possibility of establishing the original integrity of Romans as a missive having virtually the same content but sent to two different communities of believers.

67. The subversion of the pattern of affirmation and negation by the criterion of reversal does not appear to be perceived by Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 208–209; Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer: Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 12th newly worked edn, 1963), pp. 242–49; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 270–72; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 495–97; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 594–98. However, Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 563 recognizes the principle of reversal by which Israel is cast in the role of Ishmael and Esau and becomes the vessel of wrath in the unfolding history of God's salvation: 'The antithetical role filled by Esau and Pharaoh in relation to Israel's election and redemption is now being filled by the bulk of Israel in relation to God's calling of Gentile as well as Jew through the gospel'. See also James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 511–13.

Evidence of a fourteen-chapter edition that ended at 14.23 was perceived in the manuscript tradition by late nineteenth and early twentieth-century text-critical scholars: J.B. Lightfoot, F.J.A. Hort, Donatien de Bruyne and Peter Corsen.<sup>68</sup> The attachment of the doxology of 16.25-27 immediately after 14.23 was a primary indicator that such a version of Romans was in circulation in the second half of the second century.<sup>69</sup> This fourteen-chapter form is discernible in the *capitula* of many Vulgate manuscripts. The oldest of them, the eighth-century Codex Amiatinus, has preserved this form of Romans and divided it into fifty-one parts with a summary appended to each, but there are no readings for chs. 15 and 16.<sup>70</sup> Irenaeus, Cyprian and Tertullian do not quote from chs. 15 and 16 in their writings, and therefore it appears that they knew only the fourteen-chapter text of Romans.<sup>71</sup> The general consensus today concurs with Origen that its originator was Marcion. But because Origen did not know which form of the letter it was, a possible fifteen- or a sixteen-chapter form, he could only assume that Marcion not only expunged ch. 15 but also ch. 16.<sup>72</sup>

Marcion, by whom the evangelical and apostolic writings were falsified, completely removed this section (i.e. 16.25-27) from this letter; and not only this, but also from that place where it is written 'all that is not of faith is sin' he cut away up to the end. Indeed, in other copies, that is, in those that are not contaminated by Marcion, we find this section differently placed. For in some manuscripts, following the place which we mentioned above, that is, 'all that is not of faith is sin' [the words] 'now to him who is able to strengthen you' have a consistent position; yet other manuscripts have this at the end, as it is now placed.<sup>73</sup>

Consequently, Marcion's mutilated edition that ended at 14.23 can be disregarded in any effort to determine the original integrity of the Letter to the Romans. It cannot be the letter that Paul sent to the called-out community of believers at Rome.

68. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 15.

69. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 23, has itemized the major witnesses to the five different placements of the doxology, 16.25-27. Kurt Aland, 'Glosse, Interpolation, Redaktion und Komposition in der Sicht der neutestamentlichen Textkritik', in *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Textes* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1967), p. 46, observes that of the 382 minuscules containing Romans, 362 place the doxology of 16.25-27 after 14.23.

70. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 16. A noteworthy feature of the Vulgate Amiatinus is the last of these notations, which is similar to 16.25-27: 'Concerning the mystery of the Lord kept in silence before the passion, his truth having been revealed after the passion'.

71. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 20; on Tertullian, see also p. 21 and n. 27.

72. See Gamble's discussion, *The Textual History*, pp. 24-29.

73. Translated from Rufinus's Latin version of Origen's commentary on Romans by Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 22.

Until the discovery of P<sup>46</sup> in the Fayum of Egypt and the publication of many of its leaves by Chester Beatty in 1930–31, the only other text of Romans that appeared to be circulating in antiquity alongside of the fourteen-chapter version of Marcion was the form of the letter that appears in all English translations, the sixteen-chapter edition that ends with the doxology of 16.25–27. Indeed, every manuscript of Romans that exists today and all the critical editions of Romans presently in print contain both chs. 15 and 16.<sup>74</sup> What, then, is the original integrity of Paul's Letter to the Romans?

The problem is ch. 16!<sup>75</sup> If it cannot stand by itself as an independent letter, as is generally agreed, the question of integrity, in view of the discovery of P<sup>46</sup>, involves the determination of one or two forms of the letter, that is, *either* one sixteen-chapter form *or* two separate forms, namely, a fifteen-chapter edition that was sent to Rome and a sixteen-chapter edition that was sent to Ephesus.<sup>76</sup> In spite of the general insistence that ch. 16 was an original part of Paul's Letter to the Romans, it is the distinctive character of Paul's greetings in ch. 16 that reinforces the possibility that chs. 1–16 represent a second edition of the Letter to the Romans that was sent to Ephesus. Its disclosure of a family-like relationship of intimacy and affection contradicts the so-called optional groupings of the honor–shame culture of the Hellenistic world under which the *ekklesia* of the Christ movement would be classified.<sup>77</sup> As minimal as that evidence may be, it has not as yet been credited to the possibility of a differentiation between two editions, a letter of fifteen chapters sent to Rome and a similar letter of sixteen chapters sent to Ephesus.

P<sup>46</sup> is the only textual evidence to which the Ephesian hypothesis may appeal. At the same time, as is recognized, it is not 'a direct witness to either

74. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 35.

75. As for the integrity of Rom. 16 as an independent letter, separate from Rom. 1–15, Rudolf Schumacher, *Die beiden letzten Kapitel des Römerbriefes. Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Geschichte und Erklärung* (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1929), p. 102, concluded (before the discovery of P<sup>46</sup>) that ch. 16 belongs to the letter that was sent to Rome.

76. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 60, observed, that 'the character of chap. 16 seems to speak against Rome as a destination, for it is hard to imagine that Paul would have so many friends in a church unknown to him'. He adds, 'Besides, the list seems more appropriate for Ephesus than for Rome'. Earlier, Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), pp. 41–42, was disposed toward an Ephesian setting for ch. 16.

77. This in fact is suggested by Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 3rd edn, 2001), p. 45, 'Perhaps after Jesus' death and resurrection, those who believed in Jesus likewise looked on their groups as optional associations much like the Palestinian parties after whom they modeled themselves'.

of the text forms' that the postulation of Romans as a circular letter requires.<sup>78</sup> P<sup>46</sup> represents 'a conflation of the Roman and Ephesian forms, since the doxology could not have stood after 15.33 in the Ephesian form and since ch. 16 could not have followed the doxology in the Roman form'. The doxology of 16.25-27 was attached to 15.33 before the sixteenth chapter was added, and that naturally requires that the fifteen-chapter form initially interacted with Marcion's fourteen-chapter version—indeed, a very complicated process.<sup>79</sup> Since both forms of the text have a Roman or Western origin, that would be entirely possible. Chapters 1–15 plus 16.25-27 would have been the edition of Romans that arrived in Egypt. Sometime afterwards ch. 16 would have been added, but without the doxology of vv. 25-27, for it had already been attached to 15.33. The sixteen-chapter text of the Ephesian edition of Romans at that stage in its transmission would have ended with a benediction at v. 24 without the doxology of 16.25-27. It was in that form that it was incorporated into the *Corpus* of P<sup>46</sup>, the body of the Pauline letters that it has preserved.<sup>80</sup>

The weakness of P<sup>46</sup> is that it is the only textual evidence that supports the Ephesian hypothesis, and, as 'a single witness [it] cannot carry the case for the originality of the fifteen-chapter text form by itself unless compelling internal arguments substantiate the reading'.<sup>81</sup> However, if it can be acknowledged that P<sup>46</sup> bears the originality of the fifteen-chapter text form, and that originality appears to be as viable as the fourteen-chapter version of Marcion, what explanation can be offered that accounts for its origin? Marcion's edition of the letter can be explained. But it remains indeterminate whether it was derived from the sixteen-chapter edition of the letter, or from the fifteen-chapter edition. The most cogent justification for the P<sup>46</sup> edition of Romans is the postulation that it bears the first of two copies of the Letter to the Romans that was sent to Rome.<sup>82</sup>

78. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 54.

79. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 54, summarizes, 'If P<sup>46</sup> cannot be said to strengthen materially the Ephesian hypothesis in its traditional forms, at least it serves to broaden the base of general evidence. It also underlines the necessity for a more rigorous inquiry into the relationships between literary-critical theories and the date of text criticism. In these ways the accession of this evidence helps toward a solution of the larger problem of the textual history of Romans.' A shred of that evidence may be the textual variants of 13.1 and 5.

80. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 54, adds, 'If, on the other hand, P<sup>46</sup> is thought to represent a pre-*Corpus* form of the text, it could still be claimed for the hypothesis, though the formation of the *Corpus* could not longer be seen as the occasion for the edition.'

81. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 53.

82. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 10, offers another explanation for the fifteen-chapter form: 'If any copy of Romans was sent by Paul to another church because of the general

The doxology of 16.25-27, which was placed immediately after 14.23, 'must be regarded as a concluding element', and therefore 'constitutes indirect testimony to the fourteen-chapter form of the text'.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, if Marcion's version of Romans can be regarded as a representative of the textual transmission of Romans, although skewed, should not the fifteen-chapter form of P<sup>46</sup> be equally distinguished? The additional testimony of the Muratorian fragment, originating in Rome about 190 CE and bearing witness to the early formation of a New Testament canon, may not be decisive, but its reference to Paul's intention to continue his work in Spain in its brief notation on 'the Acts of all the Apostles' signifies a familiarity with the content of Romans 15. Moreover, its use of the same form of the name for Spain, *Spania*, instead of *Iberia* or *Hispania*, that Paul employed in 15.24, 28 implies direct access to an edition of Romans that included ch. 15.<sup>84</sup>

A trace of support for this fifteen-chapter form of P<sup>46</sup> that was addressed to the Roman believers is offered by the text type of Romans that is preserved in P<sup>46</sup>. Text-critically the fifteen chapters are denominated as 'proto-Alexandrian', while the text type of ch. 16 is identified as 'Egyptian':

We may describe this group—P<sup>46</sup> B 1739 sah boh Clem Orig—as 'proto-Alexandrian'. Apart from the preservation of some ancient genuine readings, the outstanding feature of this group—foremost in P<sup>46</sup>—is the 'Western' readings, or rather, those readings which have disappeared from the later 'Alexandrian' manuscripts (and often also from other Eastern witnesses) but recur in the West. The presence of these readings does not make the group 'Western' in any legitimate sense of the term; the 'Alexandrian' character of the proto-Alexandrian witnesses is established by unequivocal facts.<sup>85</sup>

interest and importance of its contents, it would not at all be surprising if the last chapter were omitted as not being of general interest; and at a later date someone making a copy of Romans for the use of his own church might easily have omitted it for the same reason'.

83. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 24.

84. Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 21.

85. Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1953), pp. 156-57. Additionally, he says, 'We have observed that, for example, the scribe of P<sup>46</sup> was careless and dull and produced a poor representation of an excellent tradition'. In his 'Conclusion' (p. 277), he says, 'Even so, the papyrus gives a "proto-Alexandrian", and not a Western, text of the epistle and adds the Ephesian chapter xvi'. See also pp. 220, 276. Of Zuntz's work, Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 34 n. 87, says, '...his discussion of the MS is the fullest and most accurate, and for the most part confirms earlier assessments while going beyond them'. As for the P<sup>46</sup> text of Rom. 16, Gamble, *The Textual History*, p. 34 n. 90, says, '...for in chap. 16 P<sup>46</sup> is found to agree much more strongly with Alexandrian witnesses and less with Western witnesses than is the case in chs 1-15. But the difference is one of degree, not of kind.'

The omission of the phrase *en Rōmē* (in Rome) in Rom. 1.7 and 15 is generally attributed to Marcion, but its exclusion, found also in Origen and the oldest Latin, might also be ascribed to Paul himself in his preparation of a second copy of the letter that was sent to Ephesus.

Noteworthy in this respect is the conclusion that Harry Gamble offers:

In 1739 [the codex that preserves the text of Romans used by Origen for his commentary] the words *en Rōmē* are found both in 1.7 and 1.15, but a scholion on 1.7 states that they were not present in the text used: *tou en Rōmē oute en tē exēgēsei oute en tō rētō mnēmoneuei*. Origen himself is the unnamed subject of this sentence. We can be only a little less certain of the reading which Origen had in 1.15. In his exposition of that text there are references to Rome, but this does not compel the conclusion that mention of Rome was present in the text, for Origen certainly accepted the letter's Roman destination. There is in this section a quotation which does not mention Rome, but reads only *et vobis evangelizare*. While an indisputable conclusion on the reading of Origen's text at 1.15 is not available, a text omitting reference to Rome seems quite probable, and as much is implied by the certain omission of 1.7.<sup>86</sup>

If, therefore, the text of Romans that was used by Origen for his commentary on Romans did not include the references *en Rōmē* in 1.7 and 1.15, it appears to be valid to conclude that Origen had access to an edition of Romans that included ch. 16 and was a copy of the sixteen-chapter edition that Paul had sent to Ephesus.

There is also a vestige of text-critical evidence encountered in 13.1 and 5 that indirectly endorses this Ephesian hypothesis and therefore supports Romans as a circular letter. At the beginning of ch. 13 Paul appears to have shifted from the use of the second person singular middle imperative of 12.21 to the third person singular middle imperative of 13.1, *hypotassesthō*, and without a conjunction to separate 13.1 from 12.21:

(You) do not be conquered by evil but (you) conquer evil with the good. Let every soul *continue to subordinate him/herself* (*hypotassesthō*) to higher placed authorities (13.1).

Although second person imperatives dominate ch. 12, this sudden change may be due to his choice of introducing his ethical instruction regarding

86. Gamble, *The Textual History*, pp. 31-32. Also Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, p. 276, '...[it] combines with the indications from Rom. xv and xvi to suggest a copy of this epistle was sent to Ephesus (and so why not still others to other communities). In this respect then, Romans and Ephesians are on a par: like the letters of Epicurus and of Hellenistic kings already referred to, they were both destined for more than one addressee.' See also p. 277, 'This implies that the editor had at his disposal copies descended from the Pauline original as well as others which derived from the particular Roman, Ephesian, etc., exemplars and that he embodied their divergences in his edition'.



governing authorities with an apparently formulaic phrase, *let every soul be subordinate* (*pasa psychē hypotassesthō*), to serve as the subject of the prescriptions of 13.1-7. Yet the imperatives that follow in the remaining verses of the chapter are all in the second person singular or second person plural. There is, however, another textual reading of 12.21 to 13.1a that appears in P<sup>46</sup>:

(You) do not be conquered by evil, but (you) conquer evil by the good (12.21).

(You) continue to subordinate yourselves (*hypotassesthe*) to *all* highly placed authorities (13.1).

The second person plural present middle imperative is employed—instead of the third person singular present middle imperative—and that same verb form occurs again in v. 5 of P<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, the adjective *all* (*pasais*) is additionally included. In other words, the manuscript tradition of 13.1 and 13.5 poses a rather dramatic difference in readings. On the one hand, the greater majority of manuscripts support the third person singular present middle imperative, *hypotassesthō* (let every soul continue to subordinate him/herself) in 13.1 and the present middle infinitive, *hypotassesthai* (to keep on subordinating oneself) in 13.5. On the other hand, P<sup>46</sup> D F G and the Old Latin bear witness to the second person singular present middle imperative, *hypotassesthe* (you continue to subordinate yourselves) in 13.1 and 13.5.

These two manuscript variants of 13.1a and 13.5 offer some support to the theory that Paul prepared two copies of Romans. Chapters 1–15, conveying the reading of P<sup>46</sup>, ‘You continue to subordinate yourselves to *all* higher placed authorities’, was addressed to the believers at Rome. ‘The continuous disturbances [in Rome] at the instigation of Chrestus’, that resulted in the Claudian expulsion of Jews and Jewish believers, like Priscilla and Aquila, may have motivated Paul to use the more forceful second person middle imperative, ‘You continue to subordinate yourselves’.<sup>87</sup> If Roman power was to be abrogated in any way, the presence of the representatives of God’s New Humanity of ‘life-giving spirits’, who would subordinate themselves to all the higher-placed authorities and at the same time conquer evil by means of the good, was imperative. Romans 13.1a, with the more formal reading of a third person singular middle imperative, ‘Let every soul continue to subordinate him/herself to higher placed authorities’, expresses a more

87. On the Claudian Edict, see Suetonius, ‘The Deified Claudius’, in *The Lives of the Caesars* (trans. J.C. Rolfe; 2 vols.; London: Heinemann, 1914), p. 53. See also Acts 18.2. Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 46-74, offers an expansive account of the historical-political setting of Paul’s addressees in Rome, their housing situation and the situation of the Jewish community.



legally oriented injunction, which, to churches more removed from the immediate exercise of Roman power, like those of Ephesus, would be more appropriate.

The ancestor of P<sup>46</sup>, as the bearer of chs. 1–15, may have been the form in which the epistle was received at Rome.<sup>88</sup> Since Clement of Alexandria's familiarity with ch. 16 supports the conjecture that that this final chapter was added to the text of Romans in Egypt, it may be inferred that the text of Romans that contains all sixteen chapters was already in circulation in Egypt.<sup>89</sup> Origen's text of Romans reinforces this probability. Where, then, did it come from? What is the origin of this Egyptian text of Romans? If ch. 16 was added to the fifteen-chapter edition of P<sup>46</sup> in Alexandria, it is credible that this Egyptian text of Romans, which included ch. 16, originated from Ephesus and was more or less identical to the copy of Romans that Paul sent to church at Ephesus.<sup>90</sup>

In the light of this circumstantial evidence, the possibility that Romans may have been a circular letter appears to be valid, at least in its skeletal form.<sup>91</sup> The Marcionite version of chs. 1–14, as is generally acknowledged, is an aberration and cannot be included in the establishment of the integrity of the Letter to the Romans. Two editions of Romans, however, may constitute that integrity. The first, consisting of chs. 1–15, and closing with the benediction of 15.33, was sent to Rome. The second was destined for Ephesus and probably was delivered by Phoebe, the deacon and benefactor of the church at Cenchrea.

This book, therefore, is an effort to interpret the Letter to the Romans as a *circular letter*. It theorizes, with a high degree of probability, that Paul had two copies of this letter prepared: chs. 1–15 were sent to Rome, chs. 1–16

88. Henry A. Sanders (ed.), *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex of the Epistles of Paul* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935), p. 35; Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 17 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, p. 14).

89. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 14 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, p. 11).

90. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 17 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, p. 14).

91. So Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others'. See the critical discussion of Manson's two-edition theory of Romans in Gamble, *The Textual History*, pp. 41–55. It appears Gamble has some difficulty in surrendering the independent integrity of the fifteen-chapter edition to which P<sup>46</sup> bears witness. In *The Textual History*, p. 28, he projects what appears to be an inordinately strange probability: 'The probability, however, is that the fifteen-chapter text is a modification of the fourteen-chapter text on the basis of the sixteen-chapter text, but a modification respecting the aim of the short text; that is, the generalizing interest was maintained but thought not to require the omission of ch. 15, which was accordingly taken over from the long text'. The italics are mine. But what kind of a modification would that be: to exclude ch. 15 to respect 'the aim of the short text'?

were sent to Ephesus.<sup>92</sup> His objective, therefore, must have been to circulate as widely as possible his theological testament for the future of God's new moral order and the concomitant possibility of actualizing God's justice. Its formulation of the human condition, the aporetic character of its resolution, his dialectical interpretation of history as it affects both Jews and Gentiles, and an ethics that characterizes the New Humanity that God inaugurated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is discernible as his manifesto to unite Jews and Gentiles in God's new humanity.

Paul composed Romans in Corinth after completing the collection that he solicited from the churches he had established to benefit the Jerusalem saints and before undertaking his journey to Jerusalem. This is supported by the correspondence between Acts 20.2-3, which bears witness to a three-month sojourn in Corinth before he traveled to Jerusalem, and Rom. 15.25-32, which conveys Paul's intention to 'go to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints'. The greetings of Gaius, who in 16.23 is identified as 'my host and [host] of the entire church', adds additional support.

Different possibilities for the dating of this letter have been advanced, calculated on the basis of the length of his apostolic career in the eastern Mediterranean, including his imprisonment in Ephesus and his journey through Macedonia and Achaia for the Jerusalem offering, but no general consensus appears to have emerged. Nevertheless, the dating that was prescribed by Emil Schürer and Theodor Zahn and adopted by Otto Michel may be consequentially credible, that is, the spring of 58.<sup>93</sup> C.H. Dodd's comparable judgment is worth quoting in this context:

The one quite certain date is that of Gallio's arrival at Corinth, which occurred while Paul was there (Acts xviii. 12), specifically July, A.D. 51. By plotting out his journeys from this fixed point, it may be possible to say that the earliest date which is at all likely for Paul's departure from Corinth for Jerusalem is shortly before Easter, A.D. 57, and the latest, A.D. 59. The latter of these seems to me the more probable. If it be accepted, then the end of Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome (Acts xxviii. 30) brings us to A.D. 64.<sup>94</sup>

Paul was not martyred in Jerusalem, but he was incarcerated in Caesarea for at least a period of two years, according to Acts 24.27. If his Letter to the Romans is to be dated in the spring of 58, he would not have arrived in Rome before 60, and possibly even as late as 61.

92. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 16 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, p. 13).

93. See Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, p. 1, also n. 3. For a slightly earlier date, see Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. Howard Clark Kee; Nashville: Abingdon Press, rev. edn, 1975), p. 311.

94. Charles Harold Dodd, *Romans* (The Moffatt Commentary; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), p. xxvi. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 7, dates Romans in conjunction with Paul's three-month stay in Corinth prior to his trip to Jerusalem, the spring of 57.

## 2

### SALUTATION, THANKSGIVING AND THE PROSPECT OF A VISIT

#### 1.1-7. *Salutation and Benediction*

Characteristically Paul identifies himself immediately as the author by placing his name at the head of the letter. But in contrast to his other letters, no co-sender is named.<sup>1</sup> Timothy, who collaborated with Paul throughout the years of his apostolic ministry, is with him in Corinth, as 16.21 indicates, but he is not cited as a co-sender. Apparently what Paul wants to say and what he will say will be a formulation of his own theological thought at the end of his missionary work in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> It will be his theological testament to the communities of faith in Rome and in Ephesus and wherever these two copies of his Letter to the Romans will be read and shared.

Another noteworthy difference in the salutation of his letter is that his Roman addressees are not named until v. 7.<sup>3</sup> Since he is coming to them as a stranger, a more circumstantial self-introduction seems to be necessary so that his letter will gain a favorable reading within this community of believers. Moreover, as he discloses in the preamble of vv. 8-16, he intends to visit them for a period of time, and therefore he will be in need of their hospitality. Certainly he is not unknown to them, for his reputation undoubtedly precedes him. His apostleship has been attacked and denigrated in virtually every assembly of believers that he constituted in the urban centers of the eastern Mediterranean world.<sup>4</sup> But how much he can presuppose as he proceeds to compose his letter is indeterminable. What he writes will convey

1. The exception is Galatians.

2. Günther Klein, 'Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans', in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 29-43 (41-42), argues that (1) Paul as the lone author of this letter, (2) the absence of the word *ekklesia* in 1.6, and (3) the apparent necessity of writing a theological treatise that is intended to evangelize, indicate that Paul is using his apostolic authority to found the church in Rome, even though a community of believers already exists there.

3. Compare 1 Thess. 1.1; 1 Cor. 1.2; 2 Cor. 1.2; Phil. 1.1; Phlm. 1 and Gal. 1.2.

4. 2 Cor. 10.1-18 and 12.11; Galatians, and Phil. 3.2-19 bear witness to the challenges to his interpretation of the gospel as well as his apostleship.

to them the truth of who he is and more consequentially the truth of what he believes, preaches and teaches. He must assume, therefore, that what he writes will inspire confidence and good will among those who will read his letter and those to whom it will be read.

### 1.1. *Paul, a Slave*

After naming himself—and only himself—Paul chooses the word *slave* (*doulos*) to introduce himself to his addressees: ‘Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus’. They may wonder and even be surprised at such a self-introduction. Living in Rome, at the very center of the empire where the slavery of tens of thousands of human beings enriches their owners, they know well, indeed, some of them from personal experience, that a slave is an animate piece of property acquired by conquest or by purchase. As a physical body that is to be used as a tool, a slave is socially and economically located at the very bottom of the stratification of society. An instrument of labor, and therefore also a ‘means of production’, a slave, like a domestic animal, is subjected to the necessity of forced activity and total control by the owner. To be a slave is to exist in a state of being that is living death.<sup>5</sup>

For Paul, however, his self-introduction as a ‘slave of Christ Jesus’ is not simply a stratagem for rhetorical affect.<sup>6</sup> He had identified himself as a slave in his earlier letters. He employed the designation in the prescript of Philippians, ‘Paul and Timothy, *slaves* of Christ Jesus’. In Gal. 1.10 he referred to himself as ‘Christ’s *slave*’. But his self-understanding as a slave, and specifically as a ‘*slave of Christ Jesus*’, is determined paradoxically by his own christological confession and its significance for his self-understanding. In his apostolic ministry he emulates the mind ‘that is in Christ Jesus’, the mind that he had invoked the Philippian believers to imitate in response to the incarnation and abasement of Christ Jesus, who, according to Phil. 2.7, emptied himself and took the form of a *slave*.

As ‘a slave of Christ Jesus’, Paul participates in Christ’s lordship.<sup>7</sup> That is central to his paradoxical self-understanding. The long-awaited inheritance

5. For a class analysis on slavery, see G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London: Duckworth, 1981), pp. 133-47. See also Aristotle on ‘slavery’ in *Politics* Book I, Chapters 4–6.

6. Whether the believers at Rome, not knowing Paul, would comprehend the paradoxical self-understanding as a ‘slave of Christ Jesus’ remains indiscernible. Perhaps, as Robert Jewett, *Romans*, p. 100, proposed, they would interpret it in the light of the ‘influential slaves in imperial service [who] proudly bore the title “slave of Caesar”’.

7. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 462, has disregarded the paradox of Paul’s lordship as a participant in the Body of Christ, when he says, ‘That Christ is Lord

he has received in Christ is his participation in the eschatologically present *reign of God* (*basileia tou theou*); it is the God-given authority to rule on God's behalf.<sup>8</sup> Earlier, in 1 Cor. 3.21-23, Paul had prevailed upon the Corinthian believers to embrace this lordship for themselves:

So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Those who belong to Christ do not belong to any human leaders. Jealousy and quarreling arose among the Corinthians when they individually laid claimed to Paul or Cephas or Apollos or Christ; and Paul, through his rebuke, had to remind them that in Christ Jesus all things belong to them, and they belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.<sup>9</sup> The lordship they exercise as sovereigns who are divinely willed 'to rule in life' can lay claim to all things in their transformation of the world. 'Ruling in life', according to Rom. 5.17, is their divine destiny because of the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice which they have received 'through the one Jesus Christ'. The actuality of that lordship is also credited to slaves on the basis of their membership in the Body of Christ. According to 1 Cor. 7.22, 'For *in the Lord* the one called a *slave* is a freed-person of the Lord; likewise the one called a free person is a *slave* of Christ'.<sup>10</sup>

Being 'a slave of Christ Jesus' and, at the same time, an active participant in the eschatological reality of God's rule, characterizes Paul's paradoxical self-understanding. However, in the freedom of his lordship in Christ he has chosen to enslave himself for the promulgation of the gospel, as he acknowledged in 1 Cor. 9.16-19:

For if I proclaim the good news, there is no basis of boasting for me, for necessity is laid on me. For woe to me if I do not proclaim the good news! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward. But if unwillingly, I have been entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward? That proclaiming the good news

and that Christians should serve and obey him is obviously a prime tenet of Paul's message'. So also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 31.

8. This is eschatologically anticipated in Dan. 7.13-14, 27. See Herman C. Waetjen, 'Millenarism, God's Reign and Daniel as the Bar Enosh', in *To Break Every Yoke: Essays in Honor of Marvin L. Chaney* (ed. Robert B. Coote and Norman K. Gottwald; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), pp. 254-57. It is explicated by Paul in 1 Cor. 15.24-28.

9. 2 Cor. 3.21-23.

10. In Phlm. 16, Philemon is summoned to receive Onesimus 'no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you both *in the flesh* and *in the Lord*'. 'In the Lord' Onesimus already is free, but 'in the flesh' he is to be manumitted.

I offer the gospel free of charge, so that I do not make full use of my rights in the gospel. For being free from all things, I enslaved myself to all so that I might gain more.

### 1.1. *A Slave of Christ Jesus*

Paul's self-identification as a 'slave' is qualified by the phrase 'Christ Jesus'. In the scribal transmission of this text of Rom. 1.1, however, the variant, 'Jesus Christ', occurs and is attested by a greater majority of manuscripts. It appears to be the preferred reading of most English translations. Nevertheless, *Christ Jesus* must be the original qualification of his self-designation as a 'slave', if only because it corresponds to the formulaic stipulation of his apostleship in 1 Cor. 1.1; 2 Cor. 1.1; Phil. 1.1 and his status as a prisoner in Philemon 1.<sup>11</sup> Throughout his letters the christological phrase *Christ Jesus* conveys a range of theological meanings that stand in contrast to the variant, 'Jesus Christ'.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, these two variants of 1.1 should not be regarded as synonymous; neither should they be viewed simply as literary variations. Each has its own specific nuances of meaning, and each has its own distinctive christological-eschatological orientation. But in this context of the Letter to the Romans, beyond its formulaic use in conjunction with Paul's apostleship, it is the exceptional character of the phrase *Christ Jesus* that authenticates it as the original reading of v. 1.<sup>13</sup>

The manuscript variant, 'Lord Jesus Christ', appears as the culmination of the christological hymn of Phil. 2.11 and discloses Jesus as the distinguished bearer of the divine epithet 'Lord' in his co-enthronement with God. The phrase accentuates the lordship of the resurrected Jesus, and Paul employs it

11. The former is attested by P<sup>10B</sup>, the cursive 81, as well as a few Old Latin versions, some editions of the Vulgate and Irenaeus. The latter is supported by P<sup>26</sup> and various uncials as well as many Byzantine uncials and cursives, a few Old Latin and Vulgate versions, the Syriac and Ambrosiaster.

12. As in 1.4, 7 and sometimes without the title 'Lord' as in 1.6, 8.

13. 'Christ' may already be used as a proper noun by Paul, as Käsemann contends, *Romans*, p. 5, and the order of placing Christ before Jesus may recall 'the original messianic significance, of which Paul is certainly aware even though he does not emphasize it'. But in Paul's writings 'Christ' is more than a messianic Son of David. Paul's christological eschatology is oriented to postexilic Jewish apocalypticism and Jewish Wisdom, not the eschatology of the Davidic Messiah that pre-exilic Isaiah formulated. There are no references to such texts as Isa. 7.14 or 9.6 or 11.1-10 in his letters; the only exception is the creedal fragment of Rom. 1.2-3 and the quotation of Isa. 11.1, 10 in 15.12. The ethnic messianic Son of David has no relevance in Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles. Paul's 'Christ' is the sinless Son of God whose life and ministry mirrored God's love and justice so completely and so perfectly that he must be God's offspring. Christ, for him, is the incarnation of Wisdom, Wis. 7.21-30.

as a formulaic benediction to pronounce the blessings of 'grace and peace', either in the salutation or conclusion of his letters:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.

The phrase's placement alongside of 'God our Father' implies a status of exaltation and the empowerment of co-enthronement.<sup>14</sup> 'The Lord Jesus Christ' is the individual Jesus whom Paul claims to have seen; and the gospel that he preaches he received 'through a revelation of Jesus Christ'.<sup>15</sup> Paul links his own eschatological death to 'the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world'.<sup>16</sup> Salvation is gained through the Lord Jesus Christ, for, as he informed the Thessalonian believers in 5.9, 'God did not appoint us toward wrath but toward the gaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ'. The Corinthian believers were assured that the Lord Jesus Christ will confirm them blameless until the end; and, when 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ' arrives, they will be united with him at his *parousia*.<sup>17</sup>

'Christ Jesus', on the other hand, is a very idiosyncratic christological term that unites Christ, as God's Son, with the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. It is Paul's designation of incarnation, the pre-existent Christ enfleshed in Jesus. If the Corinthians belong to Christ, as he stated in 1 Cor. 3.23, Christ belongs to God. Consequently, by belonging to God, by being 'of God', 'Christ', according to 2 Cor. 4.4, 'is the image of God and his glory is the light of the gospel'. And, as he added in 2 Cor. 4.6, 'It is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", who shone in our hearts toward the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ'.<sup>18</sup> These are among the attributes that distinguish the Christ in Paul's Corinthian correspondence.

Christ's uniqueness is extended by his surrogate activity as the agent of God's creation. This is implied in 1 Cor. 8.5-6, where Paul confesses:

14. 1 Thess. 11; 1 Cor. 1.3; 2 Cor. 1.2; Gal. 1.3; Phil. 1.2; Phlm. 3; Rom. 1.7.

15. 1 Cor. 9.1; Gal. 1.12.

16. Gal. 6.14 and also 1 Cor. 2.2.

17. 1 Cor. 1.8 and 15.23; Phil. 3.20-21; also 1 Thess. 4.15-17.

18. It is noteworthy that there are no references to 'Christ' or 'the Christ' or 'Christ Jesus' in 1 Thessalonians, Paul's earliest letter. 'The gospel of Christ' is used once in 1 Thess. 3.2. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ' or 'our Lord Jesus' or simply 'the Lord' are the christological appellations that dominate the letter. It is in 1 Corinthians that Paul repeatedly refers to 'Christ Jesus', 'Christ', 'the Christ', and it is in 1 Cor. 1.24 that Paul asserts that 'Christ is the power of God and the *wisdom (sophian)* of God'. Is it possible that the Corinthian predisposition to wisdom compelled Paul to expand his christology by linking Christ to Wisdom and to the 'last Adam' as 'the second human being from heaven'?



For even though there are many so-called gods either in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many lords, but for us [there is] one God, the Father, through whom are all things and we into him, and one Lord Jesus Christ *through whom are all things and we through him*.

These endowments are comparable to the characterization of *Wisdom (sophia)* in the Wisdom tradition of Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, these distinguishing features of Christ's face reflecting God's glory and God's image, and Christ as God's agent of creation, qualify Paul's conception of the Christ; and they resemble the divine qualities ascribed to Wisdom in the Wis. 7.21-27 and Prov. 8.22-31:

For she [wisdom] is an exhalation of the power of God and an emanation of the pure glory of the Ruler of all. On account of this nothing defiled intrudes into her. For she is *a radiance of eternal light (apaugasma phōtos aidiou)* and a spotless *mirror* of God's working and an *image (eikōn)* of his goodness. Being one she is able to do all things and remaining in herself she renews all things and in [every] generation she passes over into holy souls constituting friends of God and prophets (Wis. 7.25-27 [my translation]).

More explicitly in 1 Cor. 1.24, 'Christ' is designated 'the power of God and the wisdom (*sophian*) of God'; and in 1.30 it is 'Christ Jesus who become wisdom (*sophia*) to us *from God (apo theou)*'. Furthermore, on the basis of the identity between the rock of Exod. 17.1-7 and the rock of Num. 20.11, both bearing the name Meribah, from which Moses brought forth water, Paul determined that Christ was the spiritual rock, the heavenly being, that journeyed with God's people and refreshed them in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10.4). In his eschatological christology, therefore, 'Christ' is pre-eminently a pre-existent heavenly being, one who is acknowledged as 'the image of God', 'the wisdom of God', 'the glory of God', 'the power of God', the agent of God's creation and the pioneer of God's new creation.

Consequently, it is imperative that his references to Jesus as 'the Christ' should not be construed in terms of a Messiah of the Davidic dynasty that was anticipated by Isaiah in 9.6 and 11.1-10 and eventually received its consummate expression in *Pss. Sol.* 17-18. The ethnicity of the messianic 'Son of David' christology, combined with its embedded purity code, had no existential significance for Paul's evangelization of the Gentiles.

19. See the discussion of 'Divine Wisdom' in Paul's christology in Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, pp. 267-72, and the chapter titled 'Jesus as Wisdom', pp. 272-77. On p. 274, Dunn says, 'And the rationale was probably the same: not so much that Christ as Jesus of Nazareth had preexisted as such, but that preexistent Wisdom was now to be recognized in and as Christ'. Dunn seems to be hesitant to refer to Christ Jesus as the incarnation of Wisdom.



The 'Christ Jesus' that Paul proclaims, according to 2 Cor. 1.19, is also to be identified as 'the Son of God'. Theosis and incarnation, therefore, must necessarily be implied in the christological epithet, 'Christ Jesus', that introduces the christological hymn of Phil. 2.6-11:

Think this among yourselves that which is also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in *God's form*, did not consider to be equal with God as something to be claimed, but he emptied himself taking a *slave's form*. Becoming in the likeness of human beings and with respect to *appearance as a human being*, he humbled himself becoming obedient unto death, even the death of a cross. Therefore God highly exalted him and graced to him the name beyond every name, so that at the name of *Jesus* every knee bows, of heavenly things and earthly things and subterranean things and every tongue confesses *Lord Jesus Christ* unto the glory of God the Father.<sup>20</sup>

Christ, God's Son and therefore God's image, through his enfleshment in Jesus constitutes the incarnational reality of 'Christ Jesus'. In this union of heaven and earth, Christ Jesus transcends the moral order of the old creation. He is sinless! He is not infected with the condition that originated in the Fall of Adam and Eve. Paul acknowledges this truth in conjunction with his appeal to the Corinthian believers to be reconciled to God: 'The one who knew no *hamartia* (the condition of sin), God made *hamartia* on our behalf so that we might become the justice of God in him' (2 Cor. 5.21). The same truth is expressed in Rom. 8.3, 'God sent his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of *hamartia* and concerning *hamartia* condemned *hamartia* in the flesh'.

'Christ Jesus', as the enfleshed presence of God, is also Paul's formulaic term of the corporate reality of the Body of Christ. In 1 Cor. 1.30 Paul's addressees are distinguished as those who originated from God in their membership 'in Christ Jesus who became wisdom to us from God'. For it was 'in Christ Jesus', as he states in 1 Cor. 4.15, that he, Paul, gave birth to them through the gospel. Consequently, to believe 'into Christ Jesus' signifies inclusion in that incarnational reality. 'For', as he declares in Gal. 3.26 and 28, 'you are all sons and daughters of God through the trust of Christ Jesus' and therefore 'one in Christ Jesus' (see also Gal. 5.6, 24). In Rom. 6.11 Paul charges his addressees, 'So you also consider yourselves to be dead to *hē hamartia* (the condition of sin) and alive to God *in Christ Jesus*'. They are sanctified 'in Christ Jesus' and therefore they are holy (1 Cor. 12; Phil. 4.21). Moreover, because the veil that conceals the fading splendor of the Old Covenant is removed *in Christ*, those with unveiled faces who are beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror are being metamorphosed into the same image from glory into glory (2 Cor. 3.16-18).

20. My translation and my italics.

Finally, 'Christ Jesus', denoting the incarnation of the Christ as God's presence in the historical person of Jesus, implies the reality of 'the last Adam' of 1 Cor. 15.45:

The first Adam became a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the first is not spiritual but physical; then the spiritual. The first human being is from the earth, earthy. The second human being is from heaven.

Adam and Eve, as living souls in-breathed by God, inaugurated the first humanity. The Last Adam, therefore, is the pioneer of a New Humanity who through death and resurrection draws the humanity of the First Adam into the being of God and apotheosizes them into life-giving spirits.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, Christ Jesus is the community of Jesus the Christ, the last Adam or the first final human being, who, originating from God, is united with those who follow him into God's New Humanity. Paul himself, therefore, as 'a slave of Christ Jesus', belongs to God's New Humanity; and, in his self-qualification as a 'slave of Christ Jesus', he ironically is free and in his participation in 'Christ Jesus' he is a life-giving spirit.

The other christological terms that Paul employs in his letters, 'the Christ', or simply 'Christ', bear similar nuances of meaning. On the one hand, they designate Christ as God's Son, who, according to Gal. 3.13, 'redeemed us from the curse of the Law becoming a curse on our behalf'. In Gal. 3.16 Paul identified Christ as the lineal descendant of Abraham who fulfilled the conditions of the testament that God established with the patriarch of Israel and by his death terminated the condition of *hē hamartia* (the infection). Christ, as Paul professes in 1 Cor. 5.7, is the paschal lamb that was sacrificed. It is on account of *the Christ* and the surpassing greatness of the knowledge of *Christ Jesus the Lord* that Paul considers all that he formerly gained as a Pharisee to be rubbish in order that he might gain *Christ* (Phil. 3.7-9). To gain Christ, therefore, signifies a fuller participation in Christ's being and lordship and therefore a greater incarnation of the love and justice of God in his being that Paul anticipates 'by becoming like him [Christ] in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead'. To gain Christ signifies entering into a citizenship in the 'kingdom of God' that is divinely directed toward actualizing God's love and God's justice in the world.

The terms 'the Christ' and 'Christ' are also Paul's distinctive references to the corporate reality of the Body of Christ, the *community of the One and the Many* whose citizenship is in the 'kingdom of God' (Phil. 3.20). In

21. Compare, Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, pp. 260-64 (264), who identifies 'life-giving spirit' essentially with the risen Christ who, in collaboration with the Spirit, works as 'the life-giving spirit'.

1 Cor. 1.10-13 he asserted that ‘the Christ is not divided into factions but is knitted together in the same frame of mind and intention’. Subsequently, in 1 Cor. 12.12, he appropriated the analogy of the human body to explicate to the Corinthian believers the reality of their integration in Christ:

For even as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body being many are one body, so also *the Christ*.

After developing that analogy in terms of their interdependence, he proceeded to impress on them, in 12.27, ‘You are *the body of Christ* and members of each other’. Paul will restate this corporate relationship between Christ and the community of believers as the body of *the one and the many* in Rom. 12.5. The phrase ‘in Christ’ is also a designation of the corporate Body of Christ. To be ‘in Christ’, as Paul states in 2 Cor. 5.17, is to be a ‘new creation’. ‘In Christ’ the veil that covers the Torah is removed (2 Cor. 3.14). ‘In Christ all will be made alive’ (1 Cor. 15.22; see also Rom. 6.23).<sup>22</sup>

### 1.1. *A Slave of Christ Jesus, Called an Apostle Set Apart for the Gospel of God*

Paul, as a ‘slave of Christ Jesus’, also identifies himself as ‘an apostle’ who has been ‘called’ and ‘separated’ (*aphorismenos*) for the gospel of God. The participle, *aphorismenos*, is ironic because it implies the reversal of his earlier separation as a Pharisee.<sup>23</sup> As such he had embraced the Pharisaic purity code that divided the world into the dualistic realms of the sacred and the profane and required separation from every form of uncleanness. Within this pollution system he fulfilled his identity as a Pharisee, observing both the written Torah and the oral Torah, the latter, according to the Mishnah tractate *Pirke Aboth*, given by Moses to serve as a fence around the written Torah. While he ‘was persecuting *the called out assembly* (*ekklēsia*) of God and destroying it’, he was called by God to serve as an apostle to the very people, the Gentiles, who, according to the purity code he had embraced, belonged to the realm of the polluted. He was *separated from* the separation ideology he had lived by and *separated unto* (*eis*) the gospel of God. As he had informed the Galatians:

22. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 458-61, maintains, ‘Being in Christ is therefore the commonest, but not the most appropriate, expression for union with Christ’. ‘In the Spirit’, and related phrases, are more appropriate.

23. Adolf Schlatter, *Romans: The Righteousness of God* (trans. S.S. Schatzmann; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), p. 7, verbalized it in this way: ‘...with *aphorismenos* he [Paul] expressed in Greek what *Pharisaïos* meant in Aramaic...’ Whether this pun would be grasped by the Roman community of believers is indeterminable.

Now when the one who *separated* (*aphorisas*) me from the womb of my mother and called through his grace to reveal his Son in me so that I proclaim him among the Gentiles, immediately I did not consult with flesh and blood, neither did I go off into Jerusalem to those [who were] apostles before me, but I went off into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus (Gal. 1.15-16).

Separated from Pharisaism and its dualistic world of the sacred and the profane, he was incorporated into 'Christ Jesus' and accordingly into a union with God that transcended all forms of separation and thrust him into his apostolic evangelization of the Gentiles.

Paul's apostleship under God's commission established the authority that he has exercised in his evangelistic work and in his relationship to the congregations that he founded. But a comparison of the different salutations of his letters indicates a prudent use of his authority as an apostle. In the prescript of his earliest letter, 1 Thess. 1.1, he simply introduced himself and his co-workers, Silas and Timothy, without any accompanying self-designation. The phrase 'called apostle' follows his self-introduction in the salutation of 1 Cor. 1.1, while in 2 Cor. 1.1 the adjective 'called' (*klētos*) has been omitted. Apparently Paul was very circumspect in his exercise of power as an apostle. Aware that apostolic authority is meaningless, at least initially, to those who are evangelized, as well as in the kind of egalitarian community that he labored to establish in the name of Jesus Christ, he made use of that authority only when exhortation and correction were necessary. Noteworthy in this respect is his attendant use of the adjective *called* in his referential identification of his addressees as *called* (*klētois*) *holy ones* (1.7). Like him, they too are *called*, 'called of Jesus Christ'.

### 1.3-4. A Creedal Fragment

The Good News of God (*euangelion theou*), for which he, Paul, was separated as an apostle, is not a precipitous innovation. It was already anticipated long ago, promised by God through Israel's prophets and preserved in the sacred Scriptures. Paul gives content to that Good News of God by appropriating and inserting what is generally considered to be a liturgical fragment of a pre-Pauline christological formulation, originating, as its ethnic character implies, within the post-Easter community of Jewish believers. Evidently, 'it was quite a well-known formulation or at least typical in its double affirmation (Son of David, Son of God), and so would probably strike a familiar chord to many of the believers at Rome'.<sup>24</sup> The antithetical parallelism of vv. 3-4 and the use of the participle to introduce both

24. Also Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 13, who says, '...the gospel, which transcends the boundaries of Judaism (vv. 5-7), concerns a Christ who transcends the role of a merely Jewish Messiah (vv. 3-4)'. See also pp. 22-26.

sentences betoken a confession of faith that was intended to show ‘that he shared the same basis of faith as the believing addressees at Rome’.<sup>25</sup> But, in view of its orientation to the messianic Son of David christology, it would appear to be directed primarily to the Jewish believers of that community.

In all likelihood Paul himself introduced it with the prepositional phrase, ‘Concerning his Son’, which serves as the subject of the two lines of the confessional statement:

Concerning his Son, *the one being (genomenou) out of (ek) the seed of David according to the flesh, the one being appointed (horisthentos) Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of (ex) his resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

This appears to be the only christological formula in Romans. Moreover, it is the only explicit identification of Jesus as ‘the seed of David’ in all the letters of Paul. Jesus’ Davidic ancestry had no place in his christology, not only because of its ethnocentric character, but also because the hierarchical status of Jesus’ messianic kingship would contradict his egalitarian christological perspective.<sup>26</sup> Jesus is not named until the very end of the confession, ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’. In view of the many references to Jesus as God’s Son in 1 Thess. 1.10; 1 Cor. 1.9; 2 Cor. 1.19; Gal. 1.16; 2.20; 4.4; and Rom. 5.10 and 8.3, the phrase, ‘his Son’, would in all likelihood refer to the pre-existent being whom Paul usually designates ‘Christ’ or ‘the Christ’.<sup>27</sup>

The first line poses the first discontinuity by implying incarnation in as far as he, Jesus, is prioritized as God’s Son in relation to the flesh. His ancestry implies his messiahship: ‘Concerning his Son, *the one being (genomenou) out of (ek) the seed of David according to the flesh*’. The second line poses the second discontinuity! As God’s Son he is ‘the one appointed Son of God in power *out of (ex) his resurrection of the dead*’.<sup>28</sup> On the one hand, *according to the flesh*, he is God’s Son out of the seed of David. On the

25. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 10, 13. He considers the formula to convey ‘the trace of a very early christology’.

26. Paul’s only other references to David occur in Romans. Psalm texts attributed to David are cited in 4.6 and 11.9. Jesus’ Davidic messiahship is conveyed in 15.12 by Paul’s quotation of Isa. 11.1, 10, but its focus is universal, not ethnic, as it is directed toward the rule of Jesse’s son in relation to the Gentiles.

27. Also Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 58.

28. Jewett suggests, ‘Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission’, that Paul’s insertion of the phrase ‘in power’ ‘appears to be a correction of the christology of the original confession. It counters the adoptionism of the original confession by asserting that Christ bore the “power” of God prior to the resurrection, thus bringing the confession more nearly in line with Paul’s typical interest in the doctrine of preexistent kyrios (“Lord”)’. See also his *Romans*, p. 102. Yet, according to v. 4, Jesus is ‘the one designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness’ as the result of his resurrection from the dead.

other hand, *according to the Spirit of holiness*, he is God's Son in power out of his resurrection from the dead.<sup>29</sup> Flesh and Spirit are not opposed to each other in terms of a dualistic opposition between earth and heaven. Flesh signifies the finitude of historical existence, while the Spirit of holiness represents God's creative power that raised the incarnate Son of God from the dead and empowered him as the co-bearer of the divine epithet 'Lord'. Paul closes this abbreviated confession, which he introduced with the phrase 'concerning his Son', by placing 'Jesus Christ our Lord' in apposition to this two-line christological formulation. The reference to 'the seed of David' and its messianic implications, as already stated, have no relevance for Paul's christology.<sup>30</sup> 'King Jesus' and its hierarchical implications are not discernible in Romans or his earlier letters.<sup>31</sup> The discontinuity of the implied incarnation and the discontinuity of the resurrection conveyed within these two lines of this fragmentary confession is comparable to the christological hymn of Phil. 2.6-11.<sup>32</sup>

The lordship of Jesus Christ that he enunciates here for the first time is connected to the implied deputization of God's Son as *the Son of God in*

29. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 14, like many other commentators, including Witherington, *Romans*, p. 33, relates *en dýnamei* (in power) to the title 'Son of God'.

30. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, pp. 41-55, devotes an entire chapter to 'a reassessment of Messiahship as a major category within Pauline theology'. Yet Davidic messiahship is ethnocentric in character and it is hierarchically oriented to kingship; and neither is useful to Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles. For the same perspective, see also his essay, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', pp. 36, 38, 45, 64-65. Jesus the Messiah is Israel's representative in the fulfillment of God's covenant promise. In spite of this ethnocentric emphasis on messiahship and covenant, Wright nevertheless says on p. 66, 'Paul's critique of Israel was aimed...at ethnocentric covenantalism'. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, pp. 45, 103, says 'Jesus' resurrection functions as God's enthronement of the Davidic king according to the pronouncement of Scripture'.

31. N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 40, does not appear to differentiate between the pre-exilic perspective of a Davidic messiah and the postexilic emergence of a messianic community in the eschatology of Jewish apocalypticism, as, for example, in Dan. 7.13-14, 27. Two eschatological-christological strands emerge from the Old Testament: the earlier was formulated by Isaiah, in ch. 7; 9.6; ch. 11, especially 11.1-9, and taken up and transmitted by Jeremiah in 23.5-6 and Ezekiel in 34.23-24; 37.24, as well as the author of *Ps. Sol.* 17-18. The second is the apocalyptic strand of a 'new heaven and a new earth', introduced by (Third) Isa. 65.17 and followed subsequently by Daniel's visions of 'the kingdom of God' in Dan. 2 and 'one like a son of a human being' in Dan. 7. The former is hierarchical, ethnic and oriented toward a purity code; the latter is egalitarian, universal with no apparent purity code. The apocalyptic eschatological trajectory of a 'new heaven and a new earth', introduced by (Third) Isa. 65.17, and 'the kingdom of God' and 'one like a human being' of Dan. 2, 7, emerged in the postexilic period.

32. Also Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 38.

power as a result of ‘the Spirit of holiness’ that raised him from the dead. He was the Son of God already before his incarnation, but *out of his resurrection* he has become the Son of God in power, the Lord Jesus Christ who is co-enthroned with God, as Paul will profess in 8.34. Accordingly, he is God’s surrogate as the source of *grace and apostleship*, and both are linked together in 1 Cor. 15.8-10 in Paul’s self-designation as a *miscarriage* or *monstrous birth* to whom the resurrected Christ appeared in order to commission him to be an apostle. Unexpectedly, however, he has employed the pronoun ‘we’ with a verb in the past tense, ‘*We* received grace and apostleship towards the obedience of trust among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name’. Why the ‘we’? To whom does it refer? Although there is no antecedent for this pronoun in the first person plural, the divinely appointed objective that Paul specifies, ‘towards the obedience of trust among all the Gentiles’, intimates that Paul is identifying himself with his fellow apostles and evangelists, specifically those who had evangelized the Romans. Together they have been engaged in fulfilling the commission that they received at an earlier time ‘on behalf of his name’, that is, the name of ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’. That *grace and apostleship*, which is directed toward drawing the Gentiles into the obedience of trust, has resulted in their evangelization, not by Paul himself, but by others who, like him, are engaged in proclaiming the gospel. The phrase ‘obedience of trust’ conveys an interdependence between obedience and trust that will be elucidated in ch. 4, in which Abraham, as the patriarch of Israel, is distinguished as the pioneer of the ‘obedience of trust’.

Because he has qualified his apostleship as one that is specifically directed to the ‘obedience of trust among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name’, it naturally follows that the Gentile believers would first to be recognized in v. 6 as those ‘among whom you also are called of Jesus Christ’. In his self-introduction at the very beginning of his letter he referred to himself as ‘*called (klētos)* an apostle’, indeed an apostle to the Gentiles. Like him, the Gentiles among his addressees are *called*! They share a common calling, for they, like him, have been ‘called of Jesus Christ’.

However, it may be inferred from vv. 6-7 that two groups are being addressed by Paul. Initially, in v. 6, he is referring to the Gentile believers among his addressees. Verse 7 is more inclusive, as the adjective *pasin* (to all) indicates—‘to *all* those who are in Rome’—and that would enclose the Jewish believers in the community.<sup>33</sup> Together, as Jews and Gentiles, they are acknowledged to be ‘beloved of God, called holy’. Accordingly, the absence of the term *ekklēsia* (gathering of the called out) in the salutation of

33. John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 101, incorrectly claims that Romans was written to Gentiles about Jews.



vv. 5-7 does not support the interpretation of a 'fractionalized situation'.<sup>34</sup> There was no need to utilize it. Paul designates both groups in vv. 6-7 as *klētoi* (called). The Gentiles are *called of Jesus Christ*; both Jews and Gentiles are *called holy*. Together they constitute the believers 'who are in Rome, beloved of God, called holy ones'. They are 'beloved of God' because they have been delivered from enslavement to sin and death, and, like 'Jesus Christ our Lord', they have been raised from the dead by the 'Spirit of holiness' and therefore they are called holy.

It is noteworthy that the phrase *en Rōmē* (in Rome) in 1.7 and the phrase *tois en Rōmē* (to those in Rome) in 1.15 are missing in the bilingual manuscript G and the Latin translation of Origen, and, while it is absent in 1739 and 1908, it has been restored in the margin of both of these tenth- and eleventh-century minuscules. As minimal as the textual evidence is, it appears that it was a deliberate and not an accidental omission.<sup>35</sup> There seem to be only two possibilities to account for its deletion. It may have been removed by Marcion as he prepared his own edition of Romans, perhaps as the result of the humiliating treatment he had received in Rome.<sup>36</sup> But it is also possible that it may have been deleted by Paul himself in his preparation of a second copy of the letter that included the addition of ch. 16 and was sent to Ephesus.<sup>37</sup>

Paul continues by pronouncing a blessing on them. It is his formulaic benediction that he used in his earlier letters: 1 Cor. 1.3; 2 Cor. 1.2; Gal. 1.3; Phil. 1.2; and Phlm. 3. Both the grace and the peace that he confers, as he will show later, belong to the legacy of reconciliation and justice that God has constituted for them through the Lord Jesus Christ.

34. There is no evidence here or in any other part of the letter that Paul was aware of two separate congregations in the Roman community divided 'by mutual hostility and suspicion over the question of the law'. See Watson, 'The Two Roman Congregations: Romans 14.1-15.13', pp. 206, 214 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, p. lxx).

35. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', pp. 5-6 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, pp. 3-4), offers an analysis of the textual corruption that may have occurred in the transmission of the text. In his conclusion he cites the text-critical analysis of P. Corssen, 'that the three bilingual manuscripts, DFG, should be regarded as descendants of a common ancestor from which the references to Rome in chapter 1 were absent'.

36. This is Manson's conjecture, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 7 (Donfried [ed.], *The Romans Debate*, p. 4); and because he ascribes this omission to Marcion, he is convinced that it was wrong.

37. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, p. 276. Whether Paul himself would have removed these two references to Rome in 1.7 and 15 in the second edition that was intended for Ephesus would appear to be indeterminable.



1.8-16. *Thanksgiving and Intercession*

Before he proceeds to explain to his addressees why he is writing to them, he pauses to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for them. His thanksgiving, followed by a reference to the one through whom this personal relationship has been established, discloses the intimacy of his relationship with God by his use of the personal pronoun, *my*:

First of all I give thanks to *my* God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your *faith* (*pistis*) is proclaimed in the whole world (1.8).

In giving thanks for the called out believers of Rome, he acknowledges their *pistis*, for it is being disseminated through the Mediterranean world. *Pistis*, in this context, is appropriately translated as ‘faith’ because it is something they have that shows itself, something that is objectively perceivable. *Pistis* here must designate the integration of a confession of beliefs that at the same time is visibly manifested in a life-style. That *faith* that has become widely recognized may have been disclosed publicly at the time of their expulsion from Rome by the edict of the Emperor Claudius in 49 CE.<sup>38</sup>

Paul’s thanksgiving for them, however, is not simply coincidental with the letter that he is addressing to them. He has been praying for them continually, but because there is no way to convince them of the truth of his persistent intercession on their behalf, he resorts to an oath: ‘For God is my witness, whom I worship in my spirit in the gospel of his Son...’ He summons God as a witness to establish his attestation even before he informs them of his unceasing prayers for them. Offered up at the time of his own personal worship ‘in my spirit in the gospel of his Son’, his intercessions include an entreaty for himself: ‘...always at the time of my prayers asking if somehow now at last I shall have a prosperous journey in the will of God to come to you’. His double prepositional phrase, ‘in my spirit in the gospel of his Son’, conveys a self that is deeply rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It not only sanctions his oath, but it also reinforces the truth of what it is saying to his addressees about himself and his intentions.

It is the circumstances of the present moment of his writing that determine the necessity of this letter in both its structure and its content. Paul is hoping, even anticipating, a trip to Rome and, beyond that, as he will disclose in 15.23-24, to Spain. He has wanted to visit these saints in Rome for a long time. He longs to see them, so that he can impart to them a spiritual gift. But will he succeed ‘by the will of God’? His wording in the middle of v. 10, consisting of four adverbs, ‘...if somehow now at last’ (...*ei pōs ēdē pote*) conveys some misgiving about this expectation to have ‘a

38. See Acts 18.2.

prosperous journey in the will of God to come to you'.<sup>39</sup> His apparent uncertainty will be clarified at the conclusion of his letter. In 15.25 he will inform them of a more immediate journey, 'But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints'. Beyond his visit among them in Rome and his continued evangelization in Spain, he is anxious about possible eventualities that he may encounter during the fulfillment of his ministry in Jerusalem. Implied in his entreaty that his Roman addressees join him in earnest prayer to God to be rescued from 'the disobedient' in Judea and Jerusalem is the implicit possibility that he may be killed by 'the disobedient' in Judea and Jerusalem. Consequently, he would never reach Rome and be able to continue his apostolic career in Spain. What, then, is Paul intending to accomplish by writing this letter? If the worst of his fears is actualized and he is killed, the Roman and the Ephesian communities of faith will at least possess his 'theological testament' that he wants to share with them in this letter.

Paul earnestly desires to see these Gentile and Jewish believers whom he has referred to as 'beloved of God' and 'called holy'. He believes that he is able to confirm them in their commitment to the gospel, but he does not want to alienate them by overpowering them with his apostolic authority. Rome is not the sphere of activity that God has apportioned to him and, consequently, he is determined not to overextend himself in his apostolic ministry, as he had assured the Corinthian community of believers in 2 Cor. 10.13-15:

We shall not boast beyond limits but according to the size of the sphere of activity that God apportioned to us to reach even to you. For in extending to you we did not overextend ourselves, for we came as far as you in the gospel of Christ. We do not boast beyond limits in the labors of others, but having hope [that] as your faith increases, our sphere of activity might be greatly enlarged so that we might evangelize in regions beyond you without boasting of the things done in another sphere of activity.

Paul rephrases his intention by accentuating a mutuality of encouragement that he and these Roman believers might share in the reciprocity of their faith. He emphasizes his continuous determination to visit them; but, without using his apostolic work as an excuse, he simply states that he was prevented

39. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 19, surmises that 'Paul feels very insecure in relation to the unmet recipients of his letter and is thus forced into an apologetic defensive. He obviously fears the mistrust and suspicions of both his person and his work which are circulating in Rome'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 29, concludes that 'The piling up of these adverbs indicates his concern not to be misunderstood. The more he stresses that his desire to visit the Roman congregation is of long standing, the more he is open to criticism for not coming sooner.' In the light of Paul's existential circumstances these are questionable conclusions.

up to this moment. Yet from this unspoken apostolic perspective he unexpectedly claims his apostolic commission as a justification for extending his sphere of activities to Rome: ‘so that I might have some fruit also among you even as among the rest of the Gentiles’. Ultimately there are no boundaries for his apostleship. As an apostle to the Gentiles he is ‘a debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish’. His indebtedness is derived from his enslavement to Christ Jesus. It is simply being what he has become as the result of having been called through a revelation of Jesus Christ. It is being an apostle to the Gentiles! His indebtedness is fulfilled in discharging this commission, and therefore, he is ready and eager to proclaim the gospel to the saints in Rome. In 1 Cor. 9.16-18 he had expressed this sense of indebtedness as a necessity laid on him:

For if I proclaim the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid on me. For woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! For if I do this willingly I have a reward. But if unwillingly, I have been entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward? [Just this] that proclaiming the gospel I offer it free of charge.

Paul ends his self-introduction in v. 16 with an acknowledgment of the power of the gospel that he is evangelizing in the honor–shame culture that continues to dominate the Mediterranean world: ‘*For (gar)* I am not ashamed of the gospel, *for (gar)* it is the power of God *into/unto (eis)* salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek’.<sup>40</sup> That is his fundamental conviction, and through the letter’s disclosure of his theological understanding of the gospel he will elucidate the power of the gospel and convey to his addressees why he is not and cannot be ashamed of it. His earlier letters bear witness to the gospel’s power to subvert the oppressive and dehumanizing character of honor–shame culture as it fractures human relationships on the basis of status and reputation, as it endorses the acquisition of honor at the expense of others, and as it legitimates lying

40. Desta Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One: A Study of Romans 1.17 against the Background of Scripture and Second Temple Jewish Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 81-83 and 104, reads 1.16 as two independent sentences. The phrase, *dynamis theou* (power of God), of 1.16b is not the predicate of ‘the gospel’ in 1.16a, but should be identified as ‘a linguistic image for Christ’, and construed eschatologically as ‘God’s coming in Christ’. That construction has an immediate bearing on the interpretation of 1.17, in which *dikaiosynē theou* signifies ‘the righteousness one’. In view of 3.21, in which *dikaiosynē theou* is that reality that is manifested ‘through the trust of Jesus Christ’, Heliso’s interpretation cannot be validated; *dikaiosynē theou* is neither a christological nor an anthropological reality. Its character is theological, for it designates ‘God’s justice’, the justice that the law could not actualize but that the gospel will make possible, as 3.5; 4.3, 5, 6, 9; 6.18, 20, 21 and other texts indicate. Heliso’s exegesis appears to be determined by a variety of Old Testament and intertestamental texts instead of an integrated reading of Romans.

and deception.<sup>41</sup> Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, for the salvation that it has begun to actualize in his apostolic career is manifested in the communities of faith he has established in which hierarchical structures are being transformed into interdependent, horizontally constituted relationships between men and women and slaves are being manumitted by their owners.<sup>42</sup> Paul himself, by his entry into this salvation, has experienced the power of the gospel, as he testified in 2 Cor. 12.8-9:

I entreated the Lord three times on behalf of this so that it would go away from me. But he said to me, 'my grace is enough for you, for [my] power is made perfect in weakness'. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast in weaknesses so that the power of Christ comes to rest on me. Wherefore I am content in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions and troubles, on behalf of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

This salvation of the gospel that he proclaims and teaches and embodies in his own person will be elucidated in this letter as he composes his theological testament for the present and the future of the growing communities of believing Jews and Gentiles of the Christ movement in Rome, in Ephesus and beyond.

#### 1.17. *The Transition: Paul's Announcement of God's Revelation*

Paul promptly introduces what will gradually emerge as the central theme of his letter—the justice of God<sup>43</sup>:

*For (gar) the justice of God (dikaiosynē theou) is being revealed in it [the gospel] out of trust into trust (ek pisteōs eis pistin) even as it is written, 'The just will live out of trust (ek pisteōs)'.*

As he ceases to speak autobiographically, Paul introduces the keynotes of his forthcoming theological testament: *dikaiosynē theou* and *pistis*, translated here respectively, on the basis of the interpretation of similar texts in Galatians and Romans, as the *justice of God* and *trust*. Paul utilizes the same adverbial conjunction, *gar*, that initiated both clauses of v. 16. On the one hand, he is not ashamed of the gospel *for (gar)* it is *the power of God into salvation*. On the other hand, he is not ashamed of the gospel *for (gar)* it discloses *God's justice*. The gospel as the power of God, salvation, God's justice, and their relationship to each other will be the quintessence of his theological testament that he will elucidate in his letter. Salvation and God's justice are inextricably linked together in the gospel that Paul evangelizes

41. Malina, *New Testament World*, pp. 46-53.

42. On horizontally constituted relationships between men and women, see 1 Cor. 7.4; on the manumission of slaves, see Phlm. 16.

because salvation, as he acknowledged earlier in Phil. 2.12-13, is a continuous interdependent collaboration between God and human beings that is directed toward the realization of all that God's justice designs to accomplish in the world:<sup>43</sup>

Work out your own *salvation* with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

If salvation and God's justice are interdependent realities, the construal of the genitive construction of *dikaiosynē theou* (the justice of God) has a bearing on the character of that relationship. Is God the subject of the justice or the object of the justice? If, on the one hand, *dikaiosynē theou* is interpreted as a subjective genitive or simply a possessive genitive, justice belongs to God. God's very character is justice. God is the originator and source of justice. If, on the other hand, *dikaiosynē theou*, is construed as an objective genitive, God is the object of justice. The justice of God, therefore, is the justice that is divinely anticipated to be actualized by human beings created in the image and likeness of God. How, then, is *dikaiosynē theou* to be construed?

Generally, the Protestant tradition that originated from the Reformation has translated *dikaiosynē theou* as 'righteousness of God' and has judged that it should be interpreted as an objective genitive.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, *dikaiosynē theou* is the righteousness that the law of the Sinai Covenant, presumed to have been ordained by God, requires of human beings. Obedience to that code of law, however, is subverted by the power of *hamartia* (sin), a condition that, according to Augustine's doctrine of original sin, precludes the fulfillment of the law's prescribed righteousness throughout earthly life. Consequently, according to the Reformation's interpretation of Paul's gospel of salvation, God's righteousness is accredited to those who have faith in the gospel. As Martin Luther said,

For the righteousness of God is the cause of salvation. Here, too, '*the righteousness of God*' must not be understood as that righteousness by which he is righteous in himself, but as that righteousness by which we are made righteous (justified) by Him, and this happens through faith in the gospel.<sup>45</sup>

According to John Calvin,

43. 'Salvation', according to Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 195, 'in Romans means the yet-to-come final salvation which is entry into life to come'. His definition of salvation appears to presuppose the Reformation's gospel of individual salvation.

44. See 'Options for a Key Term', in Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, pp. 100-103, for a careful differentiation of the ways in which the Pauline phrase 'the righteousness of God' has been interpreted.

45. *Luther, Lectures on Romans* (trans. and ed. Wilhelm Pauck; The Library of Christian Classics, 15; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 18.

If we seek salvation, i.e. life with God, we must first seek righteousness, by which we may be reconciled to Him, and obtain that life which consists in His benevolence alone through His being favorable to us. In order that we may be loved by God we must first be righteous, for He hates unrighteousness. The meaning is, therefore, that we can obtain salvation from no other source than the Gospel, since God has nowhere else revealed to us His righteousness, which alone delivers us from death.<sup>46</sup>

Salvation, however, as the Reformers professed, includes baptism into Christ's death and resurrection which establishes a 'spiritual ingrafting' into Christ, imparts 'the strength and sap of life', ends the bondage to sin, and enables an entry into the righteousness that God requires. Accordingly, the imputed *righteousness of God* (*dikaiosynē theou*) empowers obedience to God's law and the fulfillment of the ethical conduct that the law requires.<sup>47</sup> As Luther professed,

But it is by the mercy of God that this evil, though it remains, is not reckoned to those who fervently call upon him to set them free. With caution and circumspection, they will readily do good works because they eagerly long to be justified. So then, we are sinners before ourselves and yet in the reckoning of God we are righteous through faith. And we practice this faith in him who sets us free in so far as, while we wait till he takes our sin away, we meanwhile see constantly to it that it does not get the upper hand but is held in check.<sup>48</sup>

Calvin, in his interpretation of Rom. 6.18, exhorted:

The believer ought to maintain the state of freedom which he has received. It is not fitting, therefore, for believers to be brought under the dominion of sin, from which they have been set at liberty by Christ. The argument here is derived from the efficient cause, and the argument which follows is derived from the final cause: 'You have been liberated from the bondage of sin, in order that you may pass into the kingdom of righteousness. It is fitting, therefore, that you should wholly forget sin, and turn your whole heart to righteousness, into the service of which you have been brought'.<sup>49</sup>

It is noteworthy that the Reformation's originating phrase, 'righteousness of God', naturally presupposes law, specifically the law of Sinai, but the fulfillment of the law that the righteousness of God requires is determined by the Reformation's gospel of justification by faith. Consequently, God's

46. *Calvin's Commentaries: The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* (trans. Ross Mackenzie; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), pp. 27-28.

47. See the Appendix below, 'Critique of Luther and Calvin on Justification by Faith in their Interpretation of Romans'.

48. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 127.

49. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 133.

imputed righteousness and the good works that are expected to follow are established on the basis of a dependent, hierarchically oriented relationship with God. But, if the gospel is God's power 'into salvation', and that salvation is ordered toward the healing and restoration of human beings in historical existence, the 'righteousness of God' that the gospel discloses must be more than individually imputed righteousness. It must be a righteousness or a justice that is directed toward its fulfillment in society. That was no less true of the law of the Sinai covenant in the history of Israel.

But, according to 1.17, it is not the law but the gospel that discloses God's justice. Why the gospel instead of the law? And what does the gospel reveal about the justice of God? Justice, of course, is always the objective of law. Justice presumes law. What law or law code, then, does the gospel reveal that will actualize God's justice in the world of human society?

If, on the one hand, *the law of Sinai reveals God's justice*, all offenses and transgressions of the law require the justice of punishment. Accordingly, retribution would be the character of God's justice, and God would necessarily be disclosed as a punitive deity.<sup>50</sup> The only recourse disobedient and unjust human beings would have is to reach out to God in faith in order to receive the grace of God's imputed righteousness. That essentially is the gospel of the Reformation that has continued into the present. If, on the other hand, *the gospel reveals God's justice*, what law or laws does it presuppose? What is the justice that is mandated? Moreover, if God's salvation and God's justice are interdependent realities, how does God's salvation through Jesus Christ make the impossibility of that justice possible? And concomitantly, what is the elemental quality and character of God's deity, specifically, if it is not determined by law?

According to 1.17, the gospel reveals God's justice *ek pisteōs eis pistin*. This enigmatic double prepositional phrase has been interpreted in many ways: 'from the faith of the Old Testament to the faith of the New Testament', 'from the faith of the law to the faith of the gospel', 'from the faith of the preachers to the faith of the hearers', 'from present faith to future faith'.<sup>51</sup> The translations offered by the American and English versions are equally opaque:

50. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 39, differentiates between God's righteousness and the 'defendants' righteousness'. God's righteousness is God's character, status and activity. The defendants' (or the believers') righteousness is 'the status they possess when the court has found in their favor'.

51. Offered by Cranfield, *Romans*, I, pp. 99-100. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 49, translates the phrase, 'from the Faithful One unto [those who have] faith'. See also p. 56, 'The faithful one may be God or it may be Christ'.



KJV:	‘from faith to faith’
ASV:	‘from faith to faith’
RSV:	‘through faith for faith’
NRSV:	‘through faith for faith’
NIV:	‘by faith from first to last’
NEB:	‘that starts from faith and ends in faith’
JB:	‘a justice based on faith and addressed to faith’
GNB:	‘through faith from beginning to end’
NTIME:	‘a process begun and continued by their faith’
ntielt:	‘aus Glauben zu Glauben’

How is God’s justice revealed in the gospel ‘through faith for faith’ or ‘by faith from first to last’? None of these translations of this double prepositional phrase offers an intelligible meaning, and its sense and significance continue to elude commentators.<sup>52</sup> However, its obscurity and its relationship to similar phrases in Romans and Galatians have elicited explicit studies of *ek pisteōs and ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou* in an effort to determine their meaning by resolving the much-debated issue of the genitive construction of *pistis Christou* in Rom. 3.22 and Galatians 2–3.<sup>53</sup>

52. According to Dodd, *Romans*, pp. 13–14, the meaning of the double prepositional phrase ‘is not very clear. The probability is that we have no more than a rhetorical device to give emphasis to the idea of faith.’ Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 54, identifies the phrase as a ‘*Kampfruf*’, a battle cry, that emphasizes the concept of faith. Sometimes the phrase is considered to be meaningless. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 30–31, appears to be pessimistic about discerning its meaning: ‘If *ek pisteōs eis pistin* is not simply to be declared meaningless, it is usually referred to as a movement either in the life of the individual Christian or in salvation history. That it has the character of a Semitic rhetoric may be seen from several parallels.’ Käsemann tends to dismiss its importance, claiming simply that the clause ‘is related only loosely to the preceding statement’. Its purpose is to indicate that the revelation of God’s righteousness ‘takes place always only in the sphere of faith’. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 48, says, ‘The phrase can and probably should be taken as a play on the ambiguity of the word faith/faithfulness, in the sense “from God’s faithfulness (to his covenant promises) to man’s response of faith”’. Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (trans. Scott J. Hoffmann; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), p. 29, concentrates on ‘God’s righteousness’ and, without commenting specifically on this clause, states, ‘God’s righteousness is experienced as salvation simply and solely by faith’. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 56, suggests it means, ‘From the faithful one unto those who have faith’. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 43, rightly interprets the double prepositional phrase as a progression or movement, but subsequently clarifies what he means: ‘...it is most likely that the progression in this verse refers to the missionary expansion of the gospel, which relies on the contagion of faith’. This corresponds to what he says on p. 629, when he states, ‘...proclaiming a faith that can only be conveyed through intense interaction “through faith for faith” (Rom 1.17)’.

53. For studies on this phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, in 1.17, see Waetjen, ‘The Trust of Abraham and the Trust of Jesus Christ: Romans 1.17’, *Currents in Theology and Mission*



In Romans, Paul uses the word *pistis* 36 times without ever defining it. Virtually every English version of his letter translates it as 'faith', and this appears to hold true for most of the commentaries and essays on Romans.<sup>54</sup> 'Faith', the word that is generally used to translate *pistis*, is something that a human being *has* or *has received*.<sup>55</sup> Colloquially speaking, a person 'has faith', and faith, therefore, implies something that is objective and can be shown or disclosed in terms of a life-style or a set of beliefs or both, originating from a relationship with God. The Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century defined faith by differentiating between *fides qua* and *fides quae*. The former, *fides qua*, literally *faith by which*, refers to the personal, existential relationship with God and Jesus Christ. The latter, *fides quae*, literally *faith of which*, designates the content of faith as a set of beliefs or a creed that expresses the significance of that personal, existential relationship with God in terms of its meaningfulness in the context of a particular society and its culture at a specific time in history. In contemporary Protestantism the word 'faith' generally appears to combine both *fides qua* and *fides quae*. In this general religious context, 'faith' is presupposed to

(Essays in Honor of Robert H. Smith) 30 (2003), pp. 446-54; Campbell, 'Romans 1.17'; Dodd, 'Romans 1.17'; Sam K. Williams, 'The "Righteousness of God" in Romans', *JBL* 99 (1980), pp. 241-90 (274-76); A.J. Hultgren, 'The *Pistis Christou* Formulation in Paul', *NovT* 22 (1980), pp. 248-63; Luke T. Johnson, 'Rom 3.21-26 and the Faith of Jesus', *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 77-90; Sam K. Williams, 'Again, *Pistis Christou*', *CBQ* 49 (1987), pp. 431-37; Morna D. Hooker, 'PISTIS CHRISTOU', *NTS* 35 (1989), pp. 321-42; James D. G. Dunn, 'Once More, PISTIS CHRISTOU', in Eugene H. Lovering, Jr (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1991* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 730-44; especially Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 193-235, and John W. Taylor, 'From Faith to Faith: Romans 1.17 in the Light of Greek Idiom', *NTS* 50 (2004), pp. 337-42 (342). Taylor, using the formula '*ek* + *A* + *eis* + *A*' identifies three main functions: 'movement, extended time, progression or increase'. They correspond to the interpretation of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* that is being advanced here, but not in terms of Taylor's conclusion that the idiom expresses an expansion of faith, 'starting with Jews and then among the Gentiles', and this in turn, as he says on p. 348, is 'evidence that God's righteousness is being revealed'.

54. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 491 (n. 54), appears to prefer 'faith' instead of 'trust'. For he says, '...faith involves trust, but it is not precisely trust; faith involves accepting salvation as a gift, but it is not just that either. Faith represents man's entire response to the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, *apart from law*; and *the argument for faith is really an argument against the law*'. The italics are his. In n. 54 he cites W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 174-75, who considers Paul's understanding of faith and that attributed to Abraham to be 'trust'.

55. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 94, says, '...faith is basically human receptivity', but he adds, 'as actively as it may express itself in obedience'. Later, on p. 108, he circumscribes, 'For the apostle Christian faith is not the development and deepening of a general trust in God, and it cannot therefore be seen in analogy of a relationship of love'.

be and is characterized as a relationship of dependence that relies entirely on God's accreditation of 'righteousness' to flawed human beings who, because they are incurably diseased by the condition of sin, are incapable of ever actualizing the righteousness of God.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, salvation is formulated essentially as the grace of 'justification by faith' and is coincidentally directed toward a life of sanctification by God's Spirit. It is essentially an individual state of becoming, and its fulfillment, like the actualization of God's justice and the deliverance of the creation from its bondage, is projected eschatologically into the future arrival of the parousia and even to the eventual resurrection of the dead.<sup>57</sup>

*Pistis*, translated as *trust*, as proposed above, conveys an intimacy of relationship that is analogous to a genuine interdependent, and therefore horizontal, relationship between two human beings. Trust, consequently, is something a human being *does* in commitment to a relationship in which response-abilities are interdependently shared and fulfilled. In trust both sides rely on each other to achieve a common purpose. If *pistis* in Galatians and Romans is more adequately rendered as *trust*, its cognate verb, the infinitive *pisteuein*, may legitimately be translated, *to trust*:

Even as Abraham *trusted* (*episteusen*) God, and it was credited to him *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*), you know consequently that those *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), these are the sons [and daughters] of Abraham (Gal. 3.6-7).

On account of this [it is] *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) so that it is according to grace, in order that the promise might be effective to the entire seed, not only to the seed out of the law but to the seed *out of [the] trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of Abraham who is the father of us all (Rom. 4.16).

56. Käsemann's attribution of 'faith' to God's goodness, *Romans*, p. 310, confirms this Protestant understanding of faith as a one-way, dependent relationship of human beings on God: 'Since faith is a gift, one has constantly to receive it afresh from God's goodness'. Also pp. 58-59, 'As surely as God's righteousness is salvation, just as surely the faith which receives this righteousness is set before the Judge, and only as it is set thus is it faith'. 'For faith alone sees its salvation in the lordship of Christ'. But if faith is a gift from God and God's imputed righteousness is based on faith, the believer's relationship with God is entirely a one-sided relationship of absolute dependence. See also Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 246, who states that '...faith is faith in God's faithfulness to his promise'.

57. Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (trans. H.J. Stenning; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1933), pp. 159-60, separates time and eternity and relegates resurrection to the future of eternity. As he says, 'We are, indeed, still living this life, as yet, we, indeed, only know time; it is the "not yet" which separates us from the resurrection. But we are living the life limited by that horizon, we are living in time for eternity, we are living in the hope of the resurrection'.

Abraham's trust united him with God, and in their interdependent relationship, they persisted in their faithfulness to each other. Abraham trusted God, and God trusted Abraham. In that mutual relationship of trust, they were vulnerable to each other. Abraham counted on God to fulfill God's promises, while, at the same time, God counted on Abraham to live in an obedient trust that would fulfill God's objective, namely, 'in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed' (Gen. 12.1-3). Abraham obeyed God's call, and God fulfilled the promises made to Abraham. In the interdependence of that trust, God established a testament of inheritance with Abraham 'to be the ancestor of a multitude of nations'.<sup>58</sup> Trust, as Paul will state in 4.20, empowered Abraham to live in the certainty that God would honor the promise of an heir. Abraham's trust, therefore, was accredited to him *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*); that is, doing justice was naturally anticipated to arise out of his relationship of trust. On the basis of their interdependent trust, Abraham received the titular designation 'the friend of God'.<sup>59</sup> All those who live *out of trust*, according to 4.12 and Gal. 3.7, are the offspring of Abraham.

*Trust*, therefore, also serves as the more applicable translation of *pistis* in this double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*:

For the justice of God is being revealed in it [the gospel] *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*), even as it is written, 'The just one will live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*)'.

The first of the two phrases, *ek pisteōs*, appears eight times in Romans and six times in Galatians; but the second, *eis pistin*, occurs nowhere else in Paul's writings. In Rom. 3.30 Paul asserts that God will justify circumcision *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) and uncircumcision *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*). In 5.1, as he arrives at the context in which he will begin to elucidate his understanding of 'salvation', he declares, 'Therefore, being justified *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ'. Paul had employed the same phrase in Gal. 3.7-9, in which he prioritized *trust* over the works of the law:

Even as Abraham trusted God, and it was reckoned to him *unto* (*eis*) justice, consequently all those who live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) are the sons and daughters of Abraham. Now Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) announced the good news beforehand to Abraham, 'In you all the Gentiles will be blessed'. So that those *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) are blessed with the faithful Abraham.

58. Gen. 17.2-8, the text that Paul presupposes in Rom. 4.13.

59. As in 2 Chron. 20.7 and Jas 2.23.

Again in Gal. 3.12-14:

For the just will live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). Now the law is not *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), but the one doing these things shall live in/by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law being a curse on our behalf, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’, so that the blessing of Abraham happened unto the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that we receive the promise of the Spirit *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*).

If the prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs*, is validly translated as *out of trust*, at least on the basis of Abraham’s intimate, interdependent relationship with God, the first of the two prepositional phrases in 1.17 may implicitly refer to Abraham’s trust. What, then, is the significance of the second prepositional phrase that follows, namely, *eis pistin*? What is its function in relation to ‘living *out of trust*’, and ‘being justified *out of trust*’, as the various uses of the first prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs*, indicate?

To ascertain more meaningfully the significance of these two prepositional phrases in their relation to each other, it is necessary to leave Romans temporarily in order to examine Paul’s discussion of *pistis Christou* in Galatians. The phrase is a genitive construction that is used five times in Gal. 2.15–3.29, and generally it continues to be translated as ‘faith in Christ’ because it is identified grammatically as an objective genitive that justifies the insertion of the preposition ‘in’, even though it does not occur in the Greek text. *Pistis Christou* is used twice in Gal 2.16, and in virtually every English translation it is rendered as an objective genitive:

Yet we know that a person is justified not by works of the law but *through faith in Jesus Christ* (*dia pisteōs Christou Iēsou*), so that we might be justified *by faith in Christ* (*ek pisteōs Christou*), and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.<sup>60</sup>

Encountered again in Gal. 3.22a, the genitive construction of *pistis Christou* is translated in a similar way:

But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised *through faith in Jesus Christ* (*ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou*) might be given to those who believe.<sup>61</sup>

The so-called new perspective on Paul, however, contends persuasively for a subjective genitive reading of this prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs Iēsou*

60. This is the NRSV translation of Gal. 2.16. Similarly in the NIV. The P<sup>46</sup> reading of Gal. 2.16, placing *Iēsou* before rather than after *Christou*, is preferable in view of the same order in Gal. 3.22 and Rom. 3.21 and also 5.1.

61. This is the NRSV translation, which does not correspond to the Greek text of Gal. 3.22. A more literal translation is: ‘But the Scripture enclosed all things under *hamartia* (sin), so that the promise out of the trust of Jesus Christ is given to those who trust’.

*Christou*; that is, *out of the faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ*.<sup>62</sup> The subjective genitive reading of *ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou* conveys ‘the source or ground out of which the promise is given to those who believe. It characterizes both the recipients (*hoi pisteuontes*) and the source from which the promise is given (*ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou*).’<sup>63</sup> It appears to have been adopted by many interpreters of Galatians and of Romans.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, Gal. 3.22 may be translated as follows:

But Scripture enclosed all things under *sin (hamartian)* so that the promise might be given *out of the faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ (ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou)* to those who believe (3.22).

Romans 4.16 supports this subjective genitive reading of Gal. 3.22:

On account of this [it is] *ek pisteōs* (out of faith), so that [it is] according to grace, in order that the promise might be effective to the entire seed, not only to the one out of the law, but also to the one *ek pisteōs Abraam* (out of [the] faith of Abraham), who is the father of us all.

On the basis of this correspondence, it is concluded that ‘Jesus Christ, like Abraham, is justified *ek pisteōs* (out of faith)’.<sup>65</sup> The same subjective genitive interpretation of *ek pisteōs Christou* (out of the faith of Christ) would hold true for Gal. 2.16:

Yet knowing that a human being is justified not out of works of law but *through [the] faith(fulness) of Christ Jesus (dia pisteōs Christou Iēsou)*, even we believed *into Christ Jesus (eis Christon Iēsoun)* so that we might be justified *out of [the] faith(fulness) of Christ (ek pisteōs Christou)*, because through works of law all flesh will not be justified.<sup>66</sup>

62. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 150, 153 (1983 edition, pp. 164, 167).

63. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 148 (1983 edition, pp. 162-63). The italics are his.

64. Among them, Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 106-108. Hooker, ‘PISTIS CHRISTOU’ p. 341, acknowledges both the objective and the subjective genitive construction of *pistis Christou*: ‘The Christian moves from the sphere of Adam to the sphere of Christ by accepting all that Christ has done and by becoming one with him: even the believer’s initial response—his faith—is a sharing in the obedient, faithful response of Christ himself’. Likewise also Dodd, ‘Romans 1.17—A *Crux Interpretum*’, p. 473. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 165, influenced by the work of Hays, as different parts of his book indicate, quotes Hays, ‘What follows is the content of the gospel, because it is in the gospel that the righteousness of God is revealed *ek pisteōs*, revealed only now for the purpose of leading God’s people to faith (*eis pistin*)’.

65. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 151 (1983 edition, p. 165).

66. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 162 (1983 edition, p. 175), has difficulty with Gal. 2.16. On the one hand, he claims that ‘...the sentence is so compact that it is difficult to decide what *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* and *ek pisteōs Christou* might mean’. Yet he goes on to say, ‘...it is justifiable to maintain that the text means, “...we placed our trust in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified on the basis of Christ’s faithfulness”’.

This shift from an objective to a subjective interpretation of the genitive construction of *pistis Iēsou Christou* reorients the subject–object relationship between the believer and the Christ. The believer, as the *subject*, is no longer prioritized on the basis of a personal faith that is directed toward Jesus Christ as the *object* of faith.<sup>67</sup> Salvation is not simply a matter of *faith in Jesus Christ*. The accent falls on the Christ who, as the acting subject, directs his faith in faithfulness to the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation. As a result of this prioritization, the one-sided anthropological stress on the believer’s subjective role of believing in Christ is superseded by the christological-soteriological significance of Jesus’ faithful obedience in the fulfillment of God’s promise. And his faith, combined with his obedience, according to Paul’s emphasis in Rom. 5.19, expresses itself in a faithfulness that actualizes salvation. According to Hays,

If Paul can speak so compellingly in Rom. 5.19 of the soteriological consequences of Christ’s *hypakoē* (obedience), there is no a priori reason to deny that Paul could intend the expression *pistis Iēsou Christou* to refer to Christ’s soteriologically efficacious faith(fulness).<sup>68</sup>

But how does Christ’s soteriologically efficacious faith(fulness) actualize salvation? Certain decisive questions naturally arise from ‘the theological issues’ that are evoked by this christological-soteriological reorientation through the shift in the interpretation of these genitive constructions of Galatians 2–3. Hays himself asks the question:

If this is the correct reading of Paul, what sense does it make for him to invoke the example of Abraham, whose faith was, after all, not directed toward Jesus? Indeed, the apparent appeal to Abraham as the prototype of the justified believer has always created considerable difficulties for Christian exegesis and theology precisely because his faith was *not* directed towards Christ as object.<sup>69</sup>

Earlier, on p. 123 (1983 edition, pp. 141–42), he states that ‘Gal. 2.16 speaks clearly and unambiguously of faith in Christ (*eis Christon Iēsoun*), of an act of believing/trusting directed toward Christ as “object”’. The italics are his. By ignoring the preposition *eis* that governs *Christon Iēsoun* in 2.16b, his translation contradicts the very issue that his study is re-evaluating, namely, making Jesus or Christ Jesus the object of faith. The preposition *eis* governs the accusative case and signifies motion *into* or *towards*. Accordingly, the literal rendition of *kai hēmeis eis Christon Iēsoun episteusamen* would be ‘even we trusted *into* (*eis*) Christ Jesus’. Christ Jesus is not simply the object of faith. Christ Jesus is the community of the One and the Many, that is, the Body of Christ, to whom Paul and his fellow believers have committed themselves in order to be justified *out of* [the] trust of Christ (*ek pisteōs Christou*).

67. See Hays’s extensive discussion of *pistis*, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 119–32 (1983 edition, pp. 139–49).

68. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 152 (1983 edition, p. 167).

69. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 150 (1983 edition, p. 165).

Or, as he articulates the critical issue more explicitly:

If Abraham could be justified by trusting God, why should we need to believe in *Christ* to be justified? Why not simply put our trust in God, as Abraham did?<sup>70</sup>

Abraham, of course, as Paul states in Gal. 3.16, is the recipient of the promise, the ‘prefiguration’; and Christ, his seed, is the ‘fulfillment’.<sup>71</sup> But what specifically is the promise and what is its fulfillment? What role does Jesus’ faith and obedient faithfulness have in the fulfillment of salvation? What is the ‘efficacious faith(fulness)’ that Jesus Christ as ‘the representative figure’ enacts?<sup>72</sup>

Undoubtedly, the subjective genitive reading of the prepositional phrase, *out of [the] faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ (ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou)*, and similar genitive constructions in Galatians 2–3 has persuasively been established. But if justification by faith is attributable to both Abraham and Jesus Christ, what are the differences between *ek pisteōs Abraam* (out of [the] faith of Abraham) and *ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (out of [the] faith of Jesus Christ)?<sup>73</sup> To determine what they might be, it is necessary to examine the *testament of inheritance (diathēkē)* of Gal. 3.15-19 in and by which Paul established an inherent relationship between them:

Brothers and sisters, I am speaking according to a human [example]. No one annuls or adds a codicil to a ratified *testament (diathēkē)* of a human being. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed. It does not say, ‘and to seeds’, as of many, but as of one, ‘and to your seed’, who is Christ.

This is not the *testament* of the Old Covenant that was ‘chiseled in letters on stone tablets’, that Paul discussed in 2 Cor. 3.4-16. This is the *testament (diathēkē)* that is 430 years older than the law. It is the *testament* that God

70. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 151 (1983 edition, p. 165).

71. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 198 (1983 edition, p. 226).

72. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 152 (1983 edition, p. 166). Hays cannot answer these questions adequately. This is already evident in his mistaken application of the curse that Deut. 21.23 imposes on Christ’s crucifixion to Christ’s representative act on behalf of humankind, as well as his erroneous connection of the curse to 2 Cor. 5.21b. But, more significantly, on pp. 198-99, he cannot determine the content of the ‘promise’ to Abraham and its ‘fulfillment’ through Jesus Christ because he does not understand the objective of the law as Paul stated it in Gal. 3.19. He concludes that the answer that Paul gives to the question that he raises in Gal. 3.19-25 ‘is not a very lucid one, and it poses more difficulties than can be addressed in the scope of this study’.

73. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 173 (1983 edition, p. 202), states that “‘Abraham’s faith is a foreshadowing of Christ’s”. But in what sense? Both Abraham and Jesus lived in an intimate relationship of trust with God. That may be intimated by Jesus’ reference to God as ‘Abba’, a form of address that expresses a profound, loving relationship of mutual trust between Jesus and God.



drew up with Abraham, and, as Gal. 3.18 indicates, it had to do with ‘inheritance’. *Diathēkē* is ‘the most frequently used technical term to designate the last will and testament’.<sup>74</sup>

Paul’s argumentation in Galatians 2–3, in which the subjective interpretation of the genitive prepositional phrase *ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou* is central, ‘explicitly involves the conceptual analogy of a *diathēkē* (testament), a juristic transaction by which testamentary benefits are transmitted by one person to another’.<sup>75</sup> To clarify this *diathēkē*, Paul has appropriated the Roman juridical principle of *fidei commissum* that establishes the terms that determine the distinctive character of a *testament of inheritance* (*diathēkē*). Moreover, ‘In Galatians *pistis* plays an integral part in the elaborate transaction that is explicitly juristic’.<sup>76</sup> But it is not the Greek equivalent of *fidei commissum*; it is not ‘the Greek word both generally and technically used to translate *fidei commissum*’.<sup>77</sup> *Pistis*, however, may acquire a juridical

74. Raphael Taubenschlag, *The Law of Graeco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri 332 BCE–640 CE* (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2nd rev. and enl. edn, 1955), p. 190.

75. Greer M. Taylor, ‘The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians’, *JBL* 85 (1966), pp. 58–76 (61–62). Unfortunately, the far-reaching significance of the elucidating character of his essay generally remains unrecognized in the interpretation of Gal. 2–3.

76. Taylor, ‘The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians’, p. 58.

77. Contrary to Taylor, ‘The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians’, p. 70, who states, ‘But what is obviously the technical *fidei commissum* appears in its Greek equivalent, as *pistis*’. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 186–89 (1983 edition, pp. 216–18), on the basis of his own investigation of the genitive construction of *pistis Iēsou Christou*, rejects Taylor’s identification of *pistis* with *fidei commissum*. In this critical judgment he is supported by the definition of the *fidei commissum* that is offered by *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 436. Specifically pertinent to Paul’s conceptual analogy of the *testament* that was granted to Abraham are the following characteristics of *fidei commissum*: (1) a testator could make bequests out of his inheritance by legacy (*legatum*) or *fidei commissum*; (2) whereas a *legatum* had to be left in a prescribed form and was chargeable only on an heir appointed by will, a *fidei commissum* was an informal request by the testator to any person who benefited from the inheritance (by will or by intestacy, by legacy or even by another *fideicommissum*)—such requests were originally not legally enforceable, but were simply ‘committed to the faith’ of the person addressed; (3) the original purpose of *fidei commissum* was to benefit a person who was legally unable to be an heir or a legatee (e.g. a peregrine, or a woman debarred by the *Lex Voconia*), but most such persons were excluded during the first two centuries CE, and a *fidei commissum* became in most respects a formless legacy. It could, however, transfer an entire inheritance from the heir to some other person, either immediately or at some future date, and could be used to create a ‘family settlement’ lasting several generations or even indefinitely. The italics of the word ‘faith’ is mine. See also Taubenschlag, *The Law of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, pp. 195–97, 203.



character, such as ‘fidelity’, ‘faithfulness’, ‘trust’, and even ‘bond’, and ‘mortgage’, in conjunction with a testament of inheritance.<sup>78</sup>

Certain legal features of the *fidei commissum* enabled Paul to develop his interpretation of the *testament* that God enacted with Abraham:

Only by *fidei commissum* could a testator name two successive heirs... By the theory of *fidei commissum* the first named heir was considered to adopt the second as his heir as a condition of the acceptance of the legacy.<sup>79</sup>

This principle of the *fidei commissum* is explicitly evident in Gal. 3.16, ‘The promises were spoken to *Abraham* and to *his seed, who is Christ*’. By a christological construction of the Septuagint text of Gen. 12.7, *tō spermati sou* (to your seed), Paul concluded that Jesus Christ is the single lineal descendant of Abraham. For, as he continues, ‘It does not say, “and to seeds”, as of many, but as of one’; and, after repeating the text of Gen. 12.7, he identifies that one seed as the ‘Christ’. ‘These two persons’, Abraham and Christ, ‘have exclusive legal title to and exclusive power to transmit the benefits’.<sup>80</sup>

Another attribute of the *fidei commissum* that is essential to Paul’s interpretation of God’s covenant with Abraham is his own call and self-understanding as an apostle to the Gentiles:

Only by *fidei commissum* could the testator name national aliens as beneficiaries of his testament.<sup>81</sup>

The Gentiles, of course, are the aliens in Israel’s history, but, on the basis of the *fidei commissum*, Paul can name them, through their incorporation into the trust of Jesus Christ, as *the descendants of Abraham* and, therefore, as beneficiaries of his testament of inheritance. To quote Gal. 3.6-9 again,

Even as Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him *unto/toward* (*eis*) justice, consequently you know that those [who are] *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), these are the sons and daughters of Abraham. Now Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), announced the good news beforehand to Abraham, ‘In you all the Gentiles shall be blessed’, so that those [who are] *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) are blessed with the faithful Abraham.

78. See *pistis* in James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1957), p. 515.

79. Taylor, ‘The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians’, p. 66.

80. Taylor, ‘The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians’, p. 63.

81. Taylor, ‘The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians’, p. 63.

Throughout its use in Gal. 2.15–3.29, *pistis* (trust) anticipates and belongs to the *diathēkē* that God established with Abraham and his descendant, the Christ. *Pistis*, as the trust between God and Abraham, is the foundation of the testament of inheritance that was established in trust for the benefit of Abraham's descendants. However, according to the principles of *fidei commissum*, the terms and conditions of this testament required fulfillment by Abraham's lineal descendant and fiduciary, the Christ, who would make its benefits universally accessible to all who, like Abraham, live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*):

The testamentary heir did not receive the testamentary property for his own benefit alone. As was the case with any heir, he had to assume all the testator's obligations. But he had also to distribute the residue of the testamentary property to such persons as the testament provided. This testament could provide for two classes of recipients of the testamentary property: the sole testamentary heir, and the persons with whom he was directed to share it.<sup>82</sup>

What conditions the testamentary heir would be required to fulfill would be determined by the liabilities of the codicil of the law that subsequently was added to the *testament* that God established with Abraham. Until those obligations would be discharged, the intended beneficiaries would continue to be subject to guardians and administrators, as Paul stated in Gal. 4.1-2. *Pistis*, accordingly, bears a certain ambiguous intelligibility, for, on the one hand, it refers to the interdependent relationship of trust between God and Abraham, and, on the other hand, it conveys a juridical quality in its association with the testament of inheritance.<sup>83</sup>

But if the ratified *testament* is inviolable, as Paul enunciated in Gal. 3.15, how is it possible to append a codicil? That, in fact, is Paul's judgment of the law, and it is implied in the question that he asked in 3.19: 'Why then the law?' Consequently, in order to establish the inviolability of the *testament* that was given and received in *trust*, it is necessary for Paul to determine the nature of the law's relationship to that *testament*. According to Gal. 3.17, the law cannot supersede the temporal and legal priority of the testament:

82. Taylor, 'The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians', p. 65.

83. Taylor, 'The Function of PISTIS CHRISTOU in Galatians', p. 68, contends for the same double meaning of *pistis* as *trust* and *faith*. See also Williams, 'The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans', p. 275, rightly differentiates between the *faith* (*pistis*) of Christ and the *faith* (*pistis*) of Christians, and, since he interprets *pistis Christou* as a genitive of possession, he does not hesitate to translate *pistis Christou* as 'the trust of Christ'. As he says, 'Without Christ's faithful execution of the trust given him by God, there would have been no "coming", no revealing of faith as the basis of the eschatological existence before God'. The word 'trust' is preferable as the 'key element in this juridical transaction' even for Christians.

The law, having happened after four hundred and thirty years, does not make void the *testament* (*diathēkē*) previously ratified by God so that the promise is abolished. For if the inheritance is *out of law* (*ek nomou*), it is no longer *out of promise* (*ex epangelias*), but God graced it to Abraham *through promise* (*di' epangelias*).

The law does not invalidate the promises made to Abraham; it was appended to the *testament* as a codicil.<sup>84</sup> By adhering to his analogy from Roman jurisprudence, Paul accounts for the addition of the codicil by drawing a surprising inference from the story of the Sinai covenant: '[It was] constituted by angels at the hand of a mediator'.<sup>85</sup> The participle *diatageis* (constituted) reverberates with Paul's earlier use of the more compound form of *diatassō*, namely, *epidiatassetai* (add a codicil). The codicil of the law could not be *constituted* by God, because God had established the testament of inheritance with Abraham on the basis of a mutual trust, and, therefore, as an antecedent contract it was sacred and inviolable.<sup>86</sup>

Consequently, to attach the Sinai Covenant of the law to the *testament* that God established with Abraham, required a negotiator; and Paul is quick to acknowledge, 'a mediator is not of one, but God is *one*'. By these enigmatic words he implies that the arbitration that was required would naturally involve two parties. God was *one* of them!<sup>87</sup> The other party is not named, but it can be surmised that it must have been Israel as the representative of its patriarch, Abraham. The negotiator also remains unidentified, but it could only have been Moses. Through his arbitration God and Israel reached an

84. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 21, affirms Paul's strategy in Galatians of 'undermining the absoluteness of law' by maintaining 'the priority of promise to law by temporalizing the law relative to promise' and therefore identifying the Sinai law as 'a kind of codicil'.

85. Unfortunately, Taylor does not draw upon Gal. 3.19b-20, a move which would strengthen the case he is attempting to establish. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, p. 227, does not venture into an interpretation of Gal. 3.19-20: 'If the time between the coming of Christ was "doch durchweg dunkel", if it was a time "frozen" between promise and fulfillment, what was the purpose of the law, which Israel had always regarded as God's ordinance for life and salvation?' More significantly, Hays, p. 199 (1983 edition, p. 227), maintains, 'Paul does not deny that the Law was given by God'. God, however, cannot be the giver of the law because God established a testament of inheritance with Abraham that is inviolable.

86. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 21, See especially Chapter 2, 'Justice beyond the Law'.

87. Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 257, maintains that because the preposition *dia* (through) in 3.19 expresses 'intermediate agency', the law was ordained by God but came to Moses through angels. That prevents Witherington from identifying God as one of the two parties with whom Moses is negotiating in order to add the codicil of the law to the *testament* (*diathēkē*) of Abraham.

agreement to add the Sinai law, that angels constituted (*diatageis*), to the *testament of inheritance* (*diathēkē*) and its attendant promises. As a codicil, it does not and cannot annul the testament or cancel its promises.

But why then was it necessary to bind the law to the *testament*? According to Paul's answer in Gal. 3.19, 'It was added on account of transgressions until the seed should come to whom it was promised'. The objective of law, of course, is justice. Although law is unable to actualize justice, it evokes the awareness of injustice and, beyond that, the underlying condition of sin.<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, the law of Sinai served and serves as a mirror to awaken in Israel the consciousness of the human disease of *hamartia*. Paul, at the end of his analysis of the human condition, will conclude in Rom. 3.20, 'By the law is the recognition of *sin* (*hamartia*)'.

The teleological objective of the testament of inheritance was the arrival of Abraham's testamentary heir, who would fulfill the terms and conditions of that *testament of trust* and serve as the appointed agent to distribute its benefits universally.<sup>89</sup> What were the terms and conditions of that testament? They are implied in Gal. 3.22, 'But Scripture confined all under *hamartian* (sin) so that the promise out of [the] *trust of Jesus Christ* (*ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou*) might be given to those who believe'. In other words, the law elicited the liabilities of the testament that God established with Abraham, liabilities, as Paul will acknowledge in Rom. 5.12, that originated with the Fall of Adam and Eve and introduced the infection of *hamartia* (sin) into the world:

For right up to the law *hamartia* was in the world, but *hamartia* is not charged there being no law, but death ruled from Adam right up to Moses even on those who did not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam...

Abraham, like all of Adam and Eve's descendants, was infected with *hamartia*, but because he lived 430 years before the law, he was unaware of his diseased condition. According to Paul's quotation of Gen. 15.6 in Gal. 3.6 and Rom. 4.3, 'Abraham trusted God and it was credited to him

88. See Wright's lengthy discussion of Gal 3.15-20, *The Climax of the Covenant*, pp. 157-74. His emphasis is correct. The law was introduced for specific purposes: to 'facilitate the creation of a single family spoken of in the promise'. 'When the scripture had done its work of demonstrating that all, Jew and Gentile alike, were sinners (and hence that there could not be two different "families", because all needed the same remedy and the same way of salvation), the promise of a single family could be given *ek pisteōs...tois pisteuousin* (v. 22).'

89. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, p. 218, notes, 'In national law no indications are found concerning the responsibility of the heir. But the idea that the heir was responsible for the debts of the testator with his own property would fit with the general system of the Egyptian law of inheritance.'

unto/toward justice (*eis dikaiosynēn*)'. The interdependent relationship of trust between God and Abraham presupposed that justice would naturally follow in the life and activity of Israel's patriarch. But to whatever extent Abraham was able to do justice, his infection of *hamartia* precluded its actualization, and therefore the accreditation 'unto justice' may also be said to have been projected eschatologically to the coming of the seed, the Christ.

As the second heir and fiduciary of the testament that God established with Abraham, Jesus the Christ accepted the responsibility for the liabilities of that testament and terminated the moral order of the old creation and with it the condition of *hamartia* that fated and fates all human beings who live in it. Consequently, the testament that God constituted out of the trust (*ek pisteōs*) of Abraham has culminated in the trust (*eis pistin*) of Jesus Christ.<sup>90</sup> The gospel that Paul proclaims, therefore, is this finalization of Abraham's testament of inheritance given in trust through the trust of Jesus Christ.

The subjective genitive construction of *pistis Iēsou Christou* in Galatians 2–3 appears to be validated, but its translation as 'the faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ' is unsatisfactory. As valid as its establishment is, it does not include an adequate analysis of the promise to Abraham and its fulfillment through Jesus Christ. The christological-soteriological 'efficacious faith(fulness)' that Jesus Christ as 'the representative figure' enacts perpetuates the subject-object relationship between the believer and the Christ. Although the accent has shifted from the subject to the object, from the believer's faith to the Christ's faith(fulness), there has been no essential change in the relationship. Moreover, the faith(fulness) of Christ as the believer's representative, continues to require the believer's faith, but a faith that is virtually an intellectual assent. According to 1.16, the gospel is the bearer of the good news of salvation. It is also the medium in and by which *the justice of God* (*dikaiosynē theou*) is disclosed. But even more than that, the gospel is God's power *into/unto salvation* (*eis sōtērian*) to everyone who trusts.<sup>91</sup> Consequentially the gospel opens the door to a salvation that is to be *entered* and *actualized* here and now in daily life. Merely believing the gospel or having

90. Williams, 'The "Righteousness of God" in Romans', p. 275, affirms the mutuality of trust in Jesus' relationship with God that naturally anticipates obedience, as Paul acknowledges in Rom. 5.19: 'Without Christ's faithful execution of the trust given him by God there would have been no "coming", no revealing of faith as the basis of eschatological existence before God'.

91. Most English translations render 1.16 incorrectly. The RSV and NRSV offer: 'It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith'. The NEB reads: 'It is the saving power for everyone who has faith'. The NIV has: 'It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes'.

the faith of Jesus as the representative of those who are justified out of faith and therefore as the ‘representative who carries the destiny of humankind’ does not produce God’s justice.<sup>92</sup> The movement from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ that makes the realization of God’s justice possible transcends the static subject–object relationship between the believer and the Christ. Through the actualization of God’s justice by recreated human beings the benefits of the testament’s promised inheritance are made accessible to all humankind. As Paul declared in 1.17,

For the justice of God is being revealed in it [the gospel] *out of trust (ek pisteōs) into trust (eis pistin)*, even as it is written, ‘The just one will live *out of trust (ek pisteōs)*’.

Paul concludes this transition of v. 17 by citing a text from Hab. 2.4 that, in its immediate context, conveys the prophet’s need to have God’s assurance that Israel’s eschatological expectation of deliverance will be fulfilled.<sup>93</sup> Habakkuk challenges God about the vision of the end-time, saying, ‘I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint’. To which God immediately responds:

And the Lord answered me, ‘Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that the one reading pursues it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time (*kairos*); it will rise up toward the end, and not in vain. If it is slow, wait for it, for coming it will come and it will not delay. If he should draw back, my soul will not be pleased in him; but the just one will live *out of my trust (ek pisteōs mou)*’.<sup>94</sup>

God guarantees that the vision of the appointed time has not been forfeited. It will be fulfilled, but it may be slow in coming. Habakkuk must continue to wait for it. Moreover, he must write the vision on tablets so plain that anyone reading it will understand and remain faithful in living out of God’s loyalty while waiting for the vision to be actualized. God will be

92. Campbell, ‘Romans 1.17—A *Crux Interpretum*’, pp. 280–81, in accord with Hays’s subjective genitive construction of Paul’s references to *pistis Iēsou Christou* in Galatians, has turned to an examination of Rom. 1.17, but his analysis of the double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, is limited to the first half, *ek pisteōs*. In conclusion he asserts, ‘The final possible reading of the phrase *ek pisteōs* in v. 17a is the seldom considered alternative of the faithfulness of Christ—indeed, at this point it is the only alternative left standing’. Dodd, ‘Romans 1.17—A *Crux Interpretum*’, pp. 470–71, rightly faults him for not including the other half of the double prepositional phrase, *eis pistin*.

93. For an interpretation of Paul’s use of Hab. 2.4 that emphasizes ‘faith’ as ‘the demarcating characteristic of the covenant people’, see Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, pp. 148–51.

94. My translation of LXX Hab. 2.2–4.

displeased, however, if the reader draws back from it. But in the meantime, the just ones are those who live out of God's trust and in trust continue to wait patiently for the fulfillment of the vision:

The *just one* (*ho dikaios*) will live *ek pisteōs mou* (out of my trust).

The Septuagint text of Hab. 2.4 is cited here in the same form as it was in Gal. 3.11.<sup>95</sup> It is, of course, oriented to the future, not messianically but certainly eschatologically.<sup>96</sup> Earlier in Gal. 3.11, however, it scripturally affirmed the only recourse to being justified by the works of law in view of the impossibility of fulfilling the works of the law: 'For it is evident that no one *in/by law* (*en nomō*) is justified before God, *for the just one will live out of trust*'. Paul uses Hab. 2.4 in this transition verse of 1.17 to validate scripturally the necessity of trust for the fulfillment of God's salvation of justice.<sup>97</sup>

If the gospel of salvation and the *justice of God* (*dikaioσynē theou*) are interdependent realities, as Paul intimates in 1.17, the determination of the genitive construction of *dikaioσynē theou* (the justice of God) has a bearing on the character of that relationship. How, then, is *dikaioσynē theou* to be construed? That necessarily depends on the source of God's revelation of God's justice. If the law of the Sinai Covenant is the disclosure of *God's justice*, *dikaioσynē theou* must be interpreted as an objective genitive: God is the object of the justice that God requires of human beings. If, on the other hand, the gospel of salvation is the source of God's justice, *dikaioσynē theou* is the justice that is disclosed *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, that is, *from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ*. That movement from trust into trust culminates in the salvation event of Abraham's lineal descendant and fiduciary, the Christ, and constitutes the justice of God as the impossible possibility of historical existence that can be actualized by those who are participating in God's New Humanity. Consequently, the gospel is not the means by which God establishes his righteous rule on earth.<sup>98</sup> God calls and empowers those who participate in the Last Adam of life-giving spirits to do

95. In both citations of Rom. 1.17 and Gal. 3.11 Paul has omitted the personal pronoun *mou* (my).

96. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, pp. 134-38 (1983 edition, pp. 150-57), discusses this text at length, as Paul refers to it in Gal 3.11 and Rom. 1.17, but he is drawn to a messianic interpretation of *ho dikaios* (the just one), in Paul's quotation of Hab. 2.4, as proposed by A.T. Hanson, who, on the basis of 1QpHab 8.1-3 is inclined to identify the subject, *ho dikaios* (the just one) as the Messiah. So also Heliso, *Pistis and the Righteous One*, pp. 146-54.

97. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 146, says, 'Paul's altered citation of Hab. 2.4 turns it into a confirmation of his particular emphasis on salvation by faith alone'.

98. Contrary to Jewett, *Romans*, p. 141.

justice and to deliver the creation from its bondage. But, as Paul will continue in 3.21, it will be made possible ‘through the trust of Jesus Christ unto all who believe’:

But now *without law* the justice of God has been manifested, witnessed to by the law and the prophets, but the justice of God through the trust of Jesus Christ unto all who trust.<sup>99</sup>

99. Wright, ‘Romans and the Theology of Paul’, p. 38, influenced by Hays’s *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, interprets *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* in 3.21 as ‘through the faithfulness of the Messiah, Jesus’.



### 3

#### PAUL'S ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL HUMAN CONDITION

##### 1.18-32. *God's Wrath: 'Being Handed Over'*

The juxtaposition of 1.17 and 1.18 and specifically the employment of the verb *apokalyptetai* (it is being revealed) in both verses might imply that 'God's deed and man's need' are concurrent realities. But structurally Paul has introduced his theology of the gospel by prioritizing God's salvation in the light of the human condition. Accordingly, the apostle's thought moves from solution to plight, that is, from 'God's deed to man's need'.<sup>1</sup> Yet here, however, something unforeseen and new comes to light. The justice of God is being revealed in the *gospel of salvation*! The law of Sinai, as Paul will clarify rhetorically from representative personal experience in 7.12-24, cannot establish justice because it is subverted by the power of *hamartia*. But, in view of the revelation of God's justice that the gospel is disclosing, it is necessary to elucidate the stark realities of historical existence that are engendered by the transgressions of the law, specifically idolatry and injustice.<sup>2</sup> If law, as fundamental as the Two Tables of the Commandments, cannot generate justice in human society, is it possible that the revelation of God's justice in and through the gospel of salvation will succeed where law has failed?

Paul initiates his analysis of the human condition in 1.18 by juxtaposing another revelation that is manifesting itself alongside the gospel's disclosure of God's justice. It is the unveiling of the appalling and seemingly hopeless condition of humanity's entanglement in 'God's wrath from heaven against

1. In opposition to Bultmann, Conzelmann and Bornkamm, Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 442-47, contends that God's solution is prior to the human problem in the theology of Paul.

2. Contrary to Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns; London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 37, who maintains that 'The Gospel speaks of God as He is: it is concerned with Him Himself and with Him only'. The Gospel speaks of the human plight and God's resolution of that plight, but in terms of the biblical delineation of the paradoxical identity of the human being.

every impiety and injustice of human beings'. To emphasize the concurrence of both revelations, God's justice in and through the gospel and God's wrath from heaven, Paul employs the present passive indicative, *apokalypsetai* (it is being revealed) in vv. 17-18. The one presupposes the other because the revelation of God's justice in and through the gospel is intelligible and meaningful only in the context of the human condition that is and has been subject to God's wrath. Precisely because of this critical relationship between the two revelations, it is necessary for Paul to suspend temporarily his exposition of the gospel's disclosure of God's justice 'out of trust into trust' in order to expose the manifestly hopeless present and future condition of human existence. It is only after an analysis of the comprehensive human disease of existential brokenness and social alienation, resulting from the power of *hamartia*, that the essential character of the gospel's 'power into salvation' is comprehensible.

But what is this revelation of the *wrath of God from heaven* (*orgē theou ap' ouranou*)? The Greek word *orgē* may signify *anger* in the sense of displeasure or it may denote *wrath* as indignation that is directed at wrongdoing and resulting in some form of retribution.<sup>3</sup> Of these two alternate meanings, Paul's use of the word is determined by his Jewish heritage of God's justice and not the psychology of human emotions. Wrath is God's manifestation of God's justice that is directed toward the wrongdoings that ravage the lives of human beings in the world. But how is it disclosed? If the first six words of the Greek text of v. 18 are translated, 'For the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven...', it is possible to conclude that God is personally directing divine justice at human beings as an immediate punishment emanating from God's transcendence. But God is not the subject of the verb *apokalypsetai* (it is being revealed). As a present passive indicative, *apokalypsetai* conveys a continuous disclosure of outrage, God's outrage, but God is not the acting subject. Moreover, if Paul's word order in the Greek text is observed in translation, the opening clause of v. 18, *apokalypsetai gar orgē theou ap' ouranou*, should be rendered, 'For there is being revealed *God's wrath from heaven*...' The clause denotes a divine indignation, transcendent in origin, that is being disclosed in the historical existence of human beings. But God's wrath is not to be construed as a willful punishment of human beings; God's wrath is not God's vengeance. It is 'some process or effect in the realm of objective facts', and, as it continues, it produces deadly consequences for all who affected by it.<sup>4</sup>

In the Old Testament the prophetic denunciations of disobedience and faithlessness in Israel's pre-exilic history warrant God's chastisement in the

3. Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 720.

4. See Dodd's discussion, *Romans*, p. 22.

form of human instrumentality. Isaiah, in 8.5-8, for example, pronounces judgment on Judah by contrasting the local waters that flow from the spring Gihon—which God's people do not draw from in trust—with the Euphrates, the mighty river representing the power of Assyria that is the basis of King Ahaz's security, but that will soon inundate the tiny kingdom:

Because this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah; behold, Yahweh is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and it shall rise over all its channels and pass over all its banks; and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breath of your land, O Immanuel.<sup>5</sup>

Amos culminates his prophecy in 9.1-4 with a vision of God's dreadful pronouncement of Israel's complete ruination:

I saw Yahweh standing beside the altar, and he said: 'Strike the capitals until the thresholds shake, and shatter them on the heads of all the people; and those who are left I will kill with the sword; not one of them shall flee away, not one of them shall escape. Though they dig into Sheol, from there my hand shall take them; though they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, from there I will search out and take them; and though they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the sea-serpent, and it shall bite them. And though they go into captivity in front of their enemies, there I will command the sword, and it shall kill them; and I will fix my eyes on them for harm and not for good.

Amos's vision of God is conveyed in the image of a judge of Israel whose justice is directed toward the condemnation of Israel.

A reorientation gradually emerges in the postexilic period of Israel's history as Judaism's pseudonymous visionaries enunciate God's judgment upon the systemic institutions of power and those who preside over them as they pursue the exploitation of God's elect people and nullify their divine legacy of freedom, sovereignty and glory. Apocalyptic eschatology previews God's wrath as an imminent but personally directed intrusive intervention in the form of earthquakes, floods and plagues that will terminate the moral order that has persisted since the Fall of humankind. According to Isa. 24.1,

Behold, Yahweh will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

According to Zech. 14.12,

5. See also Amos 3.1-11; Hos. 7.11-16; Jer. 9.25-26; 19.1-20.6; 25.15-38.

And this shall be the plague with which Yahweh will smite all the people that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet, their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths.

Paul has not appropriated either of these Old Testament perspectives of prophetic and apocalyptic judgment. The mode of God's justice that he accentuates is *God's wrath from heaven* as a power that is at work in the here-and-now of historical existence.<sup>6</sup> Paul's stipulation, 'from heaven', does not imply God's direct or immediate punishment of human wickedness. God's wrath is God handing human beings over to the consequences of their wrongdoing.<sup>7</sup> The cause-and-effect cycles of wrath that are operative in human history are generated inevitably by *impiety (asebeian)* and *injustice (adikian)*. The consequences that result from the evil that these violations of the law produce doom human beings to a predestination that cannot be undone by human endeavor. This is not a perspective that is derived from apocalypticism.<sup>8</sup> Its correspondence to Wis. 11.15-16 indicates that it is drawn from Wisdom tradition:<sup>9</sup>

In return for their foolish and wicked thoughts, which led them astray to worship irrational serpents and worthless animals, you sent upon them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them so that they might learn that *one is punished by the very things by which one sins.*

6. In his *Lectures on Romans*, p. 41, Luther characterizes God's wrath as 'God's fully heaped up anger', but does not indicate how it is manifested. Calvin interprets 'wrath' as 'vengeance'; see *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 93. Both Luther and Calvin presuppose a punitive deity, in as far as the law also reveals 'the righteousness of God'.

7. See Dodd, *Romans*, pp. 23-26; and as he says on p. 26, 'The vices of paganism, with their natural and inevitable concomitants, are themselves the Nemesis of the fundamental error of taking up an irreligious attitude to life, in spite of the knowledge of God which is native to the human mind'. Hamerton-Kelly, 'Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire', p. 45, defines 'wrath' in different ways: 'Wrath is religion as violence in its aspect of vengeance'; 'It is the permission granted us by God to afflict ourselves unknowingly; it is the divine nonresistance to human evil'.

8. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 38, offers an estimable interpretation of the phrase 'from heaven' as 'the unmediated and unavoidable fate which afflicts humanity'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 54-55, claims that 'wrath is not something for which God is merely responsible, "an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe", nor merely an attitude of God (far less a vengeful attitude of God), but something that God *does*' (italics are Dunn's).

9. Much of what Paul articulates in 1.19-25 corresponds to the Wisdom tradition of Hellenistic Judaism, specifically Wis. 13-15. See also William Sanday and Arthur Cayley Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 5th edn, 1902), pp. 51-52.

*Impiety* (*asebeia*) originates from the violations of the first Table of Commandments, *injustice* (*adikia*) from the second Table of Commandments. To these infringements of the Decalogue, Paul adds 'binding the truth by injustice'. Acts of impiety and injustice produce more injustice by inducing human beings to cover up their misdeeds. Community truths are perverted, alienation predominates human relations, and the process of redemption in society is vitiated.<sup>10</sup> Purity codes are formulated and pollution systems are constituted in order to establish order and security, and society is fractured into the realms of the clean and the unclean, the good and the evil. The political, economic and social power that is inherited or seized is used to maintain the fractures of society and to dominate the weak and exploit the powerless.

Those who violate the two Tables of the Commandments by committing impiety and injustice are without excuse, as Paul declares in v. 20c, for the truth of God is manifested in the works of creation and the events of history. God is not the unknown God.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, God takes the initiative to make the truth of God patently evident.

...in view of the fact (*dioti*) that what is *knowable* (*gnōston*) of God is *manifest* (*phaneron*) in them for God *manifested* (*ephanērōsen*) to them (1.19).

The adjective *gnōston* refers to what is familiar, what is capable of being known; and it is reinforced by the adjective *phaneron* (visible, evident) and its cognate, the verb *ephanērōsen* (he/she exposed publicly) to denote knowable, empirical experience. The truth of God is visible in creation and in historical existence.<sup>12</sup>

Paradoxically, however, the truth of God that is empirically experienced is conveyed by certain invisible attributes. These manifestations are not aspects of God's being that have emerged from metaphysical postulations or scientific conjectures by which the reality of God is objectified. Nor are they attributes that constitute a natural knowledge of God with which human

10. On the 'process of redemption', see Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 5-6.

11. As categorically claimed by Barth, *Romans*, p. 36. Barth does not consider the relationship between the invisible attributes of 'power' and 'godness' that Paul submits in terms of a chiasmic structure, intimating that they are interdependent realities which a human being perceives in a coalesce of the empirical experiences of power and the internal subjective experience of finitude. Human beings, in spite of their fallen condition and their infection (*hamartia*) are able to experience the truth of God because, as Paul states, 'God manifested it to them'.

12. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 66, identifies *gnōston* as an aorist participle and, by translating it as 'having known', loses its character as an ongoing knowable reality.

beings are born. The knowledge of God is not ‘native to the human mind’.<sup>13</sup> According to v. 20, God manifests the attributes of God’s *eternal power* and God’s *deity* in human experience.

For *his invisible things* from the creation of the world are *clearly seen* (*kathoratai*), understood with respect to works, both his *eternal power* (*dynamis*) and his *deity* (*theiotēs*).

Power in its countless manifestations in nature is, of course, visible to the human eye or may be empirically measured by humanly devised instruments: the speed of light, electro-magnetic forces, gravity, and the shifting of earth’s tectonic plates. Power and its effects are also visible in technology, money, class, status, office, knowledge, and speech. Ultimately all forms of power emanate from the Creator of the world.<sup>14</sup> But it cannot logically be assumed that the empirical realities of power and its effects, as they are manifested in the events of nature and as they have been perceived through the centuries of human history, are directly and necessarily to be acknowledged as evidence of the imperceptible power that originates from God. If the invisible attribute of God’s eternal power is to be associated with the empirical realities of the creation and the manifestations of power in the course of human history, that attribute must necessarily be united with the invisible attribute of God’s deity as it is perceptible in the human self-awareness of creatureliness and finitude.<sup>15</sup>

Paul, therefore, includes God’s *theiotēs*, a word that is used only here in the New Testament and denotes God’s *divinity* or God’s *godness*. The truth of God’s godness should be perceptible in the countless experiences of vulnerability and finitude that human beings have in everyday existence,

13. As Dodd asserts, *Romans*, p. 26.

14. Barth, *Romans*, p. 36, maintains that ‘the power of God can be detected neither in the world of nature nor in the souls of men. It must not be confounded with any high, exalted force, known or knowable.’ ‘Being completely different, it is the crisis of all power, that by which all power is measured, and by which it is pronounced to be both something and—nothing, nothing and—something. It is that which sets all these powers in motion and fashions their eternal rest. It is the Primal Origin by which they are all dissolved, and the consummation by which they are all established.’ Barth, by his reversal of the Age of Enlightenment’s Subject–Object dualism, deactivating the human Subject’s possibility of knowing the Object, namely God, or the truth of God, and activating the Object, God, the One who cannot be known except through a self-revelation in the Scriptures, is victimized by the same dualism as those who accentuated the Subject over against the Object.

15. *1 En.* 2–5 offers a significant parallel of the empirical realities of the creation that reflect God’s order and God’s activity. *1 En.* 5.1 exhorts, ‘Examine and consider all these works (of creation) and reflect that the God who lives forever and ever has created all these works’ (*The Book of Enoch or I Enoch* [trans. with commentary and textual notes by Matthew Black; SVTP; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985], pp. 26–27).

especially in the face of the many forms of power that threaten and destroy human life. God's deity and God's power are chiasmatically linked in the daily events and activities of human life and history.<sup>16</sup> Psalm 8.3-6 expresses this diagonal relationship in human experience:<sup>17</sup>

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, what are human beings that you care for them? You have made them scarcely less than angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and you placed all things under their feet.<sup>18</sup>

The acknowledgment of God's deity in and through the self-awareness of human vulnerability may actualize mutual trust in community, a readiness to share good things and a willingness to risk danger on behalf of others. In the Wisdom of Solomon the law is distinguished as a visible manifestation of God's *deity* (*theiotēs*), and, as the Israelites await their deliverance from Egypt, that law motivates them to agree to share all things, both good and bad:

The holy children of the good ones sacrificed in secret, and in harmony they decreed [by] the law of *deity* (*theiotētos*) that the saints have a share alike of their good things and of their dangers (Wis. 18.9).

Philo, like the Wisdom of Solomon, utilized the word *theiotētos* only once. In *Quod deterius potiori insidari solet* 86, he offers a Platonic interpretation of Gen. 2.7 in order to answer the issue of 'how the human being came to have a conception of the invisible God':

God breathed into the human being of his own *deity* (*theiotētos*) from above, and the invisible [deity] stamped on the invisible soul the mark of itself.

Apart from endowing the invisible soul with an innate knowledge of God, a perspective that Paul does not share, Philo connects the invisible attribute of God's deity to God's creation.<sup>19</sup> The human being's soul has been imprinted with God's *theiotēs*.

Clearly, these two invisible attributes of God's *power* and God's *godness* are interdependent. Paul does not separate them from each other. The invisible reality of God's *power*, as it is experienced in nature and culture, is to be

16. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 67, by not interpreting God's power and God's deity in conjunction, simply concludes, 'These things are revealed in creation, but in view of the fallen condition of human beings they do not help us much'.

17. In the Septuagint translation of Ps. 8, the verses that correspond to the Hebrew text are 8.4-7.

18. This is an inclusive-oriented translation of the Septuagint translation of Ps. 8.6-7.

19. There may be a second use of *theiotēs* in Philo's writings; it is a textual variant in *De opificio mundi* 172.



acknowledged concurrently with the invisible reality of God's *godness* in the human experience of finitude. It is in their interplay that they become visible to human beings and evoke either affirmation or negation. Paul employs a chiasmic structure that reverses the naturally expected human response to these visible manifestations of God's invisible attributes:



God's eternal *power* is acknowledged by giving thanks to God, for all power, whatever its forms or manifestations may be, originates from God. Consequently, whatever power human beings have or acquire is ultimately a gift of God, and therefore the only valid response is *giving thanks to God*, an act that establishes that power is not a personal possession that an individual can justifiably claim to have gained single-handedly. God's *godness*, God's very nature of being God, which is experienced in the consciousness of finitude in the face of power, is affirmed *by glorifying God*.<sup>20</sup>

Hellenistic Judaism downgraded this natural knowledge of God in its judgment of the Gentiles. But it did not presuppose that they were absolutely incapable of discerning the empirical realities of power and beauty as invisible attributes of God's power and deity.<sup>21</sup> According to Wis. 13.1-5,

For all human beings, *to whom the ignorance of God came (hois parēn theou agnōsia)*, are foolish by nature. And from the good things that are visible they did not have the power to see the One who is: neither paying attention to the works did they recognize the crafts-person. But they considered either fire or wind or swift air or the circle of the stars or rushing water or the luminaries of heaven to be gods that rule the world. Now if being delighted by the beauty of these things, they supposed these things to be gods, let them know how much more excellent than these is the absolute Ruler. For the Originator of beauty

20. It is noteworthy that God is affirmed as the source of power and glory in the doxology of the Lord's Prayer that appeared in the church's first catechism, *The Didache* 8.2, 'For yours is the power and the glory forever'.

21. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 154, concurs with Hans Bietenhard, 'Natürliche Gotteserkenntnis der Heiden? Eine Erwägung zu Röm 1', *ThZ* 12 (1956), pp. 275-88, that 'nowhere in Judaism was there an admission of a natural knowledge of God for Gentiles'.



created them. And if they are awed by their *power* and *operation*, let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the one who constructed them. For from the *greatness and beauty of created things* the Originator of them is correspondingly viewed.

The opening verse of Wisdom 13 characterizes all human beings as foolish by nature, 'to whom the ignorance of God came'. The implication is that this ignorance is not natural, either to Gentiles or to Jews. At some time in the past it emerged and human beings lapsed into the ignorance of God and became foolish. But prior to that fall, human beings, whether Jews or Gentiles, had the natural capacity to discern God's works in creation and in history.<sup>22</sup> That, of course, requires the primordial light of the first day of creation, the light that is disclosed by divine revelation. Wisdom 13.1-5 attempts to mitigate human accountability by attributing this ignorance of God to a trust in appearance, that is, to the empirical experience of the light of the fourth day of creation:

Yet all the same for them the blame is small, for perhaps they are led astray (while) searching and wanting to find God. For living among his works they search thoroughly and trust *appearance*, that the things seen are good (Wis. 13.6-7).

Finally, however, Wisdom, as 13.8-9 indicates, refuses to excuse those who are ignorant of God from the responsibility they bear for their evil deeds:

But again neither are they pardonable; for if they had the power to know so much that they are able to explore the world, how did they not find the absolute Ruler of these things more swiftly?

Unlike Wisdom's vacillating perspective on the culpability of human beings, Paul, who has characterized himself as a 'debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, to the wise and the foolish', does not oscillate between accusing and excusing them. Like their mythical ancestors, Adam and Eve, all human beings are divinely in-breathed souls and therefore have the natural capacity of discerning the truth of God on the basis of their interrelated experience of God's power in creation and God's godness in their own finitude. Knowing the truth of God, therefore, should induce them into knowing God.<sup>23</sup>

22. This perspective is supported by the *T. Naph.* 3.2-5. See also 2 *Bar.* 54.18-19; Philo, *Vita Mosis* 1.212-13.

23. It is incorrect to conclude, as Günther Bornkamm does in 'The Revelation of God's Wrath: Romans 1-3', in *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 59, 'Therefore, Rom. 1.18ff. is not an apologetic and pedagogical discussion, because the intention of the Apostle is not to infer God's being from the world, but to uncover the being of the world from God's revelation; not to prove the revelation of God

But because the Gentiles fail to glorify God and neglect to give thanks, they forfeit the truth of God and subject themselves to the wrath of God's judgment. No exoneration is possible. As Paul certifies, they are without excuse! Moreover, because their minds and hearts are affected by their loss of the truth of God, they lapse into foolish and futile reasonings and fall victim to illusion. Their hearts, that aspect of the self that engages in planning, willing and intending, become dark and senseless.<sup>24</sup> In their un-illuminated condition they are detached from the paradoxical reality of God's power and God's deity, and they fall into idolatry. 'They exchange the glory of the immortal God for images of a mortal human being and birds and four-footed beasts and reptiles'.<sup>25</sup>

Idolatry and injustice generate *God's wrath from heaven* by originating consequences in the here-and-now of everyday life from which human beings cannot extricate themselves. As Paul states three times in 1.24, 26 and 28, 'For this reason God handed them over'.<sup>26</sup> God's wrath 'gives sinners up to the consequences of their self-destructive actions'.<sup>27</sup> The worshipers of idols, fated by the consequences of their idolatry, become 'inwardly empty, devoid of substance and power'.<sup>28</sup> Paul's prosecution is comparable to the indictment of 2 Bar. 54.18-19:

For his works have not taught you, nor has the artful work of his creation which has existed always persuaded you. Adam is, therefore, not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam.<sup>29</sup>

*before the judgment of the world, but to unveil the judgment of God over the world revealed in the law*' (italics his). Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 58, follows Bornkamm in this judgment, but it is the reverse of the truth that Paul is communicating in 1.19-21.

24. On the anthropology of the 'heart', see Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, pp. 40-58.

25. Rom. 1.23. The belief in the apotheosis of Julius Caesar and Augustus was so powerful that a certain constellation, imagined as the heavenly throne of the cosmic ruler, was named *Caesaris thronus*. Signs such as comets and flames of fire promoted their divinity and were reinforced by minted coins circulated throughout the empire and by such literature as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Virgil's *Eclogue IV*. See Richard Oster, 'Numismatic Windows into the Social World of Early Christianity: A Methodological Inquiry', *JBL* 101 (1982), pp. 195-223 (209 n. 91).

26. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 62, cites LXX Ps. 77(78).29 and LXX Ps. 105(106).15 as parallels. Yet, in spite of a certain similarity, they express manifestations of God's wrath in the form of natural phenomena, such as plagues and diseases. Paul's understanding of God's wrath, as indicated, manifests itself in terms of cause and effect cycles that fate human beings to ruination of one kind or another.

27. Hamerton-Kelly, 'Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire', p. 152.

28. Schlatter, *Romans*, p. 39.

29. 2 *Baruch*, in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (2 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), I, p. 640.

'Each of us has become our own Adam.' The violations of the Two Tables of Commandments produce the divine penalty of being handed over to the consequences of idolatry and injustice, and the progression of the moral decay in society is the beginning of the human nemesis that culminates in the death of living and the death of dying. Paul characterizes this downward spiral in v. 24:

Therefore God handed them over in the desires of their hearts *unto (eis)* uncleanness in order to dishonor their bodies among them; who exchange the truth of God with the lie and reverence and worship the creature instead of the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen

The self-disclosing truth of God's being as it is manifested in God's eternal power and God's godness is traded in for the falsehoods that human beings fabricate out of their 'will to power'. By substituting idols in place of 'the glory of the immortal God' and thereby replacing the truth with the lie, they fall into the worship and service of the creation instead of the Creator. God, therefore, delivers them up to the consequences of their idolatry; and their idolatry, as the lie of their historical existence, seduces them into the moral depravity of sinning against their physical selves. They engage in *unclean activities (akatharsian)*. Their rebellion against the truth of God disposes them to the ruination of their physical lives by engaging in sexual immorality and the idolatrous religious impurity of temple prostitution.<sup>30</sup> Paul contradicts this willful distortion of idolizing and absolutizing the physical realities of God's creation by bursting into a doxology that professes God's eternal praise-worthiness as the Creator, and he affirms it with his own 'Amen'

The downward spiral of the fall continues, because, as Paul determines, the consequences of idolatry proliferate, 'On account of this God handed them over unto passions of dishonor...' Human beings, who idolize the physical realities of God's creation and, therefore, without attendant restraints engage in the degrading violation of their bodies, lapse into further disgraceful passions. Paul continues to echo the association between idolatry and sexual eroticism that is conveyed by the Wis. 14.12:

For the conception of idols is the beginning of fornication, and their invention is the corruption of life.

His focus in vv. 26-27 is on the homoeroticism of the Mediterranean world that expressed itself in the form of female and male homosexuality:

30. See Paul's admonitions against sexual immorality and prostitution in 1 Cor. 6.12-19 and 10.7-8.

For their women exchanged their natural relations for one unnatural. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural relations of the female, were consumed by their desire for each other, men producing shame with men and receiving among themselves the necessary penalty for their error.

Very little is known about female homosexuality in Mediterranean antiquity.<sup>31</sup> The Old Testament never mentions it. Plato refers to it only once in his dialog, *The Laws* (636c), and acknowledges it to be *para physin* (against nature):

And whether one makes the observation in earnest or in jest, one certainly should not fail to observe that when male unites with female for procreation the pleasure experienced is held to be *according to nature* (*kata physin*), but *contrary to nature* (*para physin*) when male mates with male or female with female, and that those first guilty of such enormities were impelled by their slavery to pleasure.

According to Plutarch's 'Life of Lycurgus', pederasty was 'so approved among them [the people of Sparta] that even the maidens found lovers in good and noble women'.<sup>32</sup> Except for the poetry of Sappho in which strong and erotic responses to the beauty of another woman is expressed, the few references to female homosexuality are found in the writings of male authors who acknowledge its existence, but for whom it may have been 'a reflex of male anxiety'.<sup>33</sup>

In Plato's *Symposium*, an intoxicated Aristophanes narrates a myth to explain the origin of three kinds of human beings: heterosexuals, homosexual females, and homosexual males. Originally, each of the three types had four arms and four legs, four ears, two sets of genitals, only one head but with two faces, each looking in the opposite direction.<sup>34</sup> They were powerful creatures and conspired against the gods. Zeus refused to destroy them, but, to limit their power, he sliced them in two, and, with the assistance of Apollo, pulled their skin over the exposed flesh and 'tied up in the middle of the belly, so making what we know as the navel'. Each half, as a result of

31. See K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978 [updated with a new postscript, 1989]), especially the chapter titled 'Women and Homosexuality' (pp. 171-84). Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 140-44. See also James Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love: A Bold New Exploration of the Ancient World* (New York: Random House, 2007), pp. 156, 503-508.

32. Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 18.4. Also Scroggs, *New Testament and Homosexuality*, p. 142.

33. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, pp. 172-73, says this of the 'silence of comedy' on female homosexuality.

34. Plato, *Symposium* 189 D-E.

this separation, would search for its counterpart, and from the moment of reunion would concentrate all its energies on enfolding the other in a perpetual embrace in an effort to recover original wholeness. The androgynous would be heterosexual, the male half uniting with the female half. The female halves would pursue their female counterparts, and the male halves would pursue their male counterparts. The sliced male halves, however, would not engage in same-sex unions with age-matched counterparts, but with boys in a pederastic relationship.<sup>35</sup>

The only model of male homosexuality appears to have been pederasty. Robin Scroggs underlines this by saying, 'I know of no suggestions in the texts that homosexual relationships existed between same-age adults'.<sup>36</sup> James Boswell similarly observes,<sup>37</sup>

In fourth-century Athens, they [same-sex relationships] were similar to heterosexual marriage in that an age difference of nearly a generation was the cultural ideal for both homosexual and heterosexual relationships, in that entering into such a relationship constituted a sort of 'coming out' as a young adult (like the bride's entering adult society through marriage); and in that the older person played the role of educator, protector, comparable to that of the husband in a heterosexual marriage.

In the Greek social construction of reality, pederasty was determined by the dynamics of hierarchically oriented power and the worship of the creation that expressed itself in the aesthetic ideal of the hermaphrodite (the male-female in one body).<sup>38</sup> The ideology of power relationships in honor-shame culture would prevent same-age men from placing themselves under

35. Plato, *Symposium* 191 E. See also Herman C. Waetjen, 'Same-Sex Sexual Relations in Antiquity', in Robert L. Brawley (ed.), *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), pp. 103-16 (107-109).

36. Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, pp. 35 and 130-39.

37. James Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (New York: Villard Books, 1994), p. 56 (n. 10). Boswell notes that Aristotle, in *Politics* 7.16, says, 'that men should marry at thirty-seven and women at eighteen. Plato recommends that men not marry till twenty-five to thirty' (*The Laws* 6.773c). See also Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love*, pp. 76-115; and Andrew Lear and Eva Cantarella, *Images of Ancient Greek Pederasty: Boys Were their Gods* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

38. Scroggs, *New Testament and Homosexuality*, p. 27, 'Thus increasingly the ideal of youthful male beauty was becoming modeled after that of the young female form... [T]he adult male was most attracted to a male youth when the youth was in bodily form most like that of a female. As one third century CE writer said, "For even boys are handsome ... only so long as they look like a woman". Here is the startling irony; the all-male club excluded women only to bring them back as sexual partners in the disguise of the beautiful male youth.' See also the entire chapter entitled, 'The Cultural Background: A Male Society with an Ideal of Male Beauty'.

the sexual dominance of each other. It is noteworthy in this respect that in 1 Cor. 7.4 Paul promotes a horizontally oriented egalitarian relationship between wives and husbands: 'The wife does not exercise authority over her own body but the husband; and likewise the husband does not exercise authority over his own body but the wife'.

In 1 Cor. 6.13-14 Paul included same-sex relationships among men in a list of unethical pursuits, addictions and violent actions that cannot 'inherit the reign of God':

Or do you not know that unjust [human beings] will not inherit the reign of God. Don't be deceived! Neither prostitutes, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *malakoi*, nor *arsenokoitai*, nor thieves, nor greedy people, nor drunkards, nor abusive persons, nor swindlers will inherit the reign of God.

The Greek word, *malakoi*, is an adjective meaning 'soft', and sometimes bears the more metaphorical sense of 'effeminate'. Because it stands next to the word *arsenokoitai* (those who have intercourse with males), it conveys a connection with homosexuality. According to Scroggs, '*malakoi* was *not* a technical term referring to pederasty, but could refer to a quality of life which *some* people associated with pederastic practices'.<sup>39</sup> In this context, in all likelihood, it designates the younger person who was 'the passive partner (at least normally) and was called *the beloved*, the *eromenos*'. *Arsenokoitai*, a word that appears here for the first time in the history of the Greek language, may have been created by Paul on the basis of its two component parts, *arsen* (male) and *koitē* (bed), which stand side by side in the Septuagint text of Lev. 20.13.<sup>40</sup> It refers to the older adult, the *erastēs*, or *lover*, who was the active partner who initiated the relationship and achieved orgasm by using the boy's body.<sup>41</sup>

In this context Paul does not employ these terms, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*, that combine to refer to pederasty. Whether consistency would require that this is the kind of homosexuality that he is intimating in 1.27 is questionable.<sup>42</sup>

39. Scroggs, *New Testament and Homosexuality*, p. 63. See also the *T. Levi* 17.11 where the Greek word for pederasty is used, namely *paidopphthoroi* (seducer of boys).

40. See also LXX Lev. 18.22 where both words also occur, but not side by side. *Arsenokoitai* also occurs in 1 Tim. 1.10.

41. Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, p. 32.

42. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 65, says, '...but Paul's indictment seems to include all kinds of homosexual practice, female as well as male, and was not directed against one kind of homosexual practice in distinction from another'. Dunn refers to 1 Cor. 6.9, along with other New Testament texts, but offers no analysis of it. See also his comments on I, p. 74. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 69, emphasizes Paul's belief in the natural order of things, and limits his comments to homosexuality and lesbianism in general without a reference to

Paul characterizes the physical desire of males who engage in this form of homosexuality by using the extreme term *orexis* (craving), a word that other Mediterranean writers employed to refer to sexual lust that sometimes expressed itself violently.<sup>43</sup> It occurs only here in the New Testament. Domination and exploitation usually characterized the nature of that relationship, and that is undoubtedly the reason why these two types of human beings, according to 1 Cor. 6.9, will not inherit God's reign.<sup>44</sup> The inevitable *penalty* (*antimisthian*) that those who engage in such practices receive in and among themselves is not stipulated, but it may be construed as the consequence of reciprocal dehumanization and the resulting psychological damage that precludes growth into complete and wholesome human beings.<sup>45</sup>

Once again in v. 28, and indeed for the third time, Paul returns to the penalty of God's wrath: 'Even as they did not *see fit* (*edokimasan*) to acknowledge God, God handed them over to an *unfit* (*adokimon*) mind'. The consequence of refusing to affirm the truth of God produces additional consequences. Paul utilizes a word-play to relate the charge, 'they did not *see fit* to acknowledge God', to the effectual consequence of an *unfit* or worthless consciousness. No longer able to discern what is true, good, and beautiful for a wholesome and fulfilling life, they continue their descent into living death, a condition that destroys their humanity and consequently

the pederasty of 1 Cor. 6.9-10 and its implications for 1.26-27. Jesus' identification of three kinds of eunuchs in Mt. 19.10-12 raises the question whether homosexuality or gayness in antiquity should not be limited to pederasty.

43. See Josephus, *Ant.* 7.169.

44. David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 30. 'Sexual activity', moreover, is thematized as domination: the relation between the 'active' and 'passive' sexual partner is thought of as the same kind of relation as that obtaining between social superior and social inferior. The title of Halperin's book is based on the first appearance of the word 'homosexuality' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1892; see *One Hundred Years*, p. 15. See also Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, pp. 100-109; and Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

45. L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and their Implications for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 115-16, interprets the two key words of v. 27: *planē* (error) as the *idolatry* into which the Gentiles had lapsed, and *antimisthia* (recompense/penalty) 'as the uncleanness of Gentile culture'. The *error*, he maintains, is attributable to the Gentiles 'because the progenitors of the Gentiles forsook the true God to worship idols'. The recompense he attributes to God who 'visited on them and on their progeny a characteristic kind of uncleanness, namely the desire for and practice of homosexual relations'. His view, however, is skewed by his interpretation of Paul's threefold use of the clause, 'Wherefore God handed them over'. Paul is not attributing Gentile homosexuality as a cultural phenomenon to God's punishment.



poisons their relationships to others in society.<sup>46</sup> They revel in every kind of wrongdoing, wickedness, greed, and malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and mean-spiritedness. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters. They are insolent and arrogant; they are boasters, contrivers of evil things, disobedient to parents, void of understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. Moreover, those who engage in such conduct know ‘*the requirement of God (to dikaiōma theou)*’ that those who do such things are worthy of death not only do them but approve those who do them’.<sup>47</sup> The result is a prevailing state of living death in society in which the divinely willed humanness of all its participants is gradually extinguished.

### 2.1-16. *Indicting the Moralists*

Paul’s analysis of the human condition is not yet complete. After delineating the downward spiraling vortex into living death that originates from the idolatry and injustice of human beings, he dramatically assumes the role of a prosecuting attorney in order to confront those who would deny their involvement in the general condition of infected humanity. He shifts from the third person plural to the second person singular and, by utilizing the same inferential conjunction he employed in 1.24, he indicts these imagined interlocutors individually by ironically linking them to those who also are without excuse, namely, those who, in the face of their own finitude, do not acknowledge God’s *godness* and who, in view of their experience or exercise of *power* do not give thanks to God as its ultimate source.

The inferential conjunction of 2.1, *wherefore* or *for that reason (dio)*, may refer back to the general condition of humanity that has been characterized in 1.18-32: ‘Wherefore you are without excuse, O human being!’ But who is this individual who is being addressed rhetorically? Paul proceeds to identify him or her as *everyone who judges (pas ho krinōn)*. In their individuality they may be the moralists, perhaps ethicists and philosophers who, from the perspective of their moral code, reprove the masses with the same charges that Paul has enunciated in 1.29-31.<sup>48</sup> Yet in their judgment of others they

46. Dodd, *Romans*, pp. 27-28, postulates that Paul is following the popular moralists of his time by adopting the two classes of vices: the sensual in vv. 24-27 and the anti-social in vv. 29-31.

47. See Hamerton-Kelly’s analysis of 1.18–3.20, ‘Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire: Paul’s Interpretation of Adam’s Sin in the Letter to the Romans’, pp. 41-47.

48. Contrary to Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 73; Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 52-53; Cranfield, *Romans*, pp. 137-38; Bornkamm, ‘The Revelation of God’s Wrath’, p. 59; Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, p. 109; Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 78, 90; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 38, who identify the interlocutor of 2.1-16 as a Jew and therefore produce a mis-directed interpretation of 2.1-16. Schlatter, *Romans*, p. 48, ascribes the identity to both



condemn themselves, because, as he alleges, 'For you, the one who judges, do the same things'. Consequently, they also are to be included among those whom they condemn for their immoral conduct.

Paul's indictment, however, is not simply a prejudice of his own. To support his charge, Paul unexpectedly draws in the presupposed affirmation of his addressees by utilizing the verb *oidamen* in the first person plural in order to accentuate the objectivity of his charge: 'Now *we know* that God's judicial verdict on those who do such things is in accordance with the truth'. Accordingly, this imagined interlocutor must be confronted with the impossibility of evading God's judgment. There will be no escape! And there are no excuses! Neither the insensitivity to God's gracious endurance nor ignorance of the objective of God's benevolence will be justifiable before the divine tribunal. Repentance is the appropriate response in this time of God's forbearance. Unless it is fulfilled, the moralists, who are represented by Paul's imagined interlocutor, will be condemned like those whom they judge.<sup>49</sup> They too, as vv. 3-4 enunciate, will be handed over to the consequences of their deeds to suffer their 'self-inflicted harm':

Now do you imagine, O human being, who judges those who do such things and does them, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or are you disdainful of the wealth of his goodness and tolerance and long-suffering, not discerning that the benevolence of God leads you into repentance?

If there is no forthcoming repentance, there are further consequences in the future. The presumption of denying their own involvement in wrongdoing and their attendant refusal to repent will subject them to the condemnation of God's final judgment:

According to your rigidity and unrepentant heart you are storing up for yourself *wrath* on *the day of wrath* and [the day] of the disclosure of the righteous judgment of God who will render to each according to his [or her] *works* (2.5-6).

The wrath of God, handing over the perpetrators of idolatry and injustice to the consequences of their deeds, continues into the future. But the disclosure of God's salvation in and through the gospel establishes the present as the time of repentance. It is the age of God's mercy and forbearance. The refusal to repent, therefore, will have fearful consequences 'on the day of wrath' at the tribunal of God's final judgment. Paul's focus here is not the devastating cycles of cause and effect in which human beings continue to be

Jews and Gentiles. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 197, contends for 'Paul's rhetorical goal of creating an argument that provides the premises for an ethic of mutual tolerance between the competitive house and tenement churches in Rome'. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 73-84, identifies the addressee of 2.1-16 as a 'judgmental Gentile hypocrite'.

49. Wis. 11.23 states: '...and you overlook people's sins, so that they may repent'.

fated to experience living death as the result of their own misdeeds. The conceptualization of God's wrath that he articulated in 1.18-32 appears to correspond to the perspective of the Wisdom tradition of Hellenistic Judaism already cited above.<sup>50</sup> In this context, however, he is drawing upon the eschatology of intertestamental apocalypticism, specifically its expectation of God's judgment at the culmination of history.<sup>51</sup> *First Enoch* 103.3-8, for example, warns those who are already 'dead in the wealth of their sins' of the torment that awaits them in the hellfire of Sheol:

Woe unto you sinners who are dead! When you are dead in the wealth of your sins, those who are like you will say of you, 'Happy are you sinners! They have seen all their days. They have died now in prosperity and wealth. They have not experienced struggle or battle in their lifetime. They have died in glory, and there was no judgment in their lifetime. You yourselves know that they will bring your souls down to Sheol; and they shall experience evil and great tribulation—in darkness, nets and burning flame. Your souls shall enter into the great judgment; it shall be a great judgment in all the generations of the world. Woe unto you, for there is no peace for you.'<sup>52</sup>

'Wrath in the day of wrath' corresponds to the courtroom of God's justice at which the saints of God's New Humanity, as God's representatives, will pass judgment on those who have ignored God's benevolence and have persisted in doing evil.<sup>53</sup>

*Works* are the criterion of God's judgment at the end of history, according to Paul's appropriation of LXX Ps. 61.13 (62.12): 'For you repay to each according to his/her work'. The works of the moralist, like the works of all human beings, will determine their final destiny. It is at this point that Paul diverges from his indictment of the moralist into a rather lengthy parenthetical digression that, on the basis of ethical conduct, discriminates between those who persist in good works and those who out of selfish ambition commit themselves to injustice. It is essentially the continuity between v. 6, in which he cites works as the criterion of God's judgment on the day of wrath, and v. 16, in which he enunciates that the gospel he proclaims includes both God's final judgment and the arbitration of Jesus Christ:

50. As in Wis. 11.15-16: 'In return for their foolish and wicked thoughts, which led them astray to worship irrational serpents and worthless animals, you sent them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them, so that they might learn that one is punished by the very things by which one sins'.

51. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 91, does not make this differentiation. He incorrectly maintains a continuity between the wrath of 1.18 and the wrath of 2.5: 'This wrath is not to be sharply distinguished from the wrath of 1.18; it is rather the outworking of the same divine retribution'.

52. See also *1 En.* 102.1-3.

53. See *1 En.* 12-15 and 62-63; 69.27-29; 2 *Bar.* 72. Also 1 Cor. 6.2-3.

You store up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and [its] disclosure of the just judgment of God who will render to each according to his/her *works* (v. 6).

In the day when God judges the secret things of human beings according to my gospel through Jesus Christ' (v. 16).

In the parenthetical digression of vv. 7-15 Paul shifts from the second person singular back to the third person plural of his general analysis of the human condition in 1.18-32. Utilizing the criterion of *works* in an apocalyptic frame of mind, he contrasts the destiny of the two groupings of human beings in vv. 7-8:

On the one hand, to *those* seeking eternal life through perseverance in *good works*, glory and honor and immortality.

On the other hand, to *those* who out of *selfish ambition* (*eritheia*) and disobedience to the truth are committed to injustice, wrath and fury.

Engaging in the search for eternal life and simultaneously persisting in good works is a God-like pursuit because the two involvements are oriented toward actualizing possibility; on the one hand, the possibility of eternal life for those who are seeking it and, on the other hand, the possibility for those on whose behalf good works are done. For all good works have the character of enhancing the life of others. This God-like pursuit culminates in God's conferral of glory, honor and immortality. In contrast, those who disobey the truth and engage in *self-serving aspirations* (*eritheia*) that inevitably obstruct the realization of beneficent possibility in society, will suffer God's wrath and fury at the final judgment.<sup>54</sup>

Paul repeats his predetermination of the destiny of these two types of human beings in 2.7-10, but he inverts them and, more significantly, he voices his judgment more ambiguously so that the divine reckoning that each experiences appears already to begin in the present:

Affliction and anguish upon every *soul of a human being* (*psychēn anthrōpou*) who works evil, the Jew first and also the Greek.

But glory and honor and peace to everyone who does the *good work*, the Jew first and also the Greek.

Because the universal criterion of God's judgment is works, concrete deeds, Paul can subsequently declare, 'For there is no partiality with God'. Both Jews and Gentiles will be judged by the same divine standard, but the Jews will always have a divine priority, as Paul had enunciated in 1.16. They

54. Prior to its New Testament usage, the word *eritheia* signified activities of canvassing for public office, often involving activities of intrigue. See Aristotle, *Politics* 1302a-1303a. For New Testament usages, see 2 Cor. 12.20; Gal. 5.20; Phil. 1.17; 2.3 and Jas 3.14, 16.

are the recipients of God's promises and the Sinai covenant, and they, first and foremost, are confronted with the prospects of these alternative courses of action and the possibility of fulfilling God's will by doing good works.

The anthropological phrase of v. 9, 'soul of a human being' (*psychēn anthrōpou*), intimates the perspective that determines the pronouncement of v. 9, but certainly also v. 10, and, because of their similar content, vv. 7-8 as well. *Psychēn anthrōpou* (soul of a human being) is a fragment of the Septuagint translation of the creation story of Gen. 2.7. When God breathed the *breath of life* (*pnoēn zōēs*) into the face of Adam, *the human being became a living soul* (*egeneto ho anthrōpos eis psychēn zōsan*). To be a 'living soul' or a 'living self', according to Old Testament anthropology, is to be inclined toward the realities of possibility, freedom and infinitude in historical existence.<sup>55</sup> This disposition is dramatically expressed in the poetry of the Psalms:

My *psychē* is exceedingly agitated, and you, Lord, how long? Turn, Lord, deliver my *psychēn*. Save me because of your mercy! For there is no one remembering you in death (LXX 6.4-6).

In the manner the hart longs for the springs of water, so my *psychē* thirsts for the living God (LXX 41[42].1-2).

Will my *psychē* not be subject to God? For alongside of him is my salvation; for he is also my God and my savior (LXX 61[62].1-2).

O God, my God, to you I am up early in the morning. My *psychē* thirsts for you; how many times for me my *psychē* [is] in desert land, desolate and waterless (LXX 62[63].2).

On account of your law I waited for you, Lord. My *psychē* waited for your word. My *psychē* hoped in the Lord from the watch of dawn until night; for the watch of dawn let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is mercy, and with him much redemption (LXX 129[130].5-7).

The human being as a *psychē*, a soul or a self, divinely in-breathed by the Creator, yearns to be related to God because God is the ultimate source of possibility, freedom and infinitude. The human being as a *psychē* waits for God's word because, like water and bread, God's word brings life. The human being as *psychē*, in-breathed by God, has the capacity, *at least potentially*, to act in accordance with God's law and therefore to fulfill God's justice. Paul can presuppose the actuality of human beings 'seeking eternal life and persisting in good works', but only as a potentiality that is based on the prioritizing of human identity as *psychēn anthrōpou* (soul of a human

55. See Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, pp. 10-25, who characterizes the *nephesh/psychē/soul* as 'the Needy Human Being' who craves for the fullness of life.

being), as it is established in the creation myth of Genesis 2. It is on this basis only that Paul asserts in 2.13,

For not the hearers of law are just before God, but the doers of law will be justified.<sup>56</sup>

To be 'just before God' is to obey God's law and therefore to do God's justice. But it is only potentially that a human being can be justified by doing the works of the law and acting in accordance with God's justice.<sup>57</sup> The anthropological duality that is at the center of Paul's theology includes the contrast between 'soul of a human being' (*psychē anthrōpou*) and 'flesh' (*sarx*), and in 3.20 he will enunciate the other polarity of this binary opposition: 'Therefore out of works of the law no *flesh* (*sarx*) will be justified before him'.

But here in this context he is analyzing the human condition in terms of the creation of the human being as a divinely in-breathed *living soul* (*psychē zōsa*). Since this is the origin that the Scriptures ascribe to all humanity, whether Jew or Gentile, it also substantiates that there is 'no partiality with God', in God's disposition toward humanity. The Jews, although privileged by their divine election, are no less exempt from God's judgment than the Gentiles. The standard is good works, works of piety and justice. Consequently, if the precepts of the law are not fulfilled, justification will be displaced by God's wrath:

For as many as sin without law will perish without law; and as many as sin in/by law will be judged by law.

Universally, therefore, whether 'without law' or 'in law', those who sin will suffer God's wrath in the future as well as in the present.

56. Most of the time Paul does not place the definite article *ho* before the word *nomos* (law), and therefore it is difficult to determine whether he is referring to the law of Sinai or law in general. It is in 7.1-12, when he is addressing the Jews among his addressees, that he consistently employs the definite article before *nomos*. Schlatter, *Romans*, p. 56, maintains, '*Nomos* is nothing other than *ho nomos*, just as *tōrah* is nothing other than *hatōrah*. For the rabbis there was no plural of *nomoi*, but only the one *nomos* by means of which God's universally applicable will separated good from evil.' The italics are Schlatter's. But Paul, in view of his deconstruction of law, appears to include all law, perhaps also in 2.13.

57. The possibility of not engaging in a close reading of the text, linked to consistency building, may prevent commentators from connecting the Gen. 2.7 formula that Paul employs in 2.9 with 2.13. Among them are: Schlatter, *Romans*, p. 57; Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 76-77; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 62; Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 154; Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 97; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 43; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 211-12; Witherington, *Romans*, p. 80. The contradiction between 2.13 and 3.20 is based on the anthropological difference between *psychē* (soul/self) and *sarx* (flesh). Kirk, *Romans*, p. 226, relates 2.13 to the final judgment, when 'the doers of the law will be justified'.

On what basis, however, is Paul justified in including the Gentiles under the divine criterion of good works when they were not the recipients of the law that Moses mediated at Sinai? Is it not unreasonable, indeed, unwarranted of God, to impose the same requirement on the Gentiles? To avoid ascribing any unjust standard of judgment to God, Paul, in vv. 14-15, maintains that ‘the work of the law’ is inscribed in the hearts of the Gentiles:

For when the Gentiles, not having [the] law, do by nature *the things of the law*, these not having [the] law are law to themselves, who show *the work of the law* written in their hearts, as their conscience (*syneidēsis*) bears witness and meanwhile as [their] reasonings accuse or excuse between each other.<sup>58</sup>

The Gentiles did not receive the Sinai law that presupposes God’s covenant with Israel. Yet they do have law codes that are intended to promote justice. The phrase ‘the things of the law [that they do by nature]’ must be construed as acts of justice, for ‘the work of the law’ is directed toward justice. Consequently, their acts of justice demonstrate that ‘the work of the law is written in their hearts’, and their hearts, as their willing selves, are motivated toward justice. In view of their origin at creation as ‘living souls’, they, like their ancestors Adam and Eve, have the potentiality to do the justice that the law requires and therefore to be justified.

Law, as it is directed toward the work of justice, presupposes the possibilities of obedience and transgression, and therefore, produces within a human being the differentiation between moral and immoral acts. Whichever may be done, the interaction of excusing and accusing occurs within the consciousness of an individual as the human faculty of conscience. *Syneidēsis*, the term that Paul employs to signify this moral capacity, appears to have developed into the meaning of ‘conscience’ under the influence of popular philosophy. ‘The law of nature’ is what is naturally right; what is contrary to nature is wrong. Conscience in rational human beings recognizes the

58. This is not to be confused with Jeremiah’s eschatological vision of the law written *on their hearts* (*epi kardias autōn*) in LXX Jer. 38(31).33 or the prophetic acknowledgment of God’s law in the hearts of God’s elect people in LXX Isa 51.7. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 100, nevertheless, draws the former into his discussion of this text, and, in spite of what Paul stated in 1.17, contends that “‘the law’ is still the measure of what God requires...” Evidently Dunn (I, p. 106) has not been aware of the contradiction between 2.13 and 3.20, and therefore maintains that v. 14 cannot be speaking of Gentiles in general ‘since that would imply a doctrine not just of natural law but of justification by living in accordance with the natural law—and what need then would there be for the gospel?’ Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 213-14, apparently ignoring the definite article following the word *ethnē* (Gentiles), concludes that Paul is ascribing the ‘doing by nature the things of the law’ to ‘some but not all Gentiles’; he subsequently identifies them as ‘converted Gentile Christians’.

immanent law of nature and judges actions accordingly.<sup>59</sup> *Syneidēsis* for Paul is 'a consciousness of oneself which can turn a critical eye on one's own conduct of life'.<sup>60</sup> Its occurrence in Rom. 9.1 and 13.5 and its eleven-fold use in 1 and 2 Corinthians establish it as a referent to the faculty of moral self-examination. Since the work of the law, namely, doing justice, is a natural process of conscience that takes place within every human being, Paul can justifiably maintain that non-Jews 'do by nature the things of the law', engaging in doing justice, and therefore can infer, 'they are law to themselves'. Philo of Alexandria, as a representative of Hellenistic Judaism, has a similar perspective. He differentiates human beings from animals on the basis of the voluntary movement of the soul (*psychē*) that may or may not honor its Liberator.<sup>61</sup>

He [God] made him free and unfettered to employ his powers of action with voluntary and deliberate choice for this purpose, so that, knowing both good and evil and beautiful things and shameful things and receiving a conception with respect to just and unjust things, and what belongs to virtue and what to wickedness, he might choose the better things and flee the opposite things.<sup>62</sup>

More explicitly, he distinguishes Abraham for obeying God's law before the law was given:

Moses adds this crowning saying, 'that this man did the divine law and the divine commands'. He did them, not taught by written words, but unwritten nature gave him the zeal to follow where wholesome and untainted impulse led him. And when they have God's promises before them, what should human beings do but trust in them most firmly? Such was the life of the first, the founder of the nation, one who obeyed the law, some will say, but rather, as our discourse has shown, *himself a law and an unwritten statute*.<sup>63</sup>

59. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 36, refers to the Stoic identification of the inner law as 'the law of nature'. What is natural is right; what is contrary to nature is wrong. He goes on to observe, 'A man's "conscience"—that is, his consciousness of himself as a rational and moral being—recognizes the immanent law of nature and judges his own actions by its standard. The Stoics invented the term "conscience", and Paul is speaking exactly like a Stoic when he says, "Their conscience bears witness, as their moral convictions accuse or it may be defend them"'. See Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 58-60 and 67-69, who relates *syneidēsis* to honor/shame culture and accordingly claims that 'Conscience then refers to a person's sensitive awareness to his public ego-image with the purpose of striving to align his own personal behavior and self-assessment with that publicly perceived ego-image'. See also Christian Maurer, '*syneidēsis*', in *TWNT*, VII, pp. 900-17; *TDNT*, VII, pp. 902-907.

60. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 65.

61. Philo, *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* 48.

62. Philo, *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* 49.

63. Philo, *De Abrahamo* 275-76. The italics are mine. See also Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.8, 31 (1128a), 'The refined and well-bred man, therefore, will be as we have described, being as it were a law to himself'. Cited by Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 63.



Verse 16 ends this rhetorical exchange with an imagined Gentile interlocutor and at the same time closes the parenthetical digression of vv. 7-15. Although in thought it returns to the pivotal forewarning of 'wrath on the day of wrath' in v. 6, it is formulated as though it is a continuation of v. 15 without any disruptive adverbial conjunctions. This uninterrupted movement of thought is disconcerting because there seems to be no immediate connection between vv. 15-16:

...who show *the work of the law* written in their hearts, as their moral consciousness provides supporting evidence and [their] reasonings accuse or excuse each other... (v. 15).

...in the day when God judges the secrets of the human beings according to my gospel through Christ Jesus (v. 16).

The eschatological perspective of v. 16 deters it from serving as a natural conclusion of vv. 14-15. Yet vv. 14-15 function as a digression within the larger digression of vv. 7-15 in as far as it is necessary to establish the truth of the human potentiality to do the works of the law and therefore to be declared righteous by God. For if justification by works is potentially possible, Paul must account for the possibility that Gentiles, who have not received the law, can nevertheless be justified by works of law. In its own distinctive un interrupting mode of pronouncement, therefore, v. 16 is a fitting conclusion to the entire complex of Paul's prosecution of God's indictment toward those who would deny their involvement in the general condition of infected humanity.<sup>64</sup> However, in order to avoid any inevitable sense of confidence that might arise from a simplistic fulfillment of God's will by doing the works of the law, Paul supplements the criterion of works that he cited in v. 6 by including 'the secret things of human beings'. On the day of wrath, when God holds court at the culmination of history, God will also judge the motives behind the good works. This too belongs to the gospel that Paul is not ashamed of.

The prepositional phrase 'through Christ Jesus', which ends v. 16, seems ambiguous in as far as it is difficult to determine which previous word it modifies, the noun *euangelion* (gospel) or the verb *krinei* (he judges):

...according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

...in the day God judges through Christ Jesus.

What is 'through Christ Jesus'?<sup>65</sup> Is it the gospel? Or is it God's judgment? It should not be construed as a modifier of Paul's gospel; that is, it

64. Also Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 67.

65. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 68, considers the prepositional phrase to be 'a liturgical conclusion to the section'.



does not simply circumscribe Paul's gospel as 'through Christ Jesus'. It is the culmination of v. 16 that, according to Paul's gospel, God will judge not only the 'works of the law', whether it is the works of the law which the Jews have received or whether it is the 'works of law inscribed in the hearts' of the Gentiles, but also will judge 'the secret things of human beings', and God will do it 'through Christ Jesus'. Thus far in Romans, Paul has employed the christological phrase 'Jesus Christ' four times in 1.4, 6, 7, and 8. But in 1.1 he used 'Christ Jesus' in his self-identification as 'a slave of Christ Jesus'. The christological formula 'Christ Jesus' serves as the apostle's designation of the Christ as God's Son who became incarnate in Jesus and who therefore represents the actuality of the New Human Being, the 'last Adam' of 1 Cor. 15.45. Accordingly, Paul also uses Christ Jesus as a corporate reality, particularly when it is preceded by the preposition 'in'. When God holds court at the end of history, God's judgment of 'the works of the law' and 'the secret things' of human hearts will be enacted 'through Christ Jesus', both the one, the Lord Jesus, and the many, the believers, who constitute his Body and participate in his lordship. That is an essential aspect of Paul's gospel.<sup>66</sup>

### 2.17-29. *Indicting the Jews*

Paul's rhetorical role as attorney for the prosecution is still incomplete. One more group of human beings remains to be charged; it is the ethnic group that lives by the law of the Sinai covenant and therefore, like the moralist of 2.1, may refuse to identify itself with the general condition of humanity. As the culmination of his indictment, Paul must now accuse his own people, the Jews. Yet, as in 2.1, he poses a representative Jew as an imagined interlocutor. His characterization of this individual may be a teacher or even a self-portrait of his own Jewish perspective before his transformation into an apostle of Jesus Christ.<sup>67</sup> In 2.17-18 he distinguishes this representative Jew on the basis of his divine heritage that can naturally arouse a sense of superiority and yet at the same time elicit a missionary vocation to function as God's light to the world. The Sinai law that Moses mediated to Israel is the source of his security, and it establishes his boast in God. It enables him to know the will of God, and the instruction in the law that he has received

66. According to 1 Cor. 6.2-3, 'Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that we are to judge angels?' Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 84-85; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 68; and Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 163, prefer to relate 'through Christ Jesus' to 'gospel'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 103, relates 'through Christ Jesus' to the verb *krinei* (he judges).

67. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 87-88, suggests 'a teacher', 'a very religious Jew' or even Paul himself.

qualifies him to know and approve the things that really matter in life. Philo segregated Israel from the rest of the world by citing Deut. 4.6-7, 'Behold this great nation is a wise and understanding people: for what kind of great nation is there, which has God drawing nigh to it, as the Lord our God in all things in which we call upon him?'<sup>68</sup> Josephus exalts the Jewish people in his diatribe, *Against Apion*, by professing, 'I would therefore boldly maintain that we have introduced to the rest of the world a very large number of very beautiful ideas. What greater beauty than inviolable piety? What higher justice than obedience to the laws?'<sup>69</sup>

It is this illustrious legacy, the embodiment of knowledge and truth in the law, as Paul qualifies it in v. 20b, that sanctions the vocational question he proceeds to address to his Jewish interlocutor: 'Have you persuaded yourself to be a guide to the blind, a light of those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children?' Evidently presupposing an affirmative response, he re-assumes the role of prosecuting attorney and begins his interrogation in vv. 21-22:

The one, then, teaching another, do you teach yourself? The one proclaiming, 'Do not steal', do you steal? The one saying, 'Do not commit adultery', do you commit adultery? The one abhorring imaged deities, do you commit sacrilege?

On the basis of a presupposed acknowledgment of guilt to each of these questions, Paul brings the charge against his representative Jew: 'You who boast in the law, you dishonor God by the transgression of the law'. Paul then supports this accusation with the prophetic text of Isa. 52.5, 'For the name of God is being slandered among the nations because of you'.

Both of the charges that Paul has brought against his imagined Jewish interlocutor have been silently affirmed or at least rhetorically established to be true. The law has not been observed and consequently God is dishonored. Instead of being a guide to the blind, a light in the darkness, an instructor of the foolish and a teacher of the immature, the representative Jew, in his missionary vocation to evangelize the Gentiles, has been a miscarriage. Paul's judgment corresponds to God's verdict in Ezek. 36.19-21:

I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries; in accordance with their conduct and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that it was said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land'. But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.

68. Philo, *De migratione Abrahami* 56 (LCL, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, p. 163).

69. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.293, cited by Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 70.

Although there is no explicit acknowledgment by Paul, the Jewish interlocutor is as much a sinner as the moralist of 2.1 and therefore is forced to recognize that he is a participant in, as well as a contributor to, the general spiritual and moral bankruptcy of humanity. If this is true of Paul's representative Jew, is there any characteristic of privileged membership in God's preeminent people that differentiates the Jew from the rest of humanity? Paul answers this question by confronting his Jewish interlocutor with his definition of authentic Jewishness in 2.25-27:

For, on the one hand, circumcision benefits if you do [the] law, but, on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of [the] law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If, therefore, uncircumcision observes the regulations of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? Will not the physically uncircumcised fulfilling the law judge you, a transgressor of the law, the one represented through the letter and circumcision?

The Jew, set apart from the rest of humanity by membership in the covenant community of God's elect people, is justified by faith/trust, even as Abraham was. Circumcision is the divine sign and seal of entry into that covenant. Genesis 17 bears witness to God distinguishing Abraham by establishing a covenant with him and requiring circumcision as 'a sign of the covenant between me and you'. It is natural, therefore, for Paul to draw circumcision into his dialog with this imagined Jew, for by entering into the Abrahamic covenant with God and being circumcised, he has already performed an act of obedience. Correspondingly, therefore, the fulfillment of the law is simply a continuation of that faith-directed act of submission. Paul's characterization of integrity in this context recalls the words of John the Baptizer in Mt. 3.8-9:

Make therefore fruit worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say within yourselves, 'We have Father Abraham'. For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise children to Abraham.

What, then, would be the status of the Jew who transgresses the law? Paul does not formulate that question, but he implies it in the rhetorical determination that he makes: *circumcision becomes uncircumcision*!<sup>70</sup> Consequently, if circumcision is vitiated by disobedience to the Sinai law, membership in the covenant, signified and sealed by circumcision, must also be revoked.

On the other hand, what is the status of the non-Jew who *observes/guards the regulations of the law* (*ta dikaiōmata tou nomou phyllassē*)?

70. Käsemann's claim, *Romans*, p. 72, that Paul is attacking Judaism at its basis in as far as the rite of circumcision is considered to be *ex opere operato* is entirely wrong. Paul is not attacking Judaism; he is stating his qualifications of authentic Jewish spirituality. See Sanders's critique of Käsemann, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 434-42.

Paul's determination of the relationship between circumcision and the fulfillment of the law enables him to draw the correspondingly antithetical conclusion. On the basis of obedience to the law, uncircumcision can be judged to be circumcision and therefore also membership in the covenant community of God's people.<sup>71</sup> The possibility of such an ironic reversal induces Paul to formulate a second question: 'Will not the one physically uncircumcised who fulfills the law judge you, a transgressor of the law, the one represented through the letter and circumcision?' It is, of course, the Jew who is represented by the letter of Scripture and the covenantal sign of circumcision, and ironically it is the outsider, the Gentile, who, by his obedience to the law, would judge the Jew. Here Paul appears to be anticipating his universalization of the Abrahamic covenant that he will develop in 4.1-22.

This antithetical possibility requires a more underlying determination of what or who is a true Jew, and, as a conclusion to his rhetorical prosecution of a representative Jew, Paul finally presents his definition of authentic Jewishness in vv. 28-29:

For the Jew is not [a Jew] visibly nor is circumcision that which is visible in the flesh, but the Jew [is a Jew] in secret, and circumcision [is] of the heart, in the spirit, not according to the letter, whose praise is not from human beings but from God.

Paul is not posing his own conception of the consummate Jew. His characterization of Jewish integrity is already prescribed in the Scriptures. Moses, in his farewell speech in LXX Deut. 10.16, charges the Israelites, 'Circumcise your hardened heart and do not stiffen your neck any longer'. Jeremiah issues the same command in 4.4, 'Be circumcised to your God and circumcise your heart'. Yet eventually he replaces this mandate with the eschatological vision of God establishing a new covenant with Israel, including the pledge, 'Giving I shall give my laws into their mind and I shall write them on their hearts'.<sup>72</sup>

In this context of Paul's prosecution of the representative Jew, it should not be forgotten that his presupposition for this rhetorical procedure is the anthropological premise that 'the soul of the human being' is divinely in-breathed, according to Gen. 2.7, and therefore has the potentiality to fulfill the law, as v. 13 has stipulated: 'For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law will be justified'. This, however, as already stated, is not his last word on this matter! Paul will conclude his analysis of

71. The phrase of the apodosis of v. 26, '*...guards the ordinances of the Law*', as Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 73, rightly contends, 'characterizes unequivocally the attitude of strict adherence to the law which demonstrates membership in the saved community'.

72. LXX Jer. 38.33 and MT Jer. 31.33.

the human condition in 3.20. But before he reaches that conclusion, he is compelled in 3.1-2 to declare the benefit of being Jewish ethnically and the corresponding value of circumcision.

More immediately, however, Paul ends his prosecution of the representative Jew in v. 29b by enunciating God's response to the Jew who is circumcised inwardly in his heart and not merely outwardly in the flesh. Since God will judge 'the secret things of human beings', according to 2.16, the authentic Jew is the Jew 'in secret', who does those things that God approves and therefore 'whose praise is not from human beings but from God'.

## 4

### THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING A JEW

#### 3.1-8. *Entrusted with the Word of God*

If authentic Jewishness is constituted on the basis of a circumcision of the heart and not a circumcision of the flesh, anyone, Jew and non-Jew, can qualify as a true Jew and correspondingly be regarded as a member of the elect people of God. If this is true, the critical question that naturally arises—and Paul does not hesitate to address it—is the basic issue: ‘What, then, is the advantage of the Jew?’ Although the word *Ioudaios* (Jew) is not qualified, Paul is referring to ethnic identity, and that is confirmed by his second question, ‘What is the benefit of circumcision?’ In other words, what value do Jewish ethnicity and the circumcision of the flesh have?<sup>1</sup>

‘Much in every respect’, he answers. ‘For *first*, on the one hand, they were entrusted with the oracles of God’. The oracles of God are, of course, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and because it serves as an interpretation of the law that is preserved in the Pentateuch, Paul’s use of the word *nomos* (law) generally represents Scripture in its entirety. But at this moment no other advantages are named. Other benefits will be identified later, but the addressees must wait until 9.4-5 to learn what they are. For this context, however, it is the most significant asset of Jewish ethnicity. It is *first*! In their Scriptures the Jews possess *the words of God* (*ta logia tou theou*). Indeed, it is by the words of God that they were summoned to enter into a covenant with God and submit to the law of Sinai. Consequently they have a certain knowledge that non-Jews do not have.

1. It is difficult to perceive ‘a narrative backcloth’, a storyline subtext, in Rom. 3–8, as Wright claims, ‘New Exodus, New Inheritance: The Narrative Substructure of Romans 3–8’, in S.K. Soderlund and N.T. Wright (eds.), *Romans and the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 26-35. See also Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, pp. 8-13. There are aspects of the story of Israel throughout Romans, particularly Abraham in 4.1-22 and Moses and the Exodus, Jeremiah and Hosea in 9.14–10.5, and they are drawn into particular pertinent contexts.

But in view of the reality that 2.28 implied, namely, that there are Jews who are not circumcised with respect to the heart, Paul is constrained in his self-appointed role as prosecutor to raise another critical question. The Greek text of 3.3, however, conveys two questions: ‘*For what? (ti gar)*. If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness cancel the faithfulness of God?’ It is difficult to validate the first of the two questions, because a two-worded question ending in the adverbial conjunction *gar* (for) is abnormal. It seems reasonable to assume that it is a later scribal addition. In all likelihood Paul raises a single question in v. 3 that arises naturally from his stipulation in v. 2 that the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. Verse 3, therefore, construed as one question, then asks, ‘What if some were unfaithful? Does their unfaithfulness cancel the faithfulness of God?’ Is the covenant still in force in spite of the defections that have continued through the preceding centuries? Has God’s faithfulness ceased as the result of Israel’s recurrent disloyalty? Utilizing the same diatribal response that he interjects in other contexts of his letter, he exclaims, ‘*By no means!*’ (*mē genoito*) and appropriates LXX Ps. 50.6b (51.4b) in order to defend God’s absolute integrity: ‘And let God be true, but every human being a liar, even as it is written: “so that you are justified in/by your words, and you prevail when you are being judged”’. It is God’s integrity that maintains the permanence of the Covenant, in spite of the history of Jewish defections.

If this is true, Jewish ethnicity and the solemnization of the circumcision of the flesh as the sign of participation in the Covenant, in spite of the defection that has persisted, might be defended by contending that the injustices that have been committed have in fact established God’s integrity and faithfulness.<sup>2</sup>

Now if our injustice confirms the justice of God, what shall we say? Is God, the one who inflicts wrath, unjust? I’m speaking humanly (Rom. 3.5).

That would be a possible conclusion that Paul’s imagined interlocutor might raise. But Paul negates this kind of logic with the same dynamic interjection, *mē genoito* (by no means). For if Israel’s defection and God’s continued faithfulness were the basis of the Covenant, there would be no effectual criterion by which God could conduct judgment. ‘For how will God judge the world’, Paul asks, if God established God’s faithfulness on the basis of Israel’s infidelity?

Paul continues this line of argumentation by posing the possibility that the end justifies the means. Does God have any legal ground to indict a human being for any offense, if it serves God’s vindication?

2. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 54-55, prefers to identify Paul’s casuistic efforts at finding a defense as ‘excuses’.

Now if the truth of God abounds unto his glory by my lying, why am *I* still judged as a sinner? (Rom. 3.7).

Is this an autobiographical reference? Paul's use of the first person singular 'I' in v. 7 insinuates a charge that may have been directed against him during his apostolic ministry in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> If human falseness distinguishes God's truthfulness and escalates God's glory, why, he asks, would he still be held accountable as a sinner? His subsequent shift from the first person singular into the first person plural 'we' in v. 8 draws his co-workers into this misrepresentation.<sup>4</sup> If he and they have been sanctioning the principle of 'the end justifies the means', they should indeed be reviled:

And should *we* not be slandered, even as some say [that] *we* are saying, 'Let us do evil things so that good things come' (Rom. 3.8).

But there is no basis for the charge, and those who make it are dismissed with the censure, 'Whose judgment is just'. The justification in Christ that his apostleship promotes does not ignore or discount offenses and transgressions of the law. Paul acknowledged that in Gal. 2.17 when he raised the rhetorical question, 'Now if seeking to be justified in Christ, we are still found [to be] sinners, is Christ consequently an agent of *sin (hamartia)*?' Utilizing his typical interjection, he responded, 'By no means!' Yet his apprehension about this slander and its consequences will constrain him to return to this issue in 6.1, 'Shall we persist in *sin (hamartia)* so that grace may become more abundant?' His negative response to this rhetorical question (*mē genoito*) will enable him to unfold the aporetic reality of being just and becoming just that underlies participation in the New Humanity of the Body of Christ.

### 3.9-20. Paul's Summation in the Role of Prosecuting Attorney

But more immediately after analyzing the benefits of circumcision and Jewish identity, Paul, in his self-appointed role as prosecuting attorney, acknowledges that the Jews, in spite of being entrusted with the oracles of God, have no final advantage. Their investment with the responsibility of God's Word has disclosed disbelief and failure. Even casuistic efforts to

3. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 84, 'There can be little doubt that we have here objections actually raised against Paul'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 142, on the other hand, has concluded that Paul is speaking autobiographically. He is indicting himself, 'For he himself is personally involved on both sides of the problem—himself a sinner, himself already a recipient of God's saving righteousness'. Dunn, however, is already reading justification by faith into this text, an advanced indication of his forthcoming interpretation of ch. 5.

4. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 251, identifies the first person plural 'we' of v. 8 as the 'Roman audience alongside himself [Paul] as the previous target of abuse'.



establish some advantage of Jewish identity, such as Paul has attempted in 3.5-8, have failed. 'What then?' he asks, 'Do we *have* anything *before us* for protection (*proechometha*)?'<sup>5</sup> Or, as *proechometha* may also be translated, 'Do we have an advantage for ourselves?' In view of Paul's indictment of the Jews, the verb *proechometha*, which can only refer to himself and his fellow Jews, as the first person plural 'we' indicates, must be construed as a present middle rather than a present passive indicative.<sup>6</sup> The reflexive character of the middle voice is necessary to formulate the question: Is there any defense possible that would exonerate them as God's elect people? Can they, Paul and his fellow Jews, claim any exemption *for themselves* in their defection from the Covenant and their infidelity to the oracles of God? Paul's answer is an unqualified '*Not at all!*'

At the same time, the irony of Jewish distinctiveness must not be forfeited. They, unlike the Gentiles, received the 'words of God'. Moreover, as Paul will add in 9.4-5, 'They are Israelites to whom belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, the patriarchs, and from them the Christ, according to the flesh'. On the one hand, therefore, Paul can claim a pre-eminence for his people, the Jews. At the same, time, however, they have no final advantage. Like the Gentiles, they are guilty of impiety and injustice. They have been unfaithful to the Sinai Covenant and disobedient to its laws.<sup>7</sup>

Without any further considerations, including an attentiveness to the question of the status of the Gentiles before God, Paul proceeds to make his culminating indictment: 'For *we already reached the charge* (*proētiastametha*) [that] both Jews and Greeks all are under *hamartia* (the condition of

5. The present middle indicative, *proechometha*, is almost certainly the original form of the verb that Paul employed, and it is supported by the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, as well as the majority of the later authorities. See also Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London/New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 507. On the translation of the verb *proechometha* as 'hold something before oneself for protection', see Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 869.

6. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 97-98; Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 85-86; Jewett, *Romans*, p. 257, construe *proechometha* as a verb in the passive voice, 'Are we in a worse position than they [the Gentiles]?' Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 146-47, seems to follow N.A. Dahl in construing the verb as a 'genuine middle'. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), pp. 45-46, concludes, 'A final resolution appears impossible'.

7. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 146-47, correctly stresses Paul's effort 'to expose the falseness of the typical Jewish presumption of distinctiveness so far as righteousness/unrighteousness is concerned'. But his rejection of the relationship between 3.1 and 3.9 and the implied Jewish identity of the first person plural 'we' of the verb *proechometha* results in the loss of the paradoxical character of Jewish identity.

infection)'.<sup>8</sup> No defense is possible in the light of the utterly fallen condition of humanity that has emerged in 1.18–2.24. No defense is possible because *hamartia* is the power of the infection that generates idolatry and injustice. Consequently, he had already concluded that the two groups that are representative of all humanity, Jews and Greeks, are infected with 'the sickness unto death', the infection of *hamartia*. This is the first of his 45 uses of *hamartia* in the singular number in Romans, and all of its occurrences indicate that he has employed it deliberately in order to refer to the condition that originates and underlies offenses and transgressions. To interpret its use in Romans as 'missing the mark', a definition that has dominated the interpretation of the word in the past, misconstrues its aporetic character by implying some kind of individualistic behavior that never attains to God's standard of perfection. As Paul will introduce in 5.12, *hē hamartia* (the infection) signifies the human condition that is transmitted from generation to generation. It corresponds to the Hebrew proverb of Jer. 31.29 and Ezek. 18.2, '...the fathers and mothers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge'. It is not a genetic or biological transmission originated by Adam and Eve, as Augustine believed. It is both an individual and a social condition that aggravates estrangement and induces widespread brokenness and segregation in human relationships.<sup>9</sup> It is a power in every human being that arises through socialization; sometimes it is dormant and sometimes active, and it infects everything that human beings create in their cultural, political, economic and religious activities: language, law, systemic structures, institutions and organizations.<sup>10</sup>

Both the individual and the social effects of this diseased condition of humanity that are implied in Paul's use of *hamartia* (infection) are dramatized in Albert Camus's novel, *The Plague*. Tarrou, in a dialog with Dr Rieux, the chronicler of the events of the story, acknowledges this reality of *infection* under the metaphor of the bubonic plague that is sweeping through the city of Oran, Algeria:

...and that we can't stir a finger in this world without the risk of bringing death to somebody. Yes, I've been ashamed ever since; I have realized that we all have plague, and I have lost my peace. And today I am still trying to find it, still trying to understand all those others and not to be the mortal enemy of

8. As Wright aptly states in *What Saint Paul Really Said*, p. 106, 'All humankind is thus in the dock in God's metaphorical law court'. Paul's employment of *proaitiaomai* (to reach a charge of guilt beforehand) in 3.9 is the only occurrence of this verb in all of Greek literature.

9. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 84–85, interprets *hamartia* as a 'beherrschende Macht', while Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 86; Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 191, and Jewett, *Romans*, p. 258, opt for 'power', and Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 56, translates 'deadly power'.

10. Jewish apocalypticism identified these realities as extensions of the Fall as conveyed by the myth of Gen. 6. See *1 En.* 6–9 and *Jub.* 5.

anyone. I only know that one must do what one can to cease being *plague-ridden*, and that's the only way in which we can hope for some peace or, failing that, a decent death.

...each of us has *the plague* within him; no one, no one on earth is free from it.

All I maintain is that on this earth there are pestilences and there are victims, and it's up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences.<sup>11</sup>

Paul reinforces his indictment of all humanity with a sequence of scriptural quotations. The first set, 3.10-12, is a conflation of fragments drawn from the Septuagint texts of Eccl. 7.20 and Ps. 52(53).3-4, and it affirms the universality of guilt. Noteworthy is the fivefold use of the phrase, 'There is not one...':

A just person (*dikaïos*) there is not, not even one!<sup>12</sup> There is not one who understands! There is not one who seeks for God! All turned aside, together they became worthless. There is no one doing uprightness [in relation to others]. There is not even one.

The second set, 3.13-16, derived from the Septuagint texts of, respectively, Pss 140.4 and 10.7, Isa. 59.7 and Prov. 1.16, attests to the effects of *hamartia* (infection) as they are manifested by the actions of the various parts of a human being's physical body, especially the mouth and the feet:

Their *throat* is an opened grave. With their *tongues* they try to deceive. The venom of asps is under their *lips*, whose *mouth* is full of curses and bitterness. Their *feet* are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways.

The third set, 3.17-18, a conjunction of the Septuagint texts of Isa. 59.8a and Ps. 35.2b (36.1b), validates the activities and qualities of human conduct that remain unrealized because of *hamartia*:

They have not known the way of peace. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Paul concludes his lengthy analysis of the human condition in 3.19-20, acknowledging in v. 19 that these biblical texts he has quoted are addressed to *those in the law* (*en tō nomō*), namely, God's elect people, the Jews: 'Now we know that such things that the law says it speaks to those *in the law* so that every mouth is closed and the whole world becomes accountable to God'. The Jews have been the recipients of 'the oracles of God', and

11. In these three quotations Tarrou confesses his own infection, as well as that of all humanity. Ironically, as he works with Dr Rieux to combat the disease, he contracts a double strand of the bacillus and dies. See Camus, *The Plague* (New York: Modern Library, 1948), pp. 228-29.

12. Paul has added the word *dikaïos* (just person) in the opening sentence of the quotation in v. 10.

therefore they are under its jurisdiction. Consequently their own faithlessness and disobedience would compel them to acknowledge the truth of these texts of Scripture. They are accountable to God, and, because they have no defense, their mouth is closed. But Paul has also charged the Greeks as representative of the Gentiles, and, although they have not been under the jurisdiction of the law of Sinai, they have 'the work of the law written in their hearts' and therefore they too are accountable to God. Certainly the Gentiles among the addressees of Paul's letter, because of their own offenses of impiety and injustice, would be forced to acknowledge the truth of the foregoing scriptural quotations and concede their accountability before God.

What emerges in this summation of Paul's analysis of the human condition is the ironic advantage that the Jews have. On the one hand, they have been entrusted with the oracles of God. Their membership in the Abrahamic Covenant and God's accreditation of their trust 'unto justice' commits them to doing the justice of God. On the other hand, because of their own faithlessness to the Covenant and their failure to fulfill the works prescribed by its code of law, they, along with the Gentiles, must submit to Paul's universal indictment, 'Therefore out of works of law all *flesh* (*sarx*) will not be justified before him [God]'. It is generally acknowledged that this clause is a revision of a text that Paul has drawn from Ps. 142(143).2b. No motive, however, is offered to explain the function of his revision of the Septuagint reading: 'Every living being (*pas zōn*) will not be justified before you'. Since God is not being addressed in 3.19, it was obviously necessary to replace the pronoun 'your' with the pronoun 'him'. But why has the word 'flesh' (*sarx*) been substituted for 'every living being?' In Romans *sarx* is the binary opposite of the anthropological phrase, *psychē anthrōpou* (soul of a human being), that Paul employed in 2.9, and its utilization here in 3.20 constitutes a contradiction between 2.13 and 3.20.

As noted above, *psychē anthrōpou* (soul of a human being) is a fragment of the Septuagint translation of the creation story of 'the human being' in Gen. 2.7. As the result of God breathing the *breath of life* (*pnoēn zōēs*) into the face of Adam, *the human being became a living soul* (*egenoto ho anthrōpos eis psychēn zōsan*). To be a 'living soul' or a 'living self', because of God's in-breathing, is to be directed toward the actualization of possibility, freedom and infinitude and therefore to the fulfillment of the works of justice prescribed by the law.

On the other hand, there is also the disposition of the *flesh* (*sarx*), and flesh is subject to necessity, limitation, finitude and finally death. The poetry of the Old Testament qualifies the reality of the flesh with graphic similes and metaphors:<sup>13</sup>

13. See Wolff, *Anthropology*, pp. 26-31, on *basar/sarx/flesh*, characterized as 'Man in his Infirmary'.

His soul desires food until his *sarx* is wasted and his bones are rendered empty (LXX Job 33.21).

For if he should will to stop, even to withhold the Spirit from him, all *sarx* will die unanimously (LXX Job 34.14-15).

There is no healing in my *sarx* in the face of your wrath. There is no peace in my bones in the face of my sins (LXX Ps. 37[38].4).

My heart and my *sarx* fail, the God of my heart and my portion is God forever (LXX Ps. 72[73].26).

All *sarx* is grass, and all the glory of a human being is like a flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever (LXX Isa. 40.6-8).

With all *sarx* from human being to animal and upon sinners seven times more towards these things: death and blood and strife and sword, calamities, famine and destruction and suffering (LXX Sir. 40.8-9).

The human being as *sarx* is the human being in all its vulnerability. Subject to the contingencies of historical existence and finally to death itself, the natural posture of the human being is defensiveness. Consequently, out of concern for the body of *sarx*, the human being pursues security, often regardless of the cost to others, by constructing pollution systems of separation that protect the clean from the unclean, the good from the evil, and the strong from the weak.

The *flesh*, therefore, as Paul states in 6.19 and 8.3 is *weak*, and *hamartia*, by establishing itself in and through the weakness of the flesh, has overthrown the autonomy of the human being. Autobiographically, Paul asserts in 7.18, 'For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my *flesh* (*sarx*)'. What is more, as he declares in 8.6-8, 'The *mind-set* (*phronēma*) of the *flesh* (*sarx*) is death, for the mind-set of the *flesh* is hostile to God, for it is not subordinated to God nor can it be. Now those who are in the *flesh* are unable to please God.'

Together both terms, *psychē anthrōpou* (soul of a human being) and *sarx* (flesh) signify the paradoxical constitution of the human being grounded in the unified structure of the *body* (*sōma*). Anthropologically speaking, the human being is essentially a contradiction. On the one hand, as a *soul* (*psychē*) in-breathed by God, the human being can potentially be justified by doing the works of the Law (2.13). On the other hand, as *flesh* (*sarx*), subject to *hamartia* and therefore unable to fulfill the law and do justice, the human being will not be justified before God. In the face of this aporetic condition, the Jews, to whom the law was entrusted and who have been *in the law*, have been conferred with an ironic advantage that the Gentiles do not have: 'By the law is the recognition of *hamartia* (sin as infection)'. They are benefited by the mirror-like function of the law, for the law that they have

disobeyed and transgressed gives them an awareness of their own diseased condition, and calls into question the justice that their works of the law produce.

The term *hamartia* is encountered in the writings of classical and Hellenistic Greece, and is generally used to signify the failure to do what is right, originating generally from the limitations of knowledge. This is especially illustrated by Sophocles' play, *Oedipus Rex*. It may refer to character that destines human beings to a particular fate, or to the guilt of pollution that is incurred by human limitation and therefore is predicated by life itself. It also implies human insecurity and helplessness that are exacerbated by the necessity of dependence on the arbitrary power and jealousy of the gods: 'For so the gods have spun the thread of pitiful humanity, that the life of the human being should be sorrow, while they themselves are exempt from care'.<sup>14</sup> Aeschylus, through his tragedies, endeavored to lead human beings out of such a world of *hamartia*, while Euripides sought to cast doubt on its reality through intellectual and moral argument. Sophocles, however, confronted society with its overwhelming sense of helplessness in the face of the stark reality of Fate.<sup>15</sup> Plato believed that ignorance as the condition of *hamartia* could be eliminated by education. Dialectical reasoning would enable human beings to escape the cave of non-being, and the right understanding that resulted would lead to right action. Yet toward the end of his career, as he became more aware of the power of *hamartia* in 'life-long war', Plato determined that it could only be controlled by the deification of law.<sup>16</sup> Aristotle disassociated *hamartia* from moral guilt and limited its meaning to mistakes or 'deviations from the mean'.<sup>17</sup>

Yet all law, by its objective to establish justice, coincidentally evokes a consciousness of injustice. Yet it would appear that beyond the limited acknowledgment of the reality of *hamartia* in Greek society and culture, the law of Sinai not only functions to confront God's elect people with their injustices but more fundamentally elicits the underlying condition of *hamartia* as a universal infection that permeates every society. 'Through [the] law', according to 3.20b, 'is the recognition of *hamartia*'. By Moses' arbitration at Sinai, according to Gal. 3.19b-20, God and Israel reached an agreement to *add a codicil*, the Sinai covenant of the law that was '*ordered (diatageis)* by angels', to the *testament (diathēkē)* that God had constituted in and through the *trust (pistis)* of Abraham. 'It was added', Paul asserted in

14. Homer, *Iliad* 24.525.

15. See Chapter 2, titled 'From Shame-Culture to Guilt-Culture', in E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 28-50.

16. Plato, *Laws*, especially Books IX-XII.

17. G. Stählin and W. Grundmann, '*hamartia*', in *TWNT*, I, pp. 296-302; *TDNT*, I, pp. 303-13.

Gal. 3.19a, ‘on account of transgressions until the seed should come to whom it was promised’. Ironically, the law fails in its intent and function to establish justice, but it succeeds in serving as a mirror to enable God’s people, *and finally all human beings*, to become conscious of their diseased condition and therefore also to recognize the breach between the law and justice.<sup>18</sup> The codicil of the law is necessary to establish the universality of guilt as the groundwork for God’s resolution of the power of *sin* (*hamartia*) that infects humanity. In Gal. 3.22, in accordance with the universal charge laid down in Rom. 3.9, Paul had declared, ‘But Scripture confined all under *hamartia* (infection) so that the promise *out of the trust of Jesus Christ* (*ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou*) might be given to those who believe’.

18. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 19, in the Derridean analysis that he brings to bear on Romans, says, ‘Thus it will be necessary to think of justice outside, beyond, and even against law without depriving justice of the impetus to instantiate itself in and as law. Considering how this is worked out by Derrida will help us to understand what sometimes seems to be an ambivalent attitude of Paul with respect to law that he can claim is “holy, just, and good” while at the same time speaking of a justice (divine, he will say) that is outside the law. The apparent ambivalence of Paul relative to the law will be explicable in terms of his concern for justice—the very justice that the law aims at while nevertheless betraying.’ See also Derrida, ‘Before the Law’.



## 5

### ‘OUT OF TRUST’—‘INTO JUSTICE’

#### 3.21-22a. *The Justice of God through the Trust of Jesus Christ*

Two critical issues emerge from Paul’s analysis of the human condition: the seemingly ineradicable reality of *hamartia* and, in view of its ineradicability, the ostensible impossibility of the possibility of justice in human society.

The objective of the law is justice, and justice is directed toward the actualization of salvation, the fullness of life for every human being in society. But the law is unable to actualize justice in society or in civilization as a whole because of the power of *the human infection of sin (hamartia)*. Law not only fails to fulfill its objective; it, in fact, produces wrath, as Paul will state in 4.15. The punitive character of law (requiring retribution) generates cause-and-effect cycles in *hamartia*-infected society by inflicting punishment on those whose passions have been activated by law (7.5).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, law as a body of statutes and ordinances is constituted by the ruling class. ‘Existing law is the sedimentation of the political and economic interests of the powerful.’<sup>2</sup> Those who enact laws, infected as they are with *hamartia*, will naturally formulate laws that will establish diseased systemic structures in society that promote injustice.

The purity and reciprocity codes that are embedded in the Torah of Moses, specifically Leviticus and Deuteronomy, subvert justice by dichotomizing the world into the dualistic realms of the clean and the unclean, the rich and the poor. Under the purity code of Leviticus all who lapse into pollution are consigned to the realm of the unclean and suffer the loss of social freedom and economic possibility by their subjection to the alienating realities of segregation. Deuteronomy’s demanding code of reciprocity establishes a social system that is oriented to equality, but is based on fidelity to the covenant. Violations of covenantal prohibitions subvert both individual and societal indebtedness to God that ironically engender a class system in

1. On retributive justice, see Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 32-34, 50-52.

2. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 29.



which the powerful and the wealthy can justify their enrichment at the expense of the poor on the basis of the code's ideology of reciprocity.<sup>3</sup>

Paul's deconstruction of law intimates an awareness of the injustices that are generated by these codes of law. His qualification of Gal. 3.19 that the Sinai law was 'constituted through angels' is an indication of his cognizance that law, even law that tradition ascribes to God, cannot and should not ultimately be attributed to God.<sup>4</sup> All codifications of law, even those which tradition ascribes to God, have been formulated and transmitted by human beings infected with *hamartia*.

Yet law and justice, however sharply they may be differentiated, 'require one another—indeed, are embedded in one another'.<sup>5</sup> If 'law always is law only by reference to justice', what law or law codes could and would actualize God's justice in the daily life of flesh-and-blood human beings in society? If inscribed, indecidable law cannot produce justice, is there law beyond law, a non-inscribed law code, that can actualize God's justice in society?

According to 1.17, the gospel, 'God's power unto salvation to everyone who believes', discloses God's justice. But can God's justice be actualized by the power of the gospel, when both Jews and Greeks, representatives of all humanity, are 'under *hamartia*'? Is there any remedy for *hamartia*?

To answer these questions, Paul returns to the concepts of the *justice of God* (*dikaiosynē theou*) and *trust* (*pistis*) that he introduced in 1.17:

But now, *without law*, God's justice has been manifested, witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets, but God's justice through the *trust* of Jesus Christ unto (*eis*) all who believe.

The adverb *now* (*nuni*), placed at the very beginning of the sentence (in the Greek text), accentuates the actualization of God's justice in the present. In 1.17 Paul's emphasis was on God's *revelatory* act: 'the justice of God *is being revealed* (*apokalyptetai*) in it [the gospel]'. Now in 3.21, as he begins to move toward a clarification of the relationship between God's justice and the salvation of the gospel, he substitutes *pephanerōtai* (it has been manifested), a verb that denotes empirical visibility or public exposure, in place of divine revelation. Although the justice of God is *revealed* in and through

3. See the incisive analysis of both the pollution and debt systems of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, respectively, by Fernando Belo, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981), pp. 35-59. See the blessings and curses of Deut. 28.

4. Krister Stendahl, 'Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West', in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 20, cites Gal. 3.19 to establish that 'middlemen' like angels and Moses were involved in the giving of the law, and that therefore '...this law is seen as something other than the ultimate, absolute and immediate manifestation of the salvation of God'.

5. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 30.

the gospel, it already has become a visibly manifest reality or a potentially visible manifest reality in historical existence. But without law!<sup>6</sup> For law cannot make alive! Law cannot deliver salvation! Law cannot actualize justice! Law cannot heal and restore. Paul's gospel of salvation will eventually disclose the law or law code that the justice of God presupposes. But it is not the law of Sinai! Manifestly, therefore, law and justice are disjoined, but it is the law itself that discloses that disjunction.<sup>7</sup> Through the negotiation of Moses the codicil of the law of Sinai was incorporated into the inviolable testament that God established with Abraham in order to raise to consciousness the disease of *hamartia*. As already stated, the beneficial service that the law renders is the awareness of injustice and therefore more fundamentally the underlying condition of the power of *hamartia* that generates injustice. In this respect the law bears witness to the justice of God.<sup>8</sup> It naturally follows, therefore, that if law cannot actualize justice, the works of the law, the works that the law requires, are already defective by the diseased condition of human beings who strive to fulfill the works of the law.

The justice of God that is beyond law is *through the trust of Jesus Christ* (*dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*); and it is directed 'unto (*eis*) all who believe'.<sup>9</sup> The genitive construction of *pistis Iēsou Christou*, like the 'justice of God' (*dikaioynē theou*) should be construed as a subjective or possessive genitive.<sup>10</sup> It is identical to its parallel in Gal. 2.16a, the P<sup>46</sup> reading of 3.26,

6. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 165, claims that Paul thinks of law as 'a boundary marker'. Accordingly, he interprets *chōris nomou* to be 'without the law' meaning '...outside the national and religious parameters set by the law, without reference to the normal Jewish hallmarks'. His essay, 'The New Perspective on Paul', pp. 191, 194, identifies the 'boundary marker' within 'covenantal nomism' as the Jewish hallmarks of circumcision and food laws.

7. See Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 39-43.

8. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 227, incorrectly states that the function of the Mosaic law in the economy of God's salvation was 'to witness beyond itself to the death and resurrection of Jesus'. He not only appears to have forgotten Gal. 3.19, but he does not seem to realize that the law projects justice and therefore also evokes an awareness of injustice.

9. 'Through faith in Jesus Christ' is the translation that appears in Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 88; Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 203; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 91; Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 163, 166; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 57-61; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 268, 275. As already observed, Hays's work, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, has been widely influential in establishing the genitive construction of *pistis Christou*. See pp. 162-64 and, concomitantly, pp. 164-67, for his discussion of 'the theological issue'. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, pp. 106-107, perhaps on the basis of Hays's work, prefers 'the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah'; or, as in his essay, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 38, 'through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ'. Also Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, p. 47.

10. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 101, accepts both the genitive subjective and objective constructions of *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (through [the] trust of Jesus Christ) and

and Phil. 3.9; and it is repeated, but with a different introductory preposition, in Gal. 2.16b, 20 and 3.22. *Pistis*, as already indicated, anticipates and belongs to the *diathēkē* that God established with Abraham and his descendant, the Christ. *Pistis*, therefore, is the mutual trust between God and Abraham by which the testament of inheritance was established in trust, dependent, however, on Abraham's lineal descendant, the Christ, who would assume its obligations in order to make its benefits universally accessible to all those who, like Abraham, live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). Jesus, the Christ, as the fiduciary of Abraham, by terminating the human infection of *hamartia*, fulfilled the terms and conditions of that testament and established the possibility of salvation through the realization of God's justice. Accordingly, the justice of God that is beyond the law is 'through the trust of Jesus Christ'. The trust of Jesus Christ (*pistis Iēsou Christou*) is the culmination of the movement that Paul posited in 1.17, *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*). Human beings are called to live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*)—like Abraham. Moreover, because his second testamentary heir fulfilled the provisions of the testament of inheritance, they are called to live out of the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. The prepositional phrase, *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*, therefore, signifies the second half of that double prepositional phrase of 1.17, namely, *into trust* (*eis pistin*). The *trust of Jesus Christ* is the consummation of the testament of inheritance that God constituted with Abraham which his lineal descendant, the Christ, fulfilled in order to make the justice of God actualizable. It is the trust that is to be believed, the trust that requires commitment, and it is through this consummated trust that the justice of God will be visibly manifested.

Accordingly, there is no evidence in Paul's letters that he proclaimed, exhorted or encouraged 'faith in Jesus Christ'. Nowhere does he speak of 'believing in Jesus'. Indeed, it does not appear to have been a part of his vocabulary. Faith, as a hierarchically oriented, subject/object relationship to God or to Jesus Christ, is not an implicit or a fundamental attribute of Paul's theology. To make Jesus the object of faith on the basis of 3.22a—and elsewhere in Paul's letters—as Luther and Calvin did, and as many current interpreters of Romans and Galatians continue to do, is a mistaken and flawed interpretation of this genitive construction.<sup>11</sup> The justice of God is not

considers it to be 'an expanded form of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* in the brief introductory *peroratio* in 1.16-17'.

11. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 109. According to Luther's marginal gloss on Rom. 3.11, which relates to 3.22a, 'The apostle speaks of the "righteousness of God", not the "righteousness of man" or the "righteousness of one's own will", but the "righteousness of God", not that by which God is righteous but that with which he covers man when he justifies the ungodly. Just as one speaks of "Christ-faith" and means by it not the faith by which Christ believes but the faith by which he is believed in, so one speaks of

actualized ‘by faith in Jesus Christ’, but by living *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), as Abraham did, and continuing into *the trust of Jesus Christ*.

It may appear that ‘believing in Jesus Christ’ is conveyed by Paul’s correlation of the verb *pisteuō* (I believe) with the prepositional phrase *eis Christon Iēsoun*, as in Gal. 2.16, *even we believed into Christ Jesus* (*kai hēmeis eis Criston Iēsoun episteusamen*) or in Rom. 10.14, *into whom they believed* (*eis hon episteusan*).<sup>12</sup> Paul’s use of the preposition *eis*, which governs the accusative case and expresses ‘entry into a state of being’, signifies in both of these clauses a movement of commitment *into Christ Jesus* that constitutes membership in the new humanity of the Last Adam of life-giving spirits in which the justice of God is finally actualizable.

Paul does employ the verb *pisteuō* (I believe) in conjunction with the preposition *epi* (on), governing the accusative case, in order to accentuate a believing that is characterized by complete confidence in God in difficult and unusual circumstances. In 4.5 Paul certifies that trust is credited *unto or toward* (*eis*) justice, not to the individual who works but to the *one believing onto the one who justifies the ungodly* (*pisteuonti de epi ton dikaionta ton asebeē*). In 4.24 justice will be credited to *those who believe onto the one who resurrected Jesus our Lord from the dead* (*tois pisteuousin epi ton egeiranta Iēsoun ton kyrion hēmōn ek nekrōn*). In this conjunction of the verb *pisteuō* and the preposition *epi* God is always the referent, never Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

Paul also utilizes the verb *pisteuō* (I believe) with the the dative case to designate ‘the person to whom one gives credence or whom one believes’.<sup>14</sup> The only three texts in which this kind of trusting or believing is transmitted are all drawn from the Septuagint translation of Gen. 15.6:

Abraham trusted God (*episteusen de Abraam tō theō*) (Rom. 4.3).

...in view of which he trusted God (*katenanti hou episteusen*) (Rom. 4.17).

...even as Abraham trusted God (*kathōs Abraam episteusen tō theō*) (Gal. 3.6).

the righteousness of God and means not that righteousness by which God is righteous. Both are ours. But they are called God’s and Christ’s righteousness and faith, because they are given to us by his bounty.’

12. See also Phil. 1.29 where Paul uses this same phrase to convey a necessity that is contingent upon this commitment, ‘For it was graced to us on behalf of Christ not only to *believe into him* (*eis auton pisteuein*), but also to suffer on his behalf’. The grace of entering into a commitment to Jesus Christ will necessarily include suffering.

13. When the verb *pisteuō* is used in conjunction with the preposition *epi* governing the dative case, it always occurs in a citation derived from the Septuagint. Both 9.33 and 10.11 are quotations from Isa. 28.16. Rom. 9.33 reads: *ho pisteuōn ep’ autō ou kataischynthēsetai* (the one believing in him will not be ashamed). Rom. 10.11 reads: *ho pisteuōn ep’ autō ou kataischynthēsetai* (the one believing in him will not be ashamed).

14. See Danker (ed.), *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 816.

However, this combination of the verb *pisteuō* (I believe) with the dative case is never used to convey the believer's trusting relationship to Jesus. That relationship is always expressed by the prepositional phrases 'in Christ Jesus' or simply 'in Christ'. Finally, the verb *pisteuō* is also followed by the adverbial conjunction *hoti* (that) to verbalize *what* is being believed:

...we believe that we shall also live with him (*pisteuomen hoti kai sunzēsomen autō*) (Rom. 6.8).

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again (*ei gar pisteuomen hoti Iēsous apethanen kai anestē*) (1 Thess. 4.14).

### 3.22b-26. Scribal Interpolation

The new direction of thought that Paul introduces in 3.21-22a is manifestly interrupted by 3.22b-23, 'For there is no distinction; for all sinned and are lacking the glory of God'. The development of the two concepts, *the justice of God* and the *trust*, re-introduced from 1.17, is disrupted by the insertion of an annotation on the universality of sin that is nothing more than a superfluous summary statement of the Apostle's lengthy analysis of the human condition that culminated in the charge of 3.9 that '...all are under *hamartia*'.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the reality of that condition, as Paul concluded in 3.20, is raised to the level of consciousness by the law, one of the benefits that the Jews received through the gift of 'the oracles of God'. Unequivocally, therefore, 3.22b-23 is an interpolation by a later scribe, possibly a marginal note encountered at this point in an earlier manuscript and inserted into the text, perhaps for emphasis. The phrases, *for there is no distinction* (*ou gar estin diastolē*) and *all sinned* (*pantes gar hēmarton*) appear in 10.10 and 5.12 respectively and may have been derived from those contexts.

But the interpolation does not end here. Apparently the annotation of vv. 22b-23 on the universality of sin requires the immediate declaration of a resolution in vv. 24-26:

Being pronounced just as a gift by his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus whom God openly displayed [as] a *place of propitiation* (*hilastērion*) through faith (*pisteōs*) in his blood, unto a demonstration of his justice

15. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 85-86, uses this passage to cite Paul's 'association of gift and grace'. He goes on, however, to add 5.15-17, a more valid text, to establish Paul's correlation of grace and gift in his deconstruction of law and its new indebtedness. It is the trust of Jesus Christ that culminates in the abundance of grace and the gift of justice to rule in life, as Paul avers in 5.17. The gift of justice, however, is not imputed righteousness. Justice is the legacy that is made possible by the Spirit of God pouring God's love into human hearts. Jennings (p. 99) acknowledges 'love as the content of this duty beyond debt'.

because of the passing over of previously committed sins by God's forbearance, towards the demonstration of his justice in the now season of time so that he is just and justifying the one out of the trust of Jesus (*ek pisteōs Iēsou*).

This is not yet the context in which Paul will interpret the *trust of Jesus Christ*. The movement that he projected in 1.17 is *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, that is, out of the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, it is initially necessary to explicate the implications of *ek pisteōs* in relation to the trust of Abraham, before the second prepositional phrase, *eis pistin*, can be elucidated in relation to 'the trust of Jesus Christ' in 5.1-21. Accordingly, vv. 22b-26 are entirely disruptive.<sup>16</sup> First of all, the language of this fragment is foreign to Paul. The principal terms of these verses: *hilastērion* (propitiation), *paresis* (passing over), *proginesthai* (previously committed), *hamartēma* (transgression), are not encountered in any of his letters. The word, *apolytrōsis* (redemption) occurs in Romans only once. In 8.23, Paul will speak of 'the redemption of our body' in the context of the deliverance of the creation, but not in association with Jesus' death. Theologically, as will become evident in 5.1-11, Paul's interpretation of 'the redemption in Christ Jesus' does not center on Jesus' blood but on his death, for it is his death that marks the termination of the old moral order. Accordingly, Jesus as the *place of propitiation*, the *hilastērion*, that God openly displayed, analogous to the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant on which the High Priest sprinkled blood on the Day of Atonement in order to atone for the sins of Israel, does not correspond to Paul's interpretation of Jesus' death in 5.1-10.<sup>17</sup>

16. The majority of commentators on Rom. 3.22b-26 consider the text to be authentically Pauline. Although some are aware that it is one of the most obscure and difficult sections of the letter, they reject the possibility that it is a scribal interpolation. See Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 95-101; Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 103-10; Dodd, *Romans*, pp. 50-61; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 57-61; Johnson, *Reading Romans*, pp. 54-62. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 179, also accepts the Pauline authenticity of 3.22b-26, but his comments convey a sense of uneasiness. On v. 24 he says, 'The awkwardness of the syntax is so untypically Pauline as to occasion much surprise, though it could signal the beginning of a quotation of an earlier Christian formulation'. See also Tamez, *The Amnesty of Grace: Justification by Faith from a Latin American Perspective* (trans. Sharon H. Ringe; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), pp. 108-12; Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, pp. 124-26; Lincoln, 'From Wrath to Justification: Tradition, Gospel, and Audience in the Theology of Romans 1.18-4.25', in Hays and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 130-59 (146-47); Jouette M. Bassler, 'Centering the Argument', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 160-68 (166-67); Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 103, 107-109; Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 38; Kirk, *Romans*, p. 222.

17. See LXX Exod. 25.17-22; 37.5-8; Lev. 16.2, 13-15. The Septuagint uses *hilastērion* to denote the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant.



Moreover, the apparent structure of these verses intimates a traditional fragment, perhaps liturgical in origin and use, which juxtaposes the eschatological forbearance of God in passing over previously committed sins and God's righteousness that ultimately requires the expiation that was achieved by the redemptive work of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> Between the trust of Abraham and the trust of Jesus Christ, God did not pass over the previously committed sins until the conditions of the original *testament* (*diathēkē*) were fulfilled by the second testamentary heir, Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> The 'wrath of God' is continually active in history, and, according to 1.18-32, it manifests itself in the cycles of cause and effect that are generated by idolatry and injustice and delivers human beings over to the consequences of their evil deeds.

### 3.27–4.22. *The Trust of Abraham*

Verse 27 is a natural continuation of the themes of the *justice of God* (*dikaioynē theou*) and *trust* (*pistis*) that Paul reintroduced in 3.21-22a. If

18. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, p. 46, considers 3.24-25, beginning with the opening participle *dikaïoumenoi* (being justified), to be a 'traditional formulation' of the 'earliest Church' that Paul adopted by adding the specifically Pauline expressions: 'by his grace as a gift' in 3.24 and 'to be received by faith' in 3.25, as well as the supplementary statement of 3.26. Why Paul would adopt a tradition he has only slightly revised, which including references such as 'expiation/mercy seat', 'the blood (of Christ)' and 'expiation for former sins' is inexplicable. Ernst Käsemann, in an earlier essay, 'Zum Verständnis von Rm. 3.24-26', *ZNW* 43 (1950-51), pp. 150-54, not only supports Bultmann's judgment but intends to provide additional support: 'Mir scheint, dass man solche Argumente verstärken muss'. He adheres to this judgment in his commentary, *Romans*, p. 92, in spite of characterizing this text as 'a heaping up of non-Pauline terms and liturgical motifs'. He devotes the next ten pages to an effort to interpret it as a non-Pauline fragment that nevertheless was important to Paul 'because, like him, it saw salvation in the justification of the sinner'. See *Romans*, pp. 98-99. Charles H. Talbert, 'A Non-Pauline Fragment at Romans 3.24-26?', *JBL* 85 (1966), pp. 287-96, contended that 3.25-26 is the traditional fragment, not 3.24-25, because 'the participle *dikaïoumenoi*, rightly understood, offers no support whatsoever for the inclusion of v. 24 in the traditional unit'. In his judgment, the presence of the relative pronoun *hon* at the beginning of v. 25 serves as a better starting point of the fragment than the participle at the beginning of v. 24; and 3.26 should be regarded as an integral part of the tradition, not a Pauline addition. Talbert (pp. 291-92) concludes that 'Rom 3.25-26 is not integral to Romans but was interpolated at some later time into the epistle'. If it is detached from its context, Paul's thought 'develops logically and coherently with no breaks'.

19. The debate between Ulrich Wilckens, 'Zu Römer 3,21-4,25', *EvT* 24 (1964), pp. 676-83, and Günther Klein, 'Exegetische Probleme in Römer 3,21-4,25', *EvT* 24 (1964), pp. 586-610, reveals the misdirected influence that this scribal interpolation of 3.22b-26 can exercise. Is there an echo of Marcion's dualism in God 'passing over sins previously committed in the forbearance of God'?

the justice of God has been made visible through the trust of Jesus Christ, and if it is independent of law, certain issues are naturally raised, and Paul addresses them rhetorically in the form of questions and answers in 3.27-28. The natural continuity between 3.21-22a and 3.27-28 speaks effectively for itself:

But now without law the justice of God has been made publicly visible, witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets, but the justice of God through the trust of Jesus Christ unto all who believe (3.21-22a).

‘Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what law (*nomou*)? Of works? No! But by [the] *law of trust* (*dia nomou pisteōs*)! For we consider a human being to be justified by *trust* (*pistei*) without the works of law (3.27-28).

In this continuation of 3.27-28 Paul is posing the opposition between the ‘law of works’ and the ‘law of trust’. The former is easily identified with the law of Sinai, the law that is directed toward justice and therefore requires the works of obedience. But the law of Sinai, like all law, cannot produce God’s justice and, consequently, under the ‘law of works’ boasting is excluded. The law of trust (*nomos pisteōs*), on the other hand, must be related to the justice of God that Paul connected to the double prepositional phrase of 1.17, that is, the justice of God that is *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*), and more specifically the justice of God that, according to 3.22a is *through the trust of Jesus Christ* (*dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*).

But what is the ‘law of trust?’ On the one hand, it is claimed that it is still law, not the opposite of law as such, but the law addressed to faith and fulfilled through faith in antithesis to the ‘law of works’.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, it is construed as ‘the rule, order, or norm of faith’, but ‘not the principle of faith as a demand’.<sup>21</sup> But it is neither of these. It is law beyond law. It is law that the trust of Jesus Christ actualizes and, more significantly, it is law that the trust of Jesus Christ makes publicly visible as the justice of God. It is the law that, according to 2 Cor. 3.3, the Spirit of the living God is writing on the tablets of the human heart, in fulfillment of Jer. 31.33. As such it is

20. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 186-87, contends, in opposition to E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 51, that ‘the law of faith’ is not the opposite of the law as such but of the law as precisely as the law of the Jews (alone).

21. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 103. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 220, appears to identify the phrase *nomos pisteōs* (law of trust) as a reference to the Old Testament law. According to Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 297-98, Paul defines the ‘law of faith’ as follows, ‘For we reckon a human being to be set right by faith without works of law’. Its full contours will be developed in chs. 4, 7, and 8 ‘which develop the contrast between the “law of the spirit of life” and the “law of sin and death” in 8.2’. The former is defined in 8.3-11 as ‘a law of God that is fulfilled and leads to life through the power of the spirit received by believers on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ’.



identifiable with the law of love, specifically God's love that God's Spirit pours out in human hearts, according to 5.5, and manifests itself as the justice of God.

But how inclusive will that realization of justification be, if the beneficiaries are primarily the Jews who enjoy the distinct advantage of having the oracles of God and therefore should be aware that a human being can be justified by *trust* (*pistei*) *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*). If, then, the justice of God is to emerge through *the law of trust*, will its future be limited to the Jewish people? That problem poses another set of issues, and Paul again responds rhetorically in the form of questions and answers in 3.29-30:

Is God [God] of the Jews only? Not also the Gentiles? Yes, also of the Gentiles. Even as God is one who will justify circumcision *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) and uncircumcision *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*).

Because God is also God of the Gentiles, the justification that is based on the law of *trust* must also be available to the Gentiles. The Jews as the descendants of Abraham and Sarah will, like their patriarchal ancestors, be justified *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). The Gentiles, on the other hand, who were not entrusted with the oracles of God, will be justified *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*), that is, the trust of Jesus Christ. Since Paul employed the prepositional phrase *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* (through the trust of Jesus Christ) in 3.22a, it is very likely that his repetition of *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*) at the end of 3.30 is an allusion to that longer phrase of 3.22a.

But that declaration of the potential justification of both Jews and the Gentiles, founded on *trust* (*pistis*), is determined by Paul's earlier analysis of the human condition that Gentiles and Jews are unable to fulfill the works of law and therefore cannot produce God's justice in their flesh and blood existence. In the face of the *trust*, Paul justifiably asks: 'Do we then invalidate law *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*)?' 'By no means', he answers, 'we establish law'. Law is established preliminarily because it implies the possibility of justice.<sup>22</sup> But law is also established by its very capacity to expose injustice and, beyond injustice, the condition of *hamartia* that originates injustice: 'By [the] law is the recognition of *hamartia*'. Consequently, the Sinai law, Roman law, indeed, all law is out-lawed!<sup>23</sup> Beyond all law that has been out-lawed is law that is established through *the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*); and by the implication of 3.22a, it is through *the trust of Jesus Christ*. Law that is beyond the law of Sinai, law that is established through *the trust*, is the law of God, the only law that can actualize God's justice.

22. See Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 41-47, on 'Justice vs. the Law', and 'Moses and Rome'.

23. Also Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 39-43, on 'Paul and Outlaw Justice'.

Accordingly, 'it becomes clear that the way in which justice is beyond law is that it is ahead of law'.<sup>24</sup> God's justice is ahead of law, for God's justice is the consequence of God's law, the law beyond law, the law of God's love that God's Spirit pours out in human hearts. As the only power that can defeat the power of *hē hamartia*, God's love actualizes God's justice.

If, then, 'out of works of law all flesh will not be justified before God', is there a justification beyond the law, a justification that occurs by fulfilling God's law of love and therefore actualizing God's justice? And is that justification inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles, the circumcised and the uncircumcised. To answer these questions Paul is finally able to introduce 'our Father Abraham' in 4.1. 'Abraham is decisive for Paul.'<sup>25</sup> Indeed, in 4.1-3 Paul raises and answers a question that highlights his position on Abraham:

What then *shall we say (eroumen)* our father Abraham to have found *according to flesh (kata sarka)*? For if Abraham was justified out of works, he has something to boast about. But not towards God! For what does Scripture say? 'Abraham trusted God and it was credited to him *unto justice (eis dikaio-synēn)*.'

*According to flesh (kata sarka)* is the key phrase in 4.1. Anthropologically, in its positive sense, it would refer to physical existence; negatively, it would designate the domain of the human being that has been taken captive by the power of *hamartia*. Of the two possibilities, the negative meaning of *kata sarka* is preferable because it stands in contrast to *kata charin* (according to grace) of 4.16.<sup>26</sup> The implied answer to Paul's rhetorical question of 4.1 is 'nothing'. According to the flesh, Abraham found nothing that could establish his justification.<sup>27</sup> According to the flesh he could not have been

24. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 38.

25. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (trans. Ray Brassier; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 103. Badiou goes on to say, 'First because he was elected by God solely by virtue of his faith, before the law (which was engraved for Moses, Paul notes, "four hundred and thirty years later"); second because the promise that accompanies his election pertains to "all the nations", rather than Jewish descendants alone. Abraham thereby anticipates what could be called a universalism of the Jewish site; in other words, he anticipates Paul.'

26. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 40.

27. Richard B. Hays, "'Have we found Abraham to be our forefather according to the flesh?': A Reconsideration of Rom. 4.1", *NovT* 27 (1985), pp. 76-98, presupposes that the verse is an ellipsis in which a word has been omitted from the text, and he translates *kata sarka* in a positive anthropological sense, 'What shall we say? Is Abraham found our forefather according to the flesh?' Rhetorically the answer, of course is 'no'. But Hays has turned the perfect active infinitive, *heurēkenai* (to have found), into a present passive indicative, 'Is Abraham found...' Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 60, concurs with

'justified out of works'. Paul cannot add, 'of the law' because, as he acknowledged in Gal. 3.17, Abraham lived 430 years before the Sinai law, and therefore he was unaware of his *infection* (*hamartia*).<sup>28</sup>

'Abraham trusted God, and *it was credited* (*elogisthē*) to him *unto/toward justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*).' That is the testimony of Gen. 15.6 that Paul cites in 4.3. The verb *elogisthē* (it was credited), the aorist passive of *logizomai* (I reckon/credit), belongs to the linguistic domain of record keeping and commercial accounts of debits and credits, and not, as is usually supposed, the world of forensics and courts of law.<sup>29</sup> In the case of Abraham, God had no basis for record-keeping. *Hamartia* (infection) could not be charged to Abraham's account because he was not conscious of it, and there was no system of law defining justice that could make him aware of it. As Paul will say in 4.15b, 'Where there is no law, neither is there transgression'. That is, where there is no law, there is no consciousness of justice or injustice, and beyond that, no awareness of *hamartia*. Moreover, according to 5.12,

On account of this, even as through one human being *hamartia* came into the world and through *hamartia* death, and so death went through into all human beings in as much as all sinned. For *hamartia* was in the world right up to the law, but *hamartia* is not charged to the account where there is no law. But death ruled from Adam right up to Moses, even on those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression.

If *hamartia* cannot be charged to Abraham because the law of Sinai had not yet been given, there is no basis for an indictment. Yet Abraham contracted *hamartia* and died, even though he may not have sinned in the likeness of Adam. The relationship between God and Abraham is founded on the mutuality of trust, and that trust had manifested itself in Abraham's trusting obedience to leave Haran at God's command and to journey with God into an open-ended future (Gen. 12.1-4). The vulnerability of trust bound Abraham and God together in an interdependent relationship. Abraham's trust in God would naturally motivate him to act in response to God's command and to continue to trust that God will fulfill God's promises.

Hays's reconstruction of 4.1. See also Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 40, but he rephrases the question, 'Does this (i.e. 3.21-31) mean that we Christians, Jews and Gentiles, alike, now discover that we are to be members of the fleshly family of Abraham?' Again, the answer, of course, is 'no'.

28. There is no basis for maintaining that Abraham kept the law by anticipation, as Philo did.

29. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), I, p. 583.

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your land and from your kinsfolk and from your father's house into the land that I will show you. I will make you a great people, and I will bless you, and make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those blessing you, and those cursing you I will curse; and in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed'. And Abram went up, even as the Lord said to him (LXX Gen. 12.1-4).

God's trust in Abraham will naturally anticipate that he, Abraham, will continue to act in trust and therefore continue to fulfill the objective to which God has called him. On account of that trust God credits justice to Abraham. No works are involved that would serve as a basis for his justification. In the mutual relationship of trust between Abraham and God, justice is the natural expectation that arises out of Abraham's vulnerability of trust.<sup>30</sup> Justice is the practice that belongs to a trusting relationship with God:<sup>31</sup>

Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him *unto/toward (eis)* justice (Rom. 4.3).

Consequently God does not impute righteousness on the basis of faith.<sup>32</sup> That is the heresy of the Reformation interpretation of Romans.<sup>33</sup> Nor is

30. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 116, appears to be the only commentator who interprets Paul's quotation of Gen. 15.6 correctly, 'Allendings entstehen sofort Schwierigkeiten, weil das logische Schema dieses Schriftwortes den Glauben wie ein Voraussetzung des Menschen behandelt, die die Gerechtigkeit Gottes nach sich zieht'. That is, 'Certainly difficulties immediately arise, because the logical pattern of this scriptural text deals with faith as a presupposition of the human being, *which draws the justice of God after it*'. My translation and emphasis.

31. According to LXX Ps. 105(106).30-31, this would appear to be true of Phinehas who 'stood up and made atonement, and the destruction by plague ceased; and *it was credited (elogisthē)* to him *unto justice (eis dikaiosynēn)*'. This, of course, is an interpretation of Num. 25.1-13. Phinehas ended the plague threatening the Israelites by killing an Israelite male who, having cohabited with a Midianite woman, brought her to the tent of the meeting where Moses and the congregation of the Israelites were gathered. In justification, God grants Phinehas 'my covenant of peace'.

32. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 312, states: 'Gen 15.6 therefore declares that Abraham's faith in God's promise sufficed to declare him righteous, that is, acceptable to God'. See also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 123. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 41, appears to accept the justification of imputed righteousness. He encounters 'three tenses of justification' in Rom. 1-4: 'Justification is the *future* verdict in 2.1-16'; 'Justification is also the *past* verdict pronounced over Jesus in his resurrection'; 'The famous doctrine of "justification by faith", as articulated in 3.27-30 and undergirded in 4.1-25, consists in the *present* justification'. He continues (p. 42) by adding, '...Paul has argued that the covenant people now consists of a group that is demarcated not by the badges that signify Jewish ethnicity but by their faith/faithfulness/belief in Jesus, himself the faithful one'. The italics are Wright's.

33. According to Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. J.T. McNeill; trans. F.L. Battles; The Library of Christian Classics, 20; Philadelphia: Westminster Press,

God's justification to be construed as a pronouncement of 'Not Guilty' simply on the basis of faith.<sup>34</sup> It is not equivalent to forgiveness.<sup>35</sup> Nor is God's accreditation of righteousness to be characterized as 'a free and unmerited decision of divine grace'.<sup>36</sup> It is injudicious, therefore, to translate Paul's quotation of Gen. 15.6, *episteusen de Abraam tō theō kai elogisthē autō eis dikaiosynēn*, as 'Now Abraham believed in God, and it was reckoned to him *as* righteousness'.<sup>37</sup> The same holds true of the translation, 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him *for* righteousness'.<sup>38</sup> God's righteousness does not become an attribution of Abraham.<sup>39</sup> The relationship between God and Abraham presupposes that doing justice would naturally follow Abraham's living *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). Paul does not judge to what extent that occurred in Abraham's wanderings, but his commitment to God's promises bears witness to the natural relationship between trust and obedience. But the obedience is never an end in itself. It always serves God's objectives and includes the grace of God's benedictions.

Ultimately, it would appear that God's accounting of Abraham's trust 'unto/toward justice' should also be construed as an eschatological accreditation. For the actualization of God's justice and therefore the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that he would inherit the world would not be possible until the conditions of the *testament of inheritance* (*diathēkē*) that God established with Abraham 'and his seed' would be fulfilled by Christ, Abraham's lineal descendant. Accordingly, the relationship with God that is *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), in which that trust is credited unto justice (*eis dikaiosynēn*), is culminated by entering *into the trust* (*eis pistin*) of Jesus Christ, through which the impossible justice of God is at last realizable. As Paul stated in 1.17, 'For the justice of God is being revealed in it [the

1960), pp. 726-27, '...justified by faith is he who, excluded from the righteousness of works, grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man'.

34. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 491, states: 'Faith represents man's entire response to the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, *apart from law*; and *the argument for faith is really an argument against the law*' (italics are his). On p. 492, he goes on to say, 'We should repeat here the observation that "righteousness by faith" receives very little *positive* working out by Paul' (italics are his).

35. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 68; Joachim Jeremias, *The Central Message of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1965), p. 66.

36. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 231.

37. Stendahl, *Final Account*, p. 25; Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*, p. 172; Jewett, *Romans*, p. 304.

38. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 105; Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 196; Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 117-23.

39. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 202.

gospel] *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*)'. Abraham's trust (*ek pisteōs*) implied doing the justice of God spontaneously. Entering *into the trust* of Jesus Christ (*eis pistin*) actualizes the possibility of doing the justice of God spontaneously.

Obedying the law requires working and, therefore, as Paul states in v. 4, it involves an indebtedness and commands a wage: 'to the one working the wage is not credited on the basis of grace but on the basis of debt'. A life of obedience to the law is a life of indebtedness, and, as Moses stipulated, according to Paul's citation in 10.5, 'The human being doing it will live in it'. Obedying the law is a relationship with God that is based on reciprocity, as established by the book of Deuteronomy. In contrast, however, as Paul goes on to say, 'to the one not working but believing on the one who justifies the ungodly, his trust is credited *toward* (*eis*) justice'. The obedience of trust and doing God's justice do not originate from an indebtedness to law but from a mutually trusting interdependent relationship with God.

Paul supports this determination by citing a testimony that Ps. 31(32).1 attributes to David. He introduces it with his own interpretation, 'Even as David voices the blessedness of a human being to whom God credits justice without works'. Romans 4.7-8 reads:

Blessed are those whose lawlessnesses are forgiven and whose sins are covered.  
Blessed is the man of whom the Lord by no means will charge *sin* (*hamartia*).

It appears that Paul is arguing from silence because this literal quotation from the Scriptures of the Septuagint says nothing about an accreditation toward justice arising out of a trusting relationship with God. Implied in this quotation of LXX Ps. 31(32).1 may be the pre-Sinai condition of Abraham and Sarah as they live 'out of trust'. For, according to 4.15b, '...where there is no law, neither is there transgression', or in 5.13b, '...but *hamartia* is not charged when there is no law'. Consequently, under that pre-Sinai condition, lawlessnesses and sins are naturally forgiven and *hamartia* is not charged.

Paul's quotation of Ps. 31(32).1 appears to be universal in its applicability, yet, on the basis of 4.3, he seems to have limited this blessedness to Abraham and Sarah—and to their descendants. Is the benediction that David enunciated restricted to them and their descendants? What about the Gentiles? Can they, by being drawn into the same kind of a trusting relationship with God and, therefore, living *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), be blessed by God by not being charged with sin? Paul voices this question in 4.9:

Is this blessing then on circumcision or on uncircumcision? For we say, 'The trust was credited to Abraham *toward* (*eis*) justice. How then was it credited? While being in circumcision or in uncircumcision?

His answer is based on the Septuagint text of Gen. 17.1-14:

And no longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham, because I have appointed you a father of many nations. And I shall increase you exceedingly, and I shall make you into nations, and kings will come forth from you. And I shall establish my testament between me and you and between your seed after you into their generations for an eternal testament to be your God and [God] of your seed after you<sup>40</sup> (17.5-7).

And this is the testament which you shall observe between me and you and between your seed after you into their generations. Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin and it shall be for a sign of the testament between me and you all<sup>41</sup> (17.10-11).

The *testament* of inheritance precedes the ordinance of circumcision, and accordingly Paul concludes: 'Not in circumcision but in uncircumcision!' The Gentiles are included because God constituted the inviolable testament with Abraham before the rite of circumcision was ordained.

But why then circumcision? What function was it intended to serve? According to vv. 11-12,

And he received a sign of circumcision as a seal of the justice of the trust while in uncircumcision so that he might be *father* of all those who trust while in uncircumcision so that justice is accredited to them, and *father* of circumcision to those not only out of circumcision but to those, specifically those, following in the footsteps of the trust of our father Abraham while in uncircumcision.

Circumcision, as Paul stipulates, was ordained as a sign that attested to the justice that would arise naturally out of the trusting relationship with God into which Abraham had entered while in the state of uncircumcision. To construe it as 'a sign of the righteousness Abraham received through faith' or as a 'seal of the righteous status that he had already received' destroys more immediately God's expectation that justice would naturally arise out of Abraham's trusting relationship with God and, beyond that, its eschatological fulfillment as the impossible possibility.<sup>42</sup> God does not impute righteousness on the basis of faith.<sup>43</sup> God is not representative of 'the

40. My translation of the Septuagint text of Gen. 17.5-7.

41. My translation of the Septuagint text of Gen. 17.10-11.

42. Paul's phrase, 'the justice of the trust' (*tēs dikaïosynēs tēs pisteōs*) is not equivalent to 'the righteousness of faith' (so Dodd, *Romans*, p. 69), nor 'righteousness through faith' (so Jewett, *Romans*, p. 318), nor is it 'a variation between faith and righteousness' (so Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 209-10).

43. It is not enough to say, as Davies does, *The Gospel and the Land*, p. 173, 'The justification of Abraham is apart from any achieved righteousness and denotes the free acceptance of God on the basis of faith'. Abraham's relationship of trust presupposes justice. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 119, wrongly maintains, 'To the contrary, Paul uses Abraham as the paradigmatic example of faith reckoned as righteousness'. See also



divine order that causes faith to be righteousness'.<sup>44</sup> The doer must not be separated from the believer! A trusting relationship with God naturally elicits the yearning to do justice. Abraham, having been credited *unto justice* while still uncircumcised, is the father of all uncircumcised Gentiles who trust God. At the same time, Abraham is also the father of all those who are circumcised, namely, his Jewish descendants, but who, like Abraham, received the sign of circumcision as a seal that committed them to do justice. Circumcision alone does not qualify those who are circumcised to be the authentic offspring of Abraham. Circumcision alone does not establish the ethnic identity of Abraham and his descendants as the unique people of God. Circumcision requires the same kind of trusting relationship that Abraham had with God that naturally expressed itself in doing God's justice. Authentic Jewishness, therefore, on the basis of this seal of physical circumcision, is to be characterized as a spiritual identity, determined by a 'circumcision of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter', that is, a trust committed to a life of justice (2.29). Consequently, it is the determination of the time differentiation between God's establishment of the testament with Abraham and God's enactment of the rite of circumcision that enables Paul to establish that the testament of inheritance is universally inclusive. 'Abraham... is the father of the people of God.'<sup>45</sup> Abraham is ordained forever to be the father of all the uncircumcised who trust God *and* the father of all the circumcised, but with the stipulation that they, the circumcised, like their ancestral patriarch, are engaged in a trusting relationship with God and committed to justice.<sup>46</sup>

Abraham, living *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) in his relationship with God, received the promise that he would be 'the heir of the *world* (*kosmos*)'.<sup>47</sup> That inheritance is the legacy of his offspring, both the uncircumcised and

p. 123, where he claims that both righteousness and faith are gifts of God. 'God has graciously enabled Abraham to trust, he does so, and it is graciously credited as righteousness'. If this is valid, why, then, is Christ necessary?

44. According to Schlatter, *Romans*, p. 113, God does the doing, and the believer does the believing.

45. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 36.

46. As Dunn observes, *Romans*, I, p. 211, the primary role of faith remains undisputed for both the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Yet the word 'faith' is inadequate in as far as it generally signifies a hierarchically oriented, subject-object relationship with God, instead of an intimate trusting 'I-Thou' relationship between God and Abraham in which God was as much involved as Abraham.

47. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, pp. 68-69, cites Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, p. 46, as support for his interpretation of 'world' as 'world to come'. According to Kirk, the 'justification, righteousness, inheritance, and life that Paul speaks of in chap. 4, while initiated in the past with the Christ event and proleptically enjoyed in the present, ultimately refer to resurrection life in the world to come'.

the circumcised, who, like their grand patriarch, live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). But, according to LXX Gen. 17.8, God promised Abraham the *earth/land* (*gēn*), specifically 'all the land of Canaan'. That promise, however, cannot be divorced from Gen. 15.6, 'Abraham trusted God and it was credited to him unto justice'. The covenant God established with Abraham presupposed a relationship of trust out of which justice would naturally follow. Paul, engaged in universalizing the trust of Abraham, has established Abraham as 'the father of us all', Jews and Gentiles, all who trust God and therefore naturally engage in doing justice. Consequently, Paul is compelled to extend the inheritance from 'all the land of Canaan' to 'the world'.<sup>48</sup> The 'grandiose dimensions' of the promise may have astounded his Roman addressees, who were very conscious of Rome's claim to rule the world.<sup>49</sup> But Paul is presupposing the inheritance of the world as the result of Abraham's sons and daughters moving from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ.

The promise of that inheritance, therefore, could only be fulfilled through the actualization of 'the justice of God'. Law, as Paul maintains in vv. 13-14, negates the trust and abolishes the promise because law, in view of the power of *hamartia*, cannot produce justice. The inheritance that the testament guarantees, as 4.13 stipulates, can only be realized *through the justice of trust* (*dia dikaiosynēs pisteōs*). Not 'the righteousness of faith', as the prepositional phrase is often translated, but *the justice of God* that originates from the relationship of trust!<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, the promise of inheriting the world will be fulfilled only when the justice of God, originating from a shared relationship of trust between God and human beings, is actualized.

Law requires *working*, as Paul stated in 4.4. But the *working* that it demands fails to achieve its objective because *hamartia* (infection) obstructs the realization of justice in society. Moreover, contrary to its purpose, as v. 15a concludes, 'the law works wrath'. Ironically, the law defeats its own objective.<sup>51</sup> Directed toward the actualization of justice through the

48. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*, p. 179, rightly claims that Paul's interpretation of the promise of land to Abraham's seed in 4.13 is 'deterritorialized' or 'a-territorial'. 'The land had become irrelevant'. 'Salvation', he says, 'was not now bound to the Jewish people centred in the land and living according to the Law; it was "located" not in a place, but in persons in whom grace and faith had their writ'. But Paul's word, *cosmos*, is oriented to the social construction of reality, and that would necessarily imply justice and the peace that it engenders.

49. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 325.

50. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 326, acknowledges that Paul is projecting a new social order based on persuasion, cooperation and an ethic of responsibility. All of that belongs to 'the inheritance of the world', but it is not actualized 'through righteousness of faith', but the justice that is realized through participation in the trust of Christ.

51. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 214-15 and 235, incorrectly judges the law to be the instrument that God employs to bring God's wrath to effect, in other words, handing human

establishment of boundaries, law raises to public consciousness the injustices that are committed in society and, as a consequence, engenders separation and estrangement that foster distrust, alienation and exile. The promise of law is the wrath of initiating destructive cycles of cause and effect.

If the law works wrath, producing this inescapable causal nexus that subverts its fundamental intention, what would society be like without law? If law does not promote justice, could a law-less society exist and prosper in which the justice of God would be actualizable without law? In contrast to the wrath that the law works, Paul submits the logic of the human condition in the absence of law: 'where there is no law, neither is there transgression'. Without law, there would be no commandments to transgress. No injustices would be committed that would elicit the awareness of *hamartia*, and, therefore, no estrangement between human beings would arise that would promote alienation and separation in society. By posing such a possibility, is Paul offering a glimpse of the conditions that are ultimately possible in a society in which *hamartia* has been eradicated and the Spirit of God inscribes the law of God's love on the tablets of all human hearts?

In v. 16 Paul appears to be enunciating that possibility as a condition that originates *out of trust*:

On account of this [it is] *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), in order that it is according to *grace* so that the promise might be in force to the entire seed, not only to the one *out of the law* but also to the one *out of the trust* of Abraham, who is the father of us all; even as it is written, 'Father of many nations I have established you'.

If the Old Testament is serving Paul as a history book, and the law of the Sinai Covenant was given 430 years after Abraham, his natural conclusion, as indicated earlier, would be, 'where there is no law, neither is there transgression'. Abraham, as the first heir of the *testament* of inheritance, was not conscious of *hamartia*. Yet, like all human beings since the Fall of Adam and Eve, he was subject to the infection of *hamartia*.

Now *hamartia* is not charged where there is no law, but death ruled from Adam right up to Moses even on those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression (5.13).

Abraham in his innocence trusted God, and his trust was credited to him unto justice. In their mutual relationship of trust, God anticipated that Abraham would naturally be inclined toward justice. The law that was added 430 years later disclosed *hamartia* and prepared the way for the second

beings over to the consequences of their deeds. It is human wrongdoing that produces wrath. The law, apart from human wrongdoing, makes human beings aware of *hamartia*, while, at the same time, it works its own wrath in society.

testamentary heir to fulfill the conditions of the testament by terminating the infection. Consequently, the benefits of the testament of inheritance, namely, 'the inheritance of the world', would be *graced* to all human beings, the entire seed of Abraham. Paul's phrase, 'the entire seed', in v. 16 refers to all of Abraham's offspring, both Jews and Gentiles, who, like Abraham, live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). That would include the Jews who live *out of the law*, namely, those who have received the sign of circumcision and 'follow the footsteps of our father Abraham while [he was] in the uncircumcision of trust'. As the ancestral pioneer of a trusting relationship with God, Abraham is divinely appointed to be 'the father of us all', and for divine affirmation Paul cites God's decree in the context of the divine renaming of Abram as Abraham in Gen. 17.5, 'Father of many nations I have established you'.

The justice of God that is 'out of trust', according to 4.16, is determined 'according to *grace* (*charis*)'. Initially Abraham was summoned by God to leave Haran:

Go out from your land and your kinsfolk and your father's house into the land that I shall show you. I shall make you into (*eis*) a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be blessed (Gen. 12.1-2).

Abraham's response of obedience necessarily required trust, trust that in the vulnerability of a life of migration God would safeguard him and his family. Consequently, the relationship that developed between them originated an interdependence of mutual trust. 'Abraham trusted God and it was credited to him unto (*eis*) justice.' God, extending to Abraham God's good will and favor, fulfilled the promises God made to him. The *grace* of God's calling, the *grace* of God's safekeeping and the *grace* of God's fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham combined to constitute their relationship of mutual trust. God's *grace*, therefore, as Paul discloses it in this context of 'the trust of Abraham', is both a spiritual and a material relationality.<sup>52</sup> It is 'grace as mutual empowerment', but its actualization reaches its fulfillment in the movement from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ and its culmination in the grace of the gift of the holy Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

Paul accentuates the character of Abraham's trust on the basis of his response to God's promise of an heir, 'I will give you a son by her [Sarah]'.<sup>54</sup> Without explicitly expressing his trust, Abraham falls on his face and, while laughing, says to himself, 'Will it happen to a hundred-year-old man and will Sarah, being ninety years old, give birth?'<sup>55</sup> If God declares

52. Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, p. 78.

53. 'Grace as mutual empowerment' is taken from Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, pp. 78-80.

54. Gen. 17.16; see also 18.1-15.

55. My translation of the Septuagint text of Gen. 17.17.

that he, Abraham, has been appointed to be ‘Father of many nations’, he must have an heir! Moreover, a lineal descendant is absolutely imperative if the testament God established with Abraham requires a second testamentary heir to fulfill the conditions of the trust so that its benefits can be made universally accessible. Since human conception is believed to be impossible when a man has reached the age of one hundred years and his wife ninety, Abraham’s only recourse, therefore, is to trust that God’s possibility can transcend the impossibility of the inception of Sarah’s pregnancy. From his unexpressed trust in the face of the presumed impossibility of human conception, Paul apprehends a radically intuitive understanding of God’s creative power in Abraham’s reflective wonderment and concludes: ‘in view of which he trusted God, the one *who makes the dead alive and calls the things that are not as the things that are*’.<sup>56</sup>

Paul accentuates the existential dilemma that confronted Abraham in this paradoxical condition: the possibility of God over against the impossibility of the physiological realities of old age. Such a paradox appears to be essential to Paul’s theological perspective, for in 1 Cor. 1.28 he acknowledges God’s preference for *the things that are not* (*ta mē onta*). That is, God privileges human beings whose humanity is reduced to a living death by their subjection to economic, social and political victimization and powerlessness. In their old age Abraham and Sarah are like *the things that are not* (*ta mē onta*). They do not have the power of conceiving a child, as Paul acknowledges in v. 19, ‘he considered his own body deadened, being about one hundred years old, and the deadness of mother Sarah’. Accordingly, the impossibility of the prospect that he will be the ancestor of many nations and coincidentally that he would inherit the world through the work of the second testamentary heir constitutes an existential crisis. Paul characterizes Abraham’s predicament with a double prepositional phrase that conveys his existential condition, *hos par’ elpida ep’ elpidi*. ‘Who *against hope* (*par’ elpida*) *in hope* (*ep’ elpidi*) *trusted* (*episteusen*), so that he becomes the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, “So shall your seed be”.’ Throughout this time of waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promise and living *against hope in hope* Abraham did not weaken with respect to *the trust* (*tē pistei*). In fact, Paul adds, ‘Now *unto* (*eis*) the promise of God he did not waver in disbelief, but *he was empowered by the trust*

56. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 123, interprets Abraham’s radical trusting relationship with God in 4.17 as an anticipation of ‘justification, as the restitution of creation and as resurrection’. More correctly, however, those who live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), and therefore, like Abraham, trust God who makes the dead alive, are on the threshold of the Christ event. But they have not as yet entered into the salvation of Abraham’s testamentary heir, the Christ. Like Abraham, they trust God and it is credited to them *unto* justice. But this is only the first of three kinds of justification that Paul differentiates.

(*tē pistei*) giving glory to God and being convinced that that which he had promised he is also able to do'. Oscillating between disbelief and the empowering trust, and reinforced by the promise of the trust, Abraham's hope was anchored in his intimate trusting relationship with God. As Paul concludes in vv. 20b-21,

But he was empowered with respect to *the trust*, giving glory to God and being convinced that he is also able to do that which he had promised.

The law 'works wrath'. While it is directed toward justice, it makes human beings aware of injustice and finally also the truth of *hamartia*. The result is distrust, alienation and separation within and among human beings. Consequently the law cannot actualize justice. But *out of the trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of the testament God established with Abraham, the actuality of justice was foreseen as the legacy of all human beings—but beyond the law! The fulfillment of the promise required a descendant, not only a circumcised descendant, but a true heir who, like his ancestor, would live in the same intimate relationship of trust with God. Abraham and Sarah, therefore, must have a child if he, Abraham, is to become 'Father of many nations'. They must have a child if their second testamentary heir is to be born in order to discharge the conditions of the *testament*. They must have a child if the promise of justice is to be fulfilled by those who live not only *out of the trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of Abraham but also *into the trust* (*eis pistin*) of Jesus Christ. As agonizingly uncertain and yet certain as his prospect was, Abraham lived in trust that God can and will fulfill the promise. 'Wherefore', as Paul enunciates once more by citing the text of Gen. 15.6, 'it was credited to him *unto* (*eis*) justice'. Indeed, in his trust he lived toward the justice that would eventually be realizable through the trust of Jesus Christ!

#### 4.23-25. *From the Trust of Abraham into the Trust of Jesus Christ*

To live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), as Abraham did, and therefore to be credited *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*) constitutes the entry into the promises that were pledged in and through the *testament* (*diathēkē*) that God established with Abraham. As Paul approaches his interpretation of the Christ event, he pauses to apply God's accreditation to those who journey *out of the trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of the first testamentary heir, Abraham, to those who will enter into the trust (*eis pistin*) of the second testamentary heir, Jesus Christ:

This was not written only on account of him, namely 'it was credited to him', but also on account of us to whom it is going to be credited, to those who believe on the One who resurrected Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up on account of our offenses and was resurrected on account of our vindication (4.24-25).

Now, at last, Paul is able to introduce Jesus' fulfillment of the conditions of the testament that God established with Abraham by which *hamartia* and its origination of the multiple forms of idolatry and injustice will be vanquished. The necessary starting point, of course, is the trust by which Abraham lived: '...he trusted God who makes the dead alive and calls the things that are not as the things that are'. Abraham's trust is to be emulated by those who move into the trust of Jesus Christ, for it is as radical as Abraham's trust because it is a trusting on (*pisteuousin epi*) the one who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.<sup>57</sup> Those who live on this side of the law and know that they are infected with *hamartia* are now able to proceed *from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ*. But as yet the impossible possibility of justice remains unrealized.

Consequently, it is completely erroneous to postulate that 'authentic justifying faith existed before the coming of Christ' and to pose Abraham and David as prototypes.<sup>58</sup> A trusting relationship with God is the only tie that binds them together with the post-Easter communities of Jews and Gentiles who have died and risen with Christ in baptism. 'Where there is no law', as Paul enunciated in 4.15, 'neither is there transgression'. And where there is no law, there is no consciousness of injustice and its underlying power of *hamartia*. Abraham, therefore, lived in innocence; he was not aware of the condition of his infection. His trust was accredited to him *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynē*).

His lineal descendant, the Christ, had to come to fulfill the terms of the testament (*diathēkē*), so that its benefits could be transmitted to Abraham's offspring and they could inherit the world. *The trust of Jesus Christ* is the consummation of that testament of inheritance, and it is only through participation in that trust that justification is ultimately possible, and with it the actualization of God's justice and the restoration of the creation. The Christ movement that soon identified itself by appropriating the Roman designation, *Christianoī*, is not a religion that unites Jews and Gentiles on the basis of an 'authentic justifying faith' that guarantees everlasting life. God's justice awaits to be established, human beings need to be healed and the creation waits, in fulfillment of God's hope, for its restoration.<sup>59</sup> All of

57. Käsemann's conclusion, *Romans*, p. 118, that 'Abraham's faith is an anticipation of Christian faith' is partly correct. It is the same trusting relationship that Abraham had with God, but moves into 'the trust of Jesus Christ' which culminates in securing the benefits of God's testament with Abraham, reconciliation and, above all, participation in a new creation and a new moral order beyond the law.

58. Lincoln, 'From Wrath to Justification', pp. 158-59.

59. Luther's summary of his interpretation of Rom. 4.21-25 in his *Lectures on Romans*, p. 152, is primarily oriented to individual salvation and remains unaware of the realizability of justice: 'Christ's death is the death of sin and his resurrection is the life



that is the work of the Christ that resulted in the establishment of the trust of Jesus Christ, and only now can Paul turn to his exposition of the gospel that discloses the justice of God that is being revealed *ek pisteōs eis pistin*.

of righteousness. For by his death he has offered satisfaction for *our sins*, and, by his resurrection, he has affirmed righteousness for us. And so his death does not merely signify but it effects the remission of our sins as a most sufficient satisfaction. And his resurrection is not only the sign of our righteousness, but, because it effects it in us if we believe it, also its cause.'

## 6

### JUSTIFICATION THROUGH JESUS' DEATH

#### 5.1-2. *We have peace toward God*

If God's promise to Abraham is to be realized and if Abraham's offspring are to inherit the world through the actualization of reconciliation and justice, the terms and conditions of the original *testament* that God established with Abraham must be fulfilled by the work of Abraham's second testamentary heir, Jesus Christ. Being justified *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) must be extended by *a second justification* that incorporates those who trust God into 'the trust of Jesus Christ', the *eis pistin* of 1.17.<sup>1</sup> The grammatical principle that is operating in 5.1 accentuates this critical movement from *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) into *trust* (*eis pistin*):

Therefore *being justified* (*dikaiōthentes*) *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), we have (*echomen*) peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom also we have been granted access *by the trust* into this grace in which we have been standing, and we boast in [the] hope of the glory of God (5.1-2).

The aorist passive participle, *dikaiōthentes* (being justified), is relative to the main verb, *echomen* (we have), and expresses an action that is antecedent to that of the main verb.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the act of 'being justified out

1. Luther, in his *Lectures on Romans*, p. 154, discloses his misunderstanding of 'being justified by faith' when he proceeds to base 'spiritual peace on righteousness'. The righteousness that was credited to Abraham is simply applied to Christians without an awareness of the alienation that is engendered by the recognition of *hamartia* through the law, something that Abraham did not experience because he lived 430 years before the law.

2. See F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. and ed. Robert W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 174-75; C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 99. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 348, correctly discerns the justification by faith as 'an event in the past', but he relates it to the believers' past experience of righteousness in baptism.

of trust' is prior to participating in the reality of 'having peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>3</sup> Reconciliation does not originate from being justified 'out of trust', but, as Paul subsequently states in 5.9, by 'being justified now by his blood'. Beyond being 'justified out of trust' is the second justification of being reconciled to God through the death of his Son. The two must necessarily be differentiated, but at the same time the latter is a continuation of the former on the basis of the testament of trust, that is, out of the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ.

Several manuscript variants of 5.1-2 require consideration. The original readings of both the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, as well as other uncials, the Latin, the Bohairic Coptic traditions and Marcion, offer the present active subjunctive *echōmen* (let us have) in place of the present active indicative *echomen* (we have): 'Therefore being justified out of trust, *let us have* peace towards God through out Lord Jesus Christ'. This, however, must be a later scribal substitution, for this is not a context for an appeal.<sup>4</sup> Paul's exhortations will be voiced in the ethics of chs. 12-14. Here he is interpreting the benefits of participation *in(to) the trust (eis pistin)* of the second testamentary heir, specifically the grace of *at-one-ment* with God. Those, like Abraham, who are justified only *out of trust (ek pisteōs)* would have no need of reconciliation toward God because they, not having had an encounter with the law, are not conscious of their infection of *hamartia*. But those who have lived on this side of Sinai have become aware of *hamartia* and therefore also the power that it exercises in society. Like a disease that can be both dormant and active, the effects of *hamartia* arouse suspicion and distrust in human relationships, and, by inducing fear, activate defensive and offensive postures of alienation that generate the socially dehumanizing conditions of 1.29-31. Consequently, those who have become aware of the stark realities of estrangement and exile and experience it within themselves are in need of a healing that eliminates alienation and restores inner unity and social communion through the possibility of reconciliation with God.

3. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 262, correctly acknowledges that 5.1, 'having been justified out of *faith*', 'is clearly Paul's recapitulation of the exegetical conclusion reached in 4.22 and its extension to all who believe, in 4.23-24'. But he does not go on to separate this justification 'out of trust' from the reconciliation by Christ's death in 5.10.

4. Metzger and the Committee of *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, p. 511, have reached a similar judgment, but assigned the evaluation of 'C' to the reading, indicating a considerable degree of doubt. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 132-33, lists the commentators who defend the reading *echōmen*, but rejects it because 'the content with its indicatives and the general thrust of the section are against it'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 348, prefers the subjunctive *echōmen*, because it adheres to his projected situation in Rome of the house and tenement churches acting in a combative manner against each other.

‘Peace towards God’ has effectively been established by the death of Jesus Christ (5.10a), and it is a state of being into which those who trust God may enter permanently.<sup>5</sup>

It is curious that some of the manuscripts that replace *echomen* (we have) with the hortatory verb *echōmen* (let us have) in 5.1 omit the dative phrase, *tē pistei* (by the trust) in v. 2. Both textual changes appear to be determined by an inadequate understanding of Paul’s employment of the Roman juridical principle of *fidei commissum* that is implicit in the double prepositional phrase, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, of 1.17. Participation in the movement from *the trust of Abraham* into *the trust of Jesus Christ* spontaneously incorporates those who trust God into *the second justification*, ‘...being justified now by his blood’. Consequently, the dative phrase, *tē pistei* (by the trust), is essential to the text of 5.2.<sup>6</sup>

The *grace* (*charis*) of being granted access ‘into this trust’ is the grace of relationality. It is the grace of *standing* in the state of ‘peace towards God’ as a continuous relationship of reconciliation. It is a life in God, and, as in the trust of Abraham, it is constituted as an interdependent relationship.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, it is naturally continuous because, as Paul will assert in 6.4, ‘We are buried with him (Jesus) through baptism into death’. Identification with Jesus’ death through the experience of eschatological death in baptism terminates the diseased condition of sin and with it both the alienation that the disease engenders and its predisposition towards retaliation. The end of the destructive cycle of ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ signifies the beginning of freedom, a freedom outside of the natural inclination to return like for like, humiliation for humiliation, injury for injury, violence for violence. Freedom from retaliation is the effective work of God’s indwelling Spirit, and, as Paul declared in 2 Cor. 3.17, ‘...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom’. Those who enter into this freedom by continuing to live in the state of ‘peace toward God’ constitute a new environment of human relationships in which the process of humanizing reconciliation is nurtured individually as well as communally. ‘Peace towards God’, therefore, generates a foundational wholeness within each

5. Also Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 469-70.

6. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 511-12. Again, a ‘C’ rating is given to the inclusion of the dative phrase, *tē pistei* (by the trust) in 5.2, but apparently without understanding its meaning and function. Because *tē pistei* in all likelihood is an original part of 5.2, the brackets that enclose it in the 27th edition of the Nestle–Aland *Novum Testamentum graece* should be removed.

7. Contrary to Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 295, who states, ‘...death can only be outwitted for those who yield again their submission as creatures to the creator, in dependence on whom alone life can be sustained despite death’.

individual believer that is grounded in a trusting relationship with God and coincidentally is directed to all human beings in society. The resulting peace in all those relationships and the freedom from retaliation that is activated constitute the prerequisite for the boast 'in the hope of the glory of God'.<sup>8</sup> As yet it is only a hope, nothing more. Nevertheless, it is a hope that will be fulfilled during life on this side of the grave!

#### 5.3-4. *Scribal Interpolation*

Verse 5 indicates that Paul intends to say more about 'the hope of the glory of God', but vv. 3-4 momentarily interrupt the progression of his thought with an inappropriate moralizing observation on the character development that affliction produces:

And not only this, but we also boast in afflictions, knowing that affliction produces fortitude, and fortitude [produces] character and character [produces] hope.

Boasting in the hope of the glory of God on the basis of being reconciled to God is replaced by 'boasting in afflictions' and the virtues that are derived from suffering them. Paul, however, is focused on the effects of Jesus' death, its termination of the old moral order and with it the infection of sin that dominates the lives of all human beings and that, to one extent or another, has destined them to living death. Verses 3-4 are disruptive, and in all probability, like 3.22b-26, they may be regarded as another scribal interpolation, derived perhaps from an earlier marginal gloss.<sup>9</sup> There is no manuscript evidence to support this claim, but the incongruous moralizing of vv. 3-4 as well as the natural continuity from v. 2 into v. 5 make it a reasonable possibility. Verse 11, remarkably similar in vocabulary and structure, should also be viewed as a post-Pauline insertion.<sup>10</sup>

8. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 264, wrongly maintains that the glory that is hoped for 'relies solely on God's powerful favor, accepted in humble trust, a hope like Abraham's (4.18)'. Salvation is a life in God, and, as Paul stated in Phil. 2.12-13, it involves both God and the believer: '...work out your own salvation, for it is God who is at work in you enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure'. The believer's growth into freedom and the doing of justice fulfills 2 Cor. 3.18 and its metamorphosis from one degree of glory into another.

9. The earliest manuscript witness to this context of Romans is the fragmentary text of 0220, an uncial of the 'late third or early fourth century', and it includes 5.3-4. See *The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* (ed. Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 646-47.

10. Most commentators do not consider 5.3-4 or 5.11 as scribal interpolations.

5.5-10. *At-one-ment*

For the believers of the Christ movement to hope for participation in the glory of God on the basis of their reconciliation with God and their fellow human beings may appear to be an immodest expectation, at least in life on this side of the grave. Yet Paul asserts that it is a hope that will not be ‘put to shame’. It will be fulfilled! The glory of God will be realized! Those who live in the grace of *at-one-ment* with God will be transfigured from one degree of glory into another as they, in a mirror-like fashion, reflect the glory of the New Adam who is the image and likeness of God. Paul had avowed that in 2 Cor. 3.18:<sup>11</sup>

Now we all with an uncovered face, reflecting [in mirror-like fashion] the glory of the Lord, are being metamorphosed into the same image from glory into glory, even from the Lord of the Spirit.

He repeated it in 2 Cor. 4.6 in his interpretation of Gen. 1.2, ‘For it is the God who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness”, who shone in our hearts to reveal the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ’.

The fulfillment of that hope of being transfigured into the glory of God is dependent on the incarnation of God’s love in those who have moved from *the trust of Abraham (ek pisteōs) into the trust of Jesus Christ (eis pistin)* and therefore live in the state of reconciliation. As Paul certifies in v. 5, ‘For the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit that is given to us’. This is not a fulfillment of the *Shema*.<sup>12</sup> This is not a love that is to be directed toward God. Why should God cause human beings to love God through God’s own intermediary, God’s Spirit? Those who have been reconciled to God through the Lord Jesus Christ have become bearers of God’s Spirit. Accordingly, they belong to the New Humanity of the Last Adam, and, as ‘life-giving spirits’, their natural frame of mind is the projection of God’s love into their relationships with others and, coincidentally, toward the actualization of God’s justice in the world.<sup>13</sup>

11. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 133, states, ‘Like resurrection, the divine image is for him in the first instance a christological predicate, which, apart from the divergent tradition in 1 Cor. 11.7, is transferred to the Christian only apocalyptically’. Subsequently he adds, ‘The travail of the present time under the aegis of the Messiah transforms believers back into the image lost by Adam’. According to 2 Cor. 3.18, however, the hope of ‘the glory of God’ is realized through a gradual metamorphosis into the image of Christ—not the image lost by Adam! It signifies the reality of becoming a ‘life-giving spirit’.

12. This is the claim of Wright, ‘Romans and the Theology of Paul’, p. 45. In this context of reconciliation, God’s love is to be directed out into the world by those to whom God confirmed his love by Christ dying on their behalf, while they were still sinners.

13. This is the decisive issue that Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 99-108, raises through his reading of Derrida and his consequential interaction with Paul’s

The gift of God's indwelling Spirit, the source of God's love, is conferred by God through the reconciling death of Jesus Christ to all who participate in that reconciliation. That at-one-ment with God was constituted by Christ whose death occurred propitiously at the *divinely appointed season* (*kairon*) when all human beings were subject to the helplessness of their diseased condition of sin, above all, at a time of the slave-based economy of the Mediterranean world dominated and perpetuated by Roman power and injustice.<sup>14</sup> To accentuate the magnitude of God's love in Christ, Paul utilizes the rabbinic rhetorical device of a *qal wahomer* to highlight the incomparability of Jesus' vicarious sacrifice to any and every other conceivable sacrificial death: 'For one hardly will die for a *just* human being, though on behalf of a *good* human being one might possibly dare to die'.<sup>15</sup> The minor premise of Paul's analogical movement stresses the rarity of someone dying for another human being. On the one hand, a vicarious death for a righteous person, an individual who is dutifully upright and unimpeachable in conduct, supposedly scarcely ever occurs. On the other hand, a sacrificial death for a good human being might possibly happen more frequently. First Clement 55 cites examples of kings, rulers and heroic men and women from different nations who have given themselves up to death so that they might deliver others from danger, slavery and destruction. But the sacrificial death that

Letter to the Romans. Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute—or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 147, characterizes love dialectically as the dynamic of a weak, vulnerable human being who in loving is reflecting the perfection of God: 'Only a lacking, vulnerable being is capable of love: the ultimate mystery of love is therefore that incompleteness is in a way higher than completion. On the one hand, only an imperfect, lacking being loves: we love because we do *not* know all. On the other hand, even if we were to know everything, love would inexplicably be higher than completed knowledge. Perhaps the true achievement of Christianity is to elevate a loving (imperfect) Being to the place of God—that is, of ultimate perfection.' The aphorism that is attributable to Johann Gottlieb Fichte and quoted by Douglas R. McGaughey, *Religion before Dogma: Groundwork in Practical Theology* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006), p. 34, may be added in this context, 'We do not act because we know, but rather, we know because we cannot not act'.

14. See Chapter 6, titled 'Rome the Suzerain', in de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, pp. 327–408.

15. According to Günther Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. and ed. Markus Bockmuehl; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 1996), p. 18, a *qal wahomer* is a rhetorical principle of argumentation that moves 'from the lighter (less significant) to the weightier (more significant) and vice versa'. Frederick Wisse, 'The Righteous Man and the Good Man in Romans v.7', *NTS* 19 (1972–73), pp. 91–93 (93), without referring to the rhetorical device of a *qal wahomer*, reaches the same conclusion. The two phrases of v. 7 are not in tension, 'for they depend on each other for their meaning'. 'The death of Christ is the correlative and greatest proof of man's unrighteousness.'



eclipses them all, that exceeds even the possibility of someone dying for a good human being, is the vicarious death of Christ. This is the major premise of his analogical movement in v. 8:

God confirmed his own love unto us that while we were still *sinners* (*hamartōlōn*) Christ died on our behalf\*.

Yet even the sacrificial death of Christ is disproportionate to the possibilities that lie beyond it. In order to articulate those realities, Paul constructs another *qal wahomer* that displaces the one that he has employed to establish the ascendancy of the death of Jesus Christ over all other vicarious deaths:

How much more, therefore, *being justified* (*dikaiōthentes*) now by his blood shall we be saved from the wrath. For if being enemies *we were reconciled* (*katēllagēmen*) to God through the death of his Son, how much more, *being reconciled* (*katallagentes*), shall we be saved by his life (5.10).

For the second time in this section of 5.1-11 Paul utilizes the verb *dikaion* (to justify), but now, in contrast to 5.1, he connects it with Jesus' death. Its form as an aorist passive participle, *dikaiōthentes* (being justified), corresponds to its earlier use in v. 1. But as identical as they are, these two forms of the aorist passive participle convey two entirely different acts of justification.<sup>16</sup> In 5.1 *dikaiōthentes* expresses an action that is antecedent to that of the main verb *echomen* (we have). The journey of faith begins with God crediting 'unto justice' those who, like Abraham and Sarah, trust God. Because they have not yet been confronted by the law, they are unaware of their diseased condition. They trust God, but that trust does not remove them from the old moral order, and therefore they remain subject to a world that is dominated and fated by the condition of *hamartia*. Accordingly, the trust that was credited to Abraham and Sarah *unto* (*eis*) justice must not be transferred to the Christ event and be confused with *the necessity of reconciliation*. 'Being justified by his blood' is based on the Good Friday event of Jesus' death and is directed to those who live on this side of Sinai. It is the minor or lesser reality of Paul's argumentation; it is the reality of reconciliation, a restored relationship with God. The greater is the 'how much more shall we be saved by his life'. The two, however, are not identical. Reconciliation is a present ongoing reality; salvation, being saved, is the healing

16. All too often the participle *dikaiōthentes* of 5.9 is linked to the same participle of 5.1, as though the reconciliation of 5.9 is the fulfillment of being 'justified out of trust' in 5.1. See Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 118; Cranfield, *Romans*, I, pp. 265-66; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 138; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 82; Witherington, *Romans*, p. 133. All reference 'the blood' of 5.9 back to 3.25. See Jewett, *Romans*, p. 363, who correctly differentiates the justification of 5.9 from the justification of 5.1.

and restoration that is realized into the future.<sup>17</sup> The differentiation is also acknowledged by Badiou:

It is imperative not to confuse *katallagē*, reconciliation, which is the operation of death, with *sōtēria*, salvation, which is the evental operation of resurrection. The former immanentizes the conditions of the latter without thereby rendering the latter necessary. Through Christ's death, God renounces his transcendent separation; he unseparates himself through filiation and shares in a constitutive dimension of the divided subject.<sup>18</sup>

Coincidentally, it must also be acknowledged that Paul's sacrificial language in his interpretation of Jesus' death must not be construed as a substitutionary sacrifice by which God's justice is satisfied.<sup>19</sup> Nothing is said here of a self-offering that is made to propitiate God. Paul does not presuppose that God is a punitive deity. That is the interpretation of the atonement that is expressed by the scribal interpolation of 3.25-26, and it has been the atonement theology of both Luther and Calvin and their Reformation legacy. Paul's interpretation of Good Friday is related to Easter and Easter is related to Good Friday, and both are determined by his apocalyptic eschatology. The Easter event doubtlessly implies God's legitimation of Jesus as God's Son. At the same time, according to Paul's apocalyptic eschatology, it must also be construed as God's reconstitution of all things.<sup>20</sup> The event of Jesus' resurrection from the dead signifies God's establishment of a new creation, but only after God's judgment at Jesus' death has terminated the old creation and, with it, its moral order.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, to be 'in Christ', as Paul declares in 2 Cor. 5.17, is to be construed as an incorporation into 'a *new creation*

17. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 138, also makes this differentiation, 'Being set right and reconciled are present realities, while salvation is seen as essentially in the future'. He dissolves the ambiguity of the future a few sentences later, when he says, 'Both the tense of "will be saved" and the eschatological context here make it evident Paul is not talking about some spiritual experience in the present, but rather deliverance and perhaps resurrection at the end of human history'. See also Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 87.

18. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 70. He goes on to say, 'In doing so, he creates, not the event, but what I call its site. The evental site is that datum that is immanent to a situation and enters into the composition of the event itself, addressing it to *this* singular situation, rather than another. Death is construction of the evental site insofar as it brings about that resurrection (which cannot be inferred from it) *will have been* addressed to men, to their subjective situation. Reconciliation is a given of the site, a virtual indication—inoperative by itself—of the extent to which Christ's resurrection consists in the invention of a new life *by man*.'

19. This is Dunn's interpretation of 5.10, *Romans*, I, p. 268.

20. See *1 En.* 94.16; and also 5.7-9.

21. See Isa. 26.19, the earliest reference to resurrection. Also Dan. 12.2; *1 En.* 91.16-17; 103.4; *2 Bar.* 69-74.

(*kainē ktisis*); old things passed away, behold *new things* (*kaina*) have happened'. Jesus' resurrection from the dead, interpreted in the light of apocalyptic eschatology, denotes God's inauguration of a New Heaven and a New Earth and with it a New Humanity.

Consequently—moving backwards from Easter to Good Friday and proceeding on the basis of the Easter event interpreted as God's establishment of a new creation—Jesus' *death* must necessarily signify the end of the old creation and its morally diseased order that originated with the Fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the garden of God.<sup>22</sup> That is why Paul can state in 2 Cor. 5.14-15:

For the love of Christ compels us, judging this, that one died on behalf of all, consequently all died. And he died on behalf of all so that those who live no longer live to themselves but to the one who died and was resurrected on their behalf.

Yet, in spite of this reverse movement of the early church's post-Easter interpretation, that is, from the new creation of the resurrection backwards to death and the end of the old creation, the theological significance of the Christ event proceeds from death into resurrection. By his death Jesus Christ, the second testamentary heir of the *testament of inheritance* (*diathēkē*) that God established with Abraham, terminates the human *infection of sin* (*hamartia*) and its generating power of injustice.<sup>23</sup> The result is a new, indeed, a second justification that establishes reconciliation or *at-one-ment* with God, *at-one-ment* with the believer's self and therefore also *at-one-ment* with all human beings. It is not *the blood* of Jesus Christ that constitutes this new relationship of 'peace towards God'. It is his death! For the *life* that is in the blood is terminated in death by the spilling of blood, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament enunciate, 'the life of every creature—its blood is its life' (Lev. 17.14; also 17.11). Accordingly, it is the death of Jesus that ends the old creation, and all who participate in his death through baptism are justified *out of the trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of Jesus Christ. To underline this meaning of 'being justified now by his blood' Paul formulates another *qal wahomer* in v. 10:

For if being enemies *we were reconciled* (*katēllagēmen*) to God through the *death* of his Son, how much more, *being reconciled* (*katallagentes*), shall we be saved by his life.

22. This backwards movement, determined by Paul's interpretation in the light of Jewish apocalypticism, does not appear to be drawn into the interpretation of Rom. 5–6.

23. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 225, referring to 3.24-26, claims that Jesus' death was in accord with the law of the sin offering on the Day of Atonement. Rom. 5.1-11, and not 3.24-26, conveys Paul's interpretation of Jesus' death, and it is determined by apocalyptic eschatology, not the law of sin offering.

Before salvation is possible, and therefore before the justice of God can be established on the basis of the *testament* that God established with Abraham, the disease that dominates the old moral order and the hostility that it originates between God and human beings must be terminated. 'Being justified by his blood', or being reconciled to God 'through the death of his Son', precedes being 'saved by his life'. Death is necessarily prior to resurrection! Reconciliation precedes salvation!

### 5.11. *Scribal Interpolation*

Verse 11, like 5.3, begins with the same formulaic phrase, *ou monon de* (and not only this), and, like v. 3, continues with the same sequence of conjunctions, *alla kai* (but also), followed by a form of the verb *kauchōmenoi* (boast). Additionally, the prepositional phrase, 'through our Lord Jesus Christ', may have been borrowed from 5.1:

And not only this, but even *boasting* in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we now began to receive reconciliation.

The remarkable similarity between vv. 3 and 11 and their stress on the prerogative of boasting about an actuality that is derived from a specific aspect of Paul's interpretation of the Christ event suggest the possibility that v. 11, like v. 3, is a scribal interpolation. While v. 3 moralizes on the character benefits of affliction, v. 11 justifies boasting in God on the basis of the reconciliation with God that has been achieved 'through our Lord Jesus Christ'. It is a curious note that has no immediate bearing on the actualization of 'peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>24</sup>

24. There is no manuscript evidence to support this claim that 5.11 is a scribal interpolation. Most commentators appear to accept its Pauline authenticity.

## THE LEGACY OF JESUS CHRIST

5.12-21. *Saved by his Life*

The salvation of 'being saved by his life' coincidentally includes the major premise of the prior *qal wahomer* of v. 9, 'how much more shall we be saved through him from the wrath (*tēs orgēs*)'. 'The wrath', although unaccompanied by a modifying qualifier, is the human entanglement in the causal nexus of consequences that are generated by idolatry and injustice.<sup>1</sup> It is the cause and effect concatenations that are produced by human wrong-doing, cause and effect sequences that fate human beings to a predestination that cannot be undone by human endeavor. The wrath (*hē orgē*) is implicit in the generational successions marked by the Hebrew proverb, 'The fathers and mothers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'.<sup>2</sup> The wrath also encompasses the consequential effects of the transgressions and offenses that the power of sin engenders in its conflict with the law. As Paul observed in 4.15, 'For the law produces wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression'. As a power *hamartia* can be dormant; but it easily activates defiance and disobedience in a confrontation with the law and consequently engenders chains of action/reaction. 'The wrath' is comprehensive, embracing all the cause and effect cycles that are generated by the power of *hamartia* in the world.

Jesus' death has terminated the moral order of the old creation and the disease of *hamartia* that infects both the human beings who participate in it and the structures and institutions which they constitute. The old moral order, however, continues to prevail; and within it the power of *sin* produces the effects of *wrath* that doom human beings to living death.<sup>3</sup> Salvation,

1. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 138, does not qualify his use of the word 'future', and what he says could be interpreted eschatologically at the end of history: 'Salvation is viewed here as future. It involves being rescued from the coming wrath of God.'

2. Jer. 31.29 and Ezek. 18.2.

3. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 134, has expressed Paul's eschatology persuasively: 'But precisely this is the sphere which the new aeon invades. In the time ushered in with

therefore, is ‘being saved from the wrath’, and it is ‘being saved by his life’. Not Jesus’ life before his death, but Jesus’ life as the result of his resurrection from the dead! In this second half of ch. 5 Paul elucidates the meaning of salvation according to his interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Consequently, salvation is not to be confused with reconciliation: ‘having peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ’. *At-one-ment* with God is dependent upon ‘being justified by his blood’, that is, being reconciled by Jesus’ death. Salvation, on the other hand, signifies ‘being saved from the wrath’, and it is contingent upon being healed of the condition of *hamartia*.<sup>4</sup>

#### 5.12-14. *Adam and Eve, the Fall, and Original Sin*

Mythically, the condition of *hamartia* can be traced back in time to the disobedience of ‘one human being’, Adam. In contrast to his analysis of the human condition in 1.18–3.9, in which he explicated God’s wrath as the punishment that individuals inflict on themselves by their impiety and injustice, Paul proceeds to project the condition of *hamartia* back to its very beginning in the Fall of Adam and Eve:

On account of this, even as *hē hamartia* (the infection of sin) entered into the world through one human being and through *tēs hamartias* death, and so death spread unto all human beings *in as much as* (*eph’ hō*) all sinned.

Here, in 5.12, the reader encounters the third and fourth occurrences of the term *hamartia*. Earlier, in 3.9, Paul indicted all human beings to be ‘under *sin* (*hamartia*)’; in 3.20 he observes that, ‘By the law is the recognition of *hamartia*’. In both of these instances *hamartia* is anarthrous. But now for the first time in 5.12 it is accompanied by the definite article, and, of the 41 occurrences of the singular form of the word that follow in the letter, 31 are arthrous. Why does Paul begin to employ the definite article in conjunction with *hamartia* in 5.12 and the majority of the following instances? On the one hand, the arthrous uses of *hamartia* correspond to the many

Christ the two aeons are no longer separated chronologically and spatially as in Jewish apocalyptic. The earth has become their battleground. Assailed faith and the vanquishing of the powers mark the place where Christian boasting paradoxically proclaims the peace and freedom already secured even in the midst of the ongoing conflict.’ See also Käse-mann’s discussion on pp. 30 and 142. Because he rejects the ontological change that Jesus’ death and resurrection have inaugurated, and because he projects the message of reconciliation to the end-time, human beings continue to be frail, and in their complete dependence on God the deliverance of the creation from its bondage is projected into the future of God’s reconstitution of all things.

4. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 268, refuses to differentiate reconciliation and salvation because it ‘would be pedantic, theologically unjustified, and pastorally dangerous’.

occurrences of *hamartia* with the definite article in the Septuagint; and that may be a pretext of Paul's usage. On the other hand, by utilizing the definite article with *hamartia* in 5.12, *hamartia* is introduced explicitly in conjunction with a universally transmitted condition in order to accentuate the character of *hamartia* as a diseased state of being, or more precisely as 'the state' of infected humanity in the moral order of the old creation. Accordingly, it is '*hē hamartia*'! Consequently, its prevalent translation in English as 'sin' is fundamentally inadequate. *Hē hamartia* is *the condition of sin*, the condition that is both an infection and a power; and it is this condition that Jewish apocalypticism eschatologically expects to be eradicated.

Paul's earlier focus was concentrated on the wrong-doing that individuals commit, wrongdoing which affects and infects all humanity. 'There are the pestilences and there are the innocent victims.'<sup>5</sup> But everyone is diseased.<sup>6</sup> Now in 5.12-14, in order to interpret 'being saved from the wrath', Paul introduces humanity's subjection to the disastrous cause and effect chains of wrath that result from *the infection of sin* (*hē hamartia*) entering into the world through 'one human being'. Adam, the progenitor of all humanity originated *hē hamartia*, and, throughout the countless generations that have followed, all human beings have contracted this disease. Not, however, on the basis of genetic or biological transmission! The Hebrew proverb that conveys the generational transmission of *the infection* is encountered in Jeremiah's eschatological vision of the future, 'In those days they shall no longer say, "The fathers and mothers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"'. The original sin of Adam and Eve was defiance against God's prohibition to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By willfully grasping for this knowledge, in all likelihood to safeguard the vulnerability of the flesh-and-blood selfhood of their existence, they became the prototype of all human beings, and the infection, multiplied into 'a supraindividual magnitude', gathers all human beings into its dreadful consequences.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the terrors of the contingencies of historical existence that pose the threat of death have inclined the descendants of Adam and Eve to use power in all its forms to insure their security and to prolong their lives, and, if necessary, by manipulating, exploiting and destroying each other. Paul characterized the effects of this disposition in 1.28-31:

5. Camus, *The Plague*, p. 229.

6. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 85-86, '...sin is much more than an individual offense against God's will. It concerns—as already indicated in Gen. 3.14ff.—a deadly fate which comes over humanity and its world.'

7. The phrase 'a supraindividual magnitude' is drawn from Paul Ricoeur, "'Original Sin": A Study in Meaning', in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 277.



They revel in every kind of wrongdoing, wickedness, greed, and malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and mean-spiritedness. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters. They are insolent, arrogant, boasters, contrivers of evil things, disobedient to parents, void of understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful.

The consciousness of human depravity and moral corruption induces the quest for structures of security that result in the establishment of dualistic systems of good and evil in order to fix the boundaries that will guarantee protection and safe-keeping. Purity codes that separate the clean from the unclean are formulated by predetermining which categories of people, actions and things are divinely approved and which are not. Adam and Eve, therefore, in as far as they sinned first, are the originators of *the infection*, and they are also the first to suffer its consequence of expulsion from Paradise and its concomitant reality, death. Throughout this second half of ch. 5 Paul will move from this fated human predicament to its resolution of 'being saved by his life'.

His interpretation of the Fall appears to correspond to the origin of sin as it was construed within the movements of Jewish apocalypticism and rabbinic Judaism. Both implicate all humanity in the sin of Adam and Eve, and the resulting consequence of death is extended to the solidarity of the human race on the basis of the solidarity of the family. Its corporate reality is dramatically illustrated by Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai in the *Leviticus Rabbah*:

A number of men were sitting in a boat when one of them took an auger and began boring a hole beneath him. His companions said to him, 'What are you sitting there and doing?' He replied, 'What business is it of yours? Am I not boring under myself? They answered, 'It is our business, because the water will come in and swamp the boat with us in it'.<sup>8</sup>

Analogically, Adam and Eve, by their disobedience of eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, bored a hole in the boat in which humanity will sail into the future. All their descendants to one extent or another have been affected and infected by their transgression and by the legacy of a flawed boat that may represent the fallen culture that is transmitted from generation to generation. The outcome for all is death resulting from the cause and effect chain that historically and socially links each generation back to Adam and Eve.

This aporetic reality is effectively expressed in the *Midrash Tanhuma*. The righteous descendants of Adam reproach him because death was visited

8. Taken from George Foote Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), I, p. 471.

upon them as the result of his sin. 'I was guilty of one sin', he responds, 'but there is not a single one among you who is not guilty of many iniquities'.<sup>9</sup>

In a similar manner the texts of Jewish apocalypticism attribute the origin of the condition of sin to the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. According to the Apocalypse of 2 Baruch, Adam's transgression originated the human infection, yet at the same time his descendants are held responsible for their own actions and bear the guilt of their own misdeeds:<sup>10</sup>

O Adam, what did you do to all who were born after you? And what will be said of the first Eve who obeyed the serpent, so that the whole multitude is going to corruption? (48.42-43a).

For, although Adam sinned first and has brought death upon all who were not in his own time, yet each of them who was born from him has prepared for himself the coming torment (54.15).

For his works have not taught you, nor has the artful work of his creation that has existed always persuaded you. Adam is, therefore, not the cause, except only for himself, but each of us has become our own Adam (54.18-19).

The author of *2 Esdras* (*4 Ezra*) laments in 7.116-20 that Adam, if he had to be created, was not restrained from sinning:

It would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam, or else, when it had produced him, had restrained him from sinning. For what good is it to all that they live in sorrow now and expect punishment after death? O Adam, what have you done! For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants. For what good is it to us, if an eternal age has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death? And what good is it that an everlasting hope has been promised to us, but we have miserably failed.

The conundrum of 5.12 has been the enigmatic phrase *eph' hō*. How is it to be construed? 'Contrary to every individual initiation of evil, inheritance is a question of continuation, of a perpetuation, which is like a hereditary taint transmitted to an entire human race by a first man who is the ancestor of all men.'<sup>11</sup> What is the conception of inheritance that Paul is deriving from the myth of the Fall of Adam and Eve? Is *eph' hō* a relative clause that should be translated 'in whom' which necessarily refers back to 'one human being', namely Adam, and implies that the condition of sin is transmitted in and through human conception? Is sin, therefore, a hereditary vice inherited from Adam? Or is *eph' hō* to be construed as a prepositional phrase, signifying 'in view of the fact that', or 'inasmuch as', that conveys a condition of

9. *Tanḥuma*, *Hukkat* 39; taken from Moore, *Judaism*, I, p. 476.

10. These translations of texts from *2 Baruch* and *2 Esdras* (*4 Ezra*) have been taken from Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I.

11. Ricoeur, '“Original Sin”: A Study in Meaning', pp. 269-86 (276).

inheritance that is *socially, psychologically and culturally* transferred from generation to generation?<sup>12</sup> What is the schema of inheritance that Paul is deriving from the myth of the Fall of Adam?

For if *eph' hō* means 'all have sinned in Adam', then it is tempting to find all men already contained in some fashion in the loins of Adam, as was frequently said; by contrast, if *eph' hō* means 'by means of which', 'concerning which', or even 'because of the fact that' all have sinned, then the role of individual responsibility in this chain of heredity sin is preserved.<sup>13</sup>

Significantly, the Latin translation of the Greek construction of 5.12, *eph' hō pantes hēmarton* (in as far as all sinned) appears to have determined the subsequent interpretation of this clause from the time of Pelagius and Augustine through Luther and Calvin into the present. The Vulgate's rendition of the clause, *in quo omnes peccaverunt* (in whom all sinned) was construed by Pelagius to signify 'a relation of imitation'.<sup>14</sup> That is, *in whom* refers to Adam, and 'In Adam means like Adam'.<sup>15</sup> Every human being sins 'by example or by pattern'.<sup>16</sup>

Augustine of Hippo, also interpreting the same relative clause of the Vulgate translation of 5.12, concluded that it designated the state of sin originating in *utero*. At the beginning of his spiritual autobiography, *The Confessions*, Augustine, in the light of Ps. 51.5, struggled to determine how he was already corrupt by nature while in his mother's womb.

I do not remember my infancy; I can only take other people at their word, and make some guess as to how I spent it from looking at other children. And though this guess work is quite reliable, I would be none the less reluctant to consider that life to be of a piece with the one I now live in this world. Rather it is like the life I led while still in my mother's womb, for both are now wrapped in the mists of oblivion. But if *I was conceived in iniquity, and my mother fed me on sin in her womb* [Ps. 51.5(50.7)], then, Lord, at what time or what place was I, your servant, ever innocent?<sup>17</sup>

12. See Cranfield, *Romans*, I, pp. 274-81 (278), for an extended discussion of 5.12. He lists six lines of interpretation, but, of the six, only two which construe *eph' hō* as a relative clause and as a prepositional phrase are generally supported. He finally concludes that *eph' hō* in its relationship to the verb *hēmarton* (they sinned) combines the sinning of Adam's descendants and the 'corrupt nature inherited from Adam'.

13. Ricoeur, "'Original Sin": A Study in Meaning', p. 277.

14. For a discussion of the problem of the Vulgate's translation of Romans and the differing interpretations of Pelagius and Augustine, see Theodore de Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 1-35.

15. Ricoeur, "'Original Sin": A Study in Meaning', p. 278.

16. *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, p. 92.

17. Augustine, *The Confessions* (trans. and ed. Philip Burton with an introduction by Robin Lane Fox; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Everyman's Library, 2001), I.7.12. The italics belong to Augustine's *Confessions*.

It is in his treatise against Pelagius, *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin*, that he explicitly refers to Rom. 5.12:

From the moment, then, when 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, because all men sinned', the entire mass of our nature was ruined beyond doubt and fell into the possession of its destroyer.<sup>18</sup>

In the same treatise, he subsequently relates this ruination of human nature to his paradoxical understanding of the goodness of God's creation:

In the present inquiry, however, when the question is not for what purpose the creator is wanted, but the savior, we have not to consider what good there is in natural procreation, but what evil there is in sin, whereby our nature has been certainly vitiated. *No doubt the two are generated simultaneously—both nature and nature's flaw; one, however of these is good, the other evil.* The one comes to us from the bounty of the Creator, the other is contracted from the original condemnation; the one has its cause in the good will of the supreme, the other in the depraved will of the first man; the one exhibits God as the maker of the creature, the other as the punisher of disobedience.<sup>19</sup>

Augustine's paradoxical differentiation between human nature, as created by God, and human nature, as flawed by depraved will, is decisive for a more qualified understanding of his doctrine of original sin.<sup>20</sup> It was not simply propagation that produced human depravity. It was the concupiscence of the sexual act that polluted human nature and infected the fetus that was generated in the woman's uterus:

From this state, after he had sinned, man was banished, and through his sin he subjected his descendants to the punishment of sin and damnation, for he had radically corrupted them, *in himself*, by his sinning. As a consequence of this, all those descended from him and his wife (who prompted him to sin and who was condemned along with him at the same time)—*all those born through carnal lust*, on whom the same penalty is visited as for disobedience—all these entered into the inheritance of original sin. Through this involvement they were led, through diverse errors and sufferings (along with the rebel angels, their corruptors and possessors and companions) to that final stage of punishment without end.<sup>21</sup>

18. *The Grace of Christ and Original Sin*, Book 2, ch. 34 in John J. O'Meara (ed.), *An Augustine Reader* (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 476.

19. *Confessions*, Book 2, ch. 38, in O'Meara (ed.), *An Augustine Reader*, pp. 479-80. The italics are mine. For Augustine's influence on the interpretation of Romans, see T.J. Deidun, 'Romans', in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. R.J. Collins and J.L. Houlden; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), pp. 601-604. Summarized in Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 182-83. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 86, also recognizes that Augustine's interpretation, which construes the pronoun of the relative clause *eph' hō* as 'in whom', has been decisive into modern times.

20. See Augustine, 'The Problem of Evil', *Enchiridion*, 4.12-15.

21. Augustine, *Enchiridion* 8.26. See also 8.27.

Sin is not nature but will!<sup>22</sup> According to Ricoeur, ‘the original sin of infants is “spoken of without voluntary absurdity, because it was contracted as a consequence of the evil will of the first man and hence is in some way hereditary”’.<sup>23</sup> Augustine intended to be anti-Gnosticism but ironically in his opposition to Gnosticism’s identification of evil with nature he lapsed into a quasi-Gnosticism.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, what he willed to the Church was his quasi-Gnostic interpretation of 5.12, but subsequent interpreters, like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others, have misrepresented his ‘schema of inheritance’ as simple ‘propagation’ and therefore relegated human beings to the status of victims as the result of a biologically or genetically determined natural depravity.<sup>25</sup> The willfulness of individual inclination, essential to Augustine’s interpretation, has been displaced by a vitiation of the goodness of God’s creation already in ‘our mother’s womb’. The revealing power of the myth of the Fall of Adam and Eve concerning the human condition as a whole has been lost, and Augustine’s quasi-Gnosticism has tragically been reduced to a Gnostic dualism.<sup>26</sup>

This is evident in Luther’s prevailing use of Augustine’s writings in his interpretation of 5.12 and of Romans in general:

The apostle speaks here of original and not of actual sin. This statement can be proved in many ways, and it must be taken as true in view of the fact that, *first*, he says ‘by one man’. Hence Blessed Augustine says against the Pelagians in the first book of his work *On the Merits of Sins and Their Remission*: ‘If the apostle had wanted to recall that sin entered the world not by propagation but by imitation, he would not call Adam but the devil its originator, and about him it is said in Wisdom of Solomon 2.24: “They imitate him who are of his side”. In this sense also Adam imitated him and the devil became the originator of his sin. But here it says, “by one man”, in the sense that all actual sins come and have come into the world through the devil, but original sin through one man.’ At the same place, Blessed Augustine says: ‘So, then, the apostle in making mention of that sin and death which passed from one to all by propagation represents him as the originator from whom the propagation of the human race had its beginning’.<sup>27</sup>

22. Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* XXII, 78.

23. Ricoeur, “‘Original Sin’: A Study in Meaning”, p. 286.

24. Ricoeur, “‘Original Sin’: A Study in Meaning”, p. 271.

25. See also Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 138-39; Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 273-74.

26. Ricoeur, “‘Original Sin’: A Study in Meaning”, p. 279, concludes: ‘...Augustine went to the bitter end of the concept of original sin by more and more giving it the meaning, on the one hand, of a guilt of a personal character which juridically merits death and, on the other hand, of a taint inherited by birth’.

27. Luther, in his commentary on Romans, cites Augustine’s work, *On the Merits of Sins and their Remission*, and acknowledges the latter’s interpretation of 5.12, that ‘sin and death...passed from one to all by propagation’.

It is equally obvious in Calvin's interpretation of 5.12:

To *sin*, as the word is used here, is to be corrupt and vitiated. The natural depravity which we bring from our mother's womb, although it does not produce its fruit immediately, is still sin before God, and deserves His punishment. This is what is called original sin. As Adam at his first creation had received for his posterity as well as for himself the *gifts of divine grace* (*divinae gratiae dotes*), so by falling from the Lord, in himself he corrupted, vitiated, depraved, and ruined our nature—having lost the image of God (*abdicatus a Dei similitudine*), the only seed he could have produced was that which bore resemblance to himself (*sui simile*). We have, therefore, all sinned, because we are all imbued with natural corruption, and for this reason are wicked and perverse.<sup>28</sup>

The corruption into which human beings are born already occurs in human conception. Original sin, therefore, is ineradicable, and salvation not only requires the satisfaction of God's justice through Jesus' atoning death but also God's accreditation of righteousness. Transgressions of the law can be forgiven, but the condition of original sin cannot be eliminated.

Other variations of this interpretation of v. 12 have been proposed, but in all of them *eph' hō* is identified as a relative clause bearing the meaning of 'in whom'.<sup>29</sup>

*Eph' hō*, however, can also be construed as a prepositional phrase that serves as an adverbial conjunction. Meanings such as: 'with the result that', 'so that', 'because', have been put forward, specifically in the light of the occurrences of the same prepositional phrase in other letters of Paul: 2 Cor. 5.4, Phil. 3.12 and 4.10. Yet no uniform sense in the use of *eph' hō* is discernible in the English versions which render the phrase differently in each case.<sup>30</sup> However, Paul's apparently consistent employment of this

28. *Calvin's Commentaries*, pp. 111-12.

29. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 'The Consecutive Meaning of *eph' hō* in Romans 5.12', *NTS* 39 (1993), pp. 321-39 (322-25), for a survey of nine variations of this perspective. Included is Frederick W. Danker's essay, 'Romans v.12: Sin under Law', *NTS* 14 (1968), pp. 424-39, that contends for the necessity of a legal basis and draws in Paul's subsequent use of the word 'law' (*nomos*) as the antecedent of the relative pronoun 'whom' in order to establish personal accountability.

30. Both the NRSV and the NIV translate *eph' hō* in 2 Cor. 5.4 causally: 'because we do not want to be unclothed'. But the continuity that is conveyed cannot be causal, at least not in terms of the progression of the two verbs: '[not] to be unclothed but rather clothed over'. Being unclothed is not the immediate resolution of the reality of groaning and being weighed down in a physical body; it is rather being clothed over. Because *eph' hō* upholds a progression of thought, it functions as an adverbial conjunction that denotes the successive sense of 'in view of which' or simply 'seeing that'. Accordingly, 2 Cor. 5.4 is more correctly translated: 'In view of which (*eph' hō*) we do not want to be unclothed but clothed over so that mortality is swallowed by life'. In Phil. 3.12 and 4.10 *eph' hō* serves as an adverbial conjunction to establish the basis of a relationship between

prepositional phrase as an adverbial conjunction instead of a relative clause is indicative of its function in 5.12. To cite it again:

For this reason, even as *hē hamartia* entered the world through one human being, and death through *hē hamartia*, even so death spread to all human beings, *inasmuch as/seeing that (eph' hō)* all sinned.

Adam and Eve, by their willful disobedience in eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—not by their concupiscence!—originated *hē hamartia* (the disease of sin), and it became *the condition* that infected all the subsequent generations of their descendants. For if they, by their willful disobedience, ate sour grapes, their offspring, according to the Hebrew proverb, would naturally have their teeth set on edge. Human beings, as the Wis. 11.16 enunciates, are punished by the very things by which they sin. The prepositional phrase *eph' hō*, serving as an adverbial conjunction and translated as ‘seeing that’ or ‘in view of the fact that’, introduces the underlying basis for the continuity between Adam’s origination of *hamartia* and the individual willful disobedience of his descendants.<sup>31</sup> ‘Here, doubtless, is the ultimate mystery of sin. We inaugurate evil. It is through us that evil comes into the world. But we inaugurate evil only on the basis of an evil already there.’<sup>32</sup> But, in contradiction to Augustine and Ricoeur, our birth is not its impenetrable symbol.

two disparate realities. In Phil. 3.12 the progression of thought between Paul’s admission of not having attained to the resurrection of the dead and yet pressing on to attain it is upheld by the prepositional phrase *eph' hō*. Used here as an adverbial conjunction, it introduces the underlying reality that unites his paradoxical self-understanding. In 4.10 Paul uses the *eph' hō* phrase as an adverbial conjunction to uphold the succession of two disparate actualities. For an indeterminate period of time Paul received no financial assistance from the Philippian congregation, but eventually they renewed their support of his ministry. He responds to their gift by using *eph' hō* to affirm their ongoing concern while also acknowledging the difficulty of a timely opportunity.

31. Ricoeur, ‘“Original Sin”: A Study in Meaning’, pp. 284-86, offers the most incisive critique of Augustine’s doctrine of original sin. But at the very end, p. 286, he appears to side with Augustine: ‘It is in the will itself that there is something of a quasi-nature. Evil is a kind of involuntariness at the very heart of the voluntary, no longer facing the voluntary but within the voluntary, and it is this which is the service will. And this is why there must be a monstrous combination of a juridical concept of imputation in order for evil to be voluntary and a biological concept of inheritance in order for it to be involuntary, acquired, contracted.’ Paul, in 7.13-25a, will accentuate the exceeding sinfulness of *hē hamartia* but will introduce the ‘law of the Spirit of life’, God’s holy Spirit, who will revivify mortal bodies and enable human beings to enter into greater freedom and wholeness.

32. Ricoeur, ‘“Original Sin”: A Study in Meaning’, p. 286, adds, ‘of which our birth is the impenetrable symbol’.



*Hamartia*, as Paul stipulates in v. 13, continued from Adam right up to the time that Moses mediated the law to Israel. But throughout that interim, according to Paul's determination, there was not and could not be an awareness of this condition, for, according to 3.20, 'By the Law is the recognition of *hamartia*'. All were infected, and therefore all sinned. Yet there was no legal basis to charge those who lived in this interim, for the infection that generated offenses and transgressions, as v. 13 acknowledges, in an echo of 4.15b, '*hamartia* is not charged when there is no law'.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, as Paul goes on to say in v. 14, 'But death reigned from Adam right up to Moses, even on those not *sinning* (*hamartēsantas*) in the likeness of Adam's *transgression* (*parabasis*)'. Although Adam's transgression may not have been committed by every human being, yet everyone was infected, everyone engaged in wrong-doing, and therefore everyone suffered the consequences of death. Yet without the law to evoke the consciousness of *the infection of sin*, the condition, as the origin of idolatry and injustice, could not be charged.

#### 5.15-21. *The Abundance of Grace and the Legacy of Justice*

Paul, in his effort to elucidate 'how much more we shall be saved from the wrath', introduces Adam at the very end of v. 14 as a typological figure 'of the one coming'. On the one hand, he is the primordial ancestor of the human race, and 'the one coming' is like him in as far as he is the primordial ancestor of a new humanity. Paul will proceed to characterize the two humanities that he differentiated in 1 Cor. 15.45:

The first human being Adam became unto (*eis*) a living soul; the last Adam unto (*eis*) a life-making spirit.

On the other hand, Adam is also the originator of *the condition of sin* (*hē hamartia*) that has infected all of his descendants.<sup>34</sup> He is, therefore, the anti-type of 'the one coming'. The Christ or 'the Last Adam', who, by

33. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 274, contends in his interpretation of 5.13, 'The meaning of *hamartia* has moved from that of power to that of act'. But *hamartia* must continue to signify the diseased condition of humanity because Paul continues by saying, 'Death ruled from Adam right up to Moses even on those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's *transgression*'. *Hamartia* produces transgressions. Käsemann's apocalypticism determines his interpretation of 5.13. See *Romans*, p. 150, where Käsemann rejects Paul's anthropology in favor of cosmology, stating, 'The text points in exactly the opposite direction. Paul is not speaking primarily of act and punishment but of ruling powers which implicate all people individually and everywhere determine reality as destiny.' The powers in Jewish apocalypticism are systemic structures and institutions that are established by the ruling elite to maintain their wealth, power and privilege. They too infect humanity, but they are created by infected humanity.

34. Contrary to Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 442-47, the movement in Rom. 5.15-21 is from plight to solution.

constituting a new humanity, will reverse the prevailing effects of *the infection* of sin and the cycles of wrath that it originates through ‘the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice’.<sup>35</sup>

Paul delineates this reversal in the initial antithetical differentiation of v. 15, ‘But not as the *offense* (*paraptōma*), so also [is] the *freely bestowed gift* (*charisma*)’.<sup>36</sup> His sentence structure, as ungainly and awkward as it is—and without a verb!—conveys the fundamental contrast between ‘the offense’ of Adam and ‘the gift’ of Christ by means of the differentiating formula, *but not as* (*all’ ouk hōs*) and *so also* (*houtōs kai*). Paul is moving from the human predicament into its resolution, and this will continue into v. 18 as he struggles to clarify the immense difference between the two humanities, the one originated by Adam and the other by Jesus Christ.<sup>37</sup> In v. 15b he again

35. Charles B. Cousar, ‘Continuity and Discontinuity: Reflections on Romans 5–8 (In Conversation with Frank Thielman)’, in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 196–210 (203–10), acknowledges that ‘the apocalyptic two-age scheme of 5.1–11 is even more prominent in 5.12–21. Adam and Christ personify the old and the new in strikingly antithetical ways—the one marked by sin, death, disobedience, and condemnation; the other by grace, life, obedience, and justification.’ However, he appears to give voice to Käsemann’s apocalyptic view that the two ages will run side by side until the end of the age when the decisive consequences of Christ’s death will finally be actualized.

36. In the movement from v. 13 to v. 14 Paul substitutes the noun *paraptōma* (offense) in place of *parabasis* (transgression). Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 279, may be right when he posits ‘Whether Paul intended them to bear a different meaning is unclear; *paraptoma* can have more the sense of “false step, slip, blunder” whereas “transgression” is the more fitting translation for *parabasis*. But the distinction does not amount to much.’

37. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 277, correctly discerns Adam as ‘a type of the coming one’. Each began an epoch, and ‘the character of each epoch is established by their action’. But Adam as ‘a type’ is essentially a contrast. Adam, according to 1 Cor. 15.45, inaugurated a humanity of ‘living souls’, Christ a humanity of ‘life-giving spirits’. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 152–53, emphasizes the antithetical correspondence between them. Both are bearers of destiny for the world, but Christ, the bearer of eschatological salvation is the only alternative to the first Adam’. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, p. 207, eradicates the eschatological differentiation between the two Adams by combining the two into one: ‘What has Paul seen written in his Greek Bible, Gen. ii.2? “God created man earthy out of the earth and breathed into his face His breath of life, and man became a living soul”. Paul analyzes this text into its constituent parts: ...the Adam, the man who really originated *through the divine breath of life*, is the second Adam, Christ: “the life-giving Spirit” is the predicate of his life, the Spirit, who is not only living for Himself, but also makes alive that whose Spirit it is, in other words, the body.’ Barth appears to combine the two Adams into one, for he goes on to say, ‘What comes from *God’s* breathing upon, the creation in the light of its eternal *origin*, this is the very Resurrection of the Dead, the *spiritual* body, the new man, who is *God’s*. It is an utterly immeasurable idea which Paul, in v. 45b, dares to think: the creation, the resurrection of Christ and the end of all things are here conceived as a single happening: God speaks and the result is His man, the originally finite creature, the Logos become flesh, the last Adam, who is veritably the first.’ Sadly, Barth has not understood 1 Cor. 15.45.

will employ the rabbinic rhetorical device of *qal wahomer* in order to elaborate that difference and accentuate the power inherent in the new moral order that will terminate *the power of the infection (he hamartia)*:

For if by the offense (*paraptōma*) of one many died, *how much more* the grace (*charis*) of God and the legacy (*dōrea*) by the grace of the one human being Jesus Christ will abound unto the many (5.15b).

Adam's offense transmitted the disease of *hamartia* into all the succeeding generations of the human race. 'The legacy by the grace of the one human being Jesus Christ' inaugurates the great reversal by which the gradual incorporation of all the succeeding generations into the New Humanity of life-giving spirits will eventually eliminate *hamartia* from the historical existence of humanity. The minor premise is Adam's offense that resulted in death for all human beings. The '*how much more*' of Paul's major premise is the combination of *the grace of God* and *the legacy of the grace of Jesus Christ* that enlarges the meaning of the major premise of v. 10, '*how much more shall we be saved by his life*'. For it is the union of the two, *the grace of God*, on the one hand, that is disclosed in Jesus' reconciling death and its termination of the old moral order, and *the legacy by the grace of Jesus Christ*, on the other hand, that, by his resurrection from the dead, establishes a new creation in which the justice of God characterizes and determines its moral order.

The *legacy* or *gift* (*dōrea*) of Jesus Christ is the 'grace of empowerment' that *the trust of Jesus Christ* (*pistis Iēsou Christou*) imparts to those who by their baptism have become members of the New Humanity of the Body of Christ. Originally that *trust* (*pistis*) was established by the ratified *testament* that God constituted with Abraham and a single lineal descendant, the Christ. Jesus as the Christ fulfilled the terms and conditions of that *testament* by terminating the old moral order and its power of *hē hamartia*, and therefore he serves as the sole appointed agent to distribute universally the benefits that had been promised to the great patriarch of Israel, 'to be the heir of the world'. *The legacy of Jesus Christ* is the disposition of Abraham's inheritance that begins with incorporation into God's horizontally constituted family:

For you are all sons and daughters of God through the trust of Christ Jesus (*dia tēs pistēos Christou Iēsou*). (Gal. 3.26)<sup>38</sup>

38. Although the 27th edition of Nestle–Aland's *Greek New Testament* prefers the reading, 'in Christ Jesus', P<sup>46</sup>, the oldest manuscript of Paul's letters, offers 'of Christ Jesus'. Since Paul consistently employs the genitive construction, 'through the trust of Christ Jesus', as in Gal. 2.16, 20; 3.22, it is very likely that the P<sup>46</sup> reading is the original one. In Gal. 2.16 Paul also used the phrase, *ek pistēos Christou* (out of the trust of Christ).

His legacy also encompasses the benefit that Paul has already guaranteed and that will be essential in the termination of all the cycles of retaliation, namely, ‘...the love of God being poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit that is given to us’.

Verse 16 continues the differentiation between the first and the last Adam:

The gift (*dōrēma*) is not as through the one sinning. For, on the one hand, [that] *legal action* (*krima*) out of [the midst] of one [resulted] *unto condemnation* (*eis katakrima*), but the *enactment of grace* (*charisma*) out of [the midst] of many offenses [resulted] *unto acquittal* (*eis dikaiōma*).

Again, Paul’s sentence structure is ungraceful, but, as before, the stark reality of the human predicament is the point of departure. God’s gift did not originate through Adam, the one who by his disobedience originated *the infection* (*hē hamartia*). In fact, God’s legal action against Adam resulted in condemnation, as Gen. 3.14-19 indicates. Paul accentuated that in 1.24, 26, 28 by a three-fold repetition of God’s wrath of handing human beings over to the consequences of their deeds. Yet out of the long history of multiple offenses that followed, God’s enactment of grace (*charisma*) succeeded in arriving at an *acquittal*.<sup>39</sup>

Christ did not begin where Adam began. He had to begin where Adam ended, that is, by taking on himself not merely a clean slate, not merely even the single sin of Adam, but the whole entail of that sin, working its way out in the ‘many sins’ of Adam’s descendants, and arriving at the judgment spoken of in 1.32; 2.1-16; and 3.19-20.<sup>40</sup>

But God’s *acquittal* (*dikaiōma*) must not be construed as imputed righteousness, nor as the paradox of simultaneously being just and unrighteous.<sup>41</sup>

39. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 154, translates *charisma* as ‘the basic work of grace already accomplished’. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 279, translates *charisma* as ‘the concrete enactment of grace’. J.R. Daniel Kirk, ‘Reconsidering *Dikaiōma* in Romans 5.16’, *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 787-92, proposes ‘reparation’ as a more valid meaning of *dikaiōma*. But Jesus, by his death on the cross, does not simply make amends for human wrong-doing. Adam’s transgression originated *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) that necessitated divine condemnation; Christ’s death terminated the old moral order and its power of *hē hamartia*. That is more than reparation. It is the justice of acquittal. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, treats 1.18–3.20 superficially, bypasses 3.9 and 5.12 and says very little about *hamartia*, as he pursues resurrection as the key to Romans.

40. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 37. But he does not clarify the meaning of *hē hamartia*, the form Paul uses 46 times in Romans. In his essay, ‘Romans and the Theology of Paul’, p. 46, he states that ‘Israel’s obedience/faithfulness should have been the means of undoing the problem of Adam, of humanity as a whole’. But Israel could not because of *hē hamartia*, the very power that Jesus terminated through his death on the cross. Moreover, what is the objective of the obedience and faithfulness that should have replaced the problem of Adam?

41. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 174, translated *dikaiōma* as ‘justification’ and it is the indwelling Christ in as far as he is identified with the gift of faith that Luther

Acquittal (*dikaiōma*) is the gift of God's righteous deed of dismissing the charges of wrong-doing against Adam's descendants on the basis of their participation in the reconciling death of Jesus Christ.<sup>42</sup> Good Friday has terminated the old moral order with its overriding condition of *hamartia* that has made human beings enemies of God. Consequently, it is not by imputed righteousness that human beings are justified! As Paul will elucidate in ch. 6, the divine acquittal of being declared 'not guilty' and correspondingly entering into 'peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (5.1) necessarily requires incorporation into Christ's death by baptism.

Accordingly, *charisma* as the gift of receiving the 'concrete enactment of grace' must not be confused with being 'justified by faith' or the gift of 'righteousness which is Christ's work pure and simple'.<sup>43</sup> In the new creation that God inaugurated by raising Jesus from the dead there is no imputed righteousness. Righteousness is not God's gift to believers. Righteousness is not the gift of the new status of honor granted to believers through the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>44</sup> God's acquittal is followed by a participation in the New Humanity of the last Adam, the culmination of moving from *ek pisteōs* (the trust of Abraham) into *eis pistin* (the trust of Jesus Christ). That incorporation results in the actualization of God's objective for all human beings, the freedom of 'ruling in life', as Paul stipulates through another use of the rabbinic rhetorical principle of *qal wahomer* in 5.17:

For if by the offense of one, death ruled through the one, *how much more* those receiving the abundance of *grace* (*charis*) and *the legacy of justice* (*tēs dōreas tēs dikaioynēs*) will rule (*basileusousin*) in life through the one Jesus Christ.

As before, he begins with Adam's offense and its implied origination of the condition of *hamartia*, but he accentuates Christ's reversal with the employment of a *qal wahomer* to highlight the 'how much more' of *the abundance of grace* and the abundance of the *legacy of justice*. *The abundance of grace* refers to the effects of Jesus' death and resurrection: the relationality of reconciliation and the 'grace of empowerment' following the

formulates his doctrine of *simul justus et peccator* and can say, 'Now "the grace of God" and "the gift" are one and the same, namely, the righteousness that is freely given to us by Christ'. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 87, interprets 'the gift' as 'justification by virtue of Jesus' atoning death'.

42. So also Jewett, *Romans*, p. 382.

43. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 282; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 155. Johnson, *Reading Romans*, p. 98, states: 'God's righteousness revealed itself by making humans righteous by free gift'.

44. For example, Jewett, *Romans*, p. 384, who goes on to say that righteousness 'is a sheer gift offered to everyone through Christ. God makes believers "right" through their acceptance of Christ crucified and resurrected.'

healing of the infection of *hamartia*.<sup>45</sup> The word *dōrea*, generally translated as ‘gift’, is more aptly rendered here as *legacy*.<sup>46</sup> Reintroduced from v. 15, it is ‘the legacy by the grace of the one human being Jesus Christ’. For *dōrea* as *legacy* conveys the inheritance of those who, according to Gal. 3.26, have become God’s sons and daughters ‘through the trust of Christ Jesus’. The status of the *heir* or *inheritor* (*ho klēronomos*), while still a child, as Paul continued in Gal. 4.1-2, is no different than that of a slave, although he or she is ‘lord of all’. During that period of childhood the heir is placed under guardians and managers until the fixed time of the father. Galatians 4.3-7 presents the outcome of Christ’s legacy:

So also we, when we were children, we were being held in enslavement by the elemental forces, [the abc’s] of the world. But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born from a woman, born under law, so that he might redeem those under law so that we receive son/daughter-ship. Because you are sons and daughters, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, ‘Abba, Father’. So that you are no longer a slave but a son [or] daughter, and if a son [or] daughter, also an heir through God.

‘The legacy by the grace of the one human being Jesus Christ’ is ‘the abundance of the *legacy of justice*’ (*tēs dōreas tēs dikaiosynēs*). It is the legacy that fulfills God’s eschatologically oriented accreditation of Abraham’s trust *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynē*), the justice that was to follow from Abraham’s relationship to God.

But now in this context of *the grace of God and the legacy by the grace of the one human being Jesus Christ* (v. 15), Paul returns to his earlier use of *justice* (*dikaiosynē*) that served as his point of departure in 1.17 and again in 3.21. It is that *justice* that would eventually become possible through Abraham’s seed, Jesus Christ, who would fulfill the provisions of the *testament* (*diathēkē*) that God established with Abraham. It is the *justice of God* that is revealed in the gospel. It is the *justice of God* that is disclosed *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*) (Rom. 1.17). It is the *justice of God* that is manifested *through the trust of Jesus Christ* (*dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou*) (Rom. 3.21). And it is through incorporation into that trust (*eis pistin*) of ‘the abundance of grace’ and ‘the legacy of justice’ that God’s justice is finally actualizable, and human beings can begin to ‘rule in life’.<sup>47</sup> This justice,

45. Here again, see Ehrensperger, *Paul and the Dynamics of Power*, pp. 78-80.

46. On *dōrea*, see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th edn, 1966), p. 464.

47. The *dikaiosynē* of v. 17, translated by Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 155, as ‘righteousness’ and identified as ‘Christ’s work pure and simple’, is determined by Käsemann’s Lutheran heritage of imputed righteousness. Whether *dōrea* is translated as ‘gift’ or ‘legacy’, justice emerges naturally for those who have been resurrected from the dead and therefore as members of the Body of Christ they are in God continuing to be what they have become.



therefore, is not and cannot be imputed! For imputed righteousness implies a continuous state of *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) that precludes the possibility of genuine freedom. The practice of the *justice of God* that nurtures ‘ruling in life’ can only be actualized by an incorporation into the being of God through *the trust of Jesus Christ*. To be in God is to be in God’s justice, and, therefore, by acting in accordance with being in God, doing God’s justice is a very natural activity. For it is in a participation in the *trust* or *legacy* of Jesus Christ that Jeremiah’s prophecy of God’s new covenant and the possibility of justice is fulfilled:

See, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I shall establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I established with their fathers on the day I took them by hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain in my covenant, and I had no care for them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I shall establish with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. Giving, I shall give my commandments into their minds and *I shall write them on their hearts*, and I shall be their God, and they will be a people to me (LXX 38[31].31-33).

Paul alluded to this text in 2 Cor. 3.2-3 with an emphasis on the divine agency of this fulfillment:

You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all human beings, showing that you are a letter of Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but *on human heart tablets*.

Accordingly, the justice of God and the possibility of ‘ruling in life’ will emerge naturally within those who are incorporated into ‘the trust of Jesus Christ’. Although the tense of the verb, *basileusousin* (they will rule), is future, it should not be construed as a possibility that will be realized in the distant future or in life beyond the grave.<sup>48</sup> It is a slowly maturing reality. ‘Ruling in life’ evolves through a process of maturation and requires, as Paul will enunciate in ch. 8, the sanctifying work of God’s indwelling Spirit. But already in 5.5 the Apostle has given an indication of the Spirit’s activity that

48. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 384, has characterized it well, ‘Rather, in contrast to Adam’s reign in death, to reign in life refers to “a new, holy, inexhaustible, and victorious vitality” that will make believers kings in life’. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 288; Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 142; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 155; and Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 282, place the emphasis of the future tense of *basileusousin* (they will rule) into the end time as essentially a future inheritance of the kingdom. Note also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 149, who states: ‘The important thing to note is that this reign is envisioned as happening sometime in the future, not in the present’. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 102, notes: ‘...but those who receive the benefits of God’s work in Christ (vv. 15 and 16) will rule when death is conquered’.



will actualize the possibility of ruling in life: ‘the love of God is poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us’.

In a vein somewhat similar to v. 16 and without the use of any verbs, Paul proceeds to distinguish the effective grace of Adam’s anti-type, ‘the one human being Jesus Christ’, by drawing a fundamental contrast between ‘the wrong-doing of one’ and the ‘acquittal through the one’:

Consequently, therefore, as through one *wrong-doing* (*paraptōmatos*) unto all human beings toward condemnation, so also through one *acquittal* (*dikaiōma*) unto all human beings for a *vindication of life* (*dikaiōsis zōēs*) (5.18).

Adam’s trespass, which originated *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) in himself and ‘unto all human beings’, resulted in universal condemnation and death. In contrast, the *acquittal* (*dikaiōma*) that Jesus’ death effects for all human beings vindicates life as the decisive reality of human existence. For out of God’s declaration of ‘Not Guilty’, the door into freedom and authentic life is reopened, and it is grounded in the ontological reality of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

But Paul is not yet ready to bring this series of contrasts to an end. Once again, the binary opposition that he poses in v. 19 projects distinctive consequences for the two humanities that he has been juxtaposing. Adam’s disobedience constituted sinners, for, as the primordial ancestor, he ate sour grapes and set his offspring’s teeth on edge. Jesus’ obedience is distinguished by bringing many into the state of being just. Adam’s disobedience perpetuated disobedience. The inevitable possibility of ruling in life presupposes the continuation of Jesus’ obedience through those who are incorporated *into his trust* (*eis pistin*). No characterization of his obedience is offered and none is needed. For the trust of Jesus Christ naturally presupposes ‘the love of God [that] is being poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us’. According to Paul’s citation of Hab. 2.4 in 1.17, ‘The just will live out of trust (*ek pisteōs*)’.

Verses 20-21 conclude this development of the ontological differences between the two primordial ancestors, Adam and his anti-type, Jesus Christ, and the humanities which they inaugurated. In the time from Adam to Moses, according to Paul’s text of the Scriptures, no law was given by which *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) could be raised to consciousness. Nevertheless, death ruled; and those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression were not excluded from its dominion. The law entered in alongside this condition in order to increase the wrongdoing, as Paul asserts in v. 20.<sup>49</sup> Its divinely intended objective, according to his elaboration in

49. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 151, reduces the clarity of what Paul is stating in 5.21. ‘...the Law gave sinful humanity a target, ideas of more things to rebel against’. That is the outcome, but the target of the law of Sinai, as all law, is justice. He goes on to say, ‘Paul sees the Law as deliberately sent by God to reveal human sin’. According to

7.13, is to disclose the exceeding sinfulness of *the infection* (*hē hamartia*). The critical reality of the condition of *hē hamartia* had to be disclosed so that in the course of time its revealer, the law, could serve as the guardian or truant officer that would lead the infected descendants of Adam and Eve into the trust or legacy of Jesus Christ. On the one hand, therefore, *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) increased as the result of the law's disclosure and therefore ruled in death. God's grace, on the other hand, super-increased, and, in opposition to the power of sin and death, rules through justice in its orientation toward eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (5.21).

'Being saved by his life', therefore, comprehends more than everlasting life.<sup>50</sup> Salvation is first and foremost terrestrially oriented to the realization of justice and concomitantly authentic humanness in this life. It is a growth into the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ that mirrors the love and justice of God. It is a journey into a wholeness in which the self and its body of flesh and blood are integrated into a balanced life of freedom and limitation, possibility and necessity, finitude and infinitude. It is a life committed to justice and peace and the complete renunciation of retaliation. It is a life that reflects the vindication of life by being a life-giving spirit through an incorporation into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Now the law entered alongside [the testament of Abraham] so that the offense might increase. But where *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) increased, grace super-increased so that where *the infection* (*hē hamartia*) reigned in death, so also grace might reign through *justice* (*dikaioynēs*) into eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (5.20-21).

Gal. 3.19, the law was constituted by angels, not God, but it does reveal human sin to humanity. It is evident again and again that Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, has difficulty grasping the congruence of the deconstruction of law in Romans. On p. 118, he says, 'Paul has restated his case for a negative function of the law in Israel's history'. The law is a paradoxical entity. According to 7.12, it is holy, just and good, but Paul proceeds to state in 7.14, 'I am fleshly, sold as a slave under *hamartia*'. The law is good because it is directed toward justice, but it cannot produce justice because of the human infection. The law is not abolished but established by trust/faith (3.31) because its objective is justice, and although it cannot actualize it, it discloses injustice and its underlying infection, sin. For Paul the law has a positive function in Israel's history. Its objective is justice, and it reveals injustice and sin.

50. This appears to be Dunn's perspective, *Romans*, I, p. 292: 'It is the risen and heavenly Christ who characterizes the age to come, just as it is the fallen Adam who characterizes the present age'. Obviously, for Dunn, there has been no ontological change in the structure of reality. The moral order of the old creation and its dominating power of *hamartia* prevail. What, then, is the gospel of salvation of which Paul is not ashamed?

## 8

### ENTRY INTO THE NEW HUMANITY AND ITS DUTY WITHOUT DEBT\*

#### 6.1-11. *The End of the Old Moral Order and the Power of Hamartia*

If grace super-increases where *the infection of sin* (*hē hamartia*) increases in producing idolatry and injustice, it would seem logical to persist in this condition throughout human life. God's grace would be disclosed and magnified as the predominant reality of this static condition. On the one hand, there would be a superabundance of grace and unlimited forgiveness, and, on the other hand, the thriving power of the infection would continue. Ironically, this very perspective, due largely to Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin and the influence it has continued to exercise, has been the determining ecclesiastical interpretation of the gospel down through the centuries. Indeed, prior to Augustine, it was already expressed in the scribal interpolation of 7.25b:

Consequently, therefore, on the one hand with respect to the mind, I myself am enslaved to the law of God, but, on the other hand with respect to the flesh, [I am enslaved] to the law of *hamartias*.<sup>1</sup>

But the status quo reality of super-abounding grace and the continuing, seemingly ineradicable, infection of sin is not the Good News of the gospel. To avoid such a misunderstanding, Paul proceeds to unlock the practical aspects of his theological interpretation of Jesus' death and resurrection that he had developed in ch. 5. In so doing, he returns to his earlier use of the first person plural pronoun 'we' and challenges his addressees with the critical question:

\* The 'Duty without Debt' component of the present chapter's title is taken from Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 98, specifically his quotations from Derrida's *Aporias*, p. 16.

1. That this is an interpolation is established by the following verse, 8.1. The anthropological categories are 'spirit' and 'flesh', not 'mind' and 'flesh'. Moreover, the continuation of these two anthropological categories in 8.2 make it very clear that a liberation has begun in which the law or principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is at work, setting human beings free from the principle of sin and death.

What then shall we say? Let us persist in *the infection of sin* (*hē hamartia*) so that grace abounds?

In other words, is this the logical direction in which being ‘saved by his life’ should be manifested in discipleship? Can the reconciliation of Good Friday and the legacy of God’s justice that the Easter event inaugurates be effective in human existence, if the dualistic realities of ‘super grace’ and the infection of sin continue in a stalemate?

‘Not at all!’ Paul exclaims. ‘We who died with respect to *the infection of sin* (*hē hamartia*), how shall we still live in it?’ The eschatological experience of death has far-reaching implications for the actualization of Christ’s legacy of justice and its warranty of ‘ruling in life’. What it presupposes is nothing less than the gradual and eventual elimination of *the infection* and the coincidental realization of God’s justice, as Jewish apocalypticism envisioned and anticipated.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus’ death and resurrection, as Paul interpreted them in 5.1-21, have altered the very structure of reality in which human beings live their lives. The power of *the infection* and its corresponding consequences of the death of living and the death of dying that have continued to fate humankind since the Fall of Adam and Eve have been conquered. To personalize the ontological effect of Jesus’ death and resurrection for their historical existence, Paul, in vv. 3-4, draws his addressees into the existential significance of their baptism,

Or do you not know that as many [of us] as were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried together with him through baptism into death, so that even as Christ was resurrected from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in the newness of life.

Baptism by immersion, as it appears to have been performed in the early history of the church, is more easily perceived as a death experience, an eschatological death by a symbolic drowning, a death before the termination of physical life:

Knowing this, that our old human being was crucified with him so that *the body of the infection of sin* (*to sōma tēs hamartias*) is abolished in order that we no longer are enslaved to *the infection* (*tē hamartia*) (6.6).

2. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, p. 142, in his interpretation of 1 Cor. 15.3, relegated ‘the end of our sins’ and the new life of resurrection to the end of history: ‘...Christ *died* for our sins; and: Christ *rose again* on the third day; both being asserted, ‘according to the scriptures’, as historical facts, to be sure, but, pray, *what kind* of historical facts? *This* end, the end of our sins, which yet can only end when history ends, and *this* beginning, the beginning of a new life, which yet can only begin when and where a new world begins.’ The italics are Barth’s.

'The body of *the infection*', or 'the body of sin', is the body of flesh and blood in which the infection established itself. Death in baptism, death that is in the likeness of Christ's death by crucifixion, *abolishes* (*katargēthē*) 'the body of *the infection of sin*'.<sup>3</sup> Even as physical death terminates the condition of cancer, the eschatological death that occurs in baptism ends the disease of *hamartia*.<sup>4</sup> To be crucified with Christ, as Paul professed in his autobiographical statement of Gal. 2.19-20, is an eschatological termination of one's own life: 'And no longer do I live, but Christ lives in me; and that which I now live in the flesh, I live *in the trust of the Son of God* (*en pistei zō tē tou huiou tou theou*) who loved me and delivered himself up on my account'.

The consequence of this eschatological death in baptism is necessarily acquittal. It is the verdict of 'Not Guilty' that God speaks to those who have died, and therefore, as Paul continues in v. 7:

For the one who dies *has been justified* (*dedikaiōtai*) from *the infection* of sin (*tēs hamartias*).

This is Paul's third use of this verb *dikaion* (to justify) in this context of his exposition of the Christ event in chs. 5-6.<sup>5</sup> Its earlier employment in 5.1

3. Also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 159. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 319, struggles to determine a more precise meaning of the verb *katargeō*, and finally decides that its stronger sense, bring to an end, abolish, destroy, is applicable in view of 'the eschatological orientation of the particular passage'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 405, finds the definite article before *hamartias* in v. 7 inexplicable. Paul places the article before *hamartia* to express this infection as the condition of human beings. If the old human being has been crucified with Christ, the body of *hamartia* is abolished. As physical death terminates the condition of cancer, death through crucifixion with Christ terminates the condition of *hamartia*. Jewett concludes, '...it appears that no fully satisfactory solution is currently available'.

4. According to Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 131, 'Die in der Taufe sich vollziehende Vernichtung des Sündenleibes bedeutet ein Freiwerden aus der Knechtschaft der Sünde; denn nach jüdischem Recht bedeutet der Todesfall eine Aufhebung der Rechtsverhältnisse und der Schuldenansprüche' ('The destruction of the body of sin that is carried out in baptism signifies the becoming free from the slavery of sin; for, according to Jewish law, death is the cancellation of the relationships to law and the claims of debts'). Witherington, *Romans*, p. 161, cites the Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 151a, 'When one dies, one is freed from the obligation of the Law and its precepts'. And he adds, 'But it is equally true that when one dies, one is freed from sin'.

5. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 320-21, judges that *dedikaiōtai apo tēs hamartias* (has been justified from the infection) is 'uncharacteristic of Paul'. Astonishingly, he goes on to say, 'The absolute form of the subject, rather than a *syn-* [with] formulation (as in v 8) also implies that here we do not have a specifically Christian thought, but something more like a proverb from a larger stock of communal wisdom'. That is sheer speculation! And what is 'a specifically Christian thought'? There is nothing identifiable as 'Christian' at this time. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, pp. 113-14, is intent on establishing a christological interpretation of 6.7 and identifies the one who died as Christ. He goes on to say,

served as a stepping stone into his interpretation of Christ's death. Access to the experience of reconciliation, namely, 'peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ', is preceded by the justification that is based on trust (*ek pisteōs*), the kind of mutual trust that established Abraham and Sarah's relationship with God. That is necessarily prior to reconciliation. Paul employed *dikaion* in 5.9 to enunciate the prerequisite of justification 'by his blood' or 'through the death of his Son' in order to remove the alienation evoked by the encounter with the law. The third use of *dikaion* in 6.7 refers to justification from *the infection*! Death, as an eschatological event that occurs in baptism terminates *the infection of sin*, and results in the divine acquittal of the charge of *tēs hamartias*.<sup>6</sup> Paul's earlier quotation of the Septuagint translation of Ps. 31(32).1b in 4.8 is especially pertinent in this context:

Blessed is the man of whom [the] Lord will by no means credit the condition of sin (*hamartian*).

But baptism is more than a death experience! The emergence from immersion in water also signifies the eschatological reality of resurrection, a rising from the dead!<sup>7</sup> Baptism, therefore, as the experience of rising with Christ, is an entry into the reconstitution of the world, a new heaven and a new earth, that God has established through Jesus' resurrection from the dead. It is a transformation into 'walking in the newness of life'. Resurrection from the dead, therefore, is an authentic birth from above, from God

'Thus, if after v. 6 Paul is looking to ground his statement that the co-crucifixion of believers leads to freedom from sin, Paul creates the expectation that he is going to do so upon the death and resurrection of Christ. A christological interpretation of v. 7 meets this expectation perfectly.' Verse 8, however, indicates that v. 7 should be interpreted soteriologically, while vv. 9-10 are christological.

6. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 49, rightly says, 'Those who are thus "in Christ" (which I take to mean "belonging to the people of the Messiah") are to be regarded as those who have already died and been raised'. This means, as he goes on to say, that 'the rule of sin will have no dominion over them'. But what are the implications of this new state of being? By limiting himself to the Messiah trajectory and neglecting that of Jewish apocalypticism, he cannot be more specific. That is evident in attributing the deliverance of the creation simply to the activity of God's Spirit, as he does on p. 54: 'The Spirit will liberate the whole creation'. It is rather the Spirit incarnated in human beings who have died and been resurrected with Christ.

7. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Christian Future or the Modern Mind Outrun* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) p. 67, wrote, 'Christians have the end of the world, their world, behind them; beginning and end have changed places. Pagan human beings begin with birth and live forward through time toward death; Christians live in the opposite direction, from the end of life into a new beginning. In surviving death they find the first day of creation again before them. They emerge from the grave of their old self into the openness of a real future.'

the Creator, and consequently a delivery into a new moral order. 'If anyone is in Christ, [he or she is] a new creation; old things passed away. Behold, new things have happened!'<sup>78</sup> 'To walk in the newness of life', manifests membership in God's New Humanity and its possibility of actualizing Christ's legacy of justice and its attendant reality of 'ruling in life'.

'To walk in the newness of life', to be in solidarity with the glorified Christ, has implications for the future as well as the present. Being raised from the dead in baptism constitutes being in solidarity with him in his destiny of life everlasting: 'For if we have become identified with him with respect to the *likeness (homoioōmati)* of his death, we shall certainly also [be identified with him in the likeness] of his resurrection'. The latter, *likeness of his resurrection*, establishes entry into God's new creation and its New Humanity and destines its participants, like their pioneer, 'the firstborn of many sisters and brothers', as Paul will characterize him in 8.29, to live forever. 'If we died with Christ', as he says in v. 8, 'we believe that we shall also live with him'.

It is natural, therefore, for those who have embraced their baptismal experience of dying and rising with Christ to acknowledge the truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Together with Paul they confess, 'The death he died, he died to *the infection (tē hamartia)* once and for all; and the life that he lives, he lives to God'. That becomes the paradigm of discipleship in the new moral order, and Paul accentuates it by utilizing the second person plural 'you' in order to exhort his addressees to enter into solidarity with Jesus in his death and resurrection: 'So also you!' To follow Jesus into death and resurrection begins with the experience that is implicit in baptism, and Paul does not hesitate to state it as an imperative: 'So also you! Consider yourselves to be dead to *the infection of sin (tē hamartia)* and alive to God in Christ Jesus'. Entering into the actuality of 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus' presupposes the death of 'having been acquitted from *the infection*' by dying with Christ in baptism. The actuality of being resurrected with Christ, which follows the event of death, is the work of God's life-giving Spirit that inaugurates the process of being transformed into the glory of the image and likeness of the New Human Being, Jesus Christ, as Paul stated in 2 Cor. 3.18. To be 'in Christ Jesus' and therefore to be 'alive to God' implies the incarnation of the Spirit of God in every member of the community that physically represents the resurrected Christ Jesus, God's New Humanity, in the world.

8. Paul concluded his letter to the Galatians (6.15-16) with the benediction, 'For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a *new creation*. And those who keep in line with this *rule (kanōn)*, peace on them and mercy and on the Israel of God.' The italics are mine.



Believers, by their death in baptism and by being ‘alive to God’ through their re-creation by God’s Spirit, re-present God’s New Humanity in the here-and-now of their flesh and blood existence. But the truth of that actuality in the world requires the integrity of identity and activity through the outward manifestation of engaging in reconciling relationships with all others in society and doing justice in daily living.<sup>9</sup>

#### 6.12-23. *The Indebtedness of the New Humanity*

The dichotomous condition of ‘persisting in *the infection of sin* that grace may abound’, invalidates the resurrection of ‘being alive to God in Christ Jesus’. Correspondingly, therefore, Paul entreats his addressees in vv. 12-13:

Do not let *the infection of sin* (*hē hamartia*) rule in your mortal body in order to obey its cravings. Nor put yourselves at the disposal of *the infection of sin* (*tē hamartia*) as instruments of injustice, but present yourselves to God, living as if from the dead, and your members as *instruments of justice* to God.

Discipleship is lived ‘as if’ resurrection from the dead has occurred and therefore manifesting it as a reality in bodies of flesh and blood. The mortal body, which has been the domain of the infection, must also participate in the ontological reality of God’s new creation. That, in essence, is the fundamental paradox of discipleship: on the one hand, being mortal and therefore subject to physical death, but, on the other hand, ‘living as if from the dead, and [presenting] your members as *instruments of justice* to God’.<sup>10</sup> The members of the mortal body are the tools that are used in daily life to achieve specific objectives. They are the mouth for communication, the hands for particular tasks, and the feet for movement and travel. Individually

9. Stendahl, *Final Account*, p. 31, is correct when he states, ‘Paul never says that we are saved. We have died with Christ, and we shall live with Christ’. Yet Stendahl has missed the paradox: we have died with Christ, and we have been resurrected with Christ, and in that new being we are becoming saved by the work of God’s Spirit.

10. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 106-108, claims ‘that Paul avoids the language of debt...avoiding the return of the economic relation of works. But he does not similarly avoid the language of obedience to designate the life that responds to the gift’. However, he employs the verb *hypakouein* only once as *obedience to* or *listening to* the gospel, namely 10.16, ‘But not all listened to the gospel’. The other three uses of *hypakouein* occur in ch. 6, in which it is used negatively in conjunction with enslavement. Paul prefers the verb *douleuō* to differentiate two kinds of indebtedness: the enslavement to *hamartia* and the enslavement to justice. Enslavement is an indebtedness. In 15.1 Paul urges, ‘We the strong are *indebted* (*opheilomen*) to bear the weaknesses of the powerless’. This indebtedness arises out of his earlier imperative, ‘Owe nothing to nobody (double negative) except to love each other’. This is the love that God’s Spirit pours in the hearts of those who are reconciled to God through the death of Jesus. Only that divine love, that cannot be inscribed in any text, is able to actualize God’s justice.

or in unison, they can be instruments of reconciliation or retaliation, justice or injustice.<sup>11</sup> Their reaction to hurt, insult and abuse from others that activates retaliation indicates that *the body of the infection* (to *sōma tēs hamartias*) has not died, and to that extent the power of *the infection* continues to prevent the freedom of 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus'.

However, in as far as 'the body of sin' has been abolished by dying with Christ in baptism, the power of *the infection* has been vanquished.<sup>12</sup> 'For', as Paul declares in 6.14, '*hamartia* will not exercise lordship over you'.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus' presupposes a transfer into the realm of 'the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice' so that the justice of God at long last can follow naturally from an intimate trusting relationship with God.<sup>14</sup> The possibility of the impossibility of actualizing the justice of God and coincidentally 'reigning in life' has been established by a three-fold justification: being justified *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*), 'being

11. Eduard Schweizer, 'Die Sünde in den Gliedern', in Otto Betz, Martin Hengel, and Peter Schmidt (eds.), *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel. Festschrift für Otto Michel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), pp. 437-39, builds on Michel's interpretation of Rom. 6.13 to establish the Jewish parallels of the disposition of the body's members toward sin. The 248 members of the human being are conquered earlier in life by the *yetzer ha-ra*, or the evil drive, and only at the age of thirteen will the *yetzer ha-tov* (the good drive) begin to function through the *bar mitzwah*. Schweizer concludes, 'Dass die Sünde der verschiedenen Glieder benützt oder auch in ihnen sitzt, ist für jüdisches Denken immer noch leichter aussagbar, als die hellenistische These von der Verwerflichkeit des ganzen Leibes'.

12. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 174, maintains that 'The apostle's concern is not with sinlessness as freedom from guilt, but freedom from the power of sin'. However, freedom from the power of sin in resurrected human beings is an entrance into the freedom from guilt. 'Secondly', he says, 'he is not concerned with the development to perfection but with a constantly new grasping of the once-for-all eschatological, saving act of justification, since man is always and totally thrown back on grace'. The believer, by having died and risen with Christ, is always participating in God's grace by 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 332-33, follows Paul in 6.8-10 by acknowledging that '...the body of sin has been done away with'. Yet he backs off from this radical truth by suspending the believer 'between death and life': 'They are lying buried with Christ in death (to sin), awaiting the fullness of resurrection, [and] they are still to that extent under the dominion of death till they too have been raised from the dead and death ceases to exercise any rule over them'. On the contrary, having been resurrected in baptism, they are no longer under the dominion of death. Dunn's construction continues the stalemate between grace super-abounding while the infection continues to abound.

13. In 6.14 and 6.16 Paul uses *hamartia* without the definite article.

14. In this context, Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 163, ascribes power to God's imputed righteousness: 'What emerges most clearly is that the righteousness of God which is predominantly described as a gift in the preceding chapters, is the eschatological manifestation of its Giver, so that, like sin, it has the character of a power that determines existence'.

justified now by his blood' and 'being justified from the infection' through the abolition of the body of the infection.<sup>15</sup> All three forms of justification are related to the death experience in baptism and therefore presuppose 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus'. And 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus' locates the believer in the continuing actuality of 'grace'. 'For', as Paul continues in v. 14b, 'you are not under [the] law but under grace'. Being under the law poses the ever present possibility of the law working wrath by activating 'the passions of sins' (7.5). Being under 'grace' is being in Christ Jesus and therefore living in the hope that does not disgrace or put to shame, 'for the love of God is being poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit [that] is given to us'. It is the grace of relationality! The objective and the outcome are healing and restoration.

To negate the possible inference that could be drawn from a discipleship 'under grace', Paul continues by rephrasing the original question of 6.1, 'What then, should we sin (*hamartēsōmen*) because we are not under (the) law but under grace?' If there are those who have moved from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Christ and therefore are no longer living under law but under grace, will not the absence of law promote lawlessness by dissolving the boundaries between good and evil? If Christ is the goal and termination of the law, as Paul will state in 10.4, will not the order that the law upholds collapse into chaos? Will not the restraints that it maintains against political oppression, economic exploitation and social and cultural dehumanization be shattered? His answer is identical to the reply he made to the question he raised in 6.2, 'Not at all!' Although he formulated the rhetorical question of 6.15 in the first person plural, he proceeds to respond to it directly and emphatically in the second person plural by utilizing an illustration that he draws from contemporaneous life, the institution of slavery, the institution of inhuman exploitation that establishes the economic order and wealth of the Roman Empire.

Discipleship within the New Humanity of the Body of Christ, therefore, involves the exchange of one master for another. Slavery is still the condition of his addressees, as Paul acknowledges in 6.16: 'Do you not know that to which you present yourselves [as] slaves unto obedience, you are slaves to that which you obey?' Human beings are and will always be slaves! They are either slaves of *the power of the infection* or slaves of obedience toward justice: 'You are slaves to that which you obey, whether [slaves] of *hamartia* toward death or [slaves] of obedience toward justice'. In 6.22 Paul will substitute 'being enslaved to God' in place of 'being enslaved to justice'. But they are one and the same enslavement. To be

15. Once again, the phrase, 'the possibility of the impossible', is taken from Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 83. See his discussion on pp. 81-85. See Rom. 5.1, 9 and 6.6-7.

enslaved to God is to be enslaved to God's justice. Ironically, both enslavements are liberating because the obedience they require is nothing more than living and acting in accordance with the identity of membership in the New Humanity of 'life-giving spirits'. Paul had established that in Gal. 4.6-7:

Now because you are sons and daughters of God, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, 'Abba, Father!' so that you are no longer a slave but a son or daughter; and if a son or daughter, also an heir through God.

The enslavement to justice or the enslavement to God is the obedience to 'a duty that owes nothing, that must owe nothing in order to be a duty, a duty that has no debt to pay back, a duty without debt and therefore without duty'.<sup>16</sup> This is the paradoxical condition of God's New Humanity. Enslavement to God is a new form of indebtedness, and in this context it may be formulated imperatively, '*Be what you have become!*' Be the life-giving spirit that you are as a member in the New Humanity of the Body of Christ!

It has been contended that Paul 'has confused the matter by substituting obedience for righteousness' at the end of v. 16.<sup>17</sup> But there is no confusion, for 'the obedience into justice' (*hypakoēs eis dikaiosynēn*), as the preposition *eis* implies, is simply a life of conformity to the identity that has been constituted by a participation in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. The rebirth or recreation of being raised from the dead transplants human beings into the new moral order of God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits. God has given birth to them, and therefore they have become members of God's divine family, God's beloved daughters and sons. Consequently, their duty is to be what they have become.

Paul's use of the noun *doulos* (slave) and the aorist passive *edoulōthēte* (you became enslaved) in 6.16-18 characterizes human beings as slaves, regardless of the moral order to which they belong. They are the two and the only two alternative states of being in historical existence. Being a slave of the infection (*doulos tēs hamartias*) is natural by being born into and socialized in the old moral order that Adam and Eve originated. As a power that sometimes is passive and sometimes active, the infection enslaves and destines human beings to death. On the other hand, the justice of God (*dikaiosynē theou*), into which believers are incorporated through the baptism of death and resurrection, requires only being what they have become, so that the actions of their hands, their feet and their mouth will correspond to the very being of their identity as active participants in the New Humanity of the Last Adam. That enslavement is the new indebtedness in which Paul conducts his apostolic ministry as a 'slave of Christ Jesus', as he identified himself at the very beginning of his Letter to the Romans.

16. A fragment of a quotation from Derrida's *Aporias*, p. 16, that is cited by Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 98. The italics are Derrida's.

17. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 97. The emphasis is Dodd's.

His addressees, perhaps primarily those of Gentile origin, have experienced both enslavements. In the past, as Paul acknowledges, their lord and master was *the infection*, ‘Grace/thanks (*charis*) to God that you were slaves of *the infection of sin* (*tēs hamartia*), and out of [your] heart you obeyed a type of teaching to which you were handed over’ (6.17). Prior to their baptism they embraced the pagan ideology of their culture, perhaps a popular Hellenistic philosophy, and consequently they were enslaved to *the infection* that manifested itself in idolatry and injustice. However, his addressees are also Jews, and they, in their former enslavement, were indebted to the law, and, therefore, ironically they were enslaved to *the infection* and its intensification through the wrath that the law works. Yet, as he intimated at the very beginning of v. 17, ‘Thanks (*charis*) be to God’, for that was a condition of the past when they were still fated by the power of *sin*, they have been liberated and are now enslaved to justice’.

The phrase *type of teaching* (*typon didachēs*) in v. 17 is interpreted by many commentators as a Christian ethical standard to which Paul’s addressees have submitted themselves as a result of their liberation from sin and attendant their enslavement to justice. Paul, it is believed, has slipped into a new difficulty:

He speaks as though conversion were simply the acceptance of the ethical teachings of a *rule of faith*, with the result that, *set free from sin, you have passed into the slavery of righteousness* (for *service* here, as we have seen, translates a word which means ‘slavery’—as it does in verse 13 above). It is no wonder that he feels the need to apologize for such an expression. *I use this human analogy*, he says, *to bring the truth home to your weak nature...* The apology cannot be called tactful, but it shows that Paul is conscious that his illustration is not going very well.<sup>18</sup>

The phrase *type of teaching* is also construed as ‘a fixed catechetical formulation’ or ‘a baptismal creed’ to which the baptized have committed themselves.<sup>19</sup> The translators of the NRSV appear to have adopted this interpretation and render v. 17 accordingly, ‘But thanks be to God that you,

18. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 98. The emphasis is Dodd’s.

19. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 160, conjectures that ‘type of teaching’ refers to the Gospel, either in contradistinction to the Rabbinic teaching or the Hellenistic popular philosophy or a specific form of teaching. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 181, considers the phrase ‘type of teaching’ to be ‘a Jewish form of expression for the commitment of a student to the teaching of a rabbi’: ‘...the reference is not to the giving of the tradition to the baptized but the commitment of the baptized to the tradition’. For him that tradition may be ‘something like a baptismal creed’. Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 343-44, in view of the verb, *paredothēte* (you were handed over) determines that it is ‘Christ’ instead of the law to which the believers have been handed over. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 171, identifies *typon didachēs* as ‘Christian teaching’.

having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which *you were entrusted* (*paredothēte*)’.

But can this translation of v. 17 be legitimated? In the letters of Paul the verb *paradidōmi*—in 6.17 *paredothēte*—usually bears the meaning ‘you were handed over’, not ‘you were entrusted’ or ‘you were committed’.<sup>20</sup> If the translation of *paredothēte*, ‘you were handed over’, is appropriate in this context, it seems more correct to conclude that Paul is acknowledging that his addressees were first handed over to the enslavement of *the infection* in the moral order of the old creation and its related form of teaching. Added to the difficulty of reaching a persuasive translation is the threefold use of the conjunction *de* in vv. 17-18. When, in these two verses, should *de* be rendered as an adversative particle ‘but’ and when as a simple connective, ‘and’? The initial use of *de* in v. 17 appears to be adversative and should be translated ‘but’, and the NRSV has rendered it that way: ‘*But* thanks be to God...’ The second *de* in the middle of v. 17 is more appropriately rendered as a connective, ‘and’.<sup>21</sup> If this is valid, the third use of this conjunction in v. 18, like the first, would appear to be an adversative particle. Accordingly, the better rendition of vv. 17-18 would be:

*But* thanks to God that you were slaves of *tēs hamartias*, *and* out of [your] heart you obeyed a type of teaching to which you were handed over, *but* being liberated from *tēs hamartias*, you were enslaved to God.

Both states of being in the world are acknowledged, but with the preface of a thanksgiving that takes cognizance of both enslavements yet recognizes that enslavement to God has superseded the enslavement to the power of *hamartia*. Paul affirms this condition of their discipleship in v. 18 as a decisive actuality that began in the past: ‘Being set free from *hamartia*, you became enslaved to justice’.

By their baptism into death and resurrection they have been liberated into an enslavement or an indebtedness to God’s justice. But, as Paul recognizes in v. 19, there is still the weakness of the *flesh* that is induced to secure for itself some form of protection against the life-threatening contingencies of historical existence, and to do so, if necessary, at the expense of other human beings. That is why ‘the inclination of the *flesh* is hostile to God and why ‘those in [the] *flesh* cannot please God’.<sup>22</sup> Paul, therefore, confronts his addressees with their past enslavement, when ‘they handed over their members [their hands, their feet, and their mouth], as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness *unto* (*eis*) [further] lawlessness’. They actively participated in

20. As in Rom. 1.24, 26, 28; 8.32; 1 Cor. 5.5; 11.2, 23; 13.3; 15.3, 24; Gal. 2.20.

21. The NRSV ignores Paul’s second use of *de* in v. 17.

22. Rom. 8.7-8.

the social order of the Mediterranean world that promoted slavish patron–client relationships and dehumanizing honor–shame culture. In their present condition, therefore, there is all the more reason to act in accordance with their authentic identity as participants in God’s New Humanity, and Paul does not hesitate to charge them accordingly: ‘So now present your members as slaves to justice for consecration’. Their new state of being indebted to God and God’s justice requires obedience in order to establish the integration of identity and activity that will manifest the New Humanity and coincidentally produce justice. But it is an obedience of simply being who or what they have become in their horizontal relationship with God as members of God’s family.

To accentuate the paradox of their human condition, Paul juxtaposes their past and their present enslavements in 6.20–22:

When you were *slaves* (*douloi*) of *sin* (*hamartia*), you were *free* in regard to *justice* (*dikaïosynē*). What fruit, then, were you having at that time of those things of which you are now ashamed, for their end is death. But now being *free from the infection* (*tēs hamartias*) and being *enslaved* to God, you have your fruit unto consecration and the end is eternal life.

The power of *the infection* produces the fruit of impiety and injustice, violations of the two Tables of the Law that Paul expanded in 1.21–32 as idolatry, dishonorable passions, wickedness, greed, envy, murder, strife, craftiness, slander, insolence, mercilessness and lovelessness. His Gentile addressees, in the light of their present participation in God’s new creation, can only be ashamed of these fruits which their enslavement to sin produced.<sup>23</sup> His Jewish addressees, in the light of Paul’s cross-examination of a Jewish interlocutor in 2.17–29, are also constrained to acknowledge the truth of their faithlessness to the Covenant and their disobedience to the law.

23. Halvor Moxnes, ‘Honor, Shame, and the Outside World in Paul’s Letter to the Romans’, in Jacob Neusner *et al.* (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 207–18 (214–15), characterizes the verb, *epaischynomai*, of v. 21 as follows: ‘*Epaischynomai* does not only imply a sentiment, “feeling ashamed”, but also implies an objective situation of “being shamed”. Shame is here the mark of the unbeliever’s life, and of the Christian’s former life. Its opposite is not honor but holiness (*hagiasmos*), 6.19, 22, a word which signifies distinction and separateness from the world. It is noteworthy that only here in matters of uncleanness and impurity, related to 1.23–30, does Moxnes stress the negative aspects of honor/shame culture. ‘That Paul accepts the system of honor operating in the public arena of Hellenistic society but rejects this society as shameful in the area of sex roles and sexual life may reflect the position of Christians as an “outside group”’. Christians are an ‘outside group’ in all matters related to honor–shame society because all aspects of this culture are oriented to appearance and not reality.



In the exchange of enslavements that has occurred, the liberating God of justice has replaced the harsh and overbearing master of the power of *the infection* with the power of God's Spirit in order to bear the fruit of the New Humanity.<sup>24</sup>

Their new indebtedness to God engenders freedom and God's justice as a process of transformation from 'glory into glory'. That metamorphosis, established by living and acting out of the trust (*ek pisteōs*) of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ, will produce fruit that empirically manifests consecration to God and the reality of the moral order of a new creation. The resulting harvest will be the fruits of the Spirit that Paul distinguished in Gal. 5.22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Such a harvest is generated by God's indwelling and empowering Spirit of life that will enable those who have entered into the trust of Jesus Christ to become who they are.

The compensation derived from the fruit of impiety and injustice that the power of *the infection* produces is death, already enunciated by Paul in 1.32 and now repeated here in 6.23, 'The wages of *tēs hamartias* is death'.<sup>25</sup> But this must not be construed simply as physical extinction, the termination of an individual's life in this world. The death that results from enslavement to *hē hamartias* is the tragedy of living death for both individual human beings and for the society in which they live.

Being enslaved to God by handing over the members of the body of flesh and blood to the practice of God's justice earns no wages and receives no compensation, because it is simply a matter of living and acting in accordance with the identity of being a 'life-giving spirit'. Such a discipleship naturally produces fruit that manifests consecration to God. The indebtedness to being what one has become, namely 'a life-giving spirit' committed

24. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 185, states, '...in Paul righteousness cannot be restricted to the judgment of justification or even to the gift of righteousness of faith. God's reign in the sign of grace is its material center and justification is the participation in it, in which one is set in the reign of Christ as the obedient Adam and in the new obedience. Also here service does not remain without fruit; *anomia* is replaced by *hagiasmos*, namely a life in open access to the presence of God.' The reign of Christ, however, involves 'the Last Adam of life-giving spirits', not merely 'the obedient Adam'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 354, rightly acknowledges 'the balance between divine initiative and human response', but goes on to say 'between a faith which simply accepts God's grace and one which exercises itself in moral effort'. The moral effort, however, is determined by the paradox of: 'Be what you have become'.

25. According to Moulton and Milligan (eds.), *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, p. 471, the word *opsōnion* (wage) in v. 23 had various meanings: 'provisions for a household', 'a soldier's ration money or pay'. Similarly, Jewett, *Romans*, p. 425, observes that *opsōnion* 'originally referred to buying cooked fish and was popularized by military usage to refer to wages or rations given as remuneration for services performed'.

to the actualization of God's justice and its grace of freedom, spontaneously includes the benefaction or bonus that is linked to it, 'But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

### 7.1-6. *The End of the Law*

In ch. 6, Paul established certain unequivocal aspects of the new state of being that baptism into Christ Jesus originates. Fundamentally, 'being planted together through baptism into death' results in eschatological death, death before physical death. Eschatological death, therefore, has terminated life 'in the flesh', life in the moral order of the old creation, and with it the power of *the infection of sin* (*hē hamartia*). Paul accordingly charged his addressees, 'So consider yourselves to be dead to *hē hamartia* and living to God in Christ Jesus'. 'Living to God in Christ Jesus', as the effect of participating in his resurrection, is the actualization of the new state of being with the indebtedness of being a 'life-giving spirit'.

But there is one more prospect of this new state of being that must now be authenticated: the abrogation of law, and more specifically the law of Sinai. If the law has been replaced by grace, as Paul stated in 6.15, what function, if any, does it have in the new creation?<sup>26</sup> It is an issue that he evidently feels constrained to address, if only because there are Jewish believers among his Roman addressees, and their presence is intimated in his continuation of 7.1. Accordingly, he now turns his attention to his Jewish brothers and sisters who know the law and who, in view of his employment of the participle of the verb *ginōskō*, a verb that implies familiarity acquired through experience, know it personally and existentially. Although it may include Gentile believers, either those who were proselytes and God-fearers before their conversion or those who had lived under Roman law, 7.1-6 is addressed primarily to the Jewish members of the churches at Rome:<sup>27</sup>

Or are you ignorant, brothers and sisters, for I am speaking to *those who know* (*ginōskousin*) [the] law, that the law is lord of the human being as long as he/she lives.

26. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 187, voices the Lutheran dichotomy when he states, 'The law is the true counterpart of the gospel...' They are counterparts. The law cannot produce justice. The gospel discloses how the justice of God can be actualized. But the law, as Paul stated in Gal. 3.24, is the *paidagōgos*, the guardian that leads from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. Or, in the light of Rom. 10.4, 'For Christ is the goal [and termination] of the law unto justice to everyone who believes'. Paul relativizes the law, but it is nevertheless vital, for 'By the law is the recognition of *hamartia*'.

27. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 166, in his interpretation of 7.1, includes both the Mosaic law and common human law. Both Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 333, and Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 368, limit Paul's reference to the Mosaic law.

To illustrate the force of the law's authority, Paul offers the example of a woman who by law is married to a man, and therefore is *hypandros*, literally 'under a man' or subject to a man.<sup>28</sup> Although the adjective *hypandros* does not occur in Gen. 3.16, the analogy that he is formulating appears to be determined by God's pronouncement in the Septuagint version of Gen. 3.16b, 'and he will rule over you'. For the principle that Paul is citing in 7.1, *ho nomos kurieuei tou anthrōpou* (the law is lord of the human being), coincides with God's pronouncement to Eve in Gen. 3.16b, *kai autos sou kurieusei* (and he will be lord of you).<sup>29</sup> In what would appear to be an awkward correspondence, Paul is correlating the rule of the law over God's people Israel and the rule of the man over the woman. These two existential realities are inherent in the moral order of the old creation that originated with Adam and Eve. Moreover, his analogy of a married woman and a husband, including the observation that she would be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man while her husband is still alive, intimates the relationship of wife and husband that the prophet Hosea metaphorically ascribed to the union between Israel and God.<sup>30</sup> The complexity of this far-reaching analogy reinforces the identification of those addressed by the participial phrase of 7.1a, *to those who know* [the] *law* (*ginōskousin nomon*), explicitly as the Jewish believers in Rome:

For the woman, *subject-to-a-man* (*hypandros*) is given to the living man by law, but if the man should die, she is set free from the law about the man.

Consequently, therefore, while the man is still alive she is called an adulteress if she belongs to another man. Now if the man dies, she is free from the law, so that she, belonging to another man, is not an adulteress (7.2-3).

Two circumstances are juxtaposed here: the state of being of the married woman while her husband is alive, and the state of being of the married woman after he dies.<sup>31</sup> This is analogously correlated to the state of being under the law and the new state of being beyond the experience of death. In marriage the commandment, 'You shall not commit adultery', binds the

28. The adjective *hypandros* and the prepositional phrase *hyp' andros* occur seven times in the LXX: Num. 5.19, 20, 29; Prov. 6.24, 29; Sir. 9.9; and 41.23, most likely reflecting the pronouncement of Gen. 3.16.

29. Peter Spitaler, 'Analogical Reasoning in Romans 7.2-4: A Woman and the Believers in Rome', *JBL* 125 (2006), pp. 715-47 (721-22), differentiates six interrelated aspects of Paul's use of *hypandros*. Curiously he does not seem to appreciate this linguistic relationship between Gen. 3.16 and Rom. 7.1b and therefore does not make much of the curse of Gen. 3.16 and its abolition by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

30. See especially Hos. 2.16-20.

31. Paul cited these two states of being in 1 Cor. 7.39, but without relating them to the differences of the moral orders of the two creations and their respective humanities.

woman to her husband as long as he is alive, and during that time, on the basis of God's judgment at the Fall, according to Gen. 3.16b, she is subordinate to him. If she leaves him to live with another man, she is judged under the law to be an adulteress. However, should her husband die, the law that has bound her to him is canceled, and she is free to marry another man. At the death of her husband she enters into a new state of being: complete freedom from the law that subjected her to her husband. Marriage in this new circumstance precludes the transgression of the commandment, and therefore the charge of 'adulteress' would be invalid.

To apply this analogy to the Jewish believers among his addressees, Paul repeats the form of address he used in v. 1, but with the addition of the possessive pronoun *mou*, namely 'my brothers [and sisters]'.<sup>32</sup> What he is going to say is directed explicitly to them:

For this reason, my brothers and sisters, even *you*, *you were put to death (ethanatōthete)* to the law through the Body of Christ, so that you belong to another, to the one resurrected from the dead in order that we might bear fruit to God.

Coincidentally, Paul's employment of the conjunction *even (kai)*, combined with the personal pronoun *you (hymeis)* prior to the verb *ethanatōthete* (you were put to death) in which the pronoun 'you' is already contained, accentuates his deliberate intent to limit what he wants to say to Jewish believers. The status of the married woman, who in view of the divine pronouncement in Gen. 3.16b is *hypandros*, is analogous to Israel's relationship to God in the moral order of the old creation.<sup>33</sup> Israel is *hypandros*. In this wife and husband relationship to God, Israel is subject to the law, 'the law that is lord of the human being', as Paul stated in 7.1.

The status of the married woman changes, however, when her husband dies: 'Now if the man dies, she is free from the law, so that she, belonging to another man, is not an adulteress'. Analogously, Israel's state of being, or more specifically the state of being of the Jewish believers among Paul's addressees, has changed: 'Even you, *you were put to death (ethanatōthete)* to the law'. Like the married woman who was delivered to her own death to the law by the death of her husband, Israel has been liberated from the law

32. As Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 332, has noted, this address, 'brothers', has not been used since 1.13, and here in 7.1-4 it occurs twice. Especially noteworthy is the only other use of 'my brothers' in 9.3, where it refers to Paul's fellow Jews. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 187, denies that Paul is referring to the Torah in 7.1. 'Nomos (law)', he claims, 'is simply the legal order to which citizens of the capital were subject and which would not be beyond their legal knowledge'.

33. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 122, contends that '...Christ should be seen as both the first and the second husband'.

that bound her to God: 'Even you, *you were put to death (ethanatōthete)* to the law through the body of Christ'.<sup>34</sup>

Why does Paul employ the aorist passive of the verb *thanatōō*, a much stronger verb form than the more simple aorist active, *apethanete* (you died)? Throughout ch. 6 he stressed to his addressees the active lifework of manifesting the actuality of the imperative: 'Be what you have become' through their death and resurrection experience in baptism. Initially being buried with Christ in the waters of baptism is an event of submission to the death of dying with Christ. Discipleship mandates this enactment! What follows is the active lifework of manifesting the actuality of being resurrected with Christ:

So also you continue to consider yourselves to be dead, on the one hand, to *tēs hamartia* (the infection), but, on the other hand, living to God in Christ Jesus (6.11).

Do not let *hē hamartia* reign in your mortal body in order to obey its lusts, neither present your members as instruments of justice to *tē hamartia*, but put yourselves at God's disposal as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice to God, for *hamartia* will not reign over you for you are not under law but under grace (6.12-14).

Now in contrast, however, he explicitly informs his Jewish brothers and sisters that, quite apart from the rite of baptism and its death and resurrection experience, they, like the crucified Jesus, have been put to death to the law: 'Even you, *you were put to death* to the law'.<sup>35</sup> Paul is impressing on his

34. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 101, contends that Paul's 'illustration has gone hopelessly astray', by correlating the death of the husband with the death of the law. But that is not the point of Paul's analogy. Even as the woman was delivered to her death to the divine pronouncement of Gen. 3.16 by the death of her husband, so Israel in the person of the Jewish believers in Rome has been delivered to the death of the law by their participation in the Body of Christ. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 187, has not perceived the shift from a hierarchical to a horizontal relationship to God through being put to death to the law. He says, 'Unlike the woman depicted, the Christian does not become his own master but receives a new lord to replace the old'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 362, acknowledges that Paul's metaphor of marriage conveys 'the intimate relation between Christ and the believer', and even cites Hos. 2.19, but does not perceive the change in the structure of the relationship. Spitaler, 'Analogical Reasoning in Romans 7.2-4', pp. 715-16 n. 2 and 716-17 n. 3, also misses the difference between the two moral orders.

35. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 103, fails to grasp the distinctiveness of v. 4. By being put to death to the law, the Jewish believers have left the law where it belongs, namely in the moral order of the old creation. Consequently, not only have they been 'freed from the reign of the Law', the law belongs to their past life in the old creation. As participants in God's new creation, they are now duty-bound to a new enslavement or indebtedness as the indwelling Spirit of God inscribes God's law—the law beyond the Sinai law—on their hearts in order to engage in the restorative justice of God. Wright, *The Climax of the*

Jewish addressees that they especially, as Jews, were put to death in and through their co-crucifixion with Jesus Christ.<sup>36</sup> They have been delivered over to the death of the law *through* their membership in *the Body of the Christ*! Their death to the law, therefore, is to be distinguished from the experience of eschatological death in baptism, because, as Jewish believers, they, more than the Gentiles, belong to an ancient marriage relationship with God that was reconstituted through the death and resurrection of *the Christ*.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, like the married woman of Paul's analogy who died to the law through the death of her husband, they have been put to death to the law through their crucifixion with Christ.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, like the married woman, who through the death of her husband also died to the curse of Gen. 3.16b and the condition of *hypandros*, they, through their participation in the Body of Christ, have been delivered from their *hypandros* relationship to God, as Hos. 2.18-25 anticipated:

And it will be on that day, says the Lord, she will call me, 'My husband', and she will no longer call me 'my Baalim'. And I shall remove the names of the Baalim from her mouth, and their names will by no means be remembered any longer. And I shall covenant with them on that day a covenant with the wild beasts of the field and with the birds of the sky and with the reptiles of the earth, and I will annihilate the bow and the sword and war from the earth, and

*Covenant*, p. 196, correctly states that the former husband in Paul's illustration is the 'old human being' (*palaïos anthrōpos*), or the old moral order. And it is not the Torah that dies, but it is the believer who, by being a member of the Body of Christ, has died to the law.

36. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, pp. 56-57, characterizes the difference between 'the real' of the Jewish perspective and 'the real' of Paul's explication of the Christ event: 'For Jewish discourse, the object is elective belonging, exceptional alliance between God and his people. The entirety of the real is marked by the seal of that alliance and is gathered and manifested through the observance of the law. The real is set out on the basis of the commandment'. In contrast, 'For Paul, the Christ-event is heterogeneous to the law, pure excess over every prescription, grace without concept or appropriate rite'. And he continues, 'The "folly of our preaching" will exempt us from Greek wisdom by discontinuing the regime of places and totality. It will exempt us from the Jewish law by discontinuing observances and rites. The pure event can be reconciled neither with the natural Whole, nor with the imperative of the letter'.

37. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 362, acknowledges that 'Paul takes pleasure in the thought of marriage as a metaphor for the intimate relationship between Christ and the believer'. Believers, therefore 'are married to the risen Christ'. What needs to be added is the resulting horizontality of this marriage relationship between the believer and Christ.

38. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 18, acknowledges this when he says, 'To become one with Christ—that means also to become with him the destroyer of the law; to have died with him—that means also to have died to the law'. Contrary to Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, p. 111, who states, 'Thus, neither in 1.16-17 nor in the rest of the letter does Paul invalidate the law for Israel or suggest that Israel's faithfulness is to be expressed in Christ'. The same view is expressed on pp. 142 and 146-48.

I shall make you dwell in hope. And I shall betroth you to myself forever, and I shall betroth you to myself in justice and in judgment and in mercy and in compassion. And I shall betroth you to myself in trust, and you shall know the Lord. And there will be on that day, says the Lord, I shall heed to the sky and the sky will heed to the earth and the earth will heed to the grain and the wine and the oil and they shall heed to Jezreel. And I shall sow her for myself on the earth and I shall mercy the one Not-Mercied and I shall say to the one Not-My-People, 'You are my people', and he/she will say, 'You are my Lord God'.

Through the Body of the Christ, therefore, in which they are participants in his death and resurrection, they now belong to another, to the Christ, the one resurrected from the dead. By their entry into this new state of being they have been liberated from the law, and, at the same time, they have a new relationship with God, a horizontal relationship that is determined by their membership in 'Christ Jesus', who, according to 8.34, 'is on the right hand of God' and is interceding for them.<sup>39</sup> To cite 7.4 once more:

For this reason, my brothers and sisters, you, even you were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ, so that you belong to another, to the one raised from the dead, in order that *we* bear fruit to God.

Although this exposition of the abolition of law was directed primarily to Jewish believers, the Gentiles among them may naturally be inclined to include themselves on the basis of all that Paul had enunciated about their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection in ch. 6. Accordingly, in and through their entry into the new state of being, along with their Jewish brothers and sisters, they too will have to live in the reality of having been put to death to law, not the law of Sinai but the law to which they as Gentiles have been subjected. Ultimately, therefore, both Jews and Gentiles, as the result of their entry into the moral order of the new creation, have been set free from law, the law of Sinai and the law of the Gentile world.<sup>40</sup>

Paul continues his deconstruction of the law in 7.5-6 by summarizing the two states of being in the world that he differentiated earlier in 6.12-23

39. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 369, translates the aorist passive verb *ethanatōthete* as 'You died (to the law)'. Consequently, it loses the force that it conveys beyond simply dying with Christ in baptism, the sense of being joined with the Christ in crucifixion. Verse 4, therefore, moves beyond the two or three verses of 6.3-6. Moreover, a transition does occur that is the subtext of 7.1-4; that is, the transference from a hierarchical to an egalitarian relationship with Jesus the Christ and therefore also with God the Creator.

40. True to his reversal of the Subject-Object dualism out of which he came and in which he theologized, Barth, *Romans*, p. 233, identifies law with religion, the religion of human beings as Subjects. He maintains, 'Looking outwards from the Cross, we observe religion, as a concrete thing of soul and sense, as a particular aspect of human behaviour, to have been taken out of the way (Col. ii.14). Men do not stand upright before God in virtue of their religion, any more than they stand upright before Him in virtue of any other human property.'



in terms of enslavement to God over against the enslavement to the power of the *infection*. He shifts back to his earlier use of the first person plural ‘we’ that he reintroduced at the very end of 7.4, ‘in order that *we* bear fruit to God’:

For when we were in the flesh (*en tē sarkī*), the passions of the sins (*ta pathēmata tōn hamartiōn*) were being activated in our members through the law in order to bear fruit unto death. But now we are released from the law once and for all, dying to that which held us captive so that *we* are slaves in newness of spirit and not in the obsolescence of the letter (7.5-6).

Flesh is weak because it is ‘the material corporeality’ of human beings that is finite and vulnerable, and therefore naturally inclined toward self-preservation and security.<sup>41</sup> As flesh, human beings belong to the visible, material, transient realm of the natural world, and as flesh they are subject to its contingencies, its randomness and its changes. As flesh, therefore, they desire the stability and the security that the law guarantees by establishing boundaries and limitations that all members of society are mandated to observe. Law promises justice in order to establish confidence in human relationships and security in community living. At the same time, however, the law activates the power of the *infection* (*hē hamartia*) to transgress the boundaries and limitations of the law. Slavoj Žižek has characterized this condition compellingly:

Paul knows this very well when, in the famous passage in Romans, he describes how the law gives rise to the desire to violate it. Since the moral edifice of our societies still revolves around the Ten Commandments—the law that Paul referred to—the experience of our liberal-permissive society confirms Paul’s insight: it continually demonstrates that our cherished human rights are, at their core, simply rights to break the Ten Commandments. ‘The right to privacy’—the right to adultery, committed in secret, when no one sees me or has the right to meddle in my life. ‘The right to pursue happiness and to possess private property’—the right to steal (to exploit others). ‘Freedom of the press and of the expression of opinion’—the right to lie. ‘The right of free citizens to possess weapons’—the right to kill. And, ultimately, ‘freedom of religious belief’—the right to worship false gods.<sup>42</sup>

The flesh is overpowered by ‘the passions of sins’, and the members of the body of flesh, the mouth, the hands and the feet, surrender to the ambitions, appetites and lusts that human beings conceive. The very law or laws that are enacted to forestall the passions of sins provoke the passions of sins.

41. The phrase ‘material corporeality’ is taken from Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, p. 235.

42. Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), p. 42. Similarly Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 79, says, ‘The law is what gives life to desire. But in so doing, it constrains the subject so that he wants to follow only the path of death.’

Sin is the impulse that corrupts desire, and the law is the means by which that corruption is accomplished. The evidence of sin's presence is that the law produces the very attitudes and actions that it intends to proscribe; it should guard the purity of desire, but instead it corrupts desire.<sup>43</sup>

'The law produces the very attitudes and actions that it intends to proscribe', transgressions of one kind and another, and, at the same time as a consequence, it requires the justice of retribution. Violence occurs in its transgressions and violence in its retributions. Whether or not justice is achieved, the power of *hē hamartia* that has been disclosed evokes anxiety and insecurity within society and coincidentally produces estrangement and segregation. Ironically, the law engenders the very opposite of what it is intended to fulfill: 'For if law was given that could make alive', as Paul enunciated in Gal. 3.21, 'certainly justice would be from law'. But as he averred in 4.15, 'The law works wrath'.

There is a profound irony here in Paul's deconstruction of law. Subjection to the law has been terminated by the crucifixion experience of entering into the Body of Christ: 'Even you were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ'. Yet very shortly, in 7.12, as though in terms of a reversal, he will pronounce the law to be holy, just and good. That, of course, is the law that was 'constituted by angels', which Moses negotiated with God and Israel at Sinai for its incorporation as a codicil of the testament that God established with Abraham. Paul, having lived under this law in his earlier life, enumerated in Phil. 3.4-6 the many benefits that he enjoyed as a Jew. According to law, he was a Pharisee; according to zeal, he was persecuting the church; and according to justice, the one that is in the law, he was blameless. During his career as a Pharisee, he was 'excessively zealous of the traditions of the fathers', as he informed the Galatians in 1.14. That would engage him in the strict observance of both the written and oral Torah. Consequently, on the basis of his surprising claim that 'according to justice, the one that is in the law, he was blameless', it has been concluded that he experienced 'no troubles, no problems, no qualms of conscience, no feelings of shortcomings'.<sup>44</sup> His faultless observance of the law, however, involved him in an exacting obedience to the purity code that enabled him to live and act in the realm of the 'clean' and 'pure', separated from all pollution, while the oral code of the *Torah she beal pe* (the Torah on the mouth) served as a fence around the written law that would keep him far from transgression, as stipulated in the Mishnaic tractate, *Pirke Aboth* 1.1c. Throughout his professional life as a Pharisee he had served a punitive God in the moral order of the old creation under a system of law that required the justice of punishment. It remains indeterminable whether the injustices that he witnessed and even

43. Hamerton-Kelly, 'Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire', p. 37.

44. Stendahl's judgment, expressed in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, p. 13.

engaged in may have raised his consciousness to the underlying reality of his *infection* (*hē hamartia*) and therefore the futility of achieving the kind of justice that was mandated. Finally, in and through the gospel that he initially persecuted, he was confronted with the justice of God that, by the law of love, out-laws the law of Sinai and requires the justice of healing and restoration.

Those who have entered into the New Humanity of the Body of the Christ are no longer ‘in the flesh’ as a state of being that is enslaved to *hē hamartia*. Justified from *tēs hamartias* and having been put to death to the law, they are now able to serve God ‘in the newness of the Spirit’. They are still mortal bodies, but in that physical state they live in their new indebtedness to justice. As Paul concludes in 7.6,

But now we are set free from the law, dying to that by which we were held captive, so that (*hōste*) we serve in newness of [the] Spirit and not in the obsolescence of the letter.

The adverbial conjunction, *hōste* (so that), expresses the actual consequence of dying to the law.<sup>45</sup> The dominion of the law and its compulsion to the letter has ended. The servitude that follows in the newness of Spirit is expressed in and by the paradoxical imperatives: ‘Be what you have become!’ The word ‘spirit’ is ambiguous because there is no definite article in front of it in the phrase, ‘newness of [the] Spirit’. It may pertain to the human spirit, but more than likely, on the basis of 2 Cor. 3.6, it should be construed as a reference to God’s Spirit.<sup>46</sup>

Christ Jesus	Grace	Justice ( <i>dikaiosynē</i> )	Baptism	Life Everlasting
Adam & Eve	Sinai Law	Sin ( <i>hamartia</i> )		Death

*The Two Moral Orders and their Corresponding Humanities*

Two humanities coexist, and the two corresponding moral orders to which they belong presuppose two different kinds of servitude. Adam and Eve are the ancestors of the original humanity in which all their descendants through the millennia of history participate, and, according to Paul’s quotation of Gen. 2.7 in 1 Cor. 15.45, God created them as ‘living souls’. As the result of the Fall, this humanity is infected with *hē hamartia* and is therefore naturally

45. Also Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 339.

46. Also Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 191; Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 217.

inclined to idolatry and injustice and consequently destined to the death of living and the death of dying. The law of Sinai, according to Gal. 3.15-20, is the codicil that was added to the original testament that God established with Abraham in order to engender the prospect of justice and coincidentally an awareness of the condition of *the infection*.

Jesus the Christ, the last Adam or the First Final Human Being, on the basis of his resurrection from the dead, inaugurated a New Humanity consisting by life-giving spirits who constitute the Body of Christ. Those who live within its covenant of grace and cultivate the condition and character of 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus' will experience *salvation* in the form of healing and wholeness. As a saved and a saving humanity, they are empowered by God's Spirit to engage in actualizing God's restorative justice. This is a discipleship of living ironically, for it involves the indebtedness of acting as members of God's New Humanity within the continued moral order of the old creation by being what they have become.<sup>47</sup> Dying and rising with Christ in baptism continues as a process of 'dying to that which held us captive' and being resurrected into the freedom of 'being slaves in the newness of the Spirit and not in the obsolescence of the letter'. This final dependent clause of 7.6, 'so that *we* are slaves in newness of the Spirit and not in the obsolescence of the letter' is an echo of 2 Cor. 3.6-11, in which Paul contended for the 'new covenant, not of letter but of Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life'.<sup>48</sup>

#### 7.7-25a. *The Other Side of the Paradox of Being 'in Christ Jesus'*

The law is directed toward the enactment of justice, yet it cannot establish justice. And yet, in its very objective to promote justice, it evokes the awareness of injustice and may ultimately elicit a consciousness of the power of *the infection* by which it is subverted. Because 'the law works wrath', Paul is compelled to make a decisive differentiation between the law and the power that the law activates. As a consequence of his own deconstruction of the law, he asks the critical question in v. 7: 'What then shall we say, is the law *hamartia*?'<sup>49</sup> Is the law itself the infection by which humanity

47. On the differentiation of two humanities and their involvement in the moral orders of the old and new creation, see Cornelia Cyss Crocker, 'The Aporetic Character of the New Reality of God's Reign', in *Reading 1 Corinthians in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 47-108.

48. Rom. 7.1-6, as Paul W. Meyer rightly says, 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7', in Fortna and Gaventa (eds.), *The Conversation Continues*, pp. 62-84 (71), belongs to the previous unit, 6.1-23, instead of 7.7-25.

49. No definite article is related to *hamartia* in 7.7. Here again, see Jennings, 'Deconstruction and/as Justice', in *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 23-27.

is diseased? He quickly dismisses this identification with his usual rhetorical interjection, 'Not at all!' But he will not and cannot make an apology for the law.<sup>50</sup> It belongs to the moral order of the old creation, and therefore it has its own validity. Accordingly, he is determined to forestall any misconceptions about the law.<sup>51</sup>

He initiates this discussion by affirming the disclosing function of the law. He had acknowledged it in 3.20, but now he appears to do so autobiographically from his present perspective, 'But I did not *know* (*egnōn*) *hamartia* except through law, for I had not *known* (*ēdein*) lust, if the law was not saying, "You shall not lust" (*ouk epithymēseis*)'.<sup>52</sup> Paul has employed two different verbs that signify 'knowing'. *Egnōn*, the past tense of *ginōskein*, conveys personal familiarity through experience, while *ēdein*, the pluperfect tense of *oida*, bears the sense of 'being aware of' or 'recognizing'. This is not an authentic autobiographical reminiscence of his *bar mitzwah*, the rite of passage he underwent as a thirteen year-old Jewish boy in order to enter adulthood and assume its responsibilities.<sup>53</sup> Yet, rhetorically, it may be considered as an autobiographical projection back to the event of his *bar*

50. Contrary to Bultmann, 'Romans 7 and the Anthropology of Paul', in *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann, Selected, Translated and Introduced by Schubert M. Ogden* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1960), pp. 147-57 (153). Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 192, names others who hold this view. Also Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 376; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 105.

51. Paul appears to be disclosing the irony of the conditions that the law engenders, rather than pointing to the inevitability of the corruption of law, any law, as Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 50, contends. The law is holy, just and good, but it is the power of *hamartia* that corrupts law. Law belongs to the old creation, and that is where it exercises its rightful function, projecting justice yet activating *hamartia* and, at the same time, raising to consciousness the infection of *hamartia*.

52. The commandment that Paul cites, *ouk epithymēseis*, is an abbreviation of Exod. 20.17 and Deut. 5.21. See Hamerton-Kelly, 'Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire', pp. 47-50, who interprets 7.7-13 in terms of the tenth commandment, preferring to translate *epithymia* as *envy* arising out of the social reality of mimetic desire. The Mosaic law expresses the prohibition of mimetic desire, 'but it has been hijacked to the sphere of the sacred and so its presentation of the *dikaiōma* (divine ordinance) achieves the opposite of what it intends, serving the interests of the sacred order rather than the need of humanity to curb mimetic desire.

53. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 192, like others, insists that this is not an autobiographical reminiscence. See Cranfield, *Romans*, I, pp. 344-47, for a discussion of seven possible interpretations of Paul's use of the first person singular in vv. 7-25. Meyer, 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple', p. 64, has said it well: 'Paul is employing rather a rhetorical style in which the self functions in a representative way as a type or paradigm for others. At the same time, the pronoun is not used in a purely fictive way, as though Paul were excluding himself from its pattern.'

*mitzwah*, viewed from his present theological perspective.<sup>54</sup> It is an earmark of his deconstruction of law. It should not be interpreted as ‘depicting pre-Christian being from a Christian standpoint’.<sup>55</sup> Paul’s characterization of the time prior to his encounter with the law must refer to the innocence of youth before he underwent his *bar mitzwah*: ‘Now once I was alive without [the] law’. He is claiming that he had no consciousness of his diseased condition of *hē hamartia* until he was confronted with the commandment, ‘You shall not lust!’<sup>56</sup> Rhetorically, at least, he can dramatize his confrontation with the law and more explicitly the commandment ‘You shall not lust!’ with the beginning of his consciousness of his diseased condition: ‘*Hē hamartia* seizing an opportunity through the commandment worked in me every lust’.<sup>57</sup> The infection was activated by the law. On the one hand, therefore, as Paul stated in 3.20, ‘By the law is the recognition of *hamartia*’. But, on the other hand, according to 7.5, ‘...the passions of the sins were being activated in our members through the law’. The law that made Paul aware of his *infection* was simultaneously an agent that aroused ‘the passions of sins’.

In the innocence of childhood, prior to the *bar mitzwah* rite of passage, the infection is dormant: ‘For without [the] law *hamartia* is dead’. During this time it may be provoked into action again and again, but its origin or source remains unidentified and therefore unknown. But when the commandment is confronted at the moment of entry into responsible adulthood, *the power of the infection* comes to life, and, as Paul testifies, ‘*I died*’.<sup>58</sup> In

54. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 179. claims ‘Adam is the historical figure impersonated in 7.7-13’. And he goes on to say, p. 185, ‘It [7.7] includes the first commandment given to Adam and Eve’. But the first commandment given to them in Gen. 2.17 does not correspond to the command, *ouk epithymēseis* (you shall not lust) that Paul cites in 7.7, nor does it correspond to their transgression of the command in Gen. 3.6.

55. That is Käsemann’s judgment, *Romans*, p. 192, largely determined by Werner Georg Kümmel’s monograph, *Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus* (Leipzig: J.G. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1929). Paul does not know such a ‘pre-Christian versus Christian’ differentiation.

56. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 451, citing Gal. 1.14-15, associates that moment of Paul’s awareness of *hamartia* with the beginning of his destructive zealotism against the church.

57. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 378, continues to claim that ‘...*hamartia* has a fair degree of ambiguity’. For him the word signifies both ‘a personified power’ and ‘the sense of sin as the act’.

58. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 14, cites a remarkable passage from Derrida’s discussion of Kafka’s parable, ‘Before the Law’, in *Acts of Literature*: ‘Paul reminds his brothers, “people who know the law”, that “the law exercises its power over man as long as he lives”. And the death of Christ would be the death of the old law by which we “know” sin; dead along with Christ, we are released, absolved from this law, we are dead to this law, to the great age of its “letter”, in any case, and we serve it in a new “spirit”.’ And Paul adds that when he was without law, he lived; and when, along came the law, the commandment came, he died.

order to stress the power of this experience, he places the pronoun *I* (*egō*) at the beginning of both vv. 9 and 10: 'I was alive' and 'I died'. Becoming 'a son of the commandment' did not bring life. Already at the time of undergoing the *bar mitzwah* the law produced a death experience:

And the commandment that came upon me for life, this [came upon me] for death. For *hamartia*, seizing opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed (7.11).

But it was not the law that caused Paul's death experience! It was the power of his *infection*, the *hē hamartia* that had embedded itself in the realm of his flesh, the finitude of his being.

That, in retrospect from his present perspective, is the paradox of Paul's rite of passage into adulthood!<sup>59</sup> The law was designed for life, but the *hamartia* that it aroused brought death. Yet while it enabled him to perceive the indispensable truth of his own *infection*, it also deceived him by activating that infection to work within him 'every lust'. The law itself does not generate death, and therefore it must not be held responsible for the transgressions and offenses that it aggravates. But, as Paul recognized in 4.15, 'The law works wrath'. The culpability for whatever wrong-doing is conceived and committed is to be charged to *the infection* (*hē hamartia*). Paul had enunciated a similar judgment in Gal. 3.21b, 'For if the law was given, [namely] the one able to make alive, in truth justice would be from the law; but Scripture confined all things under *hamartia* so that the promise might be given to those who believe out of the trust of Jesus Christ'.<sup>60</sup>

If, however, the cause of lawlessness is not the law itself but the power of *hē hamartia*, why should not this law of Sinai be reintroduced in the new creation in which its participants have been justified of *hē hamartia*? That, in fact, appears to have been the assumption of many, certainly as far back as Luther and Calvin.<sup>61</sup> It seems reasonable, for Paul himself acknowledges in

59. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 50, interprets 7.7-20 corporately. Paul, using the first person pronoun 'I', is speaking as a representative of Israel: 'Rom. 7.7-12 deals with the *arrival* of the Torah as a one-time event; hence the aorist tenses. Rom. 7.13-20 deals with the *continuing state* of Israel living under Torah; hence the present tenses. In each case what actually happens could be deduced from 5.20. In the first case, Israel, upon Torah's arrival, acts out the fall of Adam; hence the clear echoes of Gen. 3 in v. 11. In the second case, Israel, continuing to live with Torah, acts out the death of Adam'. See the critique of Wright's interpretation of Rom. 7, by Richard B. Hays, 'Adam, Israel, Christ', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 68-86 (82).

60. In Gal. 3.21b Paul does not use the definite article in relation to *hamartia*.

61. See Luther, 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans', in *Works of Martin Luther: The Philadelphia Edition* (6 vols.; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), VI, p. 452;



7.12, ‘...so that the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good’. Nevertheless, even though the law of Sinai is not *hē hamartia*, it cannot be identified as the law of God because, like all law, it is retributive and requires the justice of punishment. Its place is in the moral order of the old creation in which it is directed toward justice and attendantly the restraint and suppression of *hamartia*. But it is unable to control the infection, and, therefore, it cannot produce health and advance life.

Paul, however, has not abandoned law. He will replace the law of Sinai—and all law—with the law that can actualize God’s justice. That law or ‘law of law’ is the love that God’s Spirit pours out into the hearts of those who have been reconciled to God, and it alone can produce the justice of God that the gospel discloses.<sup>62</sup> What Paul professed in 5.5 he will affirm in 3.8-10:

Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another. For the one who loves has fulfilled *the other law*. For, ‘you shall not commit adultery’, ‘you shall not kill’, ‘you shall not steal’, ‘you shall not lust’, and if there is any other commandment, it is *summed up completely (anakephalaioutai)* under this ledger, ‘You shall love your next one as yourself’. Love to the next one does not work evil. The fulfillment of the law, therefore, is love.<sup>63</sup>

It is God’s love and only God’s love that is able to overcome the power of *hē hamartia* and actualize God’s justice by directing it toward healing and restoration.

Here, in the context of his deconstruction of the law, Paul continues his analysis of *hē hamartia* in relation to the law in order to confront his addressees with the power of *hē hamartia*. Consequently, after declaring that ‘the law is holy and the commandment is holy, just and good’, he asks the rhetorical question in 7.13, ‘Did that which is good become death to me?’ He replies with the same rhetorical interjection, ‘Not at all!’ The law in and of itself does not generate death experiences, ‘for’, as Paul submits in v. 14, ‘we know that the law is *spiritual (pneumatikos)*’. According to its spiritual character, the law directs human beings toward justice; ironically, however, at the same time, it ‘activates the passions of sins’. That is the paradoxical character of law in its relationship to the human infection of sin. In its

*Calvin’s Commentaries*, pp. 138-39. Apparently Hamerton-Kelly, ‘Sacred Violence and Sinful Desire’, p. 50, acknowledges the continuation of the Mosaic law, but in a new sphere: ‘Thus faith establishes the *dikaiōma* (divine ordinance) of the law by relocating it outside the precincts of the sacred at the center of individual responsibility (Rom 3.27-31)’.

62. See Crocker, ‘Old Moral Order or New Law of Christ’, in *Reading 1 Corinthians*, pp. 163-208, especially 192-202.

63. The translation of the verb, *anakephalaioutai*, is taken from Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 65. The italics are mine.

spiritual character its objective is justice—but, as Paul stated in 4.15, ‘it works wrath’.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, in spite of its paradoxical character, the law in terms of its spiritual character exposes injustice and the true nature and power of *hē hamartia*. Paul, by utilizing the first person plural, ‘we’, to acknowledge the spiritual character of the law unites his perspective with that of his addressees. Nevertheless, he will quickly return to the use of the first person singular ‘I’ in order to use himself to extend the exceeding sinfulness of *hē hamartia*:

But *hē hamartia* (the infection of sin), so that it is manifested as *hamartia*, produced death to me *through that which is good* so that *hamartia* might become sinful to the extreme through the commandment (7.13).

By exposing the power of *hē hamartia* rhetorically as his own experience, Paul is able to dramatize the continued struggle with the ‘weaknesses of the flesh’, specifically in the face of the other side of the new state of being in Christ Jesus that must necessarily be juxtaposed alongside the baptismal experience of dying and rising with Christ. It is a continuation of the autobiographical confession that he introduced in 7.7-11, and it discloses a continuing condition of discipleship that appears to contradict all that he has expressed in 6.1-7.6 about the significance of baptism: justified from *hē hamartia* through death and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

What, then, is the truth of the identity of the New Humanity of ‘life-giving spirits?’ Is the experience of dying and rising with Christ in baptism only a spiritual reality that can never be incarnated in daily life and its human relationships? Is the identity of being a sinner the essential self-understanding of the believer’s trusting relationship with God that is to be prioritized throughout life? Is it possible that *the infection (hē hamartia)* can never be eliminated from human existence in society? Is the good news of the gospel nothing more than the dualistic actuality of grace super-abounding while the infection of sin continues to abound? Is the justice of God truly an impossibility?

These are the critical issues that Paul is endeavoring to resolve in this extended analysis of the meaning and extent of salvation in chs. 6 through 8. Baptism is the rite of passage from the old creation into the new creation. The new state of being, as he characterized it in 6.22, is a present actuality, ‘But *now* being liberated from *hamartia*, and being enslaved to God, you have your fruit *unto holiness* and the end is life everlasting’. To be saved, to belong to God’s New Humanity, distinguishes those who belong to it as ‘holy people’, a designation that Paul employed in the salutation of his

64. Meyer, ‘The Worm at the Core of the Apple’, p. 75, says, ‘... “that which is good” (v. 13) is not simply the law itself, but the good that the law holds out “to me” (twice in v. 13) in its promise of life, exactly as in v. 10’.

letters to the members of the churches that he founded. But being holy people is not identical to having fruit *unto holiness*. Discipleship does not immediately and automatically actualize the ‘fruit unto holiness’. God’s love that God’s Spirit pours into human hearts and the justice that God’s love actualizes are predispositions that must be cultivated and incarnated in concrete deeds, and that requires a rigorous commitment to spiritual and psychological growth by which believers transcend the infected socio-cultural world in and by which they have been socialized. Gradually, in and through time, they will produce ‘fruit unto holiness’.

To expose *the exceeding sinfulness of sin*, Paul unfolds the other side of the paradox that defines the identity of the New Humanity. He juxtaposes two antithetical actualities: ‘For we know that the law is *spiritual* (*pneumatikos*), but (*de*) I am *fleshly* (*sarkinos*)’.<sup>65</sup> The character of the law remains uncontested; it is directed toward justice. Paul himself is the problem; he is *fleshly* (*sarkinos*). His use of the adversative particle *de* intimates that his self-characterization is a negative judgment. This is an expansion of his rhetorically directed *bar mitzwah* experience, and it stands in stark contrast to all that he said in 6.1–7.6, that is, liberation from enslavement to *hē hamartia* and indebtedness to God and to God’s justice. Moreover, in 7.5 he had certified, ‘For when *we were in the flesh*, the passions of sins were being activated in our members through the law in order to bear fruit unto death’. If he, like his fellow addressees, are no longer in the flesh, how then can he profess, ‘I am fleshly?’ If he, like them, has been delivered over to his death to the law through the Body of Christ, does he not therefore belong to another, namely Jesus Christ?

By rhetorically personalizing this attribution, ‘I am fleshly’, and expanding on it by applying to himself the past perfect participle *pepramenos* that bears the nuanced meaning of *having been sold as a slave*, he is first and foremost *presenting himself in this aporetic reality* of the other side of the paradoxical identity of the New Humanity.<sup>66</sup> This is the objective of

65. Some commentators, like Witherington, *Romans*, p. 196, are inclined to divide the first person plural verb *oidamen* (we know) into two words, *oida men* (I, on the one hand, know), so that v. 14 would read, ‘I, on the one hand, know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly’. No manuscript of *Romans* supports this separation, and Metzger and the editorial committee of *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, p. 514, prefer *oidamen*, because Paul generally uses the plural to express ‘a commonly acknowledged truth’. So also Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 199.

66. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 388, rightly acknowledges that Paul is including himself as a believer; he is not simply referring to his pre-Christian days. But he goes on to say, ‘the “I” is split and the law is split in complementary fashion because each belongs to both epochs at the same time in this period of overlap between the epoch of Adam and the epoch of Christ’. The Sinai law, however, belongs to the old moral order and serves to evoke the consciousness of *hamartia*. That law has been superseded by the law of love that God’s Spirit pours out.

7.7-25a.<sup>67</sup> Not only is he fleshly, but he ‘has been sold as a slave under the control of *hē hamartia*’. This is not his characterization of a pre-Christian state of being!<sup>68</sup> Nor is it a general analysis of the malaise of fallen humanity.<sup>69</sup> It is Paul’s acknowledgment of what he also is in the here and now. The prioritized reality of his identity as a member of the Body of Christ is his participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As he declared in 7.6, ‘But *NOW* we were set free from the law, dying to that which held us captive so that we might be enslaved in the new state of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter’. The other side of the eschatological *NOW* is the actuality of his being sold as a slave under the control of *hamartia*. As a consequence, he does not *know* (*ginōskein*) in terms of his personal experience what in actuality he is accomplishing because of the struggle that goes on within his existence and its daily activities, between his inner self, on the one hand, and his ‘members’, namely his hands, his feet and his mouth, on the other hand. ‘For not that which I will, this I do; but that which I hate, this I carry out. Now if I carry out that which I do not will, I concur with the law [that it is] good.’ That is, the law is good because it projects justice and, by exposing injustice confronts Paul with his crippled condition: the will to obey God’s commandments and yet the incapacity to fulfill them.

In actuality, however, it is not Paul himself that originates this incapability. It is induced by *hē hamartia* that has embedded itself in the finitude of his flesh and deprived him of his sovereignty.<sup>70</sup> He professes this with effect by introducing his next sentence with *nuni*, the emphatic form of the adverb *nun*, in order to intensify the prevailing situation.<sup>71</sup>

67. Many, like Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 217; Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 376-412, do not differentiate between Paul’s focus in 7.7-12 and 7.13-25a.

68. Yet this is what Käsemann maintains, *Romans*, p. 199. It is ‘the burdensome plight hanging over all mankind even in its piety’.

69. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 198; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 124.

70. Emma Wasserman, ‘The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Revisiting Paul’s Anthropology in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology’, *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 793-816, rightly characterizes 7.7-25 as ‘a dramatic monologue of inner turmoil and contradiction’. But Paul’s intellectual repertoire is not Hellenistic moral psychology, but the anthropology of the Old Testament and the eschatology of Jewish apocalypticism that is derived from his Jewish background. Wasserman, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7: Sin, Death, and the Law in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology* (WUNT, II/26; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 51-116, has expanded her earlier essay by contending that the extreme immorality of Rom. 7 is more validly interpreted according to the Platonic discourse on the soul and its passions, particularly in the writings of Middle Platonism. Her book is as faulty as her essay because she has not undertaken a close reading of Romans in its entirety nor done the necessary consistency building of the letter’s anthropology.

71. See Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 682.

But *NOW* no longer am I accomplishing this but *hamartia* which resides in me. For I know that there does not dwell in me, that is in my flesh, [that which is] good. For to will is present to me but not to accomplish the good. For I do not do the good that I will, but the evil that I do not will, this I do. And if I carry out that which I do not will, no longer am I accomplishing this but *hamartia* that dwells in me. (7.17-20)<sup>72</sup>

Throughout these verses Paul is speaking rhetorically in the first person singular. It is his most extensive use of it in this letter, and it continues the self-confession that he introduced in 7.7. But there is a notable elucidation. In v. 14b he professed, 'I am fleshly'; in v. 17 he acknowledges what was implicit in v. 14b, 'But *NOW* no longer am I accomplishing this but *hamartia* which resides in me'. If he is a slave of Christ Jesus, as he identified himself in 1.1, he is also *sold as a slave under the power of hamartia* (7.15), and that is the paradoxical reality of his discipleship. These two states of being are engaged in conflict after the death and resurrection experience in baptism. By rhetorical necessity he avows this self-truth for himself rather than utilizing the second person plural to indict his addressees. In all likelihood they will not hesitate to identify themselves with him as they read these verses, if they have appropriated for themselves all that he has addressed to them in the second person plural in 6.11 through 7.4a.

Paul's characterization of the other side of the paradox of being 'in Christ Jesus' reaches a decisive junction in vv. 21-23. For the first time he appears to be differentiating law from law or, more specifically, the law of God from law or laws that raise within him the consciousness of evil. He juxtaposes what appears to be two law codes in vv. 21-23:<sup>73</sup>

Consequently, with respect to my willingness to carry out the good, I find the *law (nomos)* that evil lies close to me; for I delight in *the law of God (tō nomō tou theou)* according to the inward human being, but I *discerningly see (blepō)* another *law (nomon)* in my members that is at war with the *law (nomos)* of my mind (*nous*) taking me captive to the *law (nomos)* of *hē hamartia* that is in my members.

Throughout the previous chapters of his letter, from 2.12 through 7.16, Paul has employed *nomos* 52 times to signify law, both the Mosaic law and law in general. In 3.27, however, he differentiated between 'law of works' and 'law of trust', but without explicitly clarifying either one. The former, 'law of works', would naturally refer to the law of Sinai. The latter, 'law of

72. Both instances of *hamartia* in 7.17 and 20 are not accompanied by the definite article.

73. Meyer, 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple', pp. 79-80, in spite of his fine analysis of 7.7-25, ends up identifying both 'the law of God' and the 'different law' of 7.21-23 with the Mosaic law.

trust', which obviously stands in contrast to 'law of works', must refer to law under the trust by which Abraham was justified 'unto justice'.

Now, as he moves into the other side of the paradox of 'being alive to God in Christ Jesus', he utilizes the law of Sinai, the law that according to its spiritual objective is holy, just and good and is directed toward justice, to expose the exceeding sinfulness of *hē hamartia*. That law is the 'law of works' of 3.27, and, according to 7.21, it is the law that makes Paul, as a paradigmatic figure, conscious of the evil that lies close to him when he wills to do good. Accordingly, it is identifiable with the law of 3.20, 'By the law is the recognition of *hamartia*' and also with the law of 7.5 that activates 'the passions of sins' and makes him captive to the power of *hamartia* in his members.<sup>74</sup>

Of the five uses of *nomos* in these three verses of 7.21-23, one is qualified as *the law of God according to the inner human being*; and one as 'the law (*nomos*) of my mind (*nous mou*)'. The *inner human being* (*ton esō anthrōpon*), a phrase that Paul had employed earlier in 2 Cor. 4.16, designates the essential self, the self that, according to 2 Cor. 5.1, resides in an 'earthly tent', and that, after death, will be re-housed by God. The phrase, *my mind* (*nous mou*), which according to 7.23 is also the bearer of 'the law', distinguishes the knowing, understanding and judging self. For, to pray with the *mind* and to sing praises with the *mind*, as Paul urged in 1 Cor. 14.14-15, indicates intelligibility and comprehension.<sup>75</sup>

Both anthropological phrases, 'the inner human being' and 'my mind', are directed to the same law, *the law of God*. Except for the tantalizing phrase, 'law of trust' in 3.27, this is the first instance of such a qualification of law in this letter, and it appears to convey a fundamental distinction

74. Paul's anthropology is related directly to what appears to be a differentiation between *nomos* (law) and *nomos tou theou* (law of God). Surprisingly, commentators generally, while differentiating the anthropological terms that Paul employed in 7.21-23, do not distinguish between the *law* and the *law of God*, apparently assuming that they are identical. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 178-79, focuses on Paul's anthropological terms to make sense of the differentiation between law and law of God: 'The true "I" of the human being assents to the law of God, while the other "I" contravenes the law of God, imprisoned under the law of sin'. This interpretation corresponds to the dualistic condition that is expressed in 7.25b. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 207, 'Here, then, reason and the inner man have the ability, which is accorded to them in the Greek tradition, namely, that of accepting and recognizing the divine will'. But, as he goes on to say, '...for Paul reason, too, is subject to the power of the flesh, so that the "inner man" here is simply an aspect of the "outward man" of 2 Cor 4.16'. Yet he continues, '...*nous* has the "full sense" of the "authentic I"'. See also Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, pp. 92-94; Cranfield, *Romans*, I, pp. 362-63; Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 393, also 398, 409; Jewett, *Romans*, I, pp. 469-70.

75. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, pp. 211 and 220-21.



between the law of Sinai and the law of God.<sup>76</sup> It is only in 8.7 that Paul explicitly refers to the *law of God* (*tō nomō tou theou*). On the basis of Gal. 3.19, it must be acknowledged that Paul cannot identify *the law* (*ho nomos*) with *the law of God* (*nomos tou theou*). The law of Sinai was constituted by angels. The law of God, therefore, must be the 'law of trust', the law beyond law. It must be the law of the new covenant, the law that God, according to the prophecy of Jer. 31(38).33, 'will give into their mind (*dianoia*) and write on their heart (*kardia*)'. It is the law of love, the only law that can establish God's justice. Paul enunciated the fulfillment of Jeremiah's expectation in 2 Cor. 3.3 as he distinguished the Corinthian believers:

You are a letter of Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but on tablets of human hearts.

The law of God that God is writing on tablets of human hearts is the law beyond law, the law of love. According to 5.5, God's Spirit is pouring out God's love; and the heart, as the seat of the will, must be able to judge with the understanding of the mind how it will direct God's love into the world and specifically to other human beings. The law of love is *the law of God* that is directed to the justice of God. This is the law that Paul delights in, according to his inward human being; it is the law of God that is identifiable with the 'law of trust' of 3.27. Because he delights in the law of love that is directed toward God's justice, it must be identical with 'the law of my mind' that is engaged in warfare with the law that he perceives in his members, the law of *hamartia* that activates his mouth, his hands and his feet to bear fruit unto death.<sup>77</sup>

76. According to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 205, '*Nomos* in v. 21 means in an extended sense the rule or necessity and the genitive construction *nomos tou theou* in v. 22 does not mean the fixed law but God's will in a general sense which allows the antithesis to the law in my members'. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, pp. 195-200, insists that Paul is vindicating the law or the Torah. On the basis of 7.21-23, he has concluded that there is a double Torah, a Torah that takes on a double role. The good Torah is the covenant document that Israel pursued in the wrong way. The doing of that Torah, according to p. 245, is fulfilled when anyone, Jew or Gentile, hears the gospel of Christ and believes it. The other is the Torah as the stumbling block that God deliberately placed in the way of Israel, namely the crucified and risen Christ. See also Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 50, for 'the double Torah'. There is no indication in Gal. 3.21-24 or Rom. 7.1-6 that Paul knows anything of a 'double Torah'. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 201-202, identifies both 'law' and 'law of God' with the Mosaic law.

77. C. K. Barrett, 'Romans 9:30-10:21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel', in *Essays on Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 132-53 (142), maintains that the phrase, '*other law* (*heteros nomos*) in 7.23 is the evil counterpart of the good law into which the good law is perverted by sin'. But Paul himself makes no such differentiation, for, in his deconstruction of law, all law is perverted by sin.



The great irony of the law of Sinai, projecting justice on the one hand, and coincidentally activating injustices on the other hand, is its disclosure of the seemingly hopeless condition of the diseased human being and, concomitantly, the wrath that it produces (4.15) by its punitive justice of retribution. The law of Sinai, which was constituted by angels, is the codicil that, through the mediation of Moses, was attached to the testament of inheritance that God established with Abraham and his seed, the Christ. Its rightful place is in the moral order of the old creation. Moses, therefore, serves as the spokesperson of the necessity of its inherent condition of reciprocity. Later, in 10.5, Paul will identify him as the guardian of the indebtedness that the Sinai law requires: 'For Moses writes that the justice that is out of [the] law is: "The human being doing them will live in them".'<sup>78</sup> As holy, just and good as the law of Sinai is in its spiritual character of being directed toward the actualization of justice, it requires the justice of punishment. The law of God, on the other hand, is the law of love that is directed toward the justice of healing and wholeness.

Neither 7.18b-20 nor 7.21-23 refer to 'unredeemed man!'<sup>79</sup> They are acknowledgments of Paul's self-understanding as a member of the Body of Christ. Paul's frustration within the paradoxical condition that he has delineated precipitates into a cry of helplessness: 'Miserable human being that I [am]! Who will deliver me from the *body* (*sōma*) of this death?' It is a cry of impotence, but not a cry of despair.<sup>80</sup> The ordeal of his condition is the exhaustion that results from the continuous warfare within himself. On the one hand, he wants to fulfill the legacy of Jesus Christ to 'rule in life' and therefore to be free to overcome the weakness of the flesh; yet, on the other hand, he all too often fails to fulfill it in his daily life because the power of *hamartia* subverts the willpower of his inward self. This misery is 'the body of this death'.<sup>81</sup> The body, as the structural totality of the human being that

78. This is a translation of the text of P<sup>46</sup>.

79. This is the judgment of Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 205, 208, and therefore he asks how the predicates and capacities of the redeemed person can be ascribed to the unredeemed.

80. According to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 210, it is a cry of despair that is 'the true mark of every creature after Adam's fall'. For Paul, however, it is a cry of an impotence that prevents him from acting in accordance with his prioritized identity as a member of the Body of Christ.

81. J. Christiaan Beker, 'The Relationship between Sin and Death in Romans', in Fortna and Gaventa (eds.), *The Conversation Continues*, p. 58, claims that the power of sin has been overcome, but the consequences of sin—its unleashing of death in God's world—still linger on. Yet Beker does not elucidate the difference between the 'power of sin' and 'the consequences of sin'. 'The twin powers' of sin and death continue, but, according to 8.2-11, the two will gradually be terminated. According to 1 Cor. 15.26, death is the last enemy that will be abolished.

unites the *inner self* (*esō anthrōpos*) and the physical mode of flesh and blood, is victimized and fated to death by this conflict. It is the ‘body of *hamartia*’ that has not yet been made powerless by being crucified with Christ (6.6). It is the mortal body of flesh and blood in which *hamartia* arouses the mouth, the hands and the feet of the body to strike out in retaliation.

In spite of this miserable incompatibility, Paul’s outcry of v. 24 is not an interjection of despair. There is hope! The baptism experience of dying and rising with Christ is a spiritual reality that is divinely destined to be incarnated in daily life and its relationships. The outcome, therefore, will not be a dualistic status quo in which grace super-abounds while the infection of sin continues to abound. For the will of God that is to be actualized in the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the eradication of *the infection* from the realm of human existence, both in the individual and in society. Consequently Paul can arrive at the end of his characterization of the other side of the paradox of Christian identity with a return to the actuality of God’s grace: ‘But *grace (charis)* to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!’<sup>82</sup> It is an echo of the super-abundance of ‘grace that will rule through justice unto everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (6.20-21).

#### 7.25b. *Scribal Interpolation*

Paul’s frustrated efforts ‘to rule in life’ and therefore to do the things that his inward self wills has culminated in an outcry of impotence: ‘Miserable human being that I [am]! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?’ The desperation of the question that his condition evokes is answered by an utterance of hope, ‘Grace/thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!’

It is disconcerting, therefore, that his interjection is followed by a summary statement of the *principle* realities that prevent him from being ‘dead to *hamartia* and alive to God in Christ Jesus’:

Consequently, therefore, I myself, on the one hand, with respect to mind, am enslaved to the law of God, but, on the other hand, with respect to the flesh, to the law of *hamartia* (7.25b).

This contradicts what Paul had stated in 6.22: ‘But now being liberated from *tēs hamartia*, and being enslaved to God, you have your fruit *unto holiness*, and the end is eternal life’. Moreover, beyond v. 25a no further summary is necessary.

82. The adversative particle *de* (but), supported by a majority of the manuscripts, probably is originally Pauline.

Although v. 25b has appropriated the two principal references of vv. 22-23, the law of God and the law of *hamartia*, it locks them into a static dualism in which their unending warfare is never resolved.<sup>83</sup> Being baptized into Christ Jesus, therefore, amounts to the status quo of 6.1, that is, continuing in *hamartia* so that grace may super-abound. That is not the resolution of his outcry of impotence!

There is no manuscript evidence that omits v. 25b, but its contradictory content obstructs the development of 'God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord' that will be disclosed in ch. 8. Accordingly, v. 25b must be regarded as a later scribal interpolation.<sup>84</sup> Paul's thought moves from 7.24-25a directly into 8.1-2:

Miserable human being that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? But grace/thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (7.24-25a).

Consequently there is no death sentence now to those in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus liberated you from the law of *hamartia* and death (8.1-2).

83. Meyer, 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple', p. 79, resolves the 'anthropological dualism uncharacteristic of Paul' by claiming that the 'load-bearing words in v. 25b are not "mind" and "flesh", even though these have the article, but rather the contrasting datives at the end of each clause, "*God's law*" and "*sin's law*". But the anthropological dualism of 'mind' and 'flesh' is characteristic of Paul. Nor is it one law, the Mosaic law, that Paul is referring to in 7.21-23. It is the difference between the Sinai law and the justice that it projects. Verse 25b is simply another version of the dualistic condition that Paul rejects in 6.1, 15.

84. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 180, recognizes that 7.25b is a summary and, assuming that it is not a gloss, he places it between vv. 23 and 24. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 212, after a lengthy discussion, concludes, like Bultmann, that v. 25b is 'the gloss of a later reader'. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, pp. 368-69; Dunn, *Romans* I, p. 415, and Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 113, note the awkwardness of the transition from 7.25 to 8.1, but are convinced that 7.25b is genuinely Pauline and its explanation is 'completely possible'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 473, like Michel, considers it to be 'a marginal gloss added by Paul himself that was probably intended to be placed between v. 23 and v. 24'. Cousar, 'Continuity and Discontinuity', p. 206, asks, in his response to 7.25b, 'How is it possible to make such a statement after the victorious cry of 7.25a?' Instead of rejecting 7.25b as an interpolation, he considers Dunn's explanation to be helpful: 'The coexistence of the two ages lies behind the tension between the two types of service depicted'. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 204, considers it to be authentic.

## 9

### EMPOWERMENT BY GOD'S SPIRIT OF LIFE

#### 8.1-8. *Walking according to the Spirit*

There is an immediacy of a progression between 7.25a and 8.1-2, if 7.25b is removed from the letter as a scribal interpolation. Verse 25a, Paul's response to the impassioned question he raised in 7.24, intimates that the end of the process of God's resolution of the human condition has not yet been reached: '*Grace (charis) to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*'

There is the grace of reconciliation towards God through the death of Jesus Christ, and, as Paul professed in 5.2, it is 'the grace (*charis*) in which we stand'. But the grace that is the resolution to the miserable condition of transcending 'the weaknesses of the flesh' is the grace that super-abounds, 'the grace that will rule through justice into everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (5.21). Or, as he characterized it earlier in 5.17, 'How much more those receiving the abundance of grace and the [abundance] of the legacy of justice will rule in life through the one Jesus Christ'.

It is this grace that Paul is acknowledging in 7.25a. But, as 6.17 disclosed, the word *charis* is also used to express gratitude for God's generosity.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, 7.25a may also be translated, 'Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!' Together 7.25a and 8.1-2 introduce Paul's forthcoming elaboration of the reality of *becoming* externally, in terms of the actions of the hands, the feet and the mouth, what a member of the Body of Christ actually is already in her or his very inner being:

Grace/thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Consequently, [there is] now no death sentence to those in Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus liberated you from the law of *hamartia* and death (7.25a–8.2).

1. Other instances are 1 Cor. 15.57 and 2 Cor. 2.14; 8.16; 9.15.

2. *Ouden* can be an adjective (no) or a substantive (nothing, no one). Paul uses it in both ways, but more frequently as a substantive, as for example in Rom. 14.7, 14; 1 Cor. 1.14; 2.8, 11, 15; 12.3, 14.2, etc. *Ouden*, as the very first word of 8.1, is used as an adjective and, as in other such instances, appears to give emphasis to what is being said, as in 1 Cor. 8.4 and Gal. 4.12.

As a consequence of God's grace, 'there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus'.<sup>3</sup> With this pronouncement, v. 1 initiates Paul's culminating exposition of how 'we shall be saved by his life' (5.10).

The movement from the phrase 'through Jesus Christ our Lord' in 7.25a to the phrase 'in Christ Jesus' in 8.1-2 may be disconcerting and perhaps obscure. Paul uses both phrases throughout his letters, but, as stated earlier, they are not synonymous. The difference between them is christologically and ecclesialogically significant for him and deserves greater recognition.

Prior to 8.1, the phrase 'Lord Jesus Christ' or 'Jesus Christ our Lord' has occurred a number of times, and usually in relation to a benefaction that Jesus has gained for humanity. In 5.1 Paul credited reconciliation towards God '*through our Lord Jesus Christ*'. In 5.15b he ascribed the grace of God and the legacy that multiplied unto the many to '*the grace of the one human being Jesus Christ*'. 'Grace', as he stated in 6.21, 'will rule through justice unto eternal life *through Jesus Christ our Lord*'. For Paul, 'the Lord Jesus Christ' or 'our Lord Jesus Christ' is God's agent, now co-enthroned as Lord, who through his death terminated the moral order of the old creation and who through his resurrection inaugurated a New Humanity. His emphasis in these verses is on the One, Jesus of Nazareth, 'God's Son' who, according to the creedal statement that he employed in 1.3-4, is 'from the seed of David according to the flesh, appointed Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness from the resurrection of the dead'.

'Christ Jesus', or simply 'the Christ', on the other hand, is the corporate reality of the One and the Many. It is the Many of the Body of Christ, who participate in the co-enthronement of the One, the Lord Jesus Christ. As indicated early on, Paul posits this community of the One and the Many in 1 Cor. 12.12, 'For even as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body being many are one body, so also the Christ'. 'Christ Jesus' is the bodily presence on earth of the resurrected and heavenly enthroned Jesus of Nazareth, and it is constituted by all those who through baptism follow him into death and resurrection.

Precisely because of the different meanings of these two phrases, 'Jesus Christ our Lord' and 'Christ Jesus', the progression from 7.25a to 8.1 is natural and consequential, and it continues into 8.2 and the following verses. Because God's grace is disbursed through Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation! But there is more! And the more is the liberation that originates

3. A rather large number of manuscripts add the phrase 'who do not walk according to the flesh' to this opening verse of ch. 8. Some of them, as well as a few others, include 'but according to the Spirit'. Both of these phrases have been drawn from v. 4, and they are unnecessary at this initial stage in the progression of Paul's thought. In view of the text-critical principle, the shorter text is preferable, and in spite of the support of both Alexandrian and Western text types, both undoubtedly are scribal interpolations. See also Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 515.

through 'the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice' and enables those who receive it 'to rule in life through the one Jesus Christ' (5.17).<sup>4</sup> But its actualization in the lives of those who have been baptized into the New Humanity of the Body of Christ is established by the *law (nomos)* that operates within the communion of saints. It is the law of the Spirit of life:

*For the law (ho nomos) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus liberated you from the law (apo tou nomou) of hamartia and death.*

In this context Paul is identifying the two laws, the law of God and the law of Sinai, with their diametrically opposed agents that produce antithetical results.<sup>5</sup> The law of the Spirit of life is the law that is beyond the law.<sup>6</sup> The

4. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 125, rightly states that 'justification is a participationist category', a participating in the new era of gift and grace, but it appears to have no relationship to the actualization of justice and the deliverance of the creation from its bondage. In his interpretation of Rom. 8.18-30 on pp. 136-38, Kirk offers nothing more than '...the hope of all creation, and of believers themselves, is the glory of the resurrected Christ'.

5. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 189-90, concludes on the basis of v. 2 that salvation is now directed toward erecting the authority of the law and achieving a new obedience. But Michel still thinks that it is the Sinai law that must now be observed and can be observed by the help of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 375, correctly connects the *nomos* of the Spirit of life with the law of God that Paul referred to in 7.22. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 212-13, concentrates on the Spirit as 'the power which works in all the baptized' toward liberation. As for 'the law of the Spirit of life', he reduces the Torah of Moses to a moral law, apparently identical to 'the will of God', and postulates its validity for the church, and adds, 'The Spirit effects eschatological life in righteousness and simultaneously gives assurance of bodily resurrection'. See *Romans*, p. 215. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 416, has not differentiated between the law of God and the law of Sinai and therefore does not make the right connections. The same holds true for Jewett, *Romans*, p. 481, who says, 'But in Christ Jesus the law gains its proper spiritual function, which leads to genuine life'. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 212, notes that it is 'the Spirit, not the Mosaic law that rules in the believer's life'. Kirk, *Romans*, p. 127, recognizes Paul's wordplay with the word *nomos* (law), and states that the 'law of the Spirit' simply means 'the work and/or power of the Spirit'.

6. According to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 216, 'the Spirit does not simply make possible a better or an original understanding of the law but replaces it'. What is replaced may be the moral law reduced from the Torah of Moses, which Käsemann appears to identify with 'the will of God'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 481, offers a similar perspective when he identifies 'the law of the Spirit of Life' as the law of Sinai, formerly distorted by the power of sin and flesh, but an instrument of honor that regains its spiritual function in Christ. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 416, claims that Paul thought of law in two different ways: 'the law caught in the nexus of sin and death...and the law rightly understood, and responded to *en pneumati ou grammati* (in Spirit not letter) is pleasing to God'. Dunn also states: 'Paul himself explicitly links the Torah and the Spirit in a wholly positive way in the very next sentence' (p. 416). Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 375, correctly identifies *nomos* (law) in 8.2 with the *nomos tou theou* (law of God) of 7.22.

law of the Spirit of life is the law of God that is divinely directed toward healing and wholeness and toward the actualization of God's justice.<sup>7</sup> It is the law of God that God's Spirit writes on human hearts. According to 2 Cor. 3.2-3, those in whom God's Spirit is inscribing God's law are metaphorically identified as 'a letter of Christ':

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all human beings, manifesting that you are *a letter of Christ* delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

The law of God that God's Spirit inscribes on human hearts is the law that liberates human beings from the *law (nomos)* of *hamartia*. The law of *hamartia* and death is the 'other law' that Paul referred to in 7.23, 'the law in my members warring against the law of my mind and taking me captive to the law of *hamartia* which is in my members. Because this 'other law', the law of Sinai, activates the power of *hamartia*, it is unable to establish justice and succeeds only in producing death in human life. 'The law of the Spirit of life' is the law that heals and restores. It is the law that enables human beings to recover their divinely willed sovereignty in order 'to rule in life'.

*The Spirit of life* is God's holy Spirit by which God created the world and originated life. *The Spirit of life* is God's animating power that resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead. *The Spirit of life*, therefore, is the source of power that enables human beings to overcome 'the weaknesses of the flesh' and to begin to fulfill God's law that is beyond the law of Sinai.<sup>8</sup> At last, in this context of 8.1-27, Paul is able to extend the activity of the holy Spirit, *the Spirit of life*, that he introduced in 5.5 in his elucidation of the significance of Jesus' death:

7. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, pp. 98-99, maintains 'there is no explicit distinction between the law of 8.4 and the Mosaic law'. But they cannot be identical if the law is related to the Spirit of God and, according to 5.5, it is the Spirit of God that is pouring out God's love in human hearts. Wright, likewise, in *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 209, identifies 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' as a reference to the Torah. 'The law is the subject of both the initial and the final sequence, and in the latter capacity it is the law itself, "helped" by the Spirit and the Son, that gives the required *dikaiōma* (righteous deeds) to God's people'. Wright (p. 244) can speak of a *double Torah*, but, as he goes on to say, 'Now, however, the two, for all that their functions are so different, are more obviously integrated'. Paul stated to his readers in 7.4, specifically the Jews, '...you were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ'.

8. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 335, 'The Spirit and faith are reverse sides of the same thing... Faith is the *pneuma* given to the individual and received by him.' Faith is not given by *pneuma*! Faith or trust is a human capacity, and through the death and resurrection experience of baptism, the believer receives God's Spirit.



Now hope does not put to shame because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through *the holy Spirit* that was given to us.

Because of the 'peace we have toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ', we have access into God's presence, as Paul asserted in 5.2. Indeed, 'it is the grace in which we stand'. In that condition of standing perpetually in the grace of God's presence, the love of God is 'poured out in our hearts through the *holy Spirit* that was given to us'. God's Spirit mediates God's love in order to engender peace and wholeness within each member of the Body of Christ, with the attendant objective to convey it to others in all the relationships of every day life. Out of this ongoing process of intensified and intensifying love that in reconciliation reaches out to others without discrimination, without expectations of reciprocity, and without engaging in any kind of retaliation, the hope of being free and 'ruling in life' begins to be realized—and with it the actualization of God's justice. Growing into that new state of being is not only the fulfillment of God's will. It is engaging in the process of producing 'the fruit unto holiness' that, as Paul stated in 6.22, results from 'being enslaved to God'. This is the salvation that the gospel offers to the world, and it is as antithetical to the capitalistic values of globalization as it was to the honor–shame culture of the Mediterranean world in which Paul lived and worked.<sup>9</sup> As Paul certified at the very beginning of his letter, there is no shame or disgrace in the salvation that this gospel discloses as a new way into reconciliation, restoration and the empowerment to actualize God's justice in the world.

In moving from the other side of the paradox of being 'in Christ Jesus' into liberation by 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus', Paul unexpectedly, it would seem, employed the personal pronoun *you* in the singular number (*se*) in 8.2. The variants in the manuscript transmission of this verse indicate that later scribes were troubled by the sudden and unexpected shift from his use of the first person singular pronouns, *I* and *me*, of 7.14b–24, to the second person singular pronoun *you*.<sup>10</sup> The transition,

9. See Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 27–57, who does not appear to discern Paul's rejection of the ethics of honor/shame culture. For a critique of the culture that the globalization of capitalism is expanding, see Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010).

10. Three different readings have been transmitted in the manuscript tradition of this text: the singular *me* (*me*), the singular *you* (*se*), and the plural *us* (*hēmas*). The last, the plural *us*, almost certainly is a scribal accommodation of the text to a wider audience. Of the two pronouns in the singular number, *se* (you) and *me* (me), the former is the more difficult reading, especially in view of Paul's consistent use of the first person pronoun *I* from 7.14b through 7.24. Undoubtedly *you* singular (*se*) is the pronoun that Paul employed. Moreover, it makes rhetorical sense. His protracted use of the first person singular, both *I* and *me* throughout 7.14b–24, served him as an avowal of the truth of his

however, is rhetorically effective and therefore appears to be valid. In 7.14b-24 Paul focused on himself to describe his crippled condition, the other side of his self-understanding as a member of the Body of Christ. As 'a slave of Christ Jesus', he has no hesitation in autobiographically characterizing himself as 'a slave sold under *hamartia*'. But in consistency with those whom he addressed earlier in 1.7 as 'beloved of God' and 'called holy people' (*saints*), it is necessary to confirm the actuality of their individual liberation 'from the law of *hamartia* and death' by 'the law of the *Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus'. They are to know individually that the Spirit of God which they received at their baptism has emancipated them from the power of the infection (*hē hamartia*) to do the justice that God wills.

That cannot be accomplished by the law of *Sinai*. It is unable to liberate human beings from the diseased condition of *hē hamartia* and attendantly overcoming 'the weakness of the flesh':

For [in view of] the inability of the law, by which it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of *hamartia* and concerning *hamartia*, condemned *hē hamartia* in the flesh, so that the requirement of the law (*to dikaiōma tou nomou*) is fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (8.3-4).

To walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh requires a death experience, an eschatological death! A death that is followed by a resurrection! Both death and resurrection occurs in baptism, as Paul announced in 6.5, are in 'the likeness of his [Jesus'] death and in the [likeness] of his resurrection'. Likeness here signifies similarity, not identity. The baptism experience of death and resurrection is like Jesus' death and resurrection. But they are not identical. Jesus' death was by crucifixion and his resurrection by a creative act of God's Spirit that transformed and transfigured him as a spiritual body. The death and resurrection that take place in baptism are eschatological, but they are nevertheless real events. They are equivalent in as far as Jesus' death and resurrection draw those who have died and been resurrected with him in baptism into the same ontological actuality in which he participates. For, as members of the Body of Christ, they are united with the co-enthroned Lord Jesus Christ through the Spirit of life, God's holy Spirit. As Paul will profess in 8.29, 'For whom he foreknew, he also pre-appointed [to be] conformed to the image of his Son so that he is the first-born of many sisters and brothers'.

own 'weaknesses of the flesh' and his enslavement to *hamartia* in order to convey the other side of the paradox of his Christian self-understanding. Now the resolution of this condition is to be directed to the individual members of his addressees.

Incarnation appears to be implicit in v. 3b: 'God sent his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of *hamartia*'. Once again, as in 6.5, Paul has utilized the term *likeness* (*homoioōma*), and in both of these verses the Greek word signifies *sameness* or *similarity*, but not identity.<sup>11</sup> If incarnation is implied in the phrase, 'God sent his own Son'—and the use of this term *homoioōma* (likeness) endorses that possibility—it can only be a *resemblance* of 'the flesh of *hamartia*'. That is, it is the equivalence of *flesh*, the stuff of which the human body is made. The flesh of Jesus' body was authentic human flesh. But through incarnation his flesh was no longer identical to 'the flesh of *hamartia*!'<sup>12</sup> Incarnation must necessarily be related to a specific time and place. Matthew and Luke posit it at the time of Jesus' conception in Mary's womb. Mark and John link it to Jesus' baptism under John when God's Spirit descended into or upon him. But Paul does not indicate when that event occurred. The truth of 8.3 corresponds to that of 2 Cor. 5.21, 'The one not knowing *hamartian* (sin) he [God] made *hamartian* on our behalf so that we become the justice of God *in/by* (*en*) him'. But when that incarnation occurred is nowhere indicated. Paul, it must be concluded, presupposes incarnation without offering any intimation of when and how it happened.

God's objective in sending Jesus as Son and surrogate 'in the likeness of the flesh of *hamartia*' was directed towards the eradication of the infection itself. That is why Paul adds the brief prepositional phrase in the middle of v. 3, 'and concerning *hamartia*'. Only the Son, who was from the seed of David according to the flesh, but a flesh no longer infected with *hamartia*, could serve as God's terminator of the old moral order and therefore also as God's condemnation of *hē hamartia* in the flesh:

God, sending his own Son in the likeness of the flesh of *hamartia* and concerning *hamartia*, condemned *hamartia* in the flesh so that *the requirement of the law* is fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

This in a nutshell is the seemingly preposterous good news of Jesus Christ. God's intention for humanity is both the elimination of the condition of *hamartia* and coincidentally the incarnation of God's justice in every human being 'so that the requirement of the law is fulfilled in us'.

11. See also Rom. 1.23 and 5.14 for the other two uses of *homoioōma*. In both instances the sense of 'sameness' or 'similarity' rather than 'identity' is intended. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 217, concludes that Paul used *homoioōma* because of its ambivalence, 'and one should not try to render it either by "identity" or on the other side by "similarity"'. Yet he seems to give priority to 'similarity', for he says, 'God sent his Son so deeply into the sphere of sinful flesh that from the very first he ordained him a sin-offering'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 421, does not perceive sinlessness in 8.3.

12. Also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 213.

There is one and only one qualification by which this objective is achievable. It is necessary to walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. 'The flesh', or the body of flesh and blood, that is subject to mortality and therefore is vulnerable to the contingencies of everyday life, manifests a fierce, even impassioned, inclination to survive. Human finitude protects its vulnerability by forms of power and degrees of control. To walk according to the flesh is to surrender to egocentricity and selfishness.<sup>13</sup> To walk according to the flesh is to pursue possibility, fulfillment, and well-being at the expense of others, regardless of the loss of personal morality and integrity. Paul summarizes the morality of walking according to the flesh very simply as an inclination toward the things of the flesh. Those who live their lives with a flesh-oriented perspective cannot please God. Indeed, the *mind-set* (*phronēma*) of the flesh is 'hostile to God' because it is a mind-set that is not subordinated to *the law of God* and cannot be. It is a mind-set that is fated toward death (8.6-7).

Diametrically opposed to the orientation of the flesh is the *mind-set* (*phronēma*) of the Spirit, God's Spirit, 'the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus', that is, the Body of Christ. This *mind-set* is committed to the fulfillment of *the law of God* that 'the Spirit of the living God is writing on the tablets of human hearts'. In 8.2 Paul employed the pronoun *you* in the singular number to confirm to his addressees individually that the Spirit of God which they received at their baptism has emancipated them from the power of *hē hamartia* to fulfill the justice of God. In 8.4 he utilized the inclusive 'us' to accentuate the fulfillment of the requirements of God's law by the members of the Body of Christ. Verses 5-7 characterize the oppositional differences between the flesh-directed life and the Spirit-oriented life and conclude in v. 8 with the pronouncement, 'Those in the flesh cannot please God'.

At that decisive point Paul turns to his addressees in v. 9, resuming the use of the plural *you*, to affirm them as those who have the mind-set of the Spirit: 'But *you* are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, even as the Spirit of God resides in *you*'. Consequently, *the requirement of the law* (*to dikaiōma tou nomou*) is fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit, because, according to 5.5, 'the love of God is being poured out in our hearts through the holy Spirit given to us'.<sup>14</sup>

13. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 218, says, '[Human nature] knows only its own good or what is good, honorable, and useful for itself, but not what is good for God and for others'.

14. Keck's exegesis of 8.4 is noteworthy, 'What Makes Romans Tick', p. 26, 'The inner residence of the Spirit not only makes it possible for the *dikaiōma* ("just requirement") of the law to be fulfilled (8.4) but is a pledge of the redemption of the body through which indwelling sin operated. And that will be nothing less than the emancipation of all creation from the consequences of Adam.' On p. 28, Keck finally identifies *to dikaiōma tou nomou* (the just requirement of the law) in 8.4 as 'the law of love'.

8.9b-10. *Scribal Interpolation*<sup>15</sup>

Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he/she is not of him. But if Christ is in you, the body, on the one hand, is dead on account of *hamartia*, but the Spirit, on the other hand, is life on account of justice (8.9b-10).

No existing manuscripts of Paul's Letter to the Romans omit 8.9b-10. Yet these sentences interfere with the continuation of Paul's thought in v. 11. Moreover, their content has the character of a summary, like some of the other interpolations in Romans. After Paul has contrasted the two fundamental orientations to life and their respective modes of ethical conduct—'walking according to the Spirit' and 'walking according to the flesh'—he turns to his addressees, 'But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in as far as the Spirit of God *resides in you*'. Verse 11, therefore, continues the affirmation of v. 9a: 'Now if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead *resides in you*, the one raising Christ Jesus from the dead will vivify your mortal bodies through the Spirit that *resides in you*'. There is no necessity at this point to inject an antithetical note about those who do not have 'the Spirit of Christ' or a summary statement that juxtaposes two antithetical realities.

More specifically, the phrase of v. 9b, 'Spirit of Christ', is foreign to Paul. It does not appear in Romans or in any of his other letters except in Phil. 1.19, a text in which he has employed the phrase 'the support of the Spirit of Jesus Christ' in order to express the means by which he anticipates being delivered from his imprisonment. It is the phrase of v. 9a, 'the Spirit of God', that is widely used throughout his letters.

Equally suspicious is the phrase 'Christ in you' that occurs in v. 10. It never appears in Paul's writings, only in the deutero-Pauline letter of Colossians (1.27). Equally problematic in v. 10 is the use of the word 'body' that follows the phrase 'Christ in you'.<sup>16</sup> It seems to offer a response to Paul's exclamation of 7.24b, 'Who will deliver me from the body of this death?', by affirming that 'Christ in you' results in the death of *hamartia* that has infected the body. But 7.24b voices the misery of the *hamartia*-infected flesh warring against the mind and taking the whole person captive, so that

15. These verses, 8.9b-10, are considered by most commentators to be authentically Pauline. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 163, seems to sense the unusual character of v. 9b and identifies it as an 'exclusion formula', like 1 Cor. 16.22, that belonging to Christ conceals the gift of the Spirit.

16. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 491, struggles to make sense of the reference to 'body' in v. 10, and he is very aware of the unusual antithesis between 'the body is dead on account of sin' and 'the Spirit is life on account of righteousness'. Nevertheless, he has translated the preposition *dia* as 'through', when in both phrases it is governing the accusative case and expressing cause. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 215-16, accepts the authenticity of 8.9b-10, but has difficulty interpreting it.

the body, the entire structure of the self that unites the mind and the flesh, is hostage to living death. Paul does not state that the body is dead because of the termination of the condition of *hamartia*! On the contrary, as v. 11 indicates, it is the Spirit of God that resurrected Jesus from the dead that will make the mortal body alive. God's Spirit is the Spirit of life! How or in what way 'the Spirit is life on account of justice' is unintelligible.

Romans 8.9b-10 subverts the development of Paul's movement of thought between 8.9a and 11, and it is best eliminated from his letter as a scribal gloss or notation that was subsequently interpolated into this context of Romans.

### 8.9a-11. *Liberation by God's Indwelling Spirit*

But you are not in [the] flesh but in [the] Spirit, even as the Spirit of God *resides in you* (8.9a).

Now if the Spirit of the one who resurrected Jesus from the dead *resides in you*, the one resurrecting Christ Jesus from the dead will make alive your mortal bodies through his indwelling/residing Spirit in you (8.11).

Verse 11 develops the culmination of the gospel that was introduced in v. 9a, but already anticipated in 5.5. It is the distinctive gift that graces those who have died and been resurrected with Christ Jesus in baptism, the gift of God's holy Spirit. The escape from the miserable condition that Paul described in 7.14b-24, as the other side of his self-understanding in Christ, is possible. The equilibrium and stagnation that are abetted by 'justification by faith', in which grace super-abounds while the infection of sin continues to abound, can be transcended. God, according to the trust that Paul ascribed to Abraham in 4.17, is the 'one who makes the dead alive and calls the things that are not as the things that are'. Here in v. 11 he accentuates the power of God's Spirit by a double reference to its activity. Through God's Spirit, God raised Jesus from the dead. That is the event of Jesus' resurrection. Through God's Spirit, God resurrects Christ Jesus from the dead. That is the corporate reality of the Body of Christ that re-presents the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Accordingly, God's Spirit is continuing to resurrect all those who are 'in Christ Jesus', who have been baptized into Christ Jesus and therefore are members of the corporate Body of Christ. Moreover, as Paul concludes in v. 11, it is within their historical existence—and not simply after their physical death—that God's spirit 'will make your mortal bodies alive through his indwelling Spirit in you'.<sup>17</sup> The twofold use of the

17. Against Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 432, who maintains that Paul's verb, *zōopoiēsai* (to make alive), 'clearly refers to the final resurrection (as in 1 Cor 15.22)', Jewett, *Romans*,

preposition *en* (in) in v. 11b, first in the compound verb *enoikoun* (to indwell) and then in the final prepositional phrase *en hymin* (in you), reinforces the reality of God's Spirit residing within each member of the Body of Christ. Mortal bodies will be vivified, made alive, 'through his indwelling Spirit in you'.

Consequently, by this resurrection power of God's indwelling Spirit of life, the *condition of sin (hamartia)* is eradicable! This, finally, is the significance of Paul's use of the 'how much more' of the *qal wahomer* of 5.17. The possibility of ruling in life can be realized in the lives of those who have been 'liberated from the law of *hamartia* and death' by God's Spirit that resurrected Jesus from the dead. Ruling in life, therefore, presupposes 'walking according to the Spirit' and not 'walking according to the flesh'. Ruling in life is actualized through the gradual freedom of excluding retaliation, greed, envy, strife, deceit, mean-spiritedness, slander and lovelessness—all those acts and actions that generate death in its many forms in individual human beings and in society. If death exercises its kingship through the power of *hē hamartia*, the life that God wills can only prevail through the abundance of grace and the abundance of the legacy of justice through the one Jesus Christ and the gift of God's indwelling Spirit. Jesus' legacy of justice is the justice of God. It is that possibility of the impossible that is directed to the realization of restoration and not to retribution or punishment. Paul will formulate the ethics of God's law of love that the justice of God presupposes in Romans 12–15.

#### 8.12-17. *Membership in God's Family*

The actualization of becoming outwardly what the baptized believer already is inwardly as a member of the Body of Christ depends on the commitment to live as members of the New Humanity of life-giving spirits. Underlying that commitment is an indebtedness, an obligation, to the indwelling Spirit of Life that raised Jesus from the dead. It is an indebtedness that is equivalent to the typology of enslavement that Paul employed in 6.22, 'But now being liberated from *hē hamartia* and being enslaved to God, you have the fruit *unto (eis)* your consecration and the goal is eternal life'. Existence as flesh and blood human beings necessarily involves an enslavement or indebtedness. On the one hand, there is an indebtedness to the condition of *hē hamartia* and 'the weaknesses of the flesh'; on the other hand, there is indebtedness to God's justice!

pp. 492-93, correctly acknowledges that Paul has shifted from dead bodies in v. 10 to mortal bodies in v. 11, and therefore used the verb *zōopoiein* (to make alive) and not the verb *egeirein* (to resurrect).



Ironically, of the two forms of enslavement or indebtedness, it is the latter of the two, indebtedness to God's justice, that produces authentic life and freedom. It is an indebtedness to a human being's identity as a member of God's New Humanity. It is simply *being what you have become*, namely, a life-giving spirit. But the other side of the paradox of being in Christ Jesus, that Paul characterized autobiographically in 7.13-24, requires the gift of God's indwelling Spirit of life in order to complete the work of God's salvation.

In this context Paul returns to the two enslavements that he differentiated in ch. 6. In reviewing the enslavement to the flesh in v. 12, he includes himself as he momentarily employs the first person plural *we* and then returns to his use of the second person plural *you*:

Consequently, therefore, sisters and brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh; for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die.

To 'live according to the flesh' is a consuming enslavement that remains entrenched in alienation. To 'live according to the flesh' is to be doomed to a life of self-deception and emptiness and consequently a life that is victimized by the stark reality of living death.

To be a *resurrected human being* by dying and rising with Christ is to be indebted to the identity of belonging to a New Humanity of life-giving spirits.<sup>18</sup> But because of the exceeding sinfulness of the infection of *hamartia*, there is another duty of debt that Paul introduces in this context of ch. 8, specifically here in v. 13b. It is the debt of the gift of the holy Spirit, which constitutes the duty to *become what you already are*.<sup>19</sup> But Paul expresses it indirectly by summoning his addressees, as sons and daughters of God, to let themselves be conducted by the Spirit of God in their negation of indebtedness to the flesh:

18. This is the decisive issue that Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 98-108, raises through his reading of Derrida and his consequential interaction with Paul's Letter to the Romans.

19. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 174, comes close to this construction when he says, 'The demand is simultaneously a promise, since in the last resort it demands no more than reception of the gift and its attestation. Hence neither indicative nor imperative loses its seriousness or significance, and "become what you are" (adopted first in Bultmann, *Theology*, I, 332f.) receives its meaning from the message of the apostle.' Unfortunately, Käsemann appears to contradict himself, as he continues: 'The act of salvation neither becomes actual nor is developed through what we do. It sets in responsibility without basing salvation on this.' And he concludes, 'Sanctification here is justification maintained in the field of action and suffering'. Yet sanctification and justification are not identical. Käsemann appears to have lost sight of Phil. 2.12b-13, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure'.

But if by the Spirit *you put to death the works of the body*, you will live. For as many as are led by God's Spirit, these are the sons and daughters of God.

This is the entry into the possibility of the impossible; it is the entry into the ultimacy of life. As sons and daughters of God, they are 'in God', because they participate in 'Christ Jesus'.<sup>20</sup> On the one hand, by living as resurrected members of God's New Humanity, they are *being what they have become*; on the other hand, they are engaged in submitting to the work of God's indwelling Spirit in order to *become what they already are*. By putting to death the works of the body, specifically the retaliatory activities of the hands, feet and mouth, they are becoming who they truly are, life-giving spirits. Both *being what you have become* and *becoming what you already are* constitute the paradox of the new indebtedness in Christ Jesus. Through the empowerment of the Spirit of life, those who have followed Jesus into death and resurrection engage in the continuous integration of the outward self with the inward self by committing the body and its members, the hands, feet and mouth, to God's justice of reconciliation and restoration.

Having come of age as 'adults of God', they are immediate participants in God's family, with all of its rights and privileges. In their participation in God's reign, they exercise their divine legacy of sovereignty on God's behalf, and the Spirit of life that resides within them is pouring out the love of God into their hearts, as Paul professed in 5.5. Since that love originates from God, it is an infinite, unconditional love, and their ethical conduct, therefore, is no longer determined by 'calculation, conscious or unconscious, of restitution or reappropriation'.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, membership in God's New Humanity induces the fulfillment of the paradoxical indebtedness to be transformed from one degree of glory to another by being fully alive and ruling in life. Those who have been raised from the dead in a baptism of death and resurrection, are alive in Christ Jesus and are being what they already have become by being enslaved to God's justice. On the other hand, baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, they are being made alive by the indwelling Spirit of life that is at work in them, putting to death the works of the body and enabling them to become what they already are. Paul had enunciated this aporetic condition in 2 Cor. 4.7-12:

Now we have this treasure in clay pots so that the immensity of the power is of God and not from us. Oppressed in everything, but not crushed; perplexed but not despairing; persecuted but not abandoned; thrown down but not destroyed. Always carrying the death of Jesus in the body so that the life of

20. In 1 Thess. 1.1, Paul's salutation to the Thessalonian believers acknowledges that they are *en theō* (in God).

21. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 97-98. Jennings's quotation is drawn from Derrida's essay, 'Passions: An Oblique Offering', in his book, *On the Name* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

Jesus is manifested in our body. For always we the living ones are being handed over to death through Jesus, in order that the life of Jesus is manifested in our mortal flesh. So that death is active in us but life in/among you.

By engaging in the duty of becoming their true selves 'in God', the members of the Body of Christ will begin to actualize God's justice by acting in accordance with their identity as 'life-giving spirits'.

This paradox of indebtedness qualifies the very being of those who are in Christ Jesus. As Paul certifies in v. 15, 'For you did not receive the Spirit of slavery towards fear again, but you received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry "Abba," Father'. God's Spirit of life, pouring out God's love in their hearts, enables them to live in this paradoxical reality. By embracing their death to the indebtedness to the flesh, they impart life. By putting to death the works of the body and its members by the empowerment of God's Spirit, they are actualizing the fullness of life for themselves while they coincidentally are enacting God's justice and communicating life to others. There is no fear of death in this New Humanity, because by being 'in God' through God's indwelling Spirit, the fullness of life is unfolding and there is nothing more that can be gained or secured.

This is the extraordinary character of the relationship that distinguishes God's family circle, a family in which the relationship between God and God's sons and daughters is so intimate that God, as the union of the mother and father who generated them, may be addressed with the most personal metaphors. Paul utilizes one that most likely originated with Jesus, the Aramaic term of familiarity and affection, 'Abba', which he translates formally as 'Father', perhaps because there was no equivalent in Greek.<sup>22</sup> Other expressions of intimacy, of course, are also possible.

At the same time God's Spirit, which has constituted this adoption into God's family through rebirth, certifies to the spirit of those in whom the Spirit resides that they are God's offspring: 'This same Spirit attests to our spirit that we are God's children'. This divine identity as 'God's children' should not be construed to signify a vertical and therefore a dependent relationship. God's children as God's offspring are heirs of God, on the one hand, and co-heirs of Christ, on the other hand.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, as heirs who

22. On 'Abba', see Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 54-65.

23. As Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 463, rightly stresses, 'They are heirs of God by virtue of being fellow heirs with Christ'. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 403, characterizes the work of God's Spirit as 'enabling us to believe in Jesus Christ, through whom alone we may rightly call God "Father"'. The focus here is not a subject/object relationship between faith and Jesus Christ, but the paradigm shift of being in God's family and therefore the change in status from a vertical to a horizontal relationship with God. Käsemann's apocalyptic eschatology, *Romans*, pp. 224-25, motivates him to project these realities

have reached adulthood in their membership in God's New Humanity, their relationship to God is horizontal, as it would be in any healthy family in which adult children enjoy a familiar, reciprocally equalizing relationship with their parents. Paul had acknowledged this more explicitly in Gal. 4.1-7. But the stipulation that he adds in v. 17c qualifies the status of God's sons and daughters in God's family, 'if indeed we suffer together so that we also are glorified together'. Suffering is a natural experience for God's adult offspring who are engaged in communicating God's unconditional love and God's justice of restoration to their fellow human beings who continue to be enslaved to the law of retribution. Coincidental with their suffering is their gradual transfiguration that continues throughout life in Christ Jesus, from one degree of glory to another, as Paul professed in 2 Cor. 3.18.

#### 8.18-30. *The Indebtedness of Liberating the Creation*

As inevitably as there will be suffering that all the members of God's family will experience, there will also be a divine destiny that they will realize through their empowerment by God's Spirit of life as they engage in the acts and activities of reconciliation and justice.<sup>24</sup> Paul, in his status as a 'slave of Christ Jesus' and as a 'called apostle who was set apart for the gospel of God', ventures to express his view of this future in these climactic verses of ch. 8. Romans 8.18 reads:

For I calculate that the sufferings of *the now season* (*ton nun kairos*) are not worthy [in comparison] toward the glory that is going to be disclosed into us.

The *nun kairos* or the *now time* should not be construed as the season of suffering that will prevail until the *parousia*, the so-called second coming of the Lord Jesus. Nor should 'the glory that is going to be disclosed in us' be relegated to the everlasting life of the world to come. *The now* or *present season* refers to the beginning of the apocalyptically oriented fulfillment of the new creation that was inaugurated by Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul will remind his addressees in 13.11 that they should be conscious of *the season* (*ton kairos*) in which they are living, 'that already the hour [is here] that you be resurrected from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed'. Salvation, as Paul has been clarifying it, is the gradual process

into the future. In the meantime, as he states on p. 219, 'The Spirit points us back to the cross of Christ as the place of salvation. He continually actualizes justification, sets us unceasingly in the sphere of the power of the Crucified and is the earthly presence of the exalted Lord.' Here, as elsewhere, Käsemann's Lutheran orientation dominates his interpretation. See also Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 485-86.

24. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 54, ascribes the liberation of the 'whole creation' to the Spirit. More correctly, it is God's sons and daughters in-dwelt and empowered by the Spirit who are entrusted by God to do that.

of world restoration and healing, the beginning of the actualization of God's justice and with it the progressive realization of 'the glory that is going to be revealed in us'. That glory is not the glory of 'a much different quality of existence' that will be realized in heaven.<sup>25</sup> It is the glory of God's salvation in and through which the freedom and sovereignty that God originally willed for all humanity will be manifested in those who participate in God's New Humanity.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, his addressees, as those who are 'in Christ' and therefore participants in God's new creation, stand on the threshold of this forthcoming and far-reaching transformation.

The new indebtedness that is initiated by access to the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice through Jesus Christ is the work of world-healing through the actualization of God's justice. As the sons and daughters of God's family realize their freedom and sovereignty of 'ruling in life', they also fulfill their identity as life-giving spirits of God's New Humanity and manifest the 'the glory that will be revealed in us'. The justice of God that they actualize will have far-reaching consequences for the restoration of the creation. The adverbial conjunction *for* (*gar*) that introduced v. 18 is used again at the beginning of v. 19 in order to correlate 'the glory that will be revealed into us' with the hopeful anticipation of the creation:<sup>27</sup>

For the eager expectation of *the creation* is waiting for the unveiling of the sons and daughters of God (8.19).

25. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 468. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 222, relates v. 18 to the 'future resurrection'.

26. Robert Jewett, 'The Corruption and Redemption of the Creation: Reading Rom 8.18-23 within the Imperial Context', in Richard A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2004), pp. 25-46 (34), rightly acknowledges that, 'it seems inappropriate to restrict "glory" in this passage to a future state of "immortality" to be enjoyed by the saints'. Yet it is not simply through 'the growing triumph of the gospel'. For on p. 35, he goes on to say, 'When Paul speaks of their "revelation/unveiling", there is a clear reference to God's glory advancing in the world through the triumph of the gospel'. More than that, it is God's glory advancing in the world through the actualization of justice and love, healing and restoration by the New Humanity of life-giving spirits, as they incarnate the gospel in everyday life.

27. Käsemann's apocalyptic orientation, *Romans*, p. 234, prevents him from discerning the participation of Christ's disciples in Christ's resurrection in the present and consequently also their gradual growth into empowerment and glorification on this side of the grave through the indwelling of God's Spirit: 'Only Christ is exalted. Disciples are still stigmatized by his cross and must occupy the place on earth which he has left'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 470, consistent with his futuristic eschatology, projects 'the revelation of the sons of God' into the future 'eschatological unveiling from heaven' when the status of God's sons and daughters will be disclosed 'by the fact of their sharing in the glory of God'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 515, clearly understands that the new creation will manifest itself in the lives and actions of believers: 'Paul's premise is that humans and the creation are interdependent and that human fulfillment is contextual and cosmic'.

Romans 1.23-25, 2 Cor. 5.17 and Gal. 6.15 indicate that Paul's use of the word *ktisis* (creation) refers both to the realm of nature with its plants and animals and to the human beings who inhabit it.<sup>28</sup> Human beings are inextricably bonded to the creation from which they emanated, and, therefore, both they and the creation have been subjected to the consequences of the Fall of Adam and Eve and its origination and continuation of the infection of *hē hamartia*. Consequently both are suffering. Paul intimates this relationship by personifying the creation as a conscious being that is waiting in eager anticipation for the disclosure of those who will fulfill God's hope in delivering the creation from its enslavement.

The redemption of the creation is the apocalyptic vision of Book 1 of *1 Enoch*. The myth of Gen. 6.1-7 is interpreted in *1 Enoch* 6-8 in the historical context of the introduction of exploitative agricultural capitalism in fourth-century Palestine by the Ptolemies of Egypt, above all Ptolemy Philadelphus.<sup>29</sup> Prior to the recapitulation of the human devastation and ecological disaster of the economic policies of the Ptolemies, the apocalyptic seer pronounces judgment on the godless powers and principalities in *1 Enoch* 1 and offers the elect of his community a vision of the forthcoming reconstitution of the world in ch. 5.

And for the elect there will be light and joy and peace, and they will inherit the earth: but for you, the godless, there will be execration. Then shall wisdom be given to the elect, and all of them shall live and shall sin no more, either through sinning unwittingly or from pride: but those who have wisdom will be humble. In an intelligent man it (wisdom) is illumination, and to a prudent man it is understanding; and they shall not err. And they shall not be condemned all the days of their lives, nor shall they die by the fury of (his) anger, but they shall complete the number of the days of their lives, and their lives shall be increased in peace; and the times of their festivals will be filled with joy and lasting peace during all the days of their lives.<sup>30</sup>

The global capitalistic culture of modernity continues to drain the subjectivity of human beings around the world of their potentiality for self-realization, destroying their humanity and consequently precluding their

28. Jewett, 'The Corruption and Redemption of the Creation', pp. 26-35, in his review of the Roman imperial ideology of nature, as it was expressed in Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* and other Roman texts from the time of Augustus Caesar, offers a critical differentiation between the Roman ideology of the restoration of the creation by the violence of war and Paul's view of 'the emergence of divine righteousness' that will transform the world 'by persuasion rather than conquest'. See also Jewett's *Romans*, pp. 511-12.

29. See especially *1 En.* 7.3-6 and its reference to 'the giants', the systemic structures and institutions constituted by the ruling elite, who consume the agricultural produce of the peasants and sin against the birds, wild beasts, reptiles and fish. For an extensive interpretation of *1 En.* 5-8, see Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, pp. 159-201.

30. *1 En.* 5.7-9. Translation by Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*, p. 27.

engagement in the fulfillment of God's hope for the redemption of the creation.<sup>31</sup> This includes all who are infected with the disease of *hamartia*: the dominators and the dominated, the victimizers and the victimized, the exploiters and the exploited. Punished by the consequences of their impiety and injustice, they are fated to the absurdity and meaninglessness of life. By drawing on Gen 3.14-19, Paul characterizes the emptiness of historical existence in 8.20,

For to *futility* (*mataiotēti*) the creation was subordinated, not willingly, but on account of the one who subordinated it in hope.

Through the curses spoken at the Fall of Adam and Eve, God subjected the creation to the meaninglessness of life and the finality of death. *Mataiotēs*, the word that Paul has used in v. 20, conveys the absurdity of human existence that the myth of Sisyphus dramatizes: the reality of purposelessness, emptiness, foolishness and vanity.<sup>32</sup> The phrase, *not willingly* (*ouch hekousa*), implies that the creation itself was not an acting accomplice in the Fall, 'but was drawn into it nonetheless'.<sup>33</sup>

Although God subordinated the creation to futility and meaninglessness, God subordinated it 'in hope'. That divine hope was an eschatological projection into the future that would be fulfilled by human beings who, according to Gen. 1.26, were created in the image and likeness of God and who would return to a collaborative relationship with their Creator that would result in the redemption of the creation and the salvation of all life on earth.<sup>34</sup> That essentially is God's determination, as Paul attests in v. 21,

Therefore also this same creation will be liberated from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of God's children.

31. See Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, pp. 313-14. Also Gregory Bruce Smith, *Nietzsche, Heidegger and the Transition to Postmodernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 33-41, 'Modernity Deflected: Metaphysical Freedom and History'. See also McGaughey, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, p. 26, for a similar characterization of Enlightenment culture, focused on the effects of the union of Platonic physics (mathematical description) with Aristotelian metaphysics (the world of things exists independent of our consciousness instead of a realm of ideas).

32. According to tradition, Sisyphus was buried outside of Corinth, and Paul's knowledge of the myth may have motivated him to exhort the Corinthians, 'knowing that your labor is not *empty* (*kenos*) in the Lord' (1 Cor. 15.58c).

33. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 235; Dunn, *Romans*, I, pp. 470-71; Jewett, *Romans*, p. 514.

34. Contrary to Beker, 'The Relationship between Sin and Death in Romans', p. 56, Paul is not an apocalyptic theologian, but a theologian of the fulfilled vision of the millenarism of Jewish apocalypticism. Paul does not claim that 'the sovereign power of God will ultimately triumph over all rebellious forces in the world that resist his will'. The restoration of the creation is the collaborative work of God's indwelling Spirit and members of God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits.



This, then, is the consummate objective of Paul's theological testament. Nothing less than Paul's 'cross examination' of Gentiles and Jews in 1.18–3.20 could highlight the hopelessness and futility of the human condition in the face of death. His analysis of the effects of the disease of *hē hamartia* and God's wrath of handing human beings over to the consequences of their deeds was necessary in order to disclose more adequately the ontological reversal from death to life through the Christ event. Paul reviewed the trust of Abraham and God's accreditation of the trusting relationship between them *unto justice* in order to arrive at the trust of Jesus Christ and the salvation that it inaugurated. Jesus' fulfillment of the conditions of the testament of inheritance that God established with Abraham actualized the structural change in reality, namely, the supremacy of life over death and the possibility of the impossibility of God's justice.

Consequently, those who have died with Christ in their baptism have been justified from the condition of *hamartia*, and, by being resurrected from the dead by God's Spirit of life, they have been transferred into God's new creation. The consequential enslavement to God and God's justice motivates the community of God's New Humanity to fulfill their new indebtedness. Their duty beyond debt is nothing more than realizing in their flesh and blood existence what they already are ontologically as members of the Body of Christ. Participation in this new creation transforms a human being into a collaborator, who, by being liberated by the Spirit of life from the power of *hē hamartia*, is engaged in employing hands, feet and mouth as instruments of justice and peace. God does need human beings, if God's objective of world salvation through the actualization of God's justice is to be fulfilled.<sup>35</sup> The hope of God the Creator is that liberated human beings will in turn liberate the creation that has suffered the ravages of their exploitation and devastation.<sup>36</sup> But that, as Paul attests, will occur only when God's sons and

35. Contrary to Barth, *Romans*, p. 35, who states, 'God does not need us. Indeed, if He were not God, He would be ashamed of us.' God is not ashamed of humanity but profoundly involved in delivering humanity from its self-inflicted punishment through its impiety and injustice.

36. Again, Jewett, *Romans*, p. 515. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 233, rejects the agency of God's New Humanity in collaborating with God in the constitution of a new heaven and a new earth. Moreover, as he says on p. 234, glory and perfected freedom represent 'the true revelation of the parousia'. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 471, states: '...Paul's thought is clearly that creation itself must be redeemed in order that redeemed man may have a fitting environment'. And on p. 472, he notes: 'Clearly in view here is a liberty which is yet future for believers as well as for creation (freedom which consists in sharing in God's glory)'. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 223–24, projects this as 'the ultimate eschatological hope to the future time of a new earth'. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 159, correctly sees 'humanity as viceregents ruling the world on God's behalf' through their participation in Jesus' death and resurrection.

daughters have begun to act in accordance with the paradox of their identity as participants in God's New Humanity who are *being what they have become* and are *becoming what they already are*. Through their own liberation and their empowerment by God's Spirit, the natural world which they inhabit will be drawn into their emancipation, healing and restoration.

Paul articulated essentially the same eschatological perspective in 1 Cor. 15.20-28, but with an apocalyptically oriented focus on the powers and the principalities, namely the fallen systemic structures and institutions constituted by fallen human beings. In this culminating elucidation of the truth of Christ's resurrection and its immediate relevance for the lives of the Corinthian believers, Paul offers his view of the role that God has destined the Christ, the co-enthroned Lord Jesus Christ and the members of his Body of life-giving spirits, to work interdependently for the transformation of the world:

Then the end, when *he* [the Christ] delivers the kingdom back to God the Father, when *he* [the Christ] makes powerless every rule and every authority and power. For it is necessary that *he* rules until *he* puts all the enemies under his feet. Death is the last enemy that is going to be made powerless. For *he* [God] subordinated all things under *his* feet. Now when it says that all things have been subordinated, except clearly the one subordinating all things to *him*. Now when all things are subordinated to *him*, then also the Son will be subordinated to the one subordinating all things to *him* so that God is all things in all things.<sup>37</sup>

In this formulation of his vision of the future, Paul presupposes the union of Christ and his Body, the One and the Many, to own and exercise the *reign of God* (*basileia tou theou*) on God's behalf. Together they collaborate in working to fulfill God's hope to liberate the creation by dis-empowering 'the powers and the principalities'. *Christ*, as the Last Adam and the pioneer of God's New Humanity of 'life-giving spirits', is divinely destined to rule until they have 'placed all their enemies under their feet'. When their work has been completed, *the Son* himself will be subordinated to God. *The Son*, like *the Christ*, is the community of the sons and daughters of God's family. When their commission of transforming the world has been completed, they will return the *kingdom* (*basileia*), that is, their reign, to God, and in their subordination to God, God will unite all things in God's very being: 'God will be all things in all things'.

37. See Cornelia Cyss Crocker, 'The Reign of Christ as the Inbreaking Rule of the One and the Many: A Fresh Reading of 1 Corinthians 15.20-28', in Douglas R. McGaughey and Cornelia Cyss Crocker (eds.), *From Biblical Interpretation to Human Transformation: Reopening the Past to Actualize New Possibilities for the Future. A Festschrift Honoring Herman C. Waetjen* (Salem: Chora-Strangers, 2006), pp. 100-15.

The *now season*, however, continues to be a *season (kairos)* of suffering, as Paul acknowledged in vv. 22-23:

We know that the whole creation is groaning together and is writhing in birth pangs together right up until now; and not only that, but we ourselves having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning within ourselves waiting for the redemption of our body.<sup>38</sup>

The birth pains, by which the new creation will be born, have only begun, and all the members of God's family, who are only beginning to fulfill their new indebtedness, are groaning with the rest of humanity and the natural world of creation. When will the emancipation of God's daughters and sons begin to affect the creation by drawing it into their freedom? When will the New Humanity reach a maturity that will enable its representatives to take possession of the legacy of their Pioneer and begin to fulfill the hope in and by which God subordinated the creation to futility?<sup>39</sup> 'The redemption of our bodies' that is anticipated is not to be projected into the life beyond the grave or the culmination of history when God is all things in all things. 'The redemption of our bodies' is the gradual deliverance from 'the body of this death', from the impotence that Paul expressed in his outcry in 7.24. It is the realization of becoming what we already are through the work of God's Spirit. It is the fulfillment of both God's hope and the hope of the New Humanity of God.

The co-heirs of Christ, who therefore are also the heirs of God, live out of hope. It is a valid mode of being, at least until the community of the New Humanity grows into a formidable representation of life-giving spirits, indwelt and empowered by God's Spirit of life. Hope, in fact, is a vital outlook toward the future, as Paul professes in vv. 24-25. But there is no material basis for it, except the actuality of participation in God's New Humanity and all that it includes.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, because of the experience of

38. The word *adoption (huiiothesian)* in v. 23 is suspect as a scribal interpolation, even though it appears in the scribal transmission of Romans. But it does not occur in P<sup>46</sup>, or in D F G and 614. The object of the participle is 'redemption'. Verse 15 indicates that what it denotes has already been received.

39. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 519, states: 'Paul does not hope for "redemption from the body", or as the peculiar single reference to "body" seems to suggest, for a resurrection of the body in some individualistic sense of being detached from the creation and its corruptibility'. He goes on: 'Paul's purpose is to encourage the Roman believers to begin enacting their sonship and daughtership right now, in refusing to conform to the fallen age, and resolutely acting rightly toward the groaning creation, of which their bodies are a part'. See also Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, pp. 104-105.

40. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 93, interprets Paul's sense of hope as a principle of tenacity, of obstinacy: 'Against this classic judicial eschatology, Paul seems instead to characterize hope as a simple imperative of continuation, a principle of tenacity, of obstinacy. In Thessalonians 1, faith is compared to striving (*ergon*), and love to grueling work, to

the truth of these things in the present, the hope that this will eventually reach out to include all human beings is founded in and through the reality of personal involvement in the Body of Christ:

For with respect to hope we are saved. But hope [that is] seen is not hope, for who hopes for that which he/she sees? But if we hope for that which we do not see, we wait for it by perseverance.

Dying with Christ in baptism presupposes resurrection, a resurrection already here and now in the present. In this ongoing reality of resurrection through which salvation is being progressively realized, hope is the resource by which God's daughters and sons persevere. Hope is established in and through a trusting relationship with God, and hope is reinforced by the indwelling Spirit of God.<sup>41</sup> It is, as Paul reminded the Corinthian believers in 2 Cor. 1.22 and 5.5, God's down payment or deposit of the new creation:

God is the one sealing us and giving the *deposit* (*arrabōn*) of the Spirit in our hearts. Now God is the one preparing us for this very thing, the one giving us the *deposit* (*arrabōn*) of the Spirit.

As the down payment of the new creation, God's Spirit shores up the weaknesses of God's family, according to Paul's elaboration in 8.26-27:

Similarly, the Spirit also comes to aid us in our weakness, for we do not know what it is necessary to pray for, but the same Spirit intercedes with inexpressible groanings. The one who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the spirit is, for it pleads to God on behalf of the saints.

God's indwelling Spirit not only collaborates in the work of making alive the mortal bodies of those who are in Christ Jesus. God's indwelling Spirit also facilitates their prayers by interceding on their behalf with wordless sighs, when in their muteness they do not know what it is necessary to pray for. By searching and investigating their hearts and by fathoming their *mind-set* (*phronēma*), God's Spirit pleads to God on their behalf.

Verse 27 poses the problem of identification and therefore elicits different interpretations. Who is '*the one* who searches the hearts of human beings?' It must be the Spirit, God's Spirit, who 'comes to aid us in our weakness and intercedes on behalf of the saints'. But to whom does the phrase 'the mind of the spirit' refer? To God's Spirit or the human spirit? Is it God who knows

the laborious, the troublesome. Hope, for its part, pertains to endurance, to perseverance, to patience, it is the subjectivity proper to the continuation of the subjective process.' See his chapter on 'Hope', pp. 93-97.

41. Contrary to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 238, who finally says, 'Faith always remains hope, even when earth seems to offer no hope'. In contrast, Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 93, says, 'With Paul and his successors, hope is described as pertaining to justice. Faith allows one to have hope in justice.'

the mind of God's Spirit, or is it God's Spirit who knows the mind of the human spirit? Since it is God's Spirit who searches human hearts, and since human hearts and human minds are intimately related in Pauline anthropology, it must be God's Spirit who knows the mind-set of the human spirit, and therefore is able to 'plead to God on behalf of the saints'.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, it must be the same Spirit, God's indwelling Spirit, who, by searching the hearts of God's sons and daughters, knows their mind-set and consequently pleads on their behalf to God. This construal of v. 27 corresponds to v. 16, 'The same Spirit attests to our spirit that we are God's children'.<sup>43</sup>

Although God's daughters and sons *do not know* what it is necessary to pray for and therefore require the mediation of God's Spirit, they *do know* that all things work together toward that which is good for those who love God. In the process of transmission, some ancient scribes interpolated the word *God* (*ho theos*) as the subject of the verb 'work together'.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, the initial part of v. 28 would read, 'Now we know that for those loving God, *God works together* everything towards the good'. But there is no necessity to improve upon Paul's statement by introducing God as the agent who manipulates everything toward the actualization of all that is good for those who love God. The clause that Paul adds at the end of v. 28, 'to those who are called according to design (*prothesis*)', makes the insertion of 'God' as the subject of the verb, 'works together', superfluous. This final clause, 'to those who are called according to design', stands in apposition to the preceding participial phrase, 'to those loving God'. Yet it does not appear to be simply redundant, for it circumscribes the extent of 'those loving God':

Now we know that to those loving God, all things are working together *unto* (*eis*) [the] good, to those being called according to design.

42. Also Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 479, '...here the thought is of God's outreaching Spirit itself hidden in the heart of man's creaturely inability and known only to God'.

43. It should be noted that this interpretation of v. 27 is the opposite of most of the English translations of 8.27. For example, the NRSV reads, 'And God who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God'. The words 'God' and the second occurrence of 'Spirit' are not in the Greek text. The same is true of the NIV.

44. It is P<sup>46</sup>, the oldest manuscript of Paul's letter, that inserts God as the subject of the verb, 'works together'. P<sup>46</sup> also inserts the adjective 'everything' (*pan*) before the word 'good' in v. 28. Cranfield, *Romans*, I, p. 425, lists eight possibilities for the evaluation of the two readings that are offered by the scribal variants of 8.28. Of the eight, the shorter reading that takes *panta* (all things) as the subject of the verb *synergei* (work together) seems to be the best reading. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 243, and Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 481, consider the introduction of *ho theos* (God) as subject of the verb *synergei* (work together) to be an emendation. Dunn, however, adds, Paul would mean the same thing in any case.

While those who love God know that all things work together toward the good, it is more specifically those who are called according to *prothesis* (design, purpose) who know that all things work together toward the good. That design or purpose, of course, would be the work of liberating the creation from its bondage that Paul enunciated in 8.21. Those who are engaged in fulfilling this commission in collaboration with God's Spirit of life affirm that conviction in trust as they live in hope.

Whether they are aware of it or not, their involvement in God's design implies that God has known them in advance. What Paul claimed for himself in Gal. 1.15, namely, that God had set him apart before he was born and called him through grace, he attributes to all who have become bearers of God's Spirit of life. God not only has known them in advance; God has predetermined that they should be conformed to the image of God's Son. They are destined to be similar in form and nature to Jesus Christ, 'the first born of many brothers and sisters'. In their membership in the New Humanity that he inaugurated, they, like him, are 'life-giving spirits'.<sup>45</sup> Paul summarizes their election and their destiny in vv. 29-30:

For whom he foreknew, he also predetermined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the first-born of many brothers/sisters; whom he predetermined, these he also called, and whom he called, these he also justified, and whom he justified, these he also glorified.

All of these divine initiatives attest to God's involvement in the lives of those who belong to God's family. But these actions should not be construed as a delimitation of who has been marked out for adoption on the basis of God's good pleasure.<sup>46</sup> Paul does not divide humankind into the categories of the elect and the reprobate. His universal perspective will emerge in 11.32. Throughout this chapter he has been addressing believers who have been called into the New Humanity of Christ Jesus. His intent is to reassure them that, while they continue in painful and even unbearable circumstances, they are unqualifiedly bound to God. For in the *past*, before they were called, they were already known and chosen by God. Indeed, they were predetermined by God to take on the same form of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and therefore to be metamorphosed into his image. Having been called to

45. 1 Cor. 15.45.

46. According to Calvin's interpretation, *Calvin's Commentaries*, pp. 180-81, 'It follows from this that this knowledge depends on God's good pleasure, because in adopting those whom He would, God had no foreknowledge of anything outside Himself, but simply marked out those whom He purposed to elect'. Calvin does not relate predestination to election but to God's decree that the elect should bear the cross, though he continues to speak of the imputation of God's righteousness to those whom God has predetermined, and, at the same time, he relegates the glorification of the elect to their future beyond this earthly existence. See also p. 182.

participate in the trust of Jesus Christ, they are *presently* being justified. At the same time, as they move into the *future*, they are being glorified as they fulfill their enslavement to God by being what they have become and becoming what they already are. But it is not the image of the first Adam that is being reconstituted. It is the image of God's last Adam, the first-born of many brothers and sisters, the prototype of God's New Humanity, that is being constituted in and through the process of transformation.<sup>47</sup> Paul formulated the verbs of vv. 29-30 in the aorist tense in order to establish God's initiatives as eschatological events that have already been inaugurated and will continue to occur until God's design has been achieved.

### 8.31-39. *No Separation from God's Love*

What more could be said? That is the question that Paul asks in v. 31, as he reaches the culmination of the first major component of his letter, 'What then shall *we* say to these things?' His employment of the plural pronoun *we* accentuates what it means to be 'fellow heirs of Christ'. In this first of five questions, in which he relates to them as a fellow member of God's family who, like them, is to be conformed to the image of God's first-born, he answers with an unqualified condition, 'If God is for us, who is against us?' Everything that Paul has shared with his addressees about the Christ event, from 5.1 through 8.30, confirms the truth that can be drawn from the protasis: 'God is for us!' If that is verifiable, then the truth that the apodosis implies is also affirmed. Nothing and no one can defeat God's design or those who collaborate with God in its fulfillment. Paul amplifies the implications of the conditional sentence of v. 31 in order to draw further consequences from the truth of the Christ event: 'Who did not *even* spare his own Son, but on behalf of us all delivered him up...' The particle *ge*, the second word in the Greek text of v. 32, 'serves to focus the attention upon a single idea, and place it, as it were, in the limelight'.<sup>48</sup> Its meaning, of course, varies according to context: *at least, even, indeed*. Of the three, it would appear that the adverb *even* intimates a comparison and may offer the most pertinent sense of the particle in this context. On the basis of the correlation in language between the Septuagint translation of Gen. 22.16 and v. 32, Paul appears to be alluding to the grand patriarch Abraham:<sup>49</sup>

47. See also Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 244, and Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 483.

48. Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 190.

49. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 247, considers the typology of Abraham as a possibility. See also Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 501, who adds that Abraham's offering of Isaac was 'a matter of considerable importance in pre-Pauline Judaism, as a demonstration of Abraham's faithfulness'. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 231-32, is doubtful about the allusion.



The angel of the Lord called Abraham again from heaven, saying, ‘I swear against myself’, says the Lord, ‘because you did this thing and did not spare your beloved son on account of me, blessing I shall bless you and multiplying I shall multiply your seed as the stars of the sky and as the sand of the sea-shore’.

Abraham was spared in offering up his own son. Ironically, the Christ, Abraham’s seed, who fulfilled the terms and conditions of the testament that God had ratified with Abraham, was not spared. God, in contrast to Abraham, did not forgo the sacrifice of God’s Son.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, as the result of God’s Son consummating that testament, according to Paul’s announcement in 1.17, ‘The justice of God is being revealed in it (the gospel) *out of the trust (ek pisteōs)* of Abraham *into the trust (eis pistin)* of Jesus Christ, even as it is written, “The just one will live out of trust”’.

If this is true, if, in contrast to Abraham, God did not spare God’s own Son, and if the single, lineal descendant of Abraham eliminated the infection of *hamartia* and its consequences, the only valid conclusion that follows is the rhetorical question that Paul verbalizes in the second half of v. 32, ‘...how will not all things be given graciously to use with him?’ The promise that God had made to Abraham and his seed, as Paul stated in 4.13, was that they would inherit the world. This unqualified consequence of the truth of the Christ event echoes the heritage that Paul validated to the Corinthian believers in 3.21:

For *all things* are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

This open-ended expectation that is evoked by the second half of v. 32, ‘how will he not with him also grace to us *all things*?’, motivates Paul to formulate a final inter-related set of questions. The first, ‘Who will bring charges against *God’s elect*?’, does not receive what would appear to be an expected reply. Rhetorically, a ‘no one’ would be presupposed. Indeed, no one, because in Christ Jesus there is no law or code of laws that could serve as a basis to bring charges against God’s elect! As Paul stated in 7.4,

So that my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ.

Where there is no law, there is also no retribution. Or, according to Paul’s characterization of the grace of God in 8.1,

Consequently there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus liberated you from the law of *tēs hamartia* (the condition of sin) and of death.

50. Gal. 3.15-18.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the law of love, the love that 'the holy Spirit pours out in our hearts'. If that law has been transgressed, confession, of course, is necessary. But Paul's brief response to the rhetorical question he has raised is simply, 'God is the one who justifies'. God's justification is directed toward restoration! So there is no one to accuse God's elect. They are 'in Christ Jesus'; they are God's daughters and sons, and therefore they are already justified.

The second question follows immediately, 'Who is the one who condemns?' Paul's answer is equally indirect, but it also presupposes the answer, 'no one!' There is no one who can bring charges against God's elect. God justifies them! There is no one to condemn, because there are no charges. To reinforce these implied responses to this set of inter-related questions, Paul formulates a creed-like confession:

Christ is the one who died, but rather being resurrected, who is also at the right hand of God, who intercedes on our behalf.

God justifies because Christ died, because Christ was resurrected, because Christ is co-enthroned with God and because Christ intercedes for the elect. The culmination of the sequence of dying, being resurrected and being co-enthroned with God, implies exercising God's power on God's behalf and therefore being distinguished as the co-bearer of the divine epithet, Lord. It is in this capacity that the exalted Lord Jesus Christ 'intercedes on our behalf'. The past, present and future of God's elect are all locked into God's absolute loyalty, the loyalty of the testament of inheritance that God constituted with Abraham and that God culminated through Jesus Christ.

Paul utilizes a final existential question in order to conclude this first segment of Romans with a consummate profession, '*Who (tis)* will separate us from the love of Christ?' The interrogative pronoun *tis* (who) that he used is both masculine and feminine in gender, but the answers that he offers are all physical, natural, economic and political circumstances: oppression, trouble, persecution, famine, nakedness, dangers and sword. Many of these nouns, however, are in the feminine gender, so 'what' would be a valid translation of *tis*. Yet behind the realities that these nouns convey are the human beings who would inflict them on the participants in God's New Humanity. Paul reinforces this prospect with a quotation from LXX Ps. 43(44).23(22), a verse that conveys unmitigated suffering:

On your account we are being handed over to death every day;  
We are counted as sheep for slaughter.

This too is the unqualified expectation that confronts God's family of sons and daughters as they, empowered by God's Spirit, collaborate in the continuous pursuit of justice and reconciliation. Nevertheless, as Paul certifies in

v. 37, 'But in all these things we are winning a most glorious victory through the one who loves us'.<sup>51</sup>

As impossible as God's project of eradicating the disease of *hamartia* may seem, and as Sisyphean as the continuous struggle appears to be, Paul is convinced that the ontological reality of the new creation and its New Humanity will prevail because of God's love in Christ Jesus, the love that God's Spirit pours out in the hearts of those who have been reconciled to God. God's love will triumph because it is unconditional. In the words of Paul's consummate profession of trust:

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor coming things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's objective will be achieved. As immutable and unresolvable as the human condition appears to be, the forms and forces of death that victimize human beings will be superseded by the supremacy of God's love. For God's everlasting, life-affirming love that is being poured out into the world through God's Spirit, incarnated in the participants of the New Humanity, will finally deliver the creation from its bondage, and God will ultimately be all things in all things.<sup>52</sup>

51. The translation of *hypernikōmen*, 'We are winning a most glorious victory', is from Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 1034.

52. Frank Thielman, 'The Story of Israel and the Theology of Romans 5-8', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 169-95 (1995), claims that 'The biblical story of Israel... forms a pivotal part of the theology of Romans 5-8'. Although Thielman acknowledges that Israel never appears by name and Paul only rarely quotes scripture, he maintains that Paul's theology takes a biblical shape. These chapters are certainly concerned about the people of God, but there is no discernible evidence in Rom. 5-8 that 'the believing community stands in continuity with the story of Israel as it appears in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, the historical books, and the prophets'. Paul is constrained to move beyond the story of Israel in Rom. 5-8 for the very necessity of the trust of Jesus Christ that presupposes apocalyptic eschatology and is implicit in the movement from *ek pisteōs eis pistin* (out of trust into trust) in 1.17. Cousar, 'Continuity and Discontinuity', pp. 210, challenges Thielman's stress on continuity and, on the basis of the presence of an apocalyptic perspective in Paul's theology, correctly places greater emphasis on discontinuity.

# 10

## GOD'S SALVATION AND THE PROBLEM OF ISRAEL

### 9.1-5. *The Great Heritage of Israel*

As Paul has reached the culmination of his penetrating exposition of the human condition of *hē hamartia* and its resolution through the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, the initial claim that he voiced in 1.16 is all the more forceful: 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power into salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek'. To the Jew first! Not only the believing Jew who is a member of the Body of Christ, but all Jews! To the Jews first, because, as Paul acknowledged in 2.18, the Jews rest upon the benefits that the Sinai law bestows and therefore are able to boast in God. To the Jews first, because the Jews, being instructed from the Sinai law, know the justice that the law requires and therefore are able to approve the things that really matter. To the Jews first, because the Jews have the great advantage over the Gentiles of knowing that 'by the law is the recognition of the condition of *hē hamartia*'. To the Jews first, because if the law functions as the *guide* (*paidagōgos*) to Christ, as Paul claimed in Gal. 3.24, and therefore into an experience of reconciliation and restoration that is the objective of salvation, nothing should obstruct the Jews from moving from 'the trust of Abraham' into 'the trust of Jesus Christ'.<sup>1</sup>

1. Stendahl, 'Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West', p. 85, contended that the real center of gravity, at least in Paul's Letter to the Romans, is found in chs. 9-11: 'Rom. 9-11 is not appendix to chs. 1-8, but the climax of the letter'. Ernst Käsemann, 'Paulus und Israel', in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), II, pp. 194-97, judges that Israel has an exemplary significance for Paul, and therefore he is compelled to smash Israel's established claims on the basis of its own history. Accordingly, Rom. 9-11 repeats the movement of Paul's first eight chapters: the prosecution of guilt, divine wrath leading to blindness and rejection, and the citations of the Old Testament as the in-breaking of divine judgment. Keck, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', p. 26, claims that 'Romans 9-11 is nothing other than the application of the theology of chaps. 1-8 to the problem of Israel, its history and destiny'. Yet these three chapters disclose Paul's dialectical interpretation of Israel's

Why, then, are not all Jews embracing the salvation that fulfills the long-awaited hopes and expectations of God's people, the salvation that makes it possible to begin to actualize the justice of God that the prophets envisioned in earlier times? Paul is profoundly distressed by his fellow Jews who repudiate the Christ, and, without any transitional interlude, he releases his emotions of heartache and sorrow at their intransigence and their resistance to the gospel:

I speak the truth in Christ. I am not lying, as my conscience confirms it to me by the holy Spirit, that there is a great grief and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish myself to be *anathema* (cursed/banned) from the Christ on behalf of the brothers/sisters of my kinsfolk according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belong *the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the law-giving and the worship and the promises*, to whom belong *the patriarchs* and from whom is *the Christ* according to the flesh. [May] the God who is over all be blessed forever. Amen (9.1-5).

After all that he has said about the Christ event, it is astonishing that he is ready and willing to be separated from the salvation that God has actualized through Jesus the Christ. *Anathema*, the word that he uses in v. 3, occurs five times in Paul's letters, and in all of its uses it bears the meaning of 'accursed by being banned'. According to 1 Cor. 12.3, certain Corinthian believers are cursing Jesus in order to ban him from their submission to the gospel. Paul corrects these dualists who want to separate the physical person of Jesus from the spiritual being of Christ: 'No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be *cursed*"!' In 1 Cor. 16.22 Paul uses the word to ban those from the community who are unwilling to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, 'If anyone does not love the Lord, let him/her be *cursed*'. The same sense of being cursed by banishment is conveyed in Gal. 1.8-9, 'But if even we or an angel from heaven should preach to you beyond that which we preached to you, let him/her be *banned (anathema)*'. Here in 9.3, by using the verb form of a conative imperfect, *ēuchomēn* (I tried to pray), Paul is expressing his prayer or wish of a self-banishment from Christ, 'I could pray to be *banned* from Christ on behalf of my brothers and sisters'.<sup>2</sup> It is an earnest, even a grim wish, for it conveys a surrender of the salvation in which he presently participates. Yet any attempt to achieve this separation as a possible sacrifice

history. It is the foundation of his eschatologically oriented universalism. It is something that he must expand at some length, particularly in view of his analysis and resolution of the human condition in chs. 1-8, and especially the universalism that is implied in the corporate reality of the Christ in which, as he states in Gal. 3.28, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'.

2. On the conative imperfect, see Blass and Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 169.

on behalf of his 'kinsfolk according to the flesh' is negated by his own consummate profession of faith in 8.38-39.<sup>3</sup> Because he is 'in Christ Jesus', he cannot be separated from God's love, the love that God's Spirit pours out in his heart, and that makes it impossible for him to be banned from Christ.

Nevertheless, to that extent Paul is affected by the inflexible resistance of his fellow Jews and therefore yearns for their transposition into 'the trust of Abraham (*ek pisteōs*)' so that they may also enter into 'the trust of Jesus Christ (*eis pistin*)'. To authenticate this extraordinary solidarity with his people he professes his 'great grief and unceasing pain' at their recalcitrance with an oath-like avowal that acknowledges the witness of the indwelling Spirit of God. By making such an extreme profession he emulates the solidarity that Moses expressed at Sinai on behalf of his people to be banished from God's book of life as a sacrifice on behalf of Israel's sin of idolatry:<sup>4</sup>

Now Moses returned to the Lord and said, 'I beg of you, Lord, this people has sinned a great sin, and they made for themselves gods of gold. And now if forgiving, forgive to them the sin. But if not erase me from your book that you have written' (LXX Exod. 32.31-32).

At Sinai and the establishment of the covenant that gave birth to Israel, Moses offered himself as an atonement for his people's sin of idolatry. Paul, in the context of the new covenant, a covenant that he qualified in 2 Cor. 3.6-9 as 'the ministry of justice in glory', affirms that he is willing to forfeit his own salvation if it would result in his fellow Jews turning to the Lord so that, as he yearned in 2 Cor. 3.7-16, the veil that covers their minds as they read Moses would be removed.

Earlier in this letter, in 3.1, Paul asked the question, 'What then is the advantage of being a Jew? What is the benefit of circumcision?' His answer presupposed a plurality of benefits: 'Much in every respect'. But he accounted for only one: 'First, they were entrusted with the oracles of God'. They have received the Word of God! Now, however, as he confronts the obstinacy of his fellow Jews toward the gospel and even prays that he might serve as a substitute sacrifice on their behalf, he enumerates the incredibly rich heritage of the Jewish people. Indeed, all of the Jewish people! God's promises were directed to ethnic Israel.<sup>5</sup> They are, first of all, distinguished

3. A connection attributable to Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 226.

4. Rabbinic Judaism sanctioned the possibility of making expiation on behalf of another human being. See Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1956), III, p. 261.

5. Heikki Räisänen, 'Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research', in Neusner (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, pp. 178-206 (184), in response to the question 'Has God's word failed?', states: 'The answer is no, for God never promised anything for ethnic Israel. His promises are meant for those whom he chooses to call to be his people, such as Isaac, Jacob, or the Christians, whether of

as *Israelites*! Their name is inextricably bound to their heritage. As Israelites, they have experienced a never-ending history of God's favor: the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law, the worship, the promises, the patriarchs, and the Christ! Paul has placed a definite article before each of these eight benefactions to signify their distinctive singularity.

As Israelites they can boast of the great event of *adoption* (*hē hyiothesia*) that constituted them as God's household. They are the original children of God! They are the offspring that God promised to Abraham that was at least preliminarily fulfilled at Sinai in the glory of that covenant that Moses mediated between God and Israel. By using the plural, 'the covenants' (*hai diathēkai*), Paul implies that other covenants should be included: the covenant established with Noah (Gen. 9.8-17), with Joshua (Josh. 8.30-35 and 24.19-28) and with David (2 Sam. 7.8-12 and 23.5). Of all the covenants, *the law-giving* (*hē nomothesia*) at Sinai that constituted Israel as God's elect people is especially a sign of God's favor. For it incorporated the codicil of the law into the testament God established with Abraham, and, as the great advantage that Israel has over the Gentiles, it enables God's people to be conscious of the power of *hē hamartia* and coincidentally to know that the justice that the law adumbrates cannot actualize it.<sup>6</sup> *The worship* (*latreia*) that sanctions the relationship between God and Israel must include both the sacrificial system of the temple cult and the synagogue services of prayer and instruction. *The promises* (*hai epangeliai*) refer to the prophecies and pledges that the prophets warranted to Israel in God's name for an even greater future than anything they had experienced in the past. *The fathers* (*hoi pateres*) undoubtedly represent the male patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and very likely also the twelve sons of Jacob, but above all Abraham. Finally, there is the benefaction of *the Christ* (*ho christos*) according to the flesh, who is the culmination of Israel's history and the fulfillment of the prophetic promises!<sup>7</sup> The Christ is the one who, by discharging the conditions of the testament God established with Abraham, makes the inheritance of the world possible for both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Paul ends this recital of the great blessings of Israel's heritage in 9.5b with a doxology that poses the critical problem of the relationship between 'the Christ according to the flesh' and the doxology that follows:

Jewish or gentile birth'. God's call is not a call into being but a call into doing justice. Räisänen appears to have absolutized the duality of affirmation and rejection into a double predestination. In view of 3.1-2 and 9.1-5, Paul is concerned about ethnic Israel and its future in the economy of God.

6. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 564, is right—the law-giving experience of Israel cannot be held in contempt, but it is not the law of Sinai 'to which non-Jewish believers are now indebted'.

7. The punctuation is decisive in the second half of 9.9, in which 'the Christ' as the last of Paul's list of benefactions is followed immediately by Paul's benediction'.



...the Christ according to flesh the one being over all God blessed into the ages.

The absence of punctuation in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the relationship between the Christ as the culminating gift to Israel and the Christ as 'the one being God over all blessed into the ages'. That is, is 'the Christ according to the flesh' the culminating gift to Israel, and is the doxology addressed to God, the author of this and all the other gifts that Israel has received? Of the various possibilities of punctuation, the one that appears to be dependent on the grammar of the Greek text would require placing the comma after the phrase *kata sarka* (according to flesh).<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, 9.5b would read:

*ex hōn ho christos to kata sarka, ho ōn epi pantōn theos eulogētos eis tous aiōnas.*

from whom the Christ according to flesh, the one being over all God blessed into the ages.

The substantive participle, *ho ōn* (the one being) refers back to Christ, who, as 'the one being over all' must therefore also be 'God blessed into the ages'. The Christ, the greatest gift to Israel, is also 'the one being God over all', and therefore is to be blessed forever!<sup>9</sup> The punctuation on which this interpretation is based does not correspond to that of the NRSV, but it is preferable in as far as the christological attribution it conveys corresponds to similar texts in Paul's earlier letters. Moreover, the word *theos* (God) in 9.5b has no definite article. Christ is God, not *the* God, not God the Creator. This is the Christ of 1 Cor. 15.45-47, 'the last Adam', 'the human being from heaven'. This is the Christ, who, according to 1 Cor. 8.6, is the 'one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him'. Paul's apparent identification of Christ with Wisdom in 2 Cor. 3.18 and 4.4 and 6 upholds the likelihood that he is referring to the Christ as 'the one being God over all'. Theosis is attributable to the Christ of 'Christ Jesus' in Phil. 2.5-6, but even more so of Jesus, whom God, according to Phil. 2.9b-11, has

8. See the extensive discussion of the problem of 9.5's punctuation in Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 520-23. See also Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 228-29, for a scrutiny of the punctuation possibilities of v. 5.

9. See Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 202-203. See also Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 228-29, who concludes that Paul is referring to 'die göttliche Existenz des Christus', the divine existence of Christ. Note also Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 567-68; Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 251-52. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 259-60, rejects the christological identification with God and places the emphasis on God, 'the one who directs history'. It may be noteworthy that the substantive participle, *ho ōn* (the one being) corresponds to God's self-identification in the Septuagint text of Exod. 3.14 as *egō eimi ho ōn* (I AM the one being). See also Rom. 10.12.

super-exalted and graced with the name beyond every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and confess Lord Jesus Christ unto the glory of God the Father. The crowning gift to Israel, therefore, is 'the Christ', who, 'according to the flesh' is identifiable as the Messiah of Davidic descent, and who at the same time is 'the one being over all God blessed into the ages, Amen'.<sup>10</sup>

#### 9.6-13. *Paul's Dialectical Interpretation of Israel's Beginnings*

But what is the future of God's elect people Israel who, in the face of all these benefactions and the possibility of inheriting the world, are rejecting the Christ? Paul proceeds to unfold a cosmically oriented history of Israel that accentuates the paradoxical character of God's involvement in the historical circumstances and events of both Jews and Gentiles, indeed, of all human beings.<sup>11</sup> He conceives of God's activity in history dialectically, discerning a continuing pattern of negation and affirmation which emerges already at the beginning of Israel's history, namely, the *negation* of the child of the flesh, Ishmael, and the *affirmation* of the child of the promise, Isaac.

He begins with an affirming judgment of the effectiveness of God's Word in Israel's history: 'It is by no means as if the Word of God has failed'. His own experiences throughout his apostolic ministry induce him to recognize the pattern of coincidental negation and affirmation in that history: 'For not all those *out of (ek)* Israel are Israel, neither are all children Abraham's seed'. Indeed, that pattern is already evident at the very beginning of Israel's history. To be born into Israel does not in and of itself qualify anyone to be a

10. Becker, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*, p. 119, states: 'Correspondingly, Jesus is Christ from two lineages: he is, namely, preexistent (1 Cor. 8.6; Phil. 2.6-7) and at the same time from Israel (Rom. 9.5) or of Davidic descent (Rom. 1.3)'. Specifically, it is the pre-existent Wisdom or Sophia of Wis. 7.22-27 that serves Paul as a christological device to communicate the person and work of Jesus to the Gentile world.

11. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 261, 263, has said it well: 'The theology and the historical situation of the apostle do not allow him to be satisfied with the solution of later Gentile Christianity that the promise is fulfilled spiritually, namely, in the church... [F]or Paul the church does not simply replace Israel.' He continues, 'The context forces us to attribute the presence of true Israel within Judaism'. Eventually, in his analysis of the problem of continuity or discontinuity between Israel and the church, Käsemann offers his resolution: 'Is there in fact a continuity of promise in earthly Israel which, however, is not sustained or guaranteed by the people as such but solely by the acting God? If so, then God is in truth this continuity and Israel is simply the earthly sphere chosen by him.' That essentially is the eschatology of incarnation. For Paul, however, the resolution is a 'both-and' paradox. Authentic Jewishness is defined in terms of being circumcised with respect to the heart, yet the benefit of circumcision is, as Paul states in 3.1-2, 'much in every respect'. See especially 11.17-23, Paul's metaphor of Israel as the olive tree of life.

true Israelite and therefore a member of God's elect people. Descent alone does not determine Jewish identity.<sup>12</sup> The pre-exilic prophets, who pronounced judgment upon the ruling elite for exploiting and dispossessing their subjects, initiated the distinction between those who are Abraham's descendants and those who are not, based on their faithfulness to the Sinai covenant.<sup>13</sup> Elijah is assured of a remnant that has remained faithful to the worship of Yahweh: 'Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him'.<sup>14</sup> The postexilic conventicles of Jewish apocalypticism disclose a robust self-consciousness of being God's elect as they condemn those within Judaism who have compromised their faith by political, cultural and religious accommodation. Third Isaiah, the innovator of the millennial vision of a new heaven and a new earth and its new moral order, distinguished between God's elect and the apostate 'sentinels' and 'shepherds' who compromised their allegiance to God and his covenant:

Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit. You shall leave your name to my chosen to use as a curse, and the Lord God will put you to death' (Isa. 65.13-15).

Paul acknowledges this reality in Rom. 9.6, 'For not all those *originating from (ek)* Israel are Israel, neither are all children Abraham's seed'. The dual pattern of coincidental affirmation and negation proves that God's Word has not failed:

But in Isaac your seed will be called; that is, it is not the children of the flesh that are God's children, but the children of the promise are reckoned as a seed. For this is the word of promise: 'At this season I shall come and Sarah shall have a son' (9.7b-9).

Abraham's two sons are differentiated from each other on the basis of 'flesh' and 'promise', the pattern of affirmation and negation that Paul perceives throughout Israel's history. *Flesh*, according to Paul's anthropology, is the domain of the human being in which *hamartia* has established itself. *Promise* implies the affirmation of trust in God's fulfillment. Ishmael, who is not named, is representative of 'the children of flesh', for he was not

12. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 262, states: 'Physical descent and legal legitimacy cannot guarantee this'. 'The apostle's concern is that the promise is not handed down immanently nor continued physically. It must be spoken and confirmed time and again'. But what precisely is to be spoken and confirmed?

13. For example, see Amos 4.1-3; Mic. 3.9-12; Jer. 22.24-30 and 23.1-6.

14. 1 Kgs 19.18.

conceived *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). Abraham, determined to make certain that God would fulfill the promise of a son, produced an heir through his wife's slave-girl, Hagar, and she bore him Ishmael. It is the second son, Isaac, who is the first-born of the 'children of promise'. In response to Abraham's trust of believing 'against hope in hope' when he was one hundred years old, God fulfilled the promise by empowering his aged wife Sarah to conceive a son whom he named Isaac. Paul had differentiated between these two sons theologically in terms of negation and affirmation in Gal. 4.22-23:

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman, and the other by a free woman. One, the child of the slave, was born *according to the flesh*; the other, the child of the free woman, was born *through the promise*.

Ishmael, the child born *according to the flesh*, is illustrative of negation, based on Abraham's effort to achieve God's objective independently of God. Isaac, as the child conceived *out of trust* and therefore the child of promise, represents the principle of affirmation that runs through the entire history of Israel as the people of God and therefore validates Paul's judgment that God's Word has not failed. This already implies the distinction between believing and non-believing Jews that Paul will make in 11.7, 25. Israel, as the descendants of Abraham who have lived *out of trust*, has endured into his own time and includes those who, like Paul himself, have moved out of the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> True Israel, Israel according to the promise, has continued throughout the history of Israel. It is the Israel that is faithful to God and is directed toward the fulfillment of God's justice.

This emerging pattern of affirmation and negation must not be absolutized into a double predestination. Ethnic Israel remains the elect people of God, and the promises God made to Abraham pertain to all Jews. Paul will certify this in 11.29, 'For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable'. Ethnic Israel is the prototype of all humanity. Before Abraham attempted to assist God in fulfilling the promise of an heir by impregnating Hagar, he was shown the stars of heaven and assured, 'So shall your descendants be'. In response to this divine word, as Gen.15.6 states, '...he trusted God, and it was accredited to him *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*)'. It is Abraham's weakness of the flesh that produces and introduces this differentiation between the child of the flesh and the child of the promise, the pattern of rejection and acceptance that permeates the history of Israel. Yet, at the same time,

15. Paul, on the basis of the pattern of affirmation and negation, proves Francis Watson's judgment, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, p. 49, that 'Not all early Christians were as ready as Paul was to conclude that the Jewish people as a whole were irretrievably hard of heart...' to be essentially incorrect.

ethnic Israel continues as the prototype of all humanity. Within that prototypical character of ethnic Israel the paradoxical activity of God is at work, as Paul will warrant in 11.30:

For even as you once were disobedient to God, but now you are mercied by their disobedience, so also these now became disobedient in order that by your mercy they too now became mercied.

God's call is irrevocable for all humanity, but first of all to ethnic Israel. It is a call to a trusting relationship with God that implies a commitment to justice in an emulation of God's own character of justice.<sup>16</sup> God's activity in history, therefore, may be represented as a dialectic of impartiality and partiality. Both are true. God's call is a call into being, a call that is unprejudiced and therefore universal. But it is a call into being that is coincidentally a call to justice, a call that is profoundly prejudiced because it originates from the very being of God. The covenant with Abraham and his seed, ethnic Israel, presupposes a trusting relationship with God that implies justice, as the call of Abraham in Gen. 15.6 discloses.

Paul, having established the pattern of negation and affirmation from the very beginning of Israel's history into his own time, proceeds to introduce the criterion of *reversal* that will constitute his dialectical interpretation of God's activity in and throughout human history. According to the pattern of affirmation and negation, some people are in and some are out, but those who are out, excluded because they were negated for one reason or another, are unexpectedly included by the principle of reversal that shatters the continuum of the dualities of affirmation and negation.<sup>17</sup> In and through a

16. E. Elizabeth Johnson, 'Romans 9–11: The Faithfulness and Impartiality of God', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 211–39 (213–20), resolves the dilemma of God's relationship to Israel in the face of the growing number of Gentile believers by stressing the tension between God's impartiality and God's faithfulness to the covenant. God held back part of Israel from responding to the gospel in order to make room for the Gentiles, but at the same time God remains faithful to Israel. Douglas Moo, 'The Theology of Romans 9–11: A Response to E. Elizabeth Johnson', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 240–58 (249), concurs with this: 'In the first section the Jews are not included because *God* chose that they would not be; in the second they are not included because *they* chose not to be'. The italics are Moo's. This is a strange way to explain both God's impartiality and God's faithfulness. God, as Paul makes very clear, is very partial to the actualization of justice on a world-wide scale, but at the same time God is impartial in as far as God has the same standard of judgment for all human beings, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality, the fulfillment of God's justice.

17. Esau/Jacob and Isaac/Ishmael are not simply side-by-side examples of God choosing one person over the other, as B.J. Oropeza maintains, 'Paul and Theodicy: Intertextual Thoughts on God's Justice and Faithfulness to Israel in Romans 9–11', *NTS* 53 (2007), pp. 57–80 (63). The subversion of the pattern of affirmation and negation by

lengthy, complex sentence of three verses Paul formulates the criterion of reversal and proceeds to cite the case of Rebekah, Isaac's wife:

And not only that, but it was said to Rebekah, having conceived [children] through Isaac her husband—for when they [the children] were not yet doing good or evil, so that election remains the choosing of God, not of works but of *being called*—that the greater will serve the lesser, even as it is written, 'Jacob I loved but Esau I hated' (vv. 10-13).

Both Esau and Jacob are legitimate sons of Isaac and Rebekah, but a reversal will occur. The cultural institution that 'the older inherits' would designate Esau as Isaac's authorized heir and therefore the one who would be 'the child of promise' and bear the continuity of true Israel. According to Deut. 21.15-17, the birthright of the first-born is inalienable. If a father has two sons, one who is loved and the other who is disliked,

He must acknowledge as firstborn the son...who is disliked, giving him a double portion of all that he has, since he is the first issue of his virility, the right of the firstborn is his.

The right of birth belonged to Esau as the firstborn. But Rebekah, in response to her inquiry of the Lord, was informed even before the twins were born, 'the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger'.<sup>18</sup> The choice between Esau and Jacob was made before their birth and therefore also before any manifestation of ethical conduct: 'when they were not yet doing good or evil'. Paul's differentiation between these twins, of course, includes the subsequent history of the peoples who descended from them. But the election of the one and the rejection of the other should not be construed as a continuation of the pattern of negation and affirmation that Paul established in vv. 6-9. This is not an affirmation of double predestination.<sup>19</sup> The binary opposition between God's election of Jacob, as the

the criterion of reversal does not appear to be perceived by Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 208-209; Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 242-49; Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 270-72; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 495-97; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 594-98. However, Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 563, clearly perceives the principle of reversal by which Israel is cast in the role of Ishmael and Esau and becomes the vessel of wrath in the unfolding history of God's salvation: 'The antithetical role filled by Esau and Pharaoh in relation to Israel's election and redemption is now being filled by the bulk of Israel in relation to God's calling of Gentile as well as Jew through the gospel'. See also Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul*, pp. 511-13. In and through Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the Jewish people, Jews died with him in his crucifixion and were raised from the dead in his resurrection, as 7.4 implies.

18. Gen. 25.23.

19. The dualist categories of affirmation and negation tend to be absolutized into a double predestination without a recognition of its subversion by God's actions of reversal. See Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 240-41. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 488, simply states

patriarch and therefore the representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, and God's rejection of Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites, is ultimately determined by God's freedom—not an arbitrary freedom but a freedom subject to God's justice as it is directed according to the criterion of reversal.<sup>20</sup> God's justice, therefore, as it is dialectically determined by the principle of reversal, would eventually include Esau and his descendants.<sup>21</sup> For God's activity in human history is iconoclastic, fracturing the continuity of traditions and typologies, above all, the binary opposition of affirmation and negation.

The citation of Mal. 1.2b-3a that Paul has attached to v. 12, with its excerpt from Gen 25.23, seems extreme and unnecessary: 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated'. The criterion of reversal is already implied in Gen. 25.23. Why add textual support that appears to distort the integrity of God's election, especially if it was made prior to the birth of Rebekah's twins? Since both Jacob and Esau are representative of their descendants, the biblical and para-biblical traditions of Esau and his Edomite posterity are conveyed antagonistically as enemies of Israel. Esau's intention to kill Jacob, as reported in Gen. 27.41-45, is developed in *Jubilees* 37-38 and the *Testament of Judah* 9.<sup>22</sup> These are events and actions that occurred after

that God's will is determined by God's mercy and righteousness. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 265-66, using the categories of 'the elected and the rejected', states, 'The antitheses Isaac-Ishmael and Jacob-Esau thus continue and characterize Paul's view of salvation history... The presence of a strong concept of predestination cannot be denied, although only here does Paul present double-predestination'. Räisänen, 'Paul, God and Israel', pp. 182-83, perceives double predestination in vv. 22-23, but concludes that 'strict predestination... leads to a dead end'. And yet he states on p. 184, 'Double predestination is not the main issue of the section, but the idea is there. It seems clear that the majority of the Jews will be damned at the judgment.' That Räisänen does not understand Rom. 9-11 is especially evident on p. 187: 'This Paul is precisely where he started: some believe, the great majority do not. No happy end is envisaged for God's people as a whole.' Räisänen explains the contradictions between chs. 9 and 11 on the basis of different strategies to reach different goals: 'Paul's wrestling points to an insoluble *heilsgeschichtlich* dilemma in his theology'. The italics are his. See his 'Conclusion' on p. 196. There is no *heilsgeschichtlich* dilemma in his theology!

20. Because of the dialectical character of Paul's interpretation of history, and specifically his use of the criterion of reversal, Esau and his descendants are not eternally predestined to rejection. This is against Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 234. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 545, construes Paul's quotation of Mal. 1.2-3 as 'Paul's aim to prick the bubble of Israel's presumptuousness as the elect'. Israel is still the elect people of God, but the Gentiles have been drawn into their election, a reality that neither Christians nor Jews acknowledge. The Israel that presently finds itself in an Esau-like status will eventually be re-grafted into the Tree of Life.

21. For Paul the purpose of God's election is justice, not only compassion and mercy, as Oropeza, 'Paul and Theodicy', p. 63, concludes. It is justice for those who are oppressed and, therefore, motivated by God's compassion.

22. See also Ezek. 25.12-14; *1 En.* 89.12.



Esau's birth. God's election, however, enacted in freedom prior to the birth of Esau and Jacob, is adjudicated on the basis of God's foreknowledge; and the call that God issues is always related directly to God's predisposition to justice and love.<sup>23</sup> God's capacity of foreknowing enabled God to discern the eventual character and conduct of Esau and his Edomite descendants who would persecute Jacob's descendants and become Israel's adversary for generations.<sup>24</sup> Coincidentally, God's election of Jacob was not a call into being but essentially a call to fulfill God's purpose, a call to do justice. Ultimately all who are called—and all are called!—are called to do justice. Paul had announced this earlier in 8.29, 'For those whom he [God] foreknew he also pre-appointed similar in form of the image of his Son, so that he is the first-born of many sons and daughters'.<sup>25</sup>

9.14-33. *The Criterion of Reversal*  
in the First and the Second Exodus

The severity of Paul's quotation of Mal. 1.2b-3a, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated', and what it appears to imply, induces Paul to ask the question, 'What then shall we say? Is there not injustice on God's part?' The use of the negative particle *mē* (not) at the beginning of the question already denies the very idea of such a possibility. But for emphasis Paul adds his frequently used rhetorical exclamation, 'Not at all!' God's sovereign activity in God's freedom in history is always predetermined by the justice that God wills and its manifestation in the lives of human beings in society who act in accordance with God's will. Justice is innate in God's very being, but it is the justice of love.

The Exodus event, therefore, is not to be conceived simply as a continuation of the pattern of negation and affirmation. Ostensibly, the rejection

23. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 268, emphasizes 'the predestinating will of God' that is determined by God's freedom and justice'. Yet 'the hardening to judgment' that he perceives in 9.15 leads him to conclude, '...Paul's view of salvation history presupposes constitutively a double predestination, since it is oriented to the event of justification'. There is no double predestination in Paul's theology! The world may glorify the one who smites the Pharaoh, but it is the judgment that the Pharaoh self-inflicts. God wills the Pharaoh to be saved and to do justice.'

24. On God's anger toward Edom and Esau's descendants, see Isa. 34.5-17; 63.1-6; Jer. 49.7-22; Ezek. 25.12-14; Amos 1.11-12; Obad. 14.

25. Johnson, 'Romans 9-11', p. 225, is right when she says, 'The question in chap. 9, then, concerns not who is in the family and who is out but who is in charge and to what purposes. The issue is the consistency and reliability of God's election.' God is in charge, but God's election is first and foremost directed toward the actualization of justice, and beyond justice the realization of the hope of the glory of God in the lives of those who have been reconciled to God, as Paul professed in 5.2. It is God's universal objective.

of the Egyptians and the admission of the Israelites into the Sinai Covenant appear to sanction this binary opposition. Yet the criterion of reversal is implicit in Paul's quotation of Exod. 33.19, the words God spoke to Moses on Sinai in response to Moses' request to be shown God's glory, 'I mercy whom I mercy, and I compassion whom I compassion'. This is not a pronouncement of an arbitrary double predestination. God's mercy is conferred in freedom without a predetermination of human will or striving, through God's predisposition to justice.<sup>26</sup> God's compassion emanates from God's justice. God's mercy is always directed toward those who are suffering injustice and marginalization. Paul had stressed this character of God's election in 1 Cor. 1.27-29:

But God chose the foolish of the world in order to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world in order to shame the strong, and God chose the insignificant and the despised, the ones that have no being in order to invalidate those that have being. So that all flesh may not boast before him.

The Egyptian Pharaoh is the double-sided figure serving as the instrumentality of God's justice. He is the oppressor who enslaved the unnamed but presupposed Israelites who were victimized by his injustices. Paul, citing Scripture as the personification of God's voice in Rom. 9.17, presents an adaptation of Exod. 9.16 that is metaphorically expansive in its implications:

For Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very thing *I brought you into being (exēgeira)* so that I might demonstrate in you my *power (dynamis)* and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth'.

The Septuagint translation of Exod. 9.16 that Paul is quoting declares that God has kept the Pharaoh alive (*dietērēthēs*) in order to disclose God's strength (*ischys*) through the deliverance of God's people for the dissemination of God's name throughout the earth:

On account of this *you were preserved (dietērēthēs)* so that I might demonstrate in you my strength (*ischys*) and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.<sup>27</sup>

26. Johnson, 'Romans 9–11', p. 225, has not moved beyond God's election determined 'solely by God's mercy, apart from human claims and actions'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 582, like Johnson, focuses on divine selectivity that is not 'the freedom of an unqualified will of God, but of the freedom of God's mercy'. The unqualified will of God is justice and love, and in 9.15, God's selectivity of the Israelites in Egyptian enslavement originates from the paradox of God's justice and love, that is, mercy on those suffering injustice. Furthermore, the divine hope that those who have been delivered from enslavement will turn around and by the love of God's Spirit heap coals of fire on the heads of their former oppressors.

27. The verb in the Septuagint rendition of Exod. 9.16, *dietērēthēs*, is a second person aorist passive of *diatēreō*, meaning *preserve* or *maintain*.

Paul has substituted the first person, aorist active indicative of the verb, *exēgeira* in place of the aorist passive *dietērēthēs* (you were preserved). *Exēgeira* is a compound form of the verb *egeirō* plus *ek* (out of) that signifies *resurrect* or *raise up* or *awaken* and is commonly used in the New Testament in conjunction with Jesus' resurrection from the dead. In his reading of the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul would have encountered some of the approximately 88 occurrences of *exēgeira* (I brought into being/I raised up). Its use in those texts that issue prophetic warnings of God raising up kings and nations as instruments to punish covenant-breaking Israel might induce Paul to substitute it for *dietērēthēs* (you were preserved).<sup>28</sup> However, his adaptation of Exod. 9.16 indicates more than the Pharaoh being *brought into being* or *raised up* in order to demonstrate God's power. Paul had used *exēgeira* earlier in 1 Cor. 6.14 in that very same sense in conjunction with the verb that he regularly employs to signify Jesus' resurrection from the dead:<sup>29</sup>

Now God also *resurrected* (*ēgeiren*) the Lord and *will raise us up/bring us into being* (*exegerei*) through his power.

God, who foreknew that the Pharaoh would be determined to continue the enslavement of Israel, informed him, according to Paul's revision of Exod. 9.16, that he was *brought into being* or *raised up* for the specific purpose of demonstrating God's power, implying, of course, the liberation of Israel from Egyptian enslavement. Presupposing the context of Exod. 9.16 and its conflict between Moses, who represents the Israelites, and the Pharaoh, who personifies the Egyptians, Paul draws upon Exod. 4.21 in order to reformulate the principle that he had articulated in v. 16: 'Consequently, then, whom he wishes he mercies, and whom he wishes he hardens'.

Evidently feeling compelled to deal with the issue of what appears to be God's apparent arbitrary will, Paul presumes the challenge of an interlocuter who raises the questions: 'Why then does God still find fault? For who has the power to resist his will?' The presupposed questioner is put down with a withering response, 'O human being! Who indeed are you talking back to God?' Paul is determined to defend the freedom and sovereignty of God against any and every objection to God's ostensibly capricious or arbitrary will. To heighten the effrontery of the questioner, he appropriates a fragment of Isaiah's pronouncement of judgment in 45.9 as a reply to those who question the freedom and sovereign power of God: 'Surely not what is

28. For example, Isa. 41.2; Jer. 6.22; Ezek. 38.14; Hab. 1.6, issue warnings that God is raising up kings and nations to punish Israel. According to Zech. 11.16, God will raise up a worthless shepherd, a high priest, as punishment. Babylon too cannot escape God's judgment (Jer. 27[50].41).

29. In 1 Cor. 15 Paul employed the verb *egeirō* twenty times.

molded will say to the molder, "Why did you make me this way?" The placement of the negative particle *mē* (not) at the beginning of the quotation taken from Isa. 45.9 indicates that a negative answer is anticipated. Will the pot say to the potter, 'Why did you make me this way?' The answer that Paul's rhetorical question presupposes would be, 'Not at all!' God, of course, is the molder, and in this context the Pharaoh and the Egyptian people whom he embodies represent what is molded.

But it should not be concluded that human will and its actions play no effective part in God's molding activity.<sup>30</sup> Human beings are not simply lumps of passive clay which God shapes according to God's will and design. God's election is determined by God's mercy as it is directed toward those who suffer the loss of what God as the Creator wills for every human being: glory and honor and self-determination.<sup>31</sup> God's mercy is always directed by God's justice and therefore excludes those who perpetrate the oppression, enslavement, exploitation and dehumanization of others.

God's innate being of justice is still pre-determinative of God's actions. God affirmed the Israelites in mercy because of their enslavement, and they became 'the vessel of honor'. God negated Pharaoh by hardening his heart because of his refusal to release the Israelites from their bondage, and he became the 'vessel of dishonor'. God, of course, is not the ultimate cause of the Pharaoh's heart-hardening. God is the mediate cause in as far as the Pharaoh is the object of God's wrath. By his own vital decisions as the oppressor and exploiter of the Israelites, the Pharaoh was delivered over to the cause and effect cycle of his injustices, and, as a result, his heart, the seat of his will, is crippled and turned into stone.<sup>32</sup>

This first Exodus event is illustrative of Paul's pattern of affirmation and negation. But, metaphorically embedded in his substitution of the verb *exēgeira* in its bearing on the Egyptian Pharaoh, is an implied criterion of reversal.<sup>33</sup> For what is not explicitly stated is the verb's metaphorical

30. Contrary to Barrett, 'Romans 9.30–10.21', p. 133, who wrote, 'It follows that man's will and effort play no effective part; only God's mercy determines man's election and achieves God's purpose (9.16). Only God's predestinating love pronounces who are and who are not his people (9.25f).' Predestinating grace is not received by faith alone! God does not declare human beings 'Not Guilty' on the sole basis of faith. A trusting relationship with God presupposes the doing of justice.

31. Once again, as Ps. 8.4-8 professes.

32. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, pp. 40-45.

33. The expansive implications of Paul's *metaphorical attribution of another king* and another Exodus by the substitution of the verb *exēgeira* in place of the Septuagint's *dietērēthēs* is not perceived by most commentators; see Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 206-207; Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 240-41; Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 268-69; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 485-87; Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 553-54; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 149-50; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 583-85. Interpretation based primarily on the actuality of the text in

allusion to another Exodus and another king whom God *brought into being* or *raised up* for the specific purpose of demonstrating God's power and causing God's name to be broadcast throughout the world. It is specifically the verb *exēgeira* in place of the Septuagint *dietērēthēs* (you were preserved) that implies the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead.<sup>34</sup> Jesus, 'the Lord of glory', who became 'the vessel of dishonor' when he was crucified by 'the rulers of this age', and, therefore, also cursed on the basis of Deut. 21.23, was *brought into being* by God, that is, was resurrected from the dead, in order to demonstrate God's power and to proclaim God's name throughout the earth by inaugurating a new and greater Exodus.

Paul's response to his imagined questioner, however, has not yet been concluded. He moves from his use of Isa. 45.9 to Jeremiah's account of his visit to the potter's house that is implied in 9.21:

Does not the potter of the clay have the authority to make from the same lump of clay that which, on the one hand, [is] for *an honored vessel* and *that which*, on the other hand, [is] for *dishonor*?

Paul's interrogative paraphrase of Jer. 18.4 initially reverses the two clay pots that are metaphorically applied to Israel: *first* a vessel of honor and *secondly* a vessel of dishonor. This inversion is determined by the quotation of Exod. 9.16 and its implications of the first Exodus at which God raised up the Pharaoh to demonstrate God's power in and through Israel's liberation from Egyptian enslavement. Israel, dishonored by its enslavement, was affirmed by God by becoming the vessel of honor that God delivered through the Exodus, while the Pharaoh was negated as the dishonored vessel.

Subsequently, however, in 9.22-23, Paul reverses the two clay pots and returns to the original order of Jer. 18.4: first, 'vessel of wrath' prepared for destruction that God has borne with great long suffering, and secondly, 'vessel of mercy' which God has prepared for glory.<sup>35</sup> In this context, *both of*

conjunction with a subject-object hermeneutics that depends on the correspondence theory of truth obstructs a metaphorical explication of the text.

34. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 256, rejects any allusion to resurrection in the verb *exēgeira* in 9.17.

35. The subversion of the duality of affirmation and negation by the criterion of reversal in Paul's movement from the first to the second order of clay vessels in 9.21-23 is not recognized by Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 208-209; Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 242-49; Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 270-72; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 495-97; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 594-98; Witherington, *Romans*, p. 256. In contrast, Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 563, acknowledges the principle of reversal by which Israel is cast in the role of Ishmael and Esau and becomes the vessel of wrath in the unfolding history of God's salvation: 'The antithetical role filled by Esau and Pharaoh in relation to Israel's election and redemption is now being filled by the bulk of Israel in relation to God's calling of Gentile as well as Jew through the gospel'. See also Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul*, pp. 511-13.

*these clay pots* represent the paradoxical identity of Israel in its relation to God's potter-like activity. Paul now relates this original order of the two clay pots to the metaphorical implications of his revision of Exod. 9.16. As already inferred, his substitution of the verb *exēgeira* (*I brought into being* or *I raised up*) in place of *dietērēthēs* (you were preserved) in his quotation of Exod. 9.16 in v. 17, intimates yet another king beyond the Pharaoh. Jesus, by being put to death on a cross, became 'the dishonored vessel'.<sup>36</sup> As Pharaoh was representative of the Egyptians, Jesus, as the dishonored vessel, personifies his people, the Jews. Consequently, even as they share in his death, they representatively participate in his resurrection.<sup>37</sup> That is, his destiny is their destiny. He was *raised up, brought into being* by God, as Paul's revision of Exod. 9.16 metaphorically intimates, 'so that in you I might demonstrate my power so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth'. Implied in his resurrection, of course, is the people he embodies, the Jews. They too are divinely willed to participate in the new Exodus, indeed, the final Exodus, that Jesus inaugurates. They, in fact, as heirs of their own apocalyptic perspective of a New Heaven and a New Earth, are divinely destined to defeat *hē hamartia*, actualize God's justice and extend God's salvation. Consequently, for them, as for the Gentiles, the oppositional pattern of negation and affirmation and its concomitant postulation of predestination are shattered forever:

Now if God, willing to demonstrate wrath and to make known his power, bears in great endurance *vessels of wrath* prepared for destruction, so that he might also make known the wealth of his glory on *vessels of mercy* which he prepared beforehand for glory, [namely] us, whom he also called not only *out of the Jews* but also *out of the Gentiles* (9.22-23).

Ironically, however, there are many in Israel who refuse to identify with Jesus as 'the dishonored vessel', cursed by his ignominious death on the cross. Analogously, they also reject participation in his resurrection from the dead. Although affirmed by God in and by the first Exodus, they, by their hardening and stumbling, are like 'the branches broken off the olive tree of life'. Yet this only temporary, as Paul will show in 11.19-24. In this context, however, Israel is analogous to the 'discarded vessels prepared for destruction'. Paul's harsh and over-bearing phrase, 'discarded vessels prepared for destruction', is disconcerting as a metaphor for hardened Israel, but, as he will profess in 11.11, they may be stumbling, but they will not fall. His use of the plural, 'discarded vessels', may imply the earlier destruction of both the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 BCE and the southern kingdom of Judah in the context of Jeremiah's experience at the potter's house. The

36. Jesus is a 'dishonored vessel' because he is cursed, according to LXX Deut. 21.23, a text that Paul quotes in Gal. 3.13, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'.

37. Even as they also participate in his crucifixion, as Paul intimated in 7.4.

‘reworked vessel’ that subsequently emerged from the potter’s creativity is analogous to ‘the vessels of mercy’ that Jeremiah viewed in ch. 18 and previewed in ch. 31 (38), the mercied vessel of a New Israel that God in a potter-like creativity will constitute under a new covenant:

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I shall covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah a new covenant, not according to the covenant which I established with their fathers on the day that I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, for they did not remain in my covenant, and I had no care for them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I shall covenant with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord. Giving I shall give my laws into their mind and I shall write it on their hearts, and I shall be God to them, and they shall be a people to me (LXX Jer. 38[31].31-33).

The ‘mercied vessels’, which God prepared for glory, represent the true Israel that has continued to live *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) and the Gentiles who, through the new Exodus, are now justified *through the trust* (*dia tēs pisteōs*). They are ‘the Israel of God’, the name that Paul used in conjunction with the ‘new creation’ in Gal. 6.15-16.

God’s foreknowledge, God’s call, God’s justification and God’s glorification converge in and through the second Exodus in the election of both Jews and Gentiles. Paul confirms this shattering and awe-inspiring dialectical activity of God in history with a series of quotations:

As indeed he [God] says in Hosea, ‘I shall call those who [were] not my people as My People, and her [who was] not beloved as Beloved, and in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people”, there they will be called sons [and daughters] of the living God’ (9.25-26).

This quotation from LXX Hos. 2.25 applies only to the Gentiles whose inclusion in God’s commonwealth has been established by Paul’s interpretive reading of Israel’s history through the criterion of reversal. By relating this text to the Gentiles, he transcends the prophet’s context and utilizes these verses from Hos. 1.9 and 2.25 to refer to ‘those who are not my people’. Analogous to the apostates of Israel who prostituted themselves in idolatrous relationships with other deities in Hosea’s time, the Gentiles, through the new Exodus of the Christ event, will be lured into a marriage relationship with God and become ‘My People’.

Verses 27-29, however, are drawn from Isa. 10.22-23 and 1.9, and both refer to the true Israel, the remnant that has lived out of the trust of Abraham throughout Israel’s history and has remained faithful to God:

If the number of the sons and daughters of Israel were like the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved; for the Lord will make on earth a reckoning by accomplishing and by cutting short (Isa. 10.22-23).



And even as Isaiah foretold (in 1.9),

If the Lord of hosts had not left a seed behind for us, we would have become like Sodom and we would be like Gomorrah.

Isaiah had predicted that God's imminent judgment would result in the devastation of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, and only a remnant would survive. Unless the people of Judah repented of their pagan religious practices, they would suffer the same fate; and the nation, as the prophet warned in 10.20, would be reduced to 'a few survivors' who would be compelled to 'lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel'.

As Paul reaches the end of his analysis as to why the Jews are not engaged in the movement of 1.17, *out of trust* (of Abraham) *into trust* (of Jesus Christ), he formulates the irony of this actuality in terms of another series of questions in 9.30-33:

What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue justice, grasped justice, but the justice *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*). But Israel pursuing the law of justice did not arrive unto the law? Why? [Because it was] not *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) but rather *out of works* (*ex ergōn*). They stumbled at the stone of offense, even as it is written: 'Look, I am placing in Zion a stone of offense and a rock of scandal, and the one believing on it will not be ashamed'.

By utilizing the criterion of reversal that he discerns throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, Paul has subverted the traditional pattern of affirmation and negation and arrived at an understanding of God's dialectical activity in history that will culminate in universal salvation.<sup>38</sup> The Gentiles, 'those who are not my people', have become 'My people'. They did not pursue justice, yet ironically they attained to it, though it was *dia nomou pisteōs* (through law of trust) not *ex ergōn nomou* (out of works of law).<sup>39</sup>

38. Wright, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 53, concludes that the hardening of Israel, like the hardening of the Egyptian Pharaoh that was the necessary precondition for the exodus, was 'preparatory for the crucifixion of Messiah, without which, for Paul, there would be no covenant renewal (Gal 2.21)'. Wright's ethnocentric Messiah emerges when he claims: 'the Messiah takes on to himself the weight of heaped-up Adamic sin which Torah had left hanging over Israel's head'. Jesus as the messianic king, analogous to the Egyptian Pharaoh, took on himself the *hē hamartia* of all humanity! As one hanged on a tree and cursed, he became the vessel of wrath; but by his resurrection from the dead he became the honored vessel of God.

39. Johnson, 'Romans 9-11', pp. 227-28, misunderstands 9.30. It is not a matter of God's righteousness being appropriated by faith, but Israel building a society in accordance with God's justice. God did rig the racecourse, but by throwing justice into the foundations of Israel. But that was always related to Abraham's trust from which justice was expected to follow. Israel pursued justice through law independently of the trust of Abraham. In 9.30, as in 2.14, Paul has placed the definite article *ta* (the) after *ethnē* (Gentiles) rather than before, but to conclude that this is Paul's manner of designating

The Jews, the descendants of Abraham and Jacob, who have the divine birthright and therefore are first, as Paul has stated several times, have been dispossessed—ironically, like Esau. Yet they are the honored recipients of *the law-giving*. They are able to approve the things that really matter, and, by the law of Sinai which they received, they are or should be aware of *hē hamartia*. Their Scriptures reveal a seemingly never-ending history of God's favor. They can rightly claim an incredibly rich heritage. But the law does not serve them as the *guide* (*paidagōgos*) to Christ in order to claim the reconciliation and restoration that 'the trust of Jesus Christ' has accomplished.

Israel, according to Paul's analysis, has been pursuing a *law of justice*. Of the seventy uses of *nomos* (law) in Romans, the phrase *nomos dikaiosynēs*, which Paul employs in 9.31, does not occur any where else in Romans; it is the *law of justice*, the law of Sinai, that is directed toward justice.<sup>40</sup> *Nomos dikaiosynēs* stands in contrast to *nomos pisteōs* (law of trust), the phrase that Paul employed in 3.27, which refers to the law that belongs to *the trust of Jesus Christ*, the law of love. God's people, however, did not attain *unto* [the] *law* (*eis nomon*); that is, Israel has not arrived at the justice that the law of Sinai projects.<sup>41</sup> The Deuteronomic code of reciprocity has ordered their indebtedness to God and has induced them to reciprocate with the works of the law, but without actualizing God's justice.<sup>42</sup> Abraham's trust, the basis of the testament that God established with him and his descendants, has been superseded by works of law, but works that are infected by the condition of *hē hamartia*.<sup>43</sup>

Gentile believers, as Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 506, does, appears to be invalid. Whether the definite article is placed before or after *ethnē*, it still signifies the Gentiles.

40. Barrett, 'Romans 9.30–10.21', p. 144, claims that Paul perceived that 'Israel, while pursuing its own understanding of the law, was scandalized by its true meaning. Israel did not catch up with the law because it based its observance of the Torah on works, not on faith'. Barrett does not clarify Israel's understanding of the law nor what-ever may be its 'true meaning'. Also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 259.

41. Barrett, 'Romans 9.30–10.21', p. 140, translates *nomon dikaiosynēs* as 'a righteous law' and proceeds to comment, 'Israel thus pursued its law, and it was a righteous law—it commanded what was right, and did not command what was wrong'. But all law is directed to what is right, to justice. See Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 581, who insists that for Paul the phrase *nomos dikaiosynēs* is oriented toward faith and not works. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 244, in terms of his 'double Torah', identifies the phrase *law of justice* (*nomos dikaiosynēs*) as the covenant document that Israel pursued in the wrong way, and that Torah then became a stumbling block. Yet the reality for Paul is that Israel pursued the Sinai law of justice apart from the trust of Abraham and consequently was unable to move on into the trust of Jesus Christ in and through which justice is actualizable.

42. See Deut. 7.7–8.20.

43. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 584, claims that 'Israel's fall was intended by God'. He identifies this predetermination with the predestinarian emphasis of 9.18–22. But there is

Paul concludes his dialectical interpretation of history with a conflation of two quotations drawn from Isa. 28.16 and Isa. 8.14:

Look, I am placing in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and the one trusting on Him will not be ashamed (9.33).

Isaiah 28.16 focuses on a cornerstone that God, in the face of the oppressive ruling elite of Jerusalem, will put into place in order to terminate their covenant with death. A translation of LXX 28.16-17a reads:

On account of this, says the Lord, 'Behold I am throwing into the foundations of Zion a chosen stone of great value, a greatly honored cornerstone into her foundations. *The one trusting on it/him (ho pisteuōn ep' autō)* will by no means be put to shame. And I shall place justice for hope and my good will for a plumb line.'

The metaphorical figures, 'a chosen stone of great value' and 'a greatly honored cornerstone', are representative of law, specifically, of course, the law of Sinai. God threw law into the foundations of Israel! Consequently, the prophet, speaking on behalf of God, expresses the hope that the justice, to which the law is directed, will be actualized, and that in turn will elicit God's good will.

Paul, however, in the light of his deconstruction of law, cannot appropriate LXX Isa. 28.16. Israel, as he stated in v. 31, pursued the *law of justice* (*nomos dikaiosynēs*) but did not arrive at the justice toward which law is directed. Paul, therefore, draws upon LXX Isa. 8.14 in order to substitute God, or, more specifically, the relationship of 'trusting on him', in place of law:

And if you had been *trusting on him (ep' autō pepoithōs)*, he would be to you unto a sanctuary, and you would not meet him as a stone of stumbling nor as a rock with respect to falling (Isa. 8.14).

In Paul's quotation of v. 33 the metaphorical figures of Isa. 8.14, 'a stone of stumbling' and 'a rock of offense' have replaced the 'chosen stone of great value' and the 'greatly honored cornerstone'. The justice toward which the law is directed has not been actualized, and, therefore, the law that was 'a chosen stone of great value' and 'a greatly honored cornerstone' has become 'a stone of stumbling' and 'a rock of offense'.<sup>44</sup>

Both Isa. 28.16 and Isa. 8.14 refer to a relationship of trust, combining a form of the verb *pisteuein* (to trust) with the prepositional phrase, *ep' autō*.

no predestination here! Israel is responsible for its substitution of the works of the law of Sinai in place of the testament of trust that God established with Abraham out of which justice naturally rises.

44. See Paul W. Meyer, 'Romans 10:4 and the "End" of the Law', in J.L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel (eds.), *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God's Control of Human Events Presented to Lou H. Silberman* (New York: Ktav, 1980), pp. 59-64.

The pronoun *autō*, governed by the preposition *epi* (on), is ambiguous, referring to both the masculine and neuter genders. In Isa. 28.16 the participial phrase *the one trusting on it/him* (*ho pisteuōn ep' autō*) refers to law, the metaphorical reality of 'a chosen stone of great value' and 'a greatly honored cornerstone'. In contrast, however, the somewhat similar phrase of Isa. 8.14, *having trusted on it/him* (*ep' autō pepoithōs*), refers to God, the one who 'would be to you unto a sanctuary'. Paul has adopted the literal participial phrase of Isa. 28.16, *the one trusting on it/him* (*ho pisteuōn ep' autō*), but the referent of the phrase *ep' autō* is that of Isa. 8.14, God. The law is Israel's stone of stumbling and rock of offense because law is unable to actualize God's justice. The shame of failing to fulfill God's justice may be transcended by trusting God, in emulation of Israel's patriarch Abraham:

Look, I am placing in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and the one trusting on him (*ho pisteuōn ep' autō*) will not be ashamed (9.33).

This second half of Paul's conflated quotation of Isa. 28.16 and 8.14, '*the one trusting on him* (*ho pisteuōn ep' autō*) will not be ashamed', accentuates the relationship of trust that is already implied in the double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *ek pisteōs eis pistin*, that is, from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. It is Abraham's trusting relationship with God that naturally anticipates justice, a trust that leads through the law to the trust of Jesus Christ. It is that trust that makes the impossibility of justice possible. As ambiguous as the prepositional phrase *ep' autō* is in a determination of its antecedent, it is generally interpreted and translated correctly as a masculine referent, 'him'.<sup>45</sup> Yet the 'him' of *ep' autō* should not be identified with Jesus Christ! He is not the 'rock of offense'.<sup>46</sup> Recalcitrant Israel stumbled, as Paul will state in 11.11, but the 'stone of stumbling' is the law, not Jesus Christ. Throughout Romans the antecedent of the pronoun *autō*, as it occurs

45. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 244, correctly judges 9.33 to be ambiguous, but 'faith', as he defines it in this context, is not simply (a) the acceptance of the crucified Messiah as the risen Lord, (b) the fulfillment of the Torah in faith, or (c) the appropriation of benefits from the covenant faithfulness of the one God. Faith is a participation in the trust of Jesus Christ, that is, being the new human being that one has become and directing the love that God's Spirit pours into believing hearts toward justice.

46. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 278, acknowledges that Paul's insertion of Isa. 8.14 has changed 'the sense of Isa 28.16a into its opposite while leaving unchanged the promise of its conclusion'. Yet he mistakenly goes on to claim that 'this was possible only for a Christian who understood Isa 28.16 messianically but regarded Israel as rejected because of its lack of faith in Christ and found a confirmation of it in Isa 8.14'. See also Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 511-12; Dunn, *Romans* II, p. 583. Jesus is not the stone of offense! Barrett, 'Romans 9.30-10.21', p. 144, identifies the referent of the ambiguous prepositional phrase *ep' autou* (on it/him) with both the Torah and with Christ on the basis of Rom. 10.11.

in the verbal phrase *pisteuein epi autō* (to believe on him), always refers to God, never Jesus Christ.<sup>47</sup> The reciprocity of obedience to the law that cannot realize God's justice has continued to replace the trust of Abraham.

#### 10.1-21. *The Possibility of the Actualization of God's Justice*

While Paul remains faithful to his divine call to serve God by being an apostle to the Gentiles, he remains loyal to his people and continues to be overwhelmed by emotions of 'great grief and unceasing pain' at their obstinate resistance. The true Israel, the Israel that is circumcised with respect to the heart and not the flesh, journeys together with Gentile believers into the new Exodus that Jesus the Christ has inaugurated by fulfilling the terms and conditions of the testament that God established with Abraham. But the Israel that is oriented to the circumcision of the flesh refuses to surrender its allegiance to the covenant of debt and reciprocity and therefore stumbles against the rock of offense that God laid in Zion, namely justice.

Paul continues to express his deep feelings for this recalcitrant Israel. Verses 1-4 echo the forceful emotions he verbalized in 9.2-3. He yearns for the salvation of his fellow Jews, the divinely willed salvation that is the very fulfillment of all that their extraordinary heritage has led them to anticipate eschatologically and christologically. Ironically, the foundation stone of justice that the trust of Abraham presupposed and that the trust of Jesus Christ established as the impossible possibility is their stumbling block:

Brothers [and Sisters], my heart's desire and my prayer toward God on their behalf [is] for salvation. For I testify with respect to them that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. For they are ignorant of *God's justice*, and seeking to establish their own, they are not subordinate to *the justice of God*. For Christ is the *end/goal (telos)* of the law *unto justice (eis dikaiosynēn)* to everyone who believes.

Paul acknowledges their zeal for God. As he stated earlier, they are Israelites. They have the covenants, the law-giving, the worship of God, the promises and the great patriarchs. But in their zeal to remain faithful to their heritage, as they understand it, they are ignorant of God's justice. They do not appear to know that the law cannot establish God's justice because the law is unable to subdue the power of *hamartia*. Consequently, they constitute their own system of justice based on the law of Sinai, but the justice that God wills remains unrealized.<sup>48</sup>

47. See the Greek texts of 4.5, 24 and 10.11 and, of course, here in 9.33.

48. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 587, transforms 'justice' into 'faith'. 'The charge is clearly directed against what Paul regarded as a basic misunderstanding of how God deals with his people and what he requires of his people—that is, God's righteousness as God's

The law is the codicil that was added to the testament that God established with Abraham, and, although it is directed toward justice, it makes human beings aware of injustice and, beyond that reality, a consciousness of the condition of *hē hamartia*. Its ultimate objective, as Paul had enunciated it in Gal. 3.22-28, is to serve as the truant officer or guide to conduct God's people to Christ.<sup>49</sup> He echoes that objective now in 10.4, 'For the *telos* (goal and termination) of the law is Christ *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*) to everyone who believes'.<sup>50</sup> Here, however, he elaborates on what he had said earlier. The law indeed serves as a guardian to hand human beings over to the Christ, but specifically for the purpose of producing justice. The irony of this movement is stunning! The consciousness of *hē hamartia* that the law engenders is to direct human beings to Christ in order to actualize the justice that the law itself could never achieve.

Christ, therefore, is the *goal and termination* (*telos*) of the law. Both meanings of the word *telos* are applicable to the Christ event, for they imply its definitive significance. The law and the consciousness of the infection of *hē hamartia* that it arouses and the infection of *hē hamartia* itself, which belong to the old moral order, are *terminated* in and through the death of Jesus. The goal, beyond their termination, is the possibility that the resurrection of Jesus the Christ constitutes. Those who in baptism have died and been resurrected with Christ can begin to actualize God's justice as God's Spirit commences to inscribe God's law, the law beyond the Sinai law, upon the tablets of the human heart. As Paul will state in 13.8b, 'For the one who loves has fulfilled the other law'. Christ is the end of that other law, the law of Sinai. Christ is the beginning of justice! At last, the justice that God credited to Abraham on the basis of their trusting relationship can be actualized. Membership in God's New Humanity commits human beings, healed of the infection, to a life of trust and the vocation of fulfilling that other law by the love that God's Spirit pours into human hearts, enabling them to do God's justice. 'The one who trusts on it', according to the concluding sentence of Paul's conflated quotation of Isa. 28.16, 'will not be disgraced' because, as already stated, God's justice promotes the salvation of health and wholeness.<sup>51</sup>

gracious accepting and sustaining power to faith, therefore open to all and not to the special prerogative of Israel to be defended by the sword.' Presupposed, it seems, is imputed righteousness that becomes a source of power within believers.

49. The law itself does not point to faith in Christ, as Jewett, *Romans*, p. 625, contends. The law points to justice, but at the same time, 'By the law is the recognition of *hamartia*'. Through that experience the law would hopefully serve as a truant officer to lead a human being to Christ.

50. This translation follows the Greek word order as closely as possible.

51. Contrary to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 281, it is not faith but love that produces true obedience. Obedience does not live by the imputed righteousness instilled 'by the

Paul dramatizes the difference between the two kinds of justice in 10.5-8. On the one hand, there is the justice of the Sinai law that his fellow Jews attempt to actualize. Moses, the negotiator between God and Israel at Sinai, according to Gal. 3.20, appears in v. 5 as the voice of Lev. 18.5 admonishing Israel, 'The doing human being shall live in it'.<sup>52</sup> Paul had enunciated this earlier in Gal. 3.11-12 as he differentiated between living out of trust and living according to the reciprocity that the covenantal law demands:

Now it is clear that in/by the law no one is justified by God, for 'The just shall live out of trust' (*ek pisteōs*). But the law is not out of trust (*ek pisteōs*), but the one doing these things shall live in them.

Moses, of course, is also the voice of Deut. 30.11-14 that Paul proceeds to revise in order to give voice to the 'justice that is out of trust'. According to LXX Deut. 30.1-14, Moses, presupposing what he has said in the previous verse, v. 10, assures Israel of the effortless possibility of observing God's commandments by 'turn[ing] to the Lord your God with all your hearts and with all your soul':

For this commandment which I am commanding you today is neither hard nor distant from you. It is not up in heaven, saying, 'Who will ascend for us in heaven and will bring it down for us; and hearing we shall do it'. Nor is it across the sea, saying, 'Who will cross for us beyond the sea and receive it for us, and make it audible for us, and we shall do it'. The word is extremely near you, in your mouth and in your heart and in your hands to do it.<sup>53</sup>

The law of Sinai, as the code of reciprocity, establishes its own enslavement, its own indebtedness, as Lev. 18.5 charges, 'The doing human being shall live in it'. But the works that are produced are infected with *hē hamartia*. God's justice, however, is out of trust (*ek pisteōs*), as Paul states

presence of the Lord who gives himself and is continuously grasped afresh by faith'. Obedience arises naturally from the indebtedness of being what one has become through the death and resurrection experience of baptism. Käsemann is right when he says there is no merit ascribed for this, but he nevertheless continues to inject his Lutheran theology of justification by faith into his interpretation of Paul. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 589, misconstrues 10.4, *telos gar nomou Christos eis dikaioynēn panti tō pisteuonti* (For the end of the law [is] Christ unto justice to everyone who believes) by paraphrasing it as 'for Christ is the end of the law as a means of righteousness for all who believe'. Imputed righteousness seems to prevail. See Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 515-20, and the lengthy discussion of 10.4 on p. 519. Cranfield concludes that Christ as the *telos* of the law cannot signify that Christ has abolished the law. What, then, does Paul mean in 7.4 when he states, 'You were put to death to the law through the Body of Christ'?

52. For a justification of this reading of v. 5 that is adopted from P<sup>46</sup> and other manuscripts, see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pp. 524-25.

53. My translation of Deut. 30.11-14.



in his contradiction of ‘the justice that is *out of law* (*ek nomou*)’. Indeed, the justice that is *out of trust* is the justice that the trust of Jesus Christ actualizes, the justice that is beyond the justice of the Sinai law:<sup>54</sup>

For Moses writes [concerning] the justice that is from the law that, ‘The doing human being shall live in it’. But the justice that is *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) says thus, ‘Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down. Or, Who will descend into the abyss? That is, to bring Christ up from the dead?’ But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.’ That is, the word of trust that we proclaim.

This other kind of justice is oriented in terms of *ek pisteōs eis pistin* (out of trust into trust). It is the justice that issues *from trust* (*ek pistēos*), initially anticipated in Abraham’s trusting relationship with God that was credited *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*) and eventually actualized as a possibility through the trust of Jesus Christ. Like Moses, ‘the justice out of trust’ also has a voice.<sup>55</sup> Paul lets that voice speak for itself by citing his revision of Deut. 30.11-14, which substitutes Christ in place of ‘this commandment’, specifically Moses’ reference to the preceding words of Deut. 30.10b that can establish obedience to God’s law, ‘If you turn to the Lord your God out of your whole heart and out of your whole soul’. By substituting Christ in place of ‘this commandment’, the voice of justice that is out of trust implies that the justice that the commandment anticipated is actualizable because those who are ‘in Christ Jesus’ have turned to God with all their heart and all their soul by entering into the baptism of death and resurrection. Their indebtedness to the Sinai covenant has been canceled and their diseased condition of *hē hamartia* has been healed. As a result, the justice of God is finally realizable.<sup>56</sup> After ‘the justice that is out of trust’ has spoken its

54. Contrary to Barrett, ‘Romans 9.30–10.21’, p. 137, God did not lay the stone of stumbling in the path of his people. The cornerstone of justice that God originally laid became a rock of stumbling for Israel.

55. On the difference between Moses writing and the voice of ‘justice out of faith speaking’, see Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 287-88. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 619, contends that *telos* in 10.4 ‘should not be understood in this context of cessation or termination’, but rather ‘completion in the sense of attainment’. His interpretation of 10.6, on p. 625, that ‘the righteousness by faith’ is presented by Paul as the personification of a concept that Christ, not as the end or termination of the law, but as the goal that makes the performance of the law possible. Ostensibly it appears to be the law of Sinai. The law, however, is the codicil that was added to the testament of Abraham in order to raise to consciousness the reality of injustice and *hamartia* as its underlying cause.

56. In spite of a good discussion of 10.5-8, Schlatter, *Romans*, pp. 214-15, continues to separate law and gospel as binary oppositions by claiming that justice is simply given to the believer by faith. As he says, on p. 215, ‘Therefore, because Christ came and is resurrected, he believes, and by means of this cited oracle he lauds the word that proclaims Christ to him as that which endows him with righteousness. He is righteous,

prohibitions—‘Do not say in your heart, “who will ascend into heaven” or “who will descend into the abyss”’—Paul lets it speak for itself:

But what does it say? ‘The *word event* (*rēma*) is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’. That is, the *word event* (*rēma*) of trust that we proclaim.<sup>57</sup>

No work or struggle is required to make it happen; neither bringing the reality of the Christ event down from heaven nor bringing the Christ event up from the abyss.<sup>58</sup> The word event that is ‘the gospel message itself’ is ‘near you’.<sup>59</sup>

The event is related to mouth and heart, both of which are the essential, indeed, the indispensable organs of the human anatomy that make the justice of God realizable in historical existence. Mouth and heart are joined together in their potential activities by trust, the trust of a relationship with God that is directed toward justice:

If you *confess* (*homologēsēs*) with your *mouth* (*stoma*) the Lord Jesus, and *trust* (*pisteuēs*) in your *heart* (*kardia*) that God resurrected him from the dead, you will be saved. This is the *word event of trust* (*to rēma tēs pisteōs*) that we proclaim (10.9).

*The word event of trust* is the integrating activities of *confessing with the mouth* and *trusting in the heart* that brings about the healing and restoration that salvation presupposes. It would appear, however, that the order of these two activities should be reversed: first *trusting in the heart* and subsequently *confessing with the mouth*. But in actuality, confessing with the mouth is only possible if it is integrated with the trust of the heart. For the heart, according to biblical anthropology, is the seat of the human will. It is the central organ that makes it possible for the limbs to move.<sup>60</sup> The trust of the heart, trust that is determined by an intimate ‘I–You’ relationship with God, embraces not only Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and his divinely appointed lordship. The trust of the heart also acknowledges a participation in his resurrection and therefore also in his lordship through membership in the Body of Christ:

not on account of what he does, but because he has the word.’ Schlatter, however, has ignored the word that must be ‘in your mouth and in your heart’, and that is the justice that follows faith as a trusting relationship with God.

57. See Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 603–605, for parallels to Deut. 30.11–14 in 2 Bar. 3.29–30; Philo, *Post.* 84–85; and *Targum Neofiti* 30 to indicate that this text ‘was a subject of considerable reflection among Jews in Palestine and in the diaspora’.

58. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 288, evinces that Paul oriented his revision of Deut. 30.11–14 to ‘the christological confession’: ‘For the first time in the New Testament the message of Christ’s ascension is linked here with the descent into Hades, thus with the descent into the realm of the dead’. See also Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 605–606.

59. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 526.

60. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, pp. 40–58.

For with the heart it is trusted *unto/into justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*). With the mouth it is confessed *unto/into salvation* (*eis sōtērian*).

In the trust of the 'I-You' relationship with God, the heart is motivated toward the actualization of God's justice, while the confession of the mouth proclaims God's salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Both verbs of the conditional sentence of v. 9 are aorist subjunctives conveying, in all likelihood, complexive actions: *pisteusēs* (you effectively trust) and *homologēsēs* (you effectively confess).<sup>61</sup> Together they convey the integration of deed and word, *the word event of trust* (*to rēma tēs pisteōs*).<sup>62</sup> On the one hand, *the word event of trust* is the gospel of salvation that God established through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of salvation that originates human health and wholeness and therefore is divinely ordained to be confessed by the mouth. On the other hand, *the word event of trust* is 'the precious cornerstone' of Isa. 28.16 that has become 'a stone of offense and a rock of scandal' to those who attempt to establish justice 'out of works' of law, as Paul enunciated in 9.32-33. It is *the justice of God* that is being revealed in the gospel of salvation, and therefore is to be trusted with the heart and coincidentally actualized in daily life.<sup>63</sup> 'Everyone', as Paul

61. Blass and Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, pp. 173-74.

62. Luther, *Lectures of Romans*, 294, states: 'Confession is the principal work of faith'. Dodd, *Romans*, p. 166, concludes that 'faith in God' is a belief that must be included in the Christian confession of faith'. See also Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. Carl C. Rasmussen; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), pp. 282-84. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 290, maintains that both verbs, to *confess* (*homologeîn*) and to *trust* (*pisteueîn*), 'relate to the content of faith fixed in the confession and consequently they cannot be materially separated'. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 531, states: '...but it is clear that no substantial distinction is intended between *dikaïosynē* and *sōtēria*, both referring to eschatological salvation'. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 153-54, also persists in the same split, by omitting Paul's reference to 'the heart' and focusing on the mouth and its anticipated confession. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 616, is equally guilty of perpetuating this disconnection between faith and justice: '...[Paul] naturally refers the two phrases to the response called for by the gospel—viz., confession of Jesus' lordship, and belief in the resurrection'. 'To talk of the "heart" is to talk of faith; faith operates at and from the level of the heart. To talk of the "mouth" is to talk of confession; confession is the primary and essential outward manifestation corresponding to faith, not a sequence of ritual "works"' (p. 609). Dunn, on p. 615, speaks of 'a deeper level of obedience, which the law properly understood really looked for', but he never explains what this means. The justice that the Christ event makes possible is completely overlooked. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 629, like other commentators, does not appear to perceive the indispensable relationship between the mouth and the heart. 'The word of faith', the phrase that he uses, is 'the believing response to the word or the word that proclaims faith'. It is essentially interactive and must be preached by more than one person to convey the idea of a 'gospel held in common'. Again, the disjunction between faith and justice is perpetuated.

63. Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 617 and 632, maintains that *faith* is 'what was always called for by the law, faith from the heart in the one who gave the covenant, [that] can

professes by quoting Isa. 28.16 again in 10.11, 'who trusts *on him/it* (*ep' autō*) will not be disgraced'. In 10.11, as in 9.33b, the third person pronoun *autō* that is governed by the preposition *ep'* (upon) is ambiguous in a determination of its antecedent. Once again, should the phrase *ep' autō* be translated 'on him' or 'on it'? As in 9.33b, the majority of the contemporary English translations and the commentaries on Romans render the phrase 'in him' or 'on him', apparently concluding that Jesus Christ must be the object of 'the one believing' (*ho pisteuōn*).<sup>64</sup> But the *salvation* (*sōtēria*) that is confessed by the mouth and the *justice* (*dikaïosynē*) that is motivated by trust in relation to the willing heart, are more immediately the referent of the prepositional phrase, *ep' autō* (on it). Yet, at the same time, the antecedent of *autō* must include Jesus Christ, who according to 10.9 is being confessed by the mouth and trusted in the heart.

This foundation stone of the mouth's confession of the Lord Jesus and the heart's corresponding activation of the hands and feet to engage in doing God's justice is equally valid for both Jews and Gentiles. 'For', as Paul maintains in v. 12, 'there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for he is Lord of all'. Here too the referent of the designation 'Lord' is ambiguous. According to v. 9, it is the 'Lord Jesus' who is confessed by the mouth, but it is God who, by raising him from the dead, has made salvation possible. God, of course, is 'Lord of all'. Yet, according to Phil. 2.9-10, '...God highly exalted him and graced to him the name beyond every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee bows of heavenly things, earthly things and subterranean things, and every tongue will confess Lord Jesus Christ unto the glory of God the Father'. As 'Lord of all', Jesus, whom God has called into being by raising him from the dead and by bestowing on him his own distinguished title 'Lord', he, Jesus, seated at God's right hand and therefore acting on God's behalf, is 'generous toward all who call upon him'. Paul confirms this universality with a quotation from LXX Joel 3.5 (that translates the Hebrew text of Joel 2.32), 'For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'.

But calling upon the name of the Lord and therefore being saved is not a recourse to those who are ignorant of the Christ event. The unenlightened must be evangelized if the gospel is to prevail so that God's justice will be actualized throughout the world. Paul reviews the formidable realities that must be overcome so that the salvation that results from calling upon the Lord and the justice that it presupposes can truly be universalized:

now be re-expressed as faith in the one through whose resurrection and exaltation God has broadened out the same covenant'. It was not faith but obedience unto justice that the law invoked!

64. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 609; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 156-57.

How then will they call upon the one into (*eis*) whom they did not trust? And how will they trust the one of whom they did not hear? And how will they hear without preaching? And how will they preach unless they are sent forth? (10.14-15a).

Calling upon the Lord implies trusting, and trusting requires hearing, and hearing presupposes preaching. But there will be no preaching unless evangelists are sent forth. The entire concatenation of activities—preaching, hearing, trusting and calling upon God—is dependent on sending out those who are able to communicate the word event of God’s good news. Accordingly, as Paul exclaims by drawing a quotation from Isa. 52.7, ‘How lovely are the feet of those proclaiming good things!’ The vocation of evangelizing, that is, preaching the good news of the Christ event is the quintessential undertaking that actualizes all the other possibilities that culminate in calling upon the Lord.

Can it be, then, that recalcitrant Israel is ignorant of the Christ event? Has Israel not heard the Good News? In his review of this concatenation of preaching, hearing, trusting and calling upon God, Paul is painfully aware that ‘Not all listened (*hypēkousan*) to the Gospel’. Messengers have been sent forth, and they have proclaimed the word event that God’s justice speaks, the word of trust that is close to you, ‘the word that is in your mouth and in your heart’. But ‘Not all listened’. The verb, *hypēkousan*, as a compound form of *akouein* (to hear) signifies a *listening beyond hearing*, a ‘hearing under’ or obedience. Not all have submitted themselves to the Christ event. Some have, of course! And they, like Isaac, are the seed of the promise. Here Paul is focused on rebellious Israel that has heard the message of the Christ event but has rejected it. Their resistance corresponds to the experience that Isaiah voiced in the context of the Babylonian exile, and Paul proceeds to quote the prophet: ‘For Isaiah says, “Lord, who believed our message?”’

### 10.17. Scribal Interpolation

Verse 17 interrupts Paul’s response to Isaiah’s question and may well be another scribal interpolation:<sup>65</sup>

Consequently trust [is] from hearing, and the hearing by the word of Christ.

65. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 262, and Rudolf Bultmann, ‘Glossen im Römerbrief’, *TLZ* 72 (1947), pp. 197-202, consider 10.17 to be a later interpolation. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 536-37, after some discussion, acknowledges its Pauline origin. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 623, and Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 641-42, also accept its authenticity as a ‘very effective “summarizing conclusion”’.

It appears to be a summary verse of what Paul has already said. The adverbial particle, *consequently*, is superfluous in this context. Moreover, what is stated in v. 17 is already explicit in v. 14.

#### 10.18. '*But I say...*'

Verse 18, therefore, is the direct continuation of v. 16—'*For Isaiah says, "Lord, who believed our message?"*'—and it elicits a question from Paul who finds himself in very similar circumstances. Accordingly he asks, '*But I say, didn't they hear?*' In other words, is it possible that they did not submit because they did not hear? His reply is already conveyed in his formulation of his question. The negative particle *mē* (not) followed by the negative adverb *ouk* (not) in an interrogative sentence implies a positive answer to his question: 'Yes, they heard'.<sup>66</sup> The relationship between v. 16 and v. 18 is intensified by Paul's juxtaposition of two verbs that form a word play: *hypakouō* (listen in the sense of obedience) and *akouō* (hear). Yes, they heard, but not all listened! Not all of them placed themselves under that word in trust. Yet they must have heard, for Ps. 18.5(19.4) affirms:

Their sound *went out* (*exēlthen*) into the whole earth; and their words unto the ends of the inhabited world.

The verb of Ps. 18.5, *exēlthen* (went out), may be construed as a constative or linear aorist, expressing 'an extended act or state, however prolonged in time, if viewed as constituting a single fact without reference to its progress'.<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, Paul would have no difficulty in acknowledging the truth of the Psalmist's witness.<sup>68</sup> Already during his apostolic career, the good news of the Christ event was being proclaimed throughout the Mediterranean world, and Paul himself bears witness to this actuality in 15.19, when he informs his addressees, 'so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ'. He himself is engaged in fulfilling these words of the Psalmist, and, as he adds

66. See Blass and Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, pp. 220-21.

67. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 13.

68. On the basis of Paul's quotation of LXX Ps. 18.5, Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 296, speaks of Paul's 'self-deception': 'How could he be so mistaken about the endless nature of the task he had begun? The further he pressed into Asia and Europe, the more starkly he must have been confronted with the rift between his apocalyptic hope and earthly reality.' But there is no self-deception here in this remarkable expression of confidence in the dissemination of the gospel of salvation. If Paul left the eastern Mediterranean because there is no further place for him in those regions (15.23), it is because he trusts that the 'power of the gospel' will continue its conquest throughout the world through the evangelizing activity of others. He is proclaiming a gospel 'into salvation', and it is a salvation that is directed toward justice, not merely the doctrine of justification.

in 15.23, 'But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you when I go to Spain'.

If, however, 'Their sound went out into the whole earth', there is yet the possibility that Israel may not have understood this word that reached to the ends of the inhabited earth. Israel heard but perhaps did not comprehend what they heard. That possibility must also be addressed. In formulating his response to this issue, Paul utilizes the same interrogative structure that he employed in v. 18, 'Didn't Israel *understand* (*egnō*)?' His question juxtaposes the same two negatives, *mē* (not) and *ouk* (not), and intimates a similar affirmative reply, 'Yes, Israel understood'. The verb *egnō* that he employs, like other uses of *ginōskein* in Romans, implies familiarity through experience; in other words, *comprehension* or *understanding*. Yes Israel did hear, and yes, Israel did understand.

But Israel did not respond in trust by embracing the foundation stone that God had placed in Zion, the cornerstone of justice, that the trust of Jesus Christ finally makes actualizable. Consequently, that foundation stone of justice has become a rock of offense?<sup>69</sup> What then is the resolution to Israel's hard-heartedness? Paul cites testimony that he derives from 'The Song of Moses' in Deut. 31.30–32.47, a psalm in which God's faithfulness is contrasted with Israel's faithlessness:

*First Moses* says, 'I will provoke *you* to jealousy by [those] not a people. I will make *you* angry at a foolish people' (Rom. 10.19).

This text has been drawn from Deut. 32.21. But Paul is quoting the second half of Deut. 32.21b. What he has not included is the first part of the verse, in which Moses voices God's anger against Israel, 'They provoked me to jealousy by what is no god, they angered me with their idols'. In characteristic Deuteronomic reciprocity, God pronounces judgment on Israel's idolatry, 'and I will provoke them to jealousy by what is no people, I will make them angry by a foolish nation'. But Paul, in concert with his anti-reciprocity theology, avoids placing God in a position of retaliation against Israel. There is no intimation here that God is provoking Israel because Israel has provoked God by its rejection of the gospel of salvation. In 10.19b Paul acknowledges that '*First Moses*' experienced Israel's intransigence. But, instead of using his own authority to reprove Israel, Moses has chosen to let God speak the judgment. It should be assumed, in the light of 9.17, that Paul is aware that this charge against Israel and God's verdict were spoken in the context of the first Exodus.

69. Johnson, 'Romans 9–11', pp. 232–33, incorrectly attributes Israel's rebellion to 'God's gracious restraint of Israel' while the Gentiles are being evangelized. It is not God who is holding back a part of Israel from responding to the gospel. It is Israel's rejection of the trust that God initiated with Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.



Now, like Moses, Paul has witnessed and experienced the same kind of defiant rebellion. As he said in v. 16, 'But not all listened to the gospel'. Consequently, in view of the similarity of their circumstances, Paul applies the same judgment upon rebellious Israel in the context of this new Exodus that God had enunciated at the first Exodus. That is why he has replaced the two third person plural pronouns of Deut. 32.21, *autous* (them), with the second person plural pronouns *hymas* (you).<sup>70</sup> He is drawing Moses' psalm into his own context, and he is using Moses, who *first* spoke these words, to serve as his spokesperson—though not, however, in the Deuteronomic vein of retribution:

I will provoke *you* to jealousy by [those] not a people; I will make *you* angry by a foolish people (Rom. 10.19).

Paul does not let this quotation of Deut. 32.21b in v. 19 conclude this rhetorical exchange with his addressees. Although God's people have rejected the Christ event, God is not striking back by retributively electing the Gentiles in order to provoke Israel to jealousy. To evade such a conclusion, to counter any inference that God is engrossed in retaliation, Paul ends his analysis of Israel's intransigence in 10.20 with two verses from Isa. 65.1-2, which he introduces with the words, 'Isaiah comes out boldly and says':

I was found by those not seeking me. I became visible to those not asking for me.

Notably, this quotation, unlike the others, does not correspond to the Septuagint text of Isa. 65.1, which reads, 'I became visible to those not seeking me; I was found by those not asking for me'. Paul has edited the two sentences by exchanging the verbs, 'I was found' and 'I became visible' in place of each other, perhaps for no other reason than to create a more logical sequence. Seeking is a more deliberate act than becoming visible. The act of seeking may lead directly to finding, and once the finding has occurred, the experience of what has been found may then become visible as a result. In any case, the irony here is immense. God is found by those who were not seeking God! God becomes visible to those who were not asking for God! Paul uses these opening sentences from Isa. 65.1 to confirm that God did not search for the Gentiles. God did not pursue them. It was the Gentiles who took the initiative, and God is using the irony of being found by the Gentiles, who had not been engaged in searching for God, to provoke Israel to jealousy.

70. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 625, has no explanation for this change of pronouns. He rightly states that there is a reversal here that Paul is conveying through Deut. 32.21, but it should not be construed as an act of reciprocity.

The quotation of Isa. 65.2 in 10.21, which follows the words of Isa. 65.1, painfully reinforces the irony of Israel's precedence being superseded by the Gentiles. Paul introduces this final quote with the phrase,

But to Israel he says, 'The whole day I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and contradicting people'.

Of course, God has been speaking to Israel through the words of Isa. 65.1 that Paul cited in 10.20. But they accentuate the initiative of the Gentiles in their search for the God of Israel. While God is being found by those who were not seeking him, God, at the same time, is devotedly committed to Israel by symbolically 'stretching out the hand' as an invitation to a relationship, indeed, as an invitation to be united with God.<sup>71</sup> Paul has edited the Septuagint text of Isa. 65.2 by placing the phrase 'the whole day long' at the very beginning of the quotation. This is done in order to stress God's continuous pursuit of Israel.<sup>72</sup>

#### 11.1-36. *The Cosmic Tree of Life: Disobedient Israel Will Be Saved*

*Two voices* have continued to speak. *Moses*, according to 10.5, wrote that the justice that the law anticipates requires continued submission to the indebtedness that the covenant of reciprocity imposes. *Justice* itself also has a voice, but it is God's justice, and God's justice is not identifiable with the law that, according to Gal. 3.19, was ordered by angels and mediated by Moses.

God's justice cannot be actualized by the law of Sinai because its legislation is subject to the human condition of *hamartia* that is predominant in the

71. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 298, continues to project his apocalyptic double predestination into Romans: 'In this context predestination characterizes, not the nature and attributes of God, but his dealings with his creation, which mean for mankind either salvation or perdition'. The present, however, is the time of salvation, that is, healing and restoration. The perdition, as Paul anticipates in 2.5, is projected into the end of history, the 'day of wrath and the revelation of God's righteous judgment'.

72. In view of Paul's quotation of Isa. 65.2 in 10.21, it is remarkable that Johnson, 'Romans 9-11', p. 235, continues to maintain that God tripped up Israel in order to provide for Gentile salvation. She insists on the interdependence of 'impartiality' and 'God's faithfulness to Israel'. Paul nowhere speaks of God's 'impartiality'. God is partial to justice and to those who are suffering injustice. Moreover, how can God be faithful to Israel, if, as Johnson says, 'God has held back part of Israel from responding to the gospel to make room for the Gentiles'. Moo, 'The Theology of Romans 9-11', p. 249, follows Johnson: 'In the first section the Jews are not included because *God* chose that they would not be; in the second they are not included because *they* chose not to be'. The italics are Moo's.

moral order of the old creation. The Sinai law cannot defeat or overcome the power of *hamartia*; in fact, it 'activates the passions of the sins', as Paul stated in 7.5. Although the law works wrath, the law is holy, just and good. As the codicil that was added to the testament that God established with Abraham, it enables human beings to become aware of the power of *hamartia*. Consequently, as Paul pronounced in 10.4, Christ is the goal and termination of the law *unto justice* (*eis dikaiosynēn*) to everyone who trusts. Participating in the Christ event by dying and rising with Jesus Christ, those who trust are ushered into a new creation in which they become life-giving spirits and, as such, begin to actualize God's justice in the world.

These two voices continue to speak, and Israel is confronted with a fundamental choice: Which voice should now be heard, understood and obeyed? The present irony is that God continues to stretch out the hand of welcome to Israel in order to enter into a new relationship that will fulfill all the promises that the prophets of Israel's history have made. At the same time, God has been found by the Gentiles of the world who are entering into a relationship of union that should begin to generate God's justice.

What, then, is the future of Israel? Paul will finally answer this question in ch. 11, as he continues to grieve over the hardening of Israel. He initiates his dialog with his addressees by asking the decisive question, 'Did God repudiate his people?'<sup>73</sup> The negative particle *mē* at the very beginning of his interrogative sentence implies a negative answer, but Paul proceeds to respond with his usual interjection, 'Not at all'. The immediate evidence that confirms that God has not forsaken Israel is Paul himself, 'For I am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Benjamin'.<sup>74</sup> That, at least preliminarily, establishes the truth of LXX Ps. 93(94).14, which Paul cites for scriptural support, 'God did not repudiate his people *whom he foreknew*'. God is not a punitive deity. To the affirming text of LXX Ps. 93.14 Paul has

73. There is no evidence, either overt or implied, that Paul is motivated to ask this question because 'gentile Christians in Rome were rewriting the self-definition of Christianity in the capital under the supposition that God had rejected Israel', as James C. Walters contends in *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), pp. 59-66, 84.

74. In his reflections on 11.1, Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 102, says, "'For the Jew first (*Ioudaioi prōton*)": this is precisely what marks the Jewish difference's pride of place in the movement traversing all differences so that the universal can be constructed. This is why Paul not only considers the necessity of making oneself "a Jew among Jews" obvious, but also vigorously invokes his Jewishness so as to establish that the Jews are included in the universality of the Announcement'; Badiou then proceeds to cite 11.1. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 299, cites the rabbinic tradition that at the first Exodus Benjamin went into the sea first, and goes on to observe that the hope of the reunification of God's people was connected with the tribe of Benjamin to which Saul and Jeremiah belonged.

added the phrase, 'whom he foreknew', and it may serve as an echo of his earlier warranty about God's foreknowledge and predetermination in 8.29, 'Those whom he foreknew he also predetermined to be conformed to the image of his Son'. This, of course, would apply to Paul and all who, like him, are living out of the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ.

As additional support of God's faithful disposition toward Israel, Paul reminds his addressees of the remnant that was contemporaneous with the prophet Elijah:

Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the story of Elijah, how he appealed to God concerning Israel, 'Lord, your prophets they killed, your altars of sacrifice they tore down, and they seek my life'. But what does the divine answer say to him? 'I left behind for myself seven thousand men who did not bend the knee to Baal' (Rom. 11.2b-4).

Verse 3 cites Elijah's cry of despair in 1 Kgs 19.10, 14; and v. 4 presents God's reassuring reply of a continued representation of faithful Israel in 1 Kgs 19.18. The existence of a remnant during Elijah's career is an historical instance of that truth that Paul himself manifests as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he concludes this certification that God has not abandoned Israel by asserting,

So then even in this *now season* (*nun kairos*) a remnant has happened according to the election of grace. But by grace, not out of works, since grace would no longer be grace.

To justify that the remnant to which Paul and others belong is identifiable with the Israel that is presently responding to God's call into the new creation, Paul explicitly adds: 'by grace (*charis*) and not out of works (*ex ergōn*) since grace would no longer be grace'. It is indeed a matter of grace, but it is not an arbitrary grace determined by divine predestination. It is a grace that falls upon those whom God foreknew as those who, having entered into the trust of Abraham, would continue into the trust of Jesus Christ.

Paul's solicitude is directed toward the Israel that fulfills its indebtedness by living under the Sinai law, and therefore he returns to the pattern of affirmation and negation that he utilized in ch. 9. The two Israels must be differentiated to determine the critical issue of the future of recalcitrant Israel. So he asks: 'What then? That which Israel sought after, this it did not attain. But the elect attained, and the rest were hardened.' The elect, as vv. 5-6 indicated, are the *affirmed* remnant who by grace gained the fulfillment of God's promises. The rest are *negated* as hardened, made dull; and they are representative of intransigent Israel. He characterizes them in v. 8 by a text that he claims as Scripture, a text that marks them as recipients of God's wrath:

God gave them a spirit of stupefaction, eyes in order not to see and ears in order not to hear until this very day.

There is no passage in the Septuagint that corresponds to this quotation; but there are at least three that appear to have some relationship to it:

For the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of stupefaction; he has closed your eyes, you prophets, and covered your heads, you seers (Isa. 29.10).

...the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. But to this day the Lord has not given you a mind to understand, or eyes to see or ears to hear (Deut. 29.3-4).

And he said, 'Go and say to this people: "Hear and by no means understand; and looking, look and by no means see. For the heart of this people was made dull, and they heard with heavy ears and they closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and they should turn and I shall heal them"' (Isa. 6.9-10).

Of the three, Isa. 29.10 appears to be more comparable to v. 8 than the others.<sup>75</sup> Yet Paul's quotation seems to have drawn elements from the other two, especially Isa. 6.9-10. In all likelihood, this is a *Binyan ab mi-katub ehad*, a Rabbinic hermeneutical principle that literally means 'a construction of a family from one scriptural text'.<sup>76</sup> The main passage, the one scriptural text, appears to be Isa. 29.10, which, on the basis of the character it has in common with the others, combines them into a family. Paul has constructed a scriptural quotation from three passages that form a unity by attributing a divinely originated loss of sensibility to Israel. God the Lord is the acting subject in each of these three texts. God has dulled their minds, closed their eyes, muffled their ears and numbed their hearts. To these manifestations of divine wrath, that is, being handed over to the consequences of their rejection of the Christ event, Paul has added LXX Ps. 68.23-24 (Ps. 69.22-23 in the Hebrew Bible) as a word of condemnation attributed to David that pronounces the divine consequences that are imposed on Israel's loss of sensibility that the family of texts combined in v. 8 characterize:

Let their table become a snare and a trap and an offense and a retribution to them. Let their eyes be darkened in order not to see and cause their back to be bent continually (11.9-10).

This declaration of judgment is characteristic of God's wrath. And, like the 'wrath of God from heaven on every impiety and injustice of human beings'

75. Both Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 549-50, and Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 641, 648-49, consider 11.8 to be 'a reworked citation of Deut. 29.4'. Israel's obtuseness in the wilderness characterizes the disobedience of Israel in Paul's time. Both acknowledge some influence on 11.8 from Isa. 29.10a on the basis of the phrase *pneuma katanuxeōs* (spirit of stupefaction), and both draw Isa. 6.9-10 into their discussion.

76. Stemmerger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, p. 19.

that Paul developed in 1.18-32, the incapacity to see and hear, the hardening of hearts and the resulting stupefaction are the intra-historical consequences that human beings pay for their wrong-doing. God is not a punitive deity. Hardening of hearts is the natural result of rebellion, defiance and perversity. According to Paul's verdict, rebellious Israel is suffering the consequences of its impiety and injustice and has been handed over to the consequences of its deeds.

But would the opening noun 'table' (*trapeza*) of v. 9 have any particular significance for Paul? Various possibilities have been proposed to specify the meaning that the word 'table' might have had for him as a metaphor. The interpretations are wide-ranging: the whole behavior of the disobedient Jews,<sup>77</sup> the Lord's table of 1 Cor. 10.21,<sup>78</sup> 'the cult' or 'ritual practices which handicapped them in the pursuit of righteousness',<sup>79</sup> or the conflicts related to who was to be admitted to the table of fellowship.<sup>80</sup> No final reference is determinable. Whatever these words of Ps. 68.23-24 may have meant originally, Paul's quotation may simply convey a multi-metaphorical characterization of the consequences of pursuing the 'law of justice' by the works of the law of Sinai, without the trusting relationship with God that Abraham had pioneered.<sup>81</sup>

Will this pattern of the *affirmation* of the remnant and the *negation* of defiant Israel continue forever? Are Israel's present circumstances hopeless?

The consequent resolution of this issue continues to be Paul's objective, and he continues by reformulating the question that he asked in 11.1, 'I say then, did they stumble so that once and for all they fall?' As always, the negative particle *mē* at the very beginning of his interrogative sentence implies a negative answer, but Paul, for the sake of emphasis, responds as usual with his exclamatory interjection, 'Not at all!' Israel has stumbled but will not be destroyed! The rationale that he offers is disturbing, but only momentarily, 'But by their offense salvation [has come] unto the Gentiles in order to provoke them to jealousy'. Although self-willed and disobedient, rebellious Israel will not fall! Why? Because God, who was not sought by the Gentiles but has been found by them, is using their salvation and the justice that originates from it to provoke intransigent Israel to jealousy.<sup>82</sup>

77. Barth, *Romans*, p. 399.

78. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 302.

79. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 650.

80. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 64.

81. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 551, proposes understanding Paul's quotation in general terms.

82. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 248, and 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', pp. 59, 61, inadequately characterizes the salvation of the gospel that the Gentiles will enjoy and that in turn will evoke Israel's jealousy: 'On the other hand, the very fact

Here the criterion of reversal that played such a decisive role in ch. 9 emerges again. The pattern of affirmation and negation has been shattered by the New Exodus forever. Rebellious Israel is not doomed to be blind and deaf to God's salvation through the trust of Jesus Christ. If, at the beginning of Israel's history, God did not abandon Jacob after his sons sold Joseph into Egyptian slavery, but used Joseph to bring deliverance, first to the Egyptians and subsequently to Jacob and his family, why would God forsake the recalcitrant descendants of Jacob? The pattern of affirmation and negation and its subversion by the criterion of reversal were manifested in the life of Joseph. Although affirmed as Jacob's favorite son, he was negated by his brothers' betrayal, which resulted in his enslavement and imprisonment in Egypt. God's reversal, however, shattered that pattern as Joseph was elevated to the vice-regency of Egypt and subsequently saved his father and his brothers after he had saved the Egyptians. Paul makes no explicit reference to this earlier occurrence of God's dialectical involvement in Israel's history. But, as ch. 9 indicated, he is aware of the divine reversal of Jesus who, analogous to Joseph, was betrayed and handed over to the Romans for execution but resurrected from the dead and glorified by being seated on the right hand of God to become the Savior of the Gentiles as well as the present remnant of Israel.

As for intransigent Israel, it too will eventually be affected by the divine criterion of reversal. Even as the intransigence of the Pharaoh benefited Israel at the first Exodus, Israel's rejection of the Christ event is presently profiting the Gentiles. Those who once were 'not my people' are now being called 'sons and daughters of the living God'. Provoked to jealousy by the salvation that is enriching the Gentiles, blind and deaf Israel, a victim of the consequences of its own disobedience and waywardness, is not doomed to fall. The new Exodus that the dishonored vessel, Jesus the Christ, inaugurated by his resurrection from the dead is the final Exodus, and disobedient Israel cannot fall because the final Exodus is the ultimate liberation from the power of *hamartia* and all the forms and forces of death that it has generated in the world. The new Exodus, therefore, is 'the inheritance of the world' that God promised to Abraham and Sarah and their offspring, and in which eventually wayward Israel will participate. Hardened Israel, therefore, has a destiny determined by God, and Paul formulates it in the Rabbinic syllogism

of this transfer of privileges from Israel according to the flesh, to the Messiah, to the Jew-plus-Gentile church, means that Israel according to the flesh ought to be jealous'. It is not the transfer of privileges that will make hardened Israel jealous; it is the Gentile actualization of justice through their participation in the trust of Jesus Christ. God's covenant with Israel was designed to establish Israel as the source of God's justice in the world—not an imputed righteousness based on faith!



of a *qal wahomer*. If the protasis, or the two propositions of the conditional sentence of v. 12, is valid, the apodosis that conveys its consequence is effectually more true:

Now if their offense is the enrichment of the world and their loss is the enrichment of the Gentiles, *how much* more their *fullness* (*plērōma*)?

That is the *telos* or objective of God's foreknowledge and predetermination of Israel, as Paul will declare in 11.26. The Gentiles, who are already being richly endowed by their participation in the salvation of the Christ event, will experience inconceivably greater enrichment by being united with the fullness of Israel.<sup>83</sup>

It is necessary, therefore, for Paul to state why this is true and what injunctions the Gentiles should be observing in the meantime. First of all, he explicitly turns to the Gentiles among his addressees and speaks directly to them in order to elucidate his self-understanding as an apostle of Jesus Christ, 'Now I'm speaking to you Gentiles!'<sup>84</sup> And he continues in vv. 13-14:

In as much, therefore, as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if somehow I might provoke my flesh to jealousy and I save some of them.

Paul is now able to do something that he by conviction generally avoids. In 1 Cor. 15.9 he self-effacingly acknowledges, 'For I am the least of the apostles who is not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God'. But in this context it is possible for him to glorify his apostolic ministry. For if God has been found by Gentiles who had not been seeking him, and God is utilizing the visibility that has been gained among them to provoke Israel to jealousy, Paul can glorify his apostleship to the Gentiles for the very reason that it is serving God's objective.<sup>85</sup> By arousing Israel's desire to want to participate in the same salvation that the Gentiles

83. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, p. 191, concurs, but says nothing about what that greater blessedness will effectuate.

84. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 305, acknowledged Paul's 'foresight' in the admonitions of vv. 16-24 that he directed to the Gentile believers. All of Israel will be saved and drawn into the salvation of the gospel, and therefore there is no basis for arrogance among Gentile believers. Moreover, whether disobedient Israel will be provoked to jealousy by Gentile praxis depends on the extent to which Gentile believers will actualize the salvation of God's justice. Sadly, as Käsemann observed, 'Jewish Christianity was eventually pushed out onto the margin'.

85. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 307. Again it is Käsemann's apocalypticism that also determined his exegesis. Nowhere in his letters does Paul insinuate that 'the conversion of Israel is an integral part of the end of history', nor that he himself and his ministry are 'a precursor of the parousia'. In Romans there is no reference to the parousia or its imminence.

have begun to experience and the justice of God that it actualizes, he may be able to save some of them.<sup>86</sup>

By a series of conditional sentences he proceeds to explain to the Gentiles among his addressees why they are being richly endowed by their participation in the Christ event. Notably, only vv. 12 and 15 are syllogisms of *qal wahomer*, propositions that move from a minor to a major premise. The protasis of v. 15 repeats the condition of v. 12, and the apodosis that follows presents a similar consequence:

Now *if* their offense is the enrichment of the world and their loss is the enrichment of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness? (11.12).

For *if* their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what is [their] acceptance if not life from the dead? (11.15).

In this conditional sentence of v. 15 Paul divides the Christ event into two parts: on the one hand, 'peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ' and all that that reconciliation includes, and, on the other hand, resurrection and its inauguration of a New Humanity of life-giving spirits. World reconciliation cannot be realized if rebellious Israel is not included in that condition of at-one-ment with God. Consequently, the divine objective of the 'reconciliation of the world' is presently circumscribed and limited. Paul, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, is engaged in that ministry of reconciliation, as he states in 2 Cor. 5.18-20. Nevertheless, when Israel's acceptance into a reconciling relationship with God occurs, that will be nothing less than the resurrection of all humankind from the dead. For Israel's reconciliation with God will not only mean acquittal, it will also incorporate Israel into the moral order of the new creation and God's victory over death. *Here is the foundation of Paul's universalism.*<sup>87</sup>

God's salvation of the world will be complete when 'all Israel' participates in it.<sup>88</sup> But in the meantime, what are the benefits that the Gentiles

86. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 556, supposes that 'When Israel, the people whom God has made peculiarly His own, His special possession, see others the recipients of the mercy and goodness of their God, they will begin to understand what they are missing and to desire that salvation which they have rejected'. It is the actualization of justice, not the goodness and mercy of God, that Paul anticipates from Gentile and Jewish believers that will enable God's disobedient people to understand what they are missing.

87. As Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 110, says, 'The universal is not the negation of particularity. It is the measured advance across a distance relative to perpetually subsisting particularity. Every particularity is a conformation, a conformism. It is a question of maintaining a nonconformity with regard to that which is always conforming us. Thought is subjected to the ordeal of conformity, and only the universal, through an interrupted labor, an inventive traversal, relieves it.'

88. According to Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 249, 'Paul is envisaging a steady flow of Jews into the church, by grace through faith. God wanted a family from all

presently enjoy because they have entered into a relationship with the God of Israel? And, attendantly, what is the value of their partnership with the remnant of Israel who, like Paul, have embraced the Christ event as the fulfillment of God's promises? To elucidate this further, Paul continues to employ conditional sentences in which the truth of the condition of the protasis establishes the truth of the apodosis:

Now if the first fruits are holy, also the lump of dough; and if the root is holy, also the branches (11.16).

The first half of v. 16 is dependent on Num. 15.17-21. Through the mediation of Moses, God commands Israel to make a donation of a loaf of bread when the people are in the promised land and are eating the bread of the land:

From your first batch of dough you shall present a loaf as a donation; you shall present it just as you present a donation from the threshing floor. Throughout your generations you shall give to the Lord a donation from the first of your batch of dough.

Naturally, the first loaf of bread that is presented to God would be considered to be holy. Consequently, as Paul concludes, the entire batch of dough from which the first loaf was made is also holy. Here the movement of the metaphor is from the part to the whole, from the initial loaf of bread, 'the first fruits', back to the lump of dough from which the loaf was made. The *first fruits* (of that loaf of bread) that are made holy by being presented to God refer to Jesus and to the New Humanity that has been constituted by his resurrection from the dead. In 1 Cor. 15.20 Christ is the *first fruits* (*aparchē*) of those who have died. Accordingly, those who are 'in Christ', and therefore members of his Body, are participants with him as the first loaf of bread offered to God. As Paul stipulated in Rom. 8.23, the children of God, who are led by the Spirit of God, 'have the *first fruits* of the Spirit'. In contrast to all the people of God who came before them, they are the very first to be blessed with the gift of God's Spirit. They are accountable, therefore, as *first fruits*, and Paul will exhort them in 12.1 'to present your

nations, saved without favoritism and hence by grace alone. Only such a family, of Jews and Gentiles, together, would fulfill all the aspects of the promises made to Abraham'. Wright, in 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 61, claims, on the one hand, '...the salvation of "all Israel" (11.26) does not refer to an event expected to take place at the parousia'. On the other hand, 'the restoration of Israel *had already happened* in the resurrection of Jesus, the representative Messiah' (italics are Wright's). Evidently, 11.26 will be fulfilled gradually in the course of time, as jealousy motivates Israel to embrace the salvation of the gospel. But what are the promises made to Abraham? As Paul stated in 4.13, 'the inheritance of the world'; and that only through the actualization of God's justice.

bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God'. If, then, they as the *first fruits* are holy, the batch of dough from which they were made into the first loaf of bread offered up to God is also holy. Metaphorically, that batch of dough represents their predecessors, God's people, Israel.<sup>89</sup>

The second half of v. 16 poses a contrast, 'and if the root is holy, also the branches'. This is not simply a matter of extending what is true in one case to the other.<sup>90</sup> Here the movement is from the whole to the parts, that is, from the invisible stock or root of the tree to its individual branches. The root corresponds to the lump of dough, while the branches coincide with the first fruits. Paul is reversing himself in his use of this second metaphor, and, at the same time, preparing his addressees, specifically the Gentiles among them, for the metaphor of the olive tree that will be the focal image of his instruction in vv. 17-24. The root, like the dough, represents Israel, but more specifically the root stock from which Israel originated. Israel itself is the olive tree, the cultivated olive tree, grown from the root stock that God planted. According to *1 En.* 93.3 and 5, after Enoch concluded the time of justice at the end of the first week of apocalyptically interpreted history by his translation into heaven, God, at the end of the third week, elected a new representative of justice:

After this there will arise a third week, and at its conclusion a man will be chosen as the plant of the righteous judgment, and after him will go forth the plant of righteousness forever and ever.<sup>91</sup>

Abraham is the rootstock of Israel, and it is anticipated that the plant of righteousness, which he represents, will continue forever. If the root of justice that he embodies is holy, the olive tree and its branches that matured

89. Also Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 274. No one else appears to identify the batch of dough from which the first loaf was made with the predecessors of these Jewish and Gentile believers, namely God's people Israel. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 564, identifies the first loaf of bread as the present believing Jews who sanctify 'the unbelieving majority of Israel', represented by the dough from which the first loaf was made. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 671, has concluded that 'the first offering of the mixture' refers to those who have already believed in Christ, both Jew and Greek. The much larger whole is the eschatological 'fullness' that will emerge when disobedient Israel is included in God's salvation. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 682, maintains that the first loaf, dedicated to God as a holy offering, sanctifies the entire batch of bread. However, the batch of bread has not yet been made, so Paul is not referring to the 'entire batch of bread' but to the lump of dough from which the first loaf was made. See Philo, *De spec. leg.* 1.131-32.

90. Jewett's perspective, *Romans*, p. 683. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 672, asserts that the two metaphors are complementary rather than synonymous. Yet they are not complementary according to his interpretation of the two metaphors.

91. From the 'Apocalypse of Weeks', *1 En.* 93.3-10; 91.11-17. Translation of *1 En.* 93.5 by Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch I*, p. 434. See also his excursus, 'The Image of the Plant in Israelite Literature', pp. 444-45.

from it are also holy. The truth of the holiness of the batch of dough and the root stock that is conveyed by these metaphors is pivotal for the exhortations to the Gentiles in vv. 17-24.<sup>92</sup>

The word 'branches' in v. 16b is the connecting link to the image of the olive tree that Paul introduces in vv. 17-18:

Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being from a wild olive tree, were grafted in their place and you became a co-participant of the root of the oily richness of the olive tree, do not exult over the branches. And if you exult over them, it is not you who bears the root, but the root bears you.

The olive tree is the Tree of Life! It is the graphic image of God's people, Israel, that unites the two Israels that Paul has differentiated on the basis of the criterion of reversal that shatters the pattern of affirmation and negation in ch. 9. Yet here it is used to instruct the Gentiles about the grace of their election. They are analogous to 'wild olive branches' that have been grafted *among them* (*en autois*), that is, among those who are already branches of the olive tree, namely the Jews who, like Paul, have moved from the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. *They, the Gentiles, have not replaced the branches that were broken off the olive tree*, the branches represented by recalcitrant Israel.<sup>93</sup> God has grafted them into this tree of Life, and therefore by God's grace they have a share in the rich heritage that belongs to Israel. Like their fellow Jewish believers, they are called to fulfill their new indebtedness by actualizing God's justice through the love that God's Spirit is pouring out in their hearts.

Accordingly, it must not be presupposed that Paul is intimating that wild olive shoots are being grafted into the age-old olive tree in order to regenerate its life and productivity.<sup>94</sup> On the contrary, the Gentiles have

92. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 309, after citing *1 En.* 93.5, goes on to say, 'The concept of the people of God growing out of the root of Israel has, therefore, an indispensable function in Paul's ecclesiology, even though it is only one of its aspects and not even the center'. Käsemann, however, does not state what that indispensable function is.

93. Nowhere in Paul's letters is there any intimation that Paul thinks he is founding a new religion which subsequently calls itself 'Christianity'. The New Creation or 'the Israel of God' does not supersede Judaism; the New Creation or 'the Israel of God' is the divine fulfillment of the promises made to Israel in the Law and the Prophets. It is the culmination of the Hebrew Scriptures. What Paul finds wrong in Judaism is not that it is not Christianity, as Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 552, contends, but that Judaism, in its covenantal nomism, is not living and acting out of the trust of Abraham so that it can move into the trust of Christ.

94. See Munck, *Christ and Israel*, pp. 128-30, for a discussion of earlier interpretations that utilize classical texts on agriculture in order to claim that wild olive tree shoots are grafted into age-old olive trees in order to revitalize the latter and renew their productivity. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 275, Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 673, and Jewett, *Romans*,

become co-participants of the oily richness of the olive tree. There is no basis, therefore, for them to exult by assuming that they have been grafted into the aged olive tree in order to revitalize its life and strength. As wild olive branches they are not renewing the cultivated olive tree; they are being incorporated into its divine Life, and for that reason they should not regard themselves to be the root of the tree. As newly implanted branches, they, as Gentiles, are being supported by the root stock that God planted through the trust of Abraham and Sarah and are enjoying all of its benefits.

Because the hardening of Israel profits the Gentiles and the rejection of Israel opens the door to the reconciliation of the world, the Gentiles could claim that 'the branches were broken off so that they would be grafted' into the olive tree. Paul concedes that this may be true. What distinguishes the difference between the broken-off branches and the implanted branches is the trust-relationship to God:

By [their] unbelief they were broken off, but you stand *by the trust* (*tē pistei*). Do not continue to think high things, but keep on fearing. For if God did not spare the branches according to nature, neither will God spare you. (11.20-21)<sup>95</sup>

It must not be presumed that God broke off the branches of recalcitrant Israel as an arbitrary act of will in order to replace them with the Gentiles. As Paul professed in 9.31-32, Israel was dulled into unbelief by replacing the foundation stone of Abraham's trust with the works of their own righteousness, works that are flawed by their diseased condition of *hē hamartia*: 'They stumbled at the stone of offense'. The Gentiles, as the wild olive branches, have been grafted into the tree of Life because they have committed themselves to the salvation of justice that arises out of the trust of Abraham and is consummated by the trust of Jesus Christ.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, they should be prudent about how they think of themselves. Indeed, they should 'Keep on fearing!' For being grafted into the cultivated olive tree is no guarantee of a permanent bonding with God's people. The charge to 'keep on fearing' signifies the necessity of continuous commitment to God's justice that is dependent on living *out of trust into trust* (*ek pisteōs eis pistin*). Like hardened Israel, it is possible that they, as Gentiles, might lapse

pp. 684-85, rightly reject the claim that Paul is referring to the grafting of a wild olive shoot into an aged olive tree in order to revitalize its olive production.

95. The phrase *tē pistei* of 11.20 corresponds to *tē pistei* in 5.2, and may be grounds for regarding the latter as authentically Pauline.

96. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 569, confusingly says, 'It was on the ground of their unbelief that the unbelieving Jews were cut off, and it is on the ground of their faith, that is simply on the basis of God's mercy and not any merit of their own, that the Gentiles stand'. Yet it is faith that is engaged in actualizing God's justice. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 674, similarly emphasizes continuing faith.

into the stupor of unbelief. Since God did not spare the natural branches, neither will God spare the grafted-in Gentiles.

These opposed actualities of stumbling Israel broken off from God's olive tree and the grafting-in of the wild olive branches of the Gentiles disclose God's aporetic character of goodness and severity through the criterion of reversal. For their continued well-being as wild olive branches grafted into God's Tree of Life, Paul exhorts his Gentile addressee in 11.22,

See, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God! On the one hand, on those falling, severity; but on you, on the other hand, the goodness of God, if you continue to remain in [that] goodness, otherwise you too will be cut off.

God's eschatological objective for all human beings is justice. Yet this is not, however, the justice of Sinaitic or any law, for all systems of law are punitive, and, those who submit to them cannot produce the justice of God. God's justice is restorative and engages in eliminating *hē hamartia* and all the forms and forces of death that it continues to generate in human society. Those who remain committed to God's objective will continue to experience the goodness of God. But those who lapse into unbelief and therefore fail to fulfill God's objectives cut themselves off from God's Tree of Life.

After addressing these admonitions to the Gentiles, Paul returns to the issue of intransigent Israel. They have stumbled, but not in order to fall, as he maintained earlier in 11.11. As severe as God may be in handing them over to the consequences of their rebellion, God does not will to discard them forever. For, as Paul acknowledges, 'Now those, if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again'.<sup>97</sup> In their isolation from the cultivated olive tree they will have become dried out, dead branches, but God is able to make the dead alive and call into being the things that have no being. That is what Abraham believed, according to Paul's attribution in 4.17, and that is also the trust to which Paul has committed himself in his eschatological projection of God's activity in the world, as 1 Cor. 1.28 discloses.

To support this divine possibility of re-grafting hardened Israel into God's tree of Life, Paul formulates another syllogism of *qal wahomer* in v. 24 that establishes the logic of his contention:

For if you are cut from that which is by nature a wild olive tree and, contrary to nature, are grafted into a cultivated olive tree, *how much more* those who are natural [branches] will be grafted into their own olive tree (11.24).

97. Moo, 'The Theology of Romans 9–11', p. 257, associates the conversion of all Israel with the last days, presumably the parousia: 'All Jews are "beloved of God"; but, as Paul has made clear, this status will eventuate in salvation only for those whom God individually chooses for salvation in this age (the remnant) and in the last days (the expanded remnant, "all Israel")'.



To strengthen his reasoning, Paul stresses the natural difference between the Gentiles and defiant Israel. The Gentiles, already represented as branches of a wild olive tree, are now characterized as *naturally* wild olive branches. Being grafted as *naturally* wild olive branches into a cultivated olive tree is contradictory to the *nature* of a cultivated olive tree.<sup>98</sup> Yet that is what God has begun to do for the Gentiles. Consequently, it is all the more natural for God to re-graft the broken off branches of hardened Israel that originally were natural branches of the cultivated olive tree, but currently are dead.

With this decisive proposition Paul closes his brief address to the Gentiles and, by shifting from the second personal singular to the second person plural in v. 25, he makes his final pronouncements to all his addressees. Acknowledging them as brothers and sisters, as he has done a number of times, he informs them that he wants to protect them from ignorance about the mystery that he has shared with them, an ignorance that would ineluctably induce them to be wise in their own estimation. There is something more that must be said about the dialectical activity of God in history to prevent the development of an incomplete and therefore faulty understanding of Israel that would sanction a disposition of superiority toward obstinate Israel among those who presently are participating in the Christ event:

For hardening has come upon a part of Israel until there enters in the fullness of the Gentiles, and so all Israel will be saved, even as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this [will be] my covenant with them when I take away their *sins* (*hamartias*)' (11.26b-27).

Only a part of Israel inflexibly rejects the salvation event of Jesus' death and resurrection and the justice that it makes possible. And Paul anticipates that that will continue until the Gentile world has entered into God's New Humanity. When that objective has been achieved, rebellious Israel will unite with the remnant of Israel that has continued to remain faithful to the trust of Abraham, 'and so all Israel will be saved'.<sup>99</sup> Paul's effort to prevent the development of a disposition of superiority and smugness among his

98. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 684, cites Theophrastus's *De causis plantarum*. Theophrastus 'describes the normal process of grafting domestic olive branches into wild olive trees whose roots are stronger but whose fruit never ripens properly'.

99. As Jewett, *Romans*, p. 701, concludes, quoting Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 681, 'all Israel refers to Israel as a whole, as a people, whose corporate identity and wholeness could not be lost even if in the event there were some (or indeed many) individual exceptions'. Gager, *Reinventing Paul*, p. 146, is persuaded that Paul maintains 'the validity of the law and the constancy of God's promises to Israel' and 'does not envisage an End-time conversion of Israel to Christ'. In *Romans*, however, Paul replaces the punitive law of Sinai with the law of love and the justice of retribution with the justice of restoration, and that is the divine objective for Israel and for all humanity.

addressees, who have entered into the new and final Exodus that God has inaugurated, intimates that he expects them to continue his ministry of provoking hardened Israel to jealousy so that finally all Israel will be saved. The fulfillment quotation that he cites in 11.26-27 is drawn from the Septuagint translation of two texts of Isaiah and possibly one from Jeremiah:

And there will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them (Isa. 59.20-21).

On account of this he will take away the lawlessness of Jacob, and this is his blessing, when I will take away his *sin* (*hamartia*) (Isa 27.9).

For this is the covenant which I shall covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord (Jer. 38[31].33).

It appears that Paul has constructed another *binyan ab mi-katub ehad*, like the Rabbinic hermeneutical principle he employed in 11.8. This is a 'family' of possibly three texts, Isa. 59.20, 27.9 and Jer. 38(31).33 that essentially convey the same eschatological promise. Isaiah 59.20, which is quoted more extensively than Isa. 27.9 or Jer. 38(31).33, would be the main text. The major change Paul has made in his rendition of this fulfillment construction is the substitution of the plural *sins* (*hamartiai*) in place of the singular *sin* (*hamartia*) in Isa. 27.9. This exchange may be influenced by his acknowledgment in 7.5 of the law activating 'the passions of sins', the only use of the plural *hamartias* (sins) in Romans, apart from the quotations he cites in 7.5 and 11.27. Paul's use of Isa. 59.20 in 11.26 should not be interpreted as an implication of the *parousia*, nor should 'Zion' be allegorized as 'the heavenly sanctuary'.<sup>100</sup> Jesus the deliverer has come out of Zion and has taken away the sin(s) of Jacob. Paul cites the text of Isa. 59.20 as a fulfillment that supports what he has stated in his introduction of the scriptural quotation, 'And so all Israel will be saved'.<sup>101</sup>

For the present, therefore, there is an ongoing reality that his addressees must take into account: 'As far as the Gospel is concerned, [they are] enemies on your account, but, as far as their election is concerned [they are] beloved on account of the fathers'. But, according to Paul's conception of God and his dialectical interpretation of history, this is not the state or

100. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 692, says, 'This is the first and only time Paul speaks of Christ's second coming in this letter'. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 578, Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 314, and Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 692, interpret 11.26b as an eschatological reference to the future, specifically the *parousia*, and therefore allegorize 'Zion' as 'the heavenly sanctuary'. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 703, correctly identifies 'the deliverer from Zion' as the Christ who came from David (1.3) and from the Israelites (9.5).

101. Hays, 'Adam, Israel, Christ', pp. 83-84, in view of 11.25b and specifically the phrase 'until the full number of Gentiles has come in', corrects Wright's perspective, 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', p. 61, by recognizing that 'Paul manifestly regards that condition as not yet met'.

condition that will continue forever. God is a God of love and not a God of punishment. 'For irrevocable are the gifts and the calling of God'. The truth of that profession is illustrated by the Joseph story of Genesis 37, 39–45, although there are no textual references to it in Romans 9–11. Nevertheless, Joseph's 'resurrection' to vice-regency over Gentile Egypt and the eventual obeisance by which his brothers acknowledge his kingship constitute a typology that supports Paul's resolution of the problem of Israel. Joseph himself, after avowing to his brothers, 'God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on the earth', commanded them to bring their father Jacob to Egypt by informing him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, "God has made me lord of all Egypt... I will provide for you—so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty"'.<sup>102</sup>

Whatever effect, if any, the Joseph model may have had in Paul's reasoning about Israel's future, he summarizes his theological interpretation of history in 11.30–31 in a manner that is analogous to the Joseph story:

For even as you once were disobedient to God but now are mercied by their disobedience, so also now they were disobedient, so that by the mercy shown to you they may also be mercied. For God confined *all things (ta panta)* unto disobedience so that he might mercy all.<sup>103</sup>

The universal truth that Paul has drawn from his reflections on God's engagement in Israel's history is universal disobedience, and, it might be added, disobedience that is predetermined by the universal infection of *hamartia*. Here is another aspect of Paul's foundational universalism. Accordingly, Paul concludes this second major section of Romans, 'For God confined *all things* unto disobedience so that he shows mercy to *all*'. God's mercy will overcome all human resistance, because eventually all humanity will yearn for the restorative justice that the Christ event is able to realize.<sup>104</sup> This formulation of universal salvation stands in contrast to the eschatological dualism of Jewish apocalypticism that climaxes in cosmic separation.<sup>105</sup>

102. LXX Gen. 45.9, 11.

103. I have preferred the P<sup>46</sup> reading, *ta panta* (all things) instead of the reading of the majority manuscripts, *tous pantas* (the all, referring to human beings), since *tous pantas* seems to be a scribal improvement.

104. Contrary to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 317, there is more to salvation history than the doctrine of justification. The gospel of salvation is directed toward the actualization of justice in the world, not the imputation of righteousness on the basis of faith. It is completely inadequate to state: 'The end of the old world and the beginning of the new world can be thought of only as the justification of the ungodly'.

105. Dan. 12.2 is typical of this perspective: 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt'. See also Rev. 20.14–15.

Paul's extensive effort to resolve the problem of Israel in relation to the problem of the Gentiles culminates in an eschatological vision of universalism.<sup>106</sup> 'The fullness of the Gentiles' and 'all Israel saved' are united to fulfill that teleological vision that Paul enunciated in 1 Cor. 15.28, 'Now when all things are subordinate to him, [the One and the Many of the Body of Christ] then the Son will be subordinate to the one who subordinated all things to him, so that God will be all things in all things'.

Paul closes this second major section of his letter with an eloquent doxology that exalts the God of Israel who also has become the God of the Gentiles and who will eventually become the God of all Israel and therefore the God of all human beings. Paul's love, trust and hope that human history will eventually culminate in world reconciliation and world justice are sustained by the conceptualization of God that he has formed through the Scriptures of the Old Testament and their fulfillment through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>107</sup> He gives voice to it in a deliberate use of an unmistakably identifiable triadic structure: (1) riches, wisdom and knowledge, (2) the triple use of the interrogative pronoun 'who' and (3) the three-fold prepositions of v. 36, *ek* (out of), *dia* (through) and *eis* (into):<sup>108</sup>

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

To his own outburst of praise and exultation he adds the voice of Isa. 40.13:

*Who* knew the mind of the Lord or *who* became his counselor?

Possibly also a word from Job 41.3! But this fragment does not correspond to the Septuagint translation of Job 41.3. Its source remains indeterminable, but those who have searched for it claim that Paul may have derived it from another Greek version:

Or *who* has given to him in advance and will be repaid by him?

106. For subsequent interpretations of Romans and specifically the 'Jew-Gentile' dichotomy from the end of the second century into the fourth century, see the multiple essays in Kathy L. Gaca and L.L. Welborn (eds.), *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (Romans through History and Culture Series; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005).

107. Johnson, 'Romans 9–11', pp. 237–38, closes her interpretation of chs. 9–11 by implying that Paul's vision was historically anachronous: 'In Paul we are dealing with a man who simply has not learned enough church history to understand the differences between Christianity and Judaism, much less to recognize the distinction between two religious communities'. But would Paul acknowledge the differences between Christianity and Judaism that subsequently developed in history? Would Paul have regarded the eschatology, christology and ethics that he sets forth in Romans as a new religion independent of Judaism?

108. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 286.

God's being is unfathomable, and whatever human beings perceive of that depth in their lives and in their history accentuates the paradox of both the disclosure and the concealment of God's being in relation to all that God is and has and does. There is no humanly conceived wisdom or knowledge that could give God guidance or direction. There are no human achievements that necessitate God's reciprocity. Nothing can be given to God and nothing can be repaid to God, for everything that is, originated from God. Human beings, therefore, can only receive. To convey this ultimate reality, Paul appropriates a widely diversified and widespread Stoic formula that may also have been used in Jewish prayers and liturgies.<sup>109</sup> God is the source, the sustainer and the destiny of all that is!

For *out of (ek)* him and *through (dia)* him and *into (eis)* him are all things! To him be glory into the ages! Amen.

109. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 286, offers a history of religions background to Paul's doxology and concluding formula. See also Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 591. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 701, includes nine such formulas in Greek derived from Philo, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and the Hermetic *Asclepius*. See also Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 716-23, for a lengthy discussion of what he considers to be a hymn 'about the mysterious depth of divinity'.

## THE ETHICS OF GOD'S NEW HUMANITY

12.1-2. *Entering the New Indebtedness as Bodies Offered to God in Worship*

It seems appropriate that Paul's comprehensive theologizing on the human condition and its divine resolution, followed by his astonishing eschatological perspective of a cosmic tree of life into which all humanity will ultimately be incorporated, should culminate in an ethics that is directed toward the fulfillment of God's objective in history: 'that God may be all things in all things' (1 Cor. 15.28). For its realization, the justice that is innate to God's being, namely restorative justice, must be universally actualized. How that can be implemented in every-day life is the objective of Rom. 12.1–15.13.<sup>1</sup> It is another aspect of Paul's foundational universalism.

The ethics that Paul formulates in this final division of his letter presupposes the community of God's New Humanity, the people of 'the Israel of God', who are participants in the moral order of the New Creation that God established through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through their eschatological death experience they are no longer fated by the power of *hē hamartia*, and they are no longer indebted to the law. Indeed, the law of Sinai, or, for that matter, any system of law, no longer has any jurisdiction in their lives. Their terrestrial destiny, as citizens of God's commonwealth, is to fulfill the legacy of Jesus Christ, to 'rule in life' by exercising God's rule on God's behalf to engage in establishing the justice of God. That is their debt beyond the indebtedness they have left behind through their death experience. It is simply to be and to act according to their identity as God's daughters and sons and, as such, to fulfill God's hope of delivering the creation from its enslavement to ruin and destruction.

1. Mark Reasoner, 'The Theology of Romans 12.1–15.13', in Hay and Johnson (eds.), *Pauline Theology*, III, pp. 287-99 (295-99), claims that the theology of 12.1–15.13 is a theology of obligation. But that must be qualified. The indebtedness that Paul has characterized is an indebtedness of being what one has already become through a baptism of death and resurrection and therefore manifesting through the physical body the reality of participating in the New Humanity of life-giving spirits.

If, as Paul professed in 8.19-21, the creation is waiting eagerly for this disclosure of God's sons and daughters in order to be healed and liberated from the power of *hē hamartia*, how can this begin to happen? If the justice of God is beyond the law as the possibility of the impossible, how can that justice be realized? The ethics of God's New Humanity that Paul puts forth in this concluding section is directed toward its actualization.

Paul begins this component of his letter with the adverbial conjunction *therefore (oun)*, which serves as the transition from all that has been stated up to this point to his formulation of the ethics that should manifest God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits and make visible the justice of God to which they are committed:

*Therefore (oun)*, I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your thoughtful service of worship.

This is an ethical prospect that presupposes a paradigm shift. It is not a summons arising out of the necessity of reciprocity. It is not an imperative based on a conditional covenant, such as Moses charged Israel on behalf of God in Deut. 11.13-15:

If you will only heed every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the Lord your God and serving him with all your heart and soul—then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill.

It is rather an appeal based on 'the mercies of God', the comprehensive mercies that Paul has disclosed in and through his exposition of God's resolution of the human condition in chs. 5–8. God's love is paramount among these mercies and is accentuated in 5.8, 'Now God demonstrated his own love unto us, that while we were still sinners, Christ died on our behalf'. God's love, therefore, having originated reconciliation and regeneration through Jesus Christ, is the grounding of Paul's invocation to his addressees to offer their 'bodies as a living sacrifice...to God'. This is the beginning of fulfilling their indebtedness to God's justice. As participants in God's New Creation, as those who have been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, they are summoned to transcend the Old Testament practice and procedure of the Temple cult by serving as priests in order to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice to God.

Human beings are bodies, and human beings have bodies. In as far as *they are bodies*, they are delivered to the duality of possibility and necessity, freedom and limitation, life and death. In as far as *they have bodies*, they, as selves, can be differentiated from their flesh and blood structure and make themselves the subject of their intellectual and physical activities and



engagements. As selves they are naturally oriented to realizing the potentiality that is inherent in themselves as bodies. As bodies, human beings enter into community and communion with each other. Those who are joined together in Christ, although they are many in number, constitute one body, as Paul had reminded the Corinthian believers in 1 Cor. 12.12-27, 'For by one Spirit we all were baptized into one body' (1 Cor. 12.13). Additionally, he had enriched their self-understanding as individuals in community by disclosing to them that they, as bearers of God's Spirit, embody the living Temple of God! As he said in 1 Cor. 6.19-20,

Or do you not know that your body is a *sanctuary* (*naos*) of the Holy Spirit in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own, for you were purchased with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

Their bodies, in their new state of being as the temples of God's Spirit, are 'holy and acceptable to God' and therefore can be offered to God as living sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> This is 'the thoughtful service of worship' that is the point of entry into the ethics that characterizes their membership in God's New Humanity. The self as a body that is consecrated to the fulfillment of God's hope and God's objectives will not only motivate its members—the mouth, the hands and the feet—to act in accordance with the prioritized new being in Christ; the self as a body, as it fulfills this prospect, will also produce empirical evidence of the actualization of God's New Humanity in this world.

Making God's New Humanity visible is a necessity, if the world and its dehumanized and dehumanizing social construction of reality are to be confronted with the actuality of a new moral order in which God's New Humanity is engaged in realizing God's justice. Accordingly, Paul adds a second imperative in 12.2 that is to be embodied by his believing addressees:

And do not be conformed to this age, but be metamorphosed with respect to the rebirth of the *mind* (*nous*) so that you prove by testing what is the good and acceptable and whole will of God.

2. As Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 329, says, 'It is the offering of bodily existence in the otherwise profane sphere. As something constantly demanded this takes place in daily life, whereby every Christian is simultaneously sacrifice and priest.' Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 601, mistakenly says: 'The Christian's concrete living is henceforth to be marked by the continuing process of sanctification (*hagiasmos*): is to be moulded and shaped ever more and more into conformity with God's righteous will'. By being a member of the New Humanity of the Last Adam, the believer is already a life-giving spirit. Obligation is nothing more than being what one has become and becoming what one already is. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 718, continues to enunciate his general perspective of faith as a one-sided, dependent relationship with God.

The mind is to be drawn into the transformation in which both self and body participate so that its power of critical judgment can discern God's will in the every-day life of thinking and acting. All that is good, acceptable, whole and wholesome, in the light of God's resolution of the human condition, are the criteria by which God's will may be determined in the continued fulfillment of collaborating with God in the realization of God's objectives in the world.

### 12.3-8. *The Ministry of the Gifts of Grace*

Paul sanctions these imperatives, as well as those that follow, on the basis of an implied reference to his apostolic authority. The 'grace that was given to me' is sufficient to establish his claim on 'everyone who is among you'. The first is an appeal to a reasonable estimate of self-worth that is conveyed by a play on the verb *phronein* (to think) and its compound forms, *hyperphronein* (to think too highly of oneself) and *sōphronein* (to be sensible):

...not to think too highly (*hyperphronein*) beyond that which is necessary to think (*phronein*) but to think (*phronein*) in order to be sensible (*sōphronein*), to each as God distributed a measure of trust.

'Not to think too highly beyond that which it is necessary to think' is obscure, and it is not clarified by the succeeding infinitive clause, 'But to think in order to be sensible'. What kind of thinking, therefore, is thinking that shows good judgment? Thinking that is of a sound mind? Thinking that shows self-control? It must be thinking that is anchored in 'the rebirth of the mind' that is participating in the metamorphosis of those who belong to God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits.

That would necessarily exclude all thinking that is detached from personal and communal being and becoming. It would proscribe all thinking that engages in consolidating an ethical system before any kind of ethical action is validated:

We do not act because we know, but, rather, we know because we cannot not act; practical reason is the tap root of all reason.<sup>3</sup>

Purity codes, like the six orders of the Mishnah that developed orally within the Pharisaic movement, are ethical systems that are designed to establish the knowledge of 'the clean and the unclean', 'the good and the evil', prior to any practical activity, prior to any engagement in moral behavior. They constitute para-biblical law and, like the Sinai law, they are established to

3. As indicated earlier, an aphorism of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, cited by McGaughey, *Religion before Dogma*, p. 34, who develops this *a priori* reality in his formulation of a practical theology.

safeguard and perpetuate the societies for which they were created. By having as complete a moral system in place as possible, societies can guarantee their individual members a maximal sense of identity, security and confidence as they conduct their daily activities in a dichotomized world of the 'clean' and the 'good' divorced from the 'unclean' and the 'evil'. Yet, the ontological truth that 'we know because we cannot not act' compels individuals to act in conditions and circumstances that transgress purity codes and ethical systems and in due course even to challenge their legitimacy.<sup>4</sup> The *letter (gramma)* of the purity codes, like the letter of the law, cannot establish the justice of restoration in human society.

Christ is the goal and termination of the law, as Paul stated in 10.4, and consequently the members of his Body are no longer subject to purity codes and ethical systems that presuppose the moral order of the old creation and constitute law on the basis of the knowledge of good and evil, clean and unclean. The moral order of God's new creation requires an ethical response in every individual circumstance of life that is appropriate to its time and place, but always from within the moral order of God's New Humanity that accordingly aspires to fulfill the identity of being life-giving spirits. At the same time the ethical thinking that arises out of 'the rebirth of the mind' refrains from presumptuous and conceited self-evaluations that may all too easily arise as the result of the ethical sovereignty that the individual members of Christ's Body have received as heirs of 'the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice in order to rule in life through the one Jesus Christ' (Rom. 5.17).

In 12.3 Paul admonishes his addressees 'not to think too highly beyond that which is necessary to think but to think sensibly', a statement directed against the temptation to attempt greater or more far reaching changes in purity codes and systems of law than already exist in order to achieve world transformation. The community of the Body of Christ, as well as its individual members, are exhorted to think sensibly as they determine when and how the aporetic realities of possibility and necessity, freedom and limitation, are to be invested in service to others and to themselves. They are to

4. A classic example is Victor Hugo's character, Jean Valjean, in *Les misérables*, who, for the crime of stealing a loaf of bread, suffered 'under the stick and the chain in the dungeon'. In putting himself on trial, he acknowledged that he was not 'an innocent man unjustly punished'. He had committed a crime. The loaf of bread would probably not have been refused if he had asked for it; in any case, it would have been better if he had waited for it. Eventually he reaches the point in his reasoning when he asks, 'Whether this penalty, complicated by excessive aggravations for attempted escapes, did not eventually become a sort of attack made by the stronger on the weaker, a crime of society committed on the individual, a crime which was renewed every day, and had lasted for nineteen years?'

direct their ethical thinking and doing toward a sober judgment of the capabilities God has invested by *measure of trust* (*metron pisteōs*) in each of them. The phrase, 'measure of trust', is the direct object of the verb *distribute* (*emerisen*).<sup>5</sup> It is God's *measure of trust*! It is not the 'measure of faith apportioned by God to each believer'; nor is it God's measure of the quantity or quality of human reliance upon God.<sup>6</sup> It is God's investment of *trust* in individual human beings who through the indwelling of God's Spirit will effectively collaborate with God in liberating the creation 'from the enslavement of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God' (8.21). On the basis of this *measure of trust*, God endows human beings with certain capabilities that potentially will fulfill God's purposes both in the community of the Body of Christ and in the world.<sup>7</sup> If God's investment of trust, predetermined by God's judgment, endows human beings with certain capacities, their potential actualization, according to Paul's exhortation, is based on sober self-evaluation, keeping one's head in a prudent assessment of one's capabilities.<sup>8</sup>

To reinforce this perspective on ethical thinking and doing, and God's entrustment of specific capabilities to individual members of the community, Paul introduces the metaphor of the physical body in vv. 4-5:

For even as we have many members in one body, but not all the members have the same *praxis*, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Paul had employed this metaphor in 1 Cor. 12.12-27 in order to confront the splintered community of believers at Corinth with the true character of

5. See the lengthy discussion of Rom. 12.3-8 by Thomas W. Gillespie, *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 50-63.

6. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 332, 335.

7. Also Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 296-97, construes Paul's phrase, *measure of trust*, as God's Spirit bestowing a gift according to a specific measure or weight of grace. As a parallel, he refers to Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, II, p. 431, 'Rabbi Acha says, The holy Spirit that rests upon the prophets, rests on them only according to weight (measure)'. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 612-15, discusses the possible meanings of *metron* (measure) at length, finally concluding that a believer is 'to measure himself by the standard which God has given him in his faith', namely, '...those things in which he is on precisely the same level as his fellow Christians'. Also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 288. Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 741-42, interprets *metron* (measure) as 'the norm that each person is provided in the appropriation of the grace of God'. But it is God who determines that measure on the basis of God's trust, not the believer's trust. That is an essential aspect of the relationship of trust between God and God's daughters and sons.

8. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 722, preferring to use the word 'faith', rightly says, '...by recognizing that each is graced in some measure and each expression is indispensable to the community of faith, a false sense of superiority will be effectively avoided'.

God's New Humanity. Declarations of party allegiances, verbalized by self-identification formulas, such as 'I am of Paul', 'I am of Apollos', 'I am of Cephas', had produced alienating factions. Moreover, certain especially gifted members of the congregation were enjoying superior roles and a corresponding status that promoted dispirited feelings of inferiority in others within the community. A polemical intonation characterized Paul's rhetoric, as he developed the metaphor of the body and refuted the overbearing and arrogant attitude of those individuals by comparing them to specific members of the physical body, such as the eye and the head, that in their elitist mentality presuppose, 'I have no need of you'. Role and status, reinforced by distinctive gifts of the Spirit, constituted a hierarchical system of relationships to structure the Corinthian community, and Paul utilized the metaphor of the body in order to equalize relationships within the community.

No such polemical tone is perceptible in Romans 12. The metaphor of the body is introduced to serve as the foundation of community relationships and to establish a horizontal structure of the interdependent members of the Body of Christ. But the functions of the individual members of the community and their interdependent relationships are not metaphorically applied to the individual gifts of grace, as they are in 1 Cor. 12.14-26. Nor is the Spirit identified as the activator of these gifts. Yet, analogously, as the human body has individual members that interdependently contribute to its wholeness and well-being, the Body of Christ is constituted by human beings who have been endowed with distinctive gifts. Paul's formulation implies that every member is the bearer of a gift that can serve to enrich, to inspire and to animate the ongoing life of the community: 'Now having different gifts according to the grace given to us'.

Paul's index of gifts does not appear to be a random selection, nor should it be construed as a hierarchical ordering. It may, in fact, consist of those that he considers to be principally significant to the unity and health of the community and the diversity of its individual members. Each gift has its distinctive limitations in ordaining a particular task or function that is to be fulfilled within the community. Each contributes in some way to the spiritual and physical care of the Body of Christ:

if *prophecy* (*prophēteian*), according to the proportion (*analogian*) of trust  
 if *ministry* (*diakonian*), in the ministering  
 if *the one teaching* (*ho didaskōn*), in the teaching  
 if *the one exhorting* (*ho parakalōn*), in the exhorting  
     *the one sharing* (*ho metadidous*), in sincere concern  
     *the one leading* (*ho proistamenos*), in diligence  
     *the one doing mercy* (*ho eleōn*), in cheerfulness

Prophecy is cited first, in all likelihood because it was an essential prerequisite of every service of worship. Its distribution is determined by *the proportion of trust* (*tēn analogian tēs pisteōs*), a phrase that obviously characterizes the members of the community who have been *graced* (*charis*) by God with the *gift* (*charisma*) of prophecy. *Analogia* means 'the right relationship', 'the proportion' in the sense of correspondence.<sup>9</sup> The gift of prophecy is conferred in congruence with the trust that an individual expresses in a faith commitment toward God and in the personal investment of ability and integrity in serving as a prophet within the community.<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, therefore, God, by the investment of God's own trust, endows each member of the Body of Christ with certain capabilities; and, on the other hand, the gift of prophecy is bestowed by the Spirit in proportion to the trust or commitment of an individual to God and to the community.

But what is the material content of prophecy? In as far as *teaching* (*didaskalia*) is cited as another gift of grace, prophecy, in contrast to teaching, must engage in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> But more specifically, it must necessarily include the interpretation of the Scriptures, which in the Greek-speaking world would be the Septuagint. That interpretation would naturally be correlated to the work of Jesus Christ and directed toward application to the contextual realities of time and place. Eschatology, specifically apocalyptic eschatology, that would be oriented to the believing community's participation in the actualization of the new moral order and its significance for both the present and the future, would naturally be an essential hallmark of prophecy. Paul himself, as 1 Thess. 4.13-18 indicates, could draw upon the apocalyptic text of Daniel 7 to respond to a specific concern about the disposition of those who died prior to the Parousia.

The ministry of the *diakonia* is equally important to the well-being of the community as the Body of Christ, and, according to 1 Cor. 12.4, it includes a variety of services. But what they are is not delineated. The basic meaning of the word applies to 'service', and it may be in this sense that Paul referred to himself in 2 Cor. 6.4 and 11.23 as one among the *diakonoι* who is engaged in ministry. More specifically, however, the words *diakonos*, *diakonia* and *diakonein* apply to 'waiting at table' or 'giving care'.<sup>12</sup> The Seven Deacons of Acts 6.1-6 were ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands in order to replace the Twelve in the specific ministry of 'waiting at

9. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 299; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 341.

10. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 728, construes the phrase, 'according to the proportion of trust' as the prophet's 'dependence on God'. It would be more correct to speak of this proportion of trust as *interdependence*.

11. Gillespie, *The First Theologians*, pp. 61-63.

12. Lk. 17.8; 22.27; Mk 1.31; Jn 12.2.

table', but as the remaining verses of Acts 6 testify, their ministry included evangelization, preaching and teaching. Certainly the socio-economic realities of the urban or rural contexts of the individual congregations would determine the nature and extent of deaconal work. Attentiveness to the needs of the widows and the orphans, the aged and the handicapped, the poor and the sick, the strangers and the newcomers, would undoubtedly be included. The varied and endless demands on those who served as deacons may have necessitated an ordination to full-time ministry. If the *diakonia* was established as a vocation, as seems likely, those who served in it would be dependent on the financial support of their congregations or they would have to have a measure of financial independence of their own. In any case, the phrase, 'in the ministering', that Paul has appended to this function may be intended to intimate that only those who are able and equipped for this work should undertake it.<sup>13</sup>

Teaching (*didaskōn*) and exhorting (*parakalōn*) are also regarded as essential activities. Paul's use of the substantive participles, 'the one teaching' and 'the one exhorting', implies that these respective activities do not presuppose the distinction of a title.<sup>14</sup> In certain contexts the role of teacher appears to have been distinguished by a title, as is indicated by the form of address, 'Rabbi', in Mt. 23.8. Jesus is called 'the Teacher' in Jn 11.28 and 13.13. As Rabbi and Teacher, Jesus engaged in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Very likely, therefore, 'the one teaching' would engage in scriptural interpretation and application, but directed essentially toward instruction, perhaps especially catechetical instruction in the content of faith that was vital in the life of every congregation, as is witnessed by the subject matter of the Church's earliest catechism, *The Didache*. Ethical guidance and pastoral edification were necessary for the maintenance of the church's distinctive identity and character in the alien and alienating heterogeneity of antiquity.

The ministry of *exhortation* (*ho parakalōn*) would include both comfort and admonition. Every member of the community, of course, could offer comfort by personal presence, visits and consoling letters. But there would always be individuals especially gifted to comfort and console the elderly, the dying, the bereaved, the handicapped, the victims of injustice and those suffering misfortunes of one kind or another.<sup>15</sup> 'The one exhorting' would also encourage constancy in ethical conduct, perhaps especially accentuating the transmission of God's love (*agapē*) as the greatest of all spiritual gifts.<sup>16</sup>

13. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 623.

14. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 749.

15. See Otto Schmitz and Gustav Stählin, '*parakaleō paraklēsis*', in *TWNT*, V, pp. 785-98 (794-97). Also *TDNT*, V, pp. 778-82.

16. 1 Cor. 13; 2 Cor. 2-3.



Pastoral admonition, as Paul's other letters testify, would also be necessary to censure those who fail to manifest the identity and character of God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits in their deeds and words.<sup>17</sup>

The phrase *the one sharing* (*ho metadidous*) may be determined for everyone in the community. The verb *metadidōmi*, from which the substantive participle *metadidous* is formed, occurs in Rom. 1.11 and 12.8. In the former, Paul expresses his desire to share a spiritual gift with 'the saints' while he is with them in Rome. In 12.8 he is summoning his addressees to 'give a share of' or 'to impart' what they have. Its qualification by the prepositional phrase that follows, *en haplotēti*, implies that it is a sharing of material substance. Although a secondary meaning of 'liberality' or 'generosity' generally seems to be preferred in the English translations, the sense of 'sincere concern' or 'simple goodness' may be more suitable.<sup>18</sup> The motive for 'giving a share' is not generosity but 'sincere concern' or 'simple goodness', for, as Paul indicates in 2 Cor. 8.2, even those in the 'depths of poverty' may be able to give according to their extremely limited means.

*The one standing before* (*ho proistamenos*) is the presider, the individual who is placed before a community to lead, to administrate and therefore also to exercise authority. Paul employed this same form of the passive participle in 1 Thess. 5.12, 'Now I ask you, brothers and sisters, to respect those laboring among you and to regard very highly in love those *presiding over* you in the Lord and admonishing you because of their work'. The one whose gift is to lead is expected to be committed to the well-being of the community with the *eagerness*, *zeal* and *diligence* that the noun *spoudē* characterizes.<sup>19</sup>

*The one doing mercy* (*ho eleōn*) would be directed more immediately to the outsiders of the community, for mercy is a quality that is shown to those who are considered to be unworthy. Paul employed the verbal form of the adjective in relation to those who would be judged in this way in 1.13.0, 'For even as you once were disobedient to God but now *you are shown mercy* (*ēleēthēte*) by their disobedience, so also now they are disobedient so that by the *mercy shown* (*eleēi*) to you, *they also are to be shown mercy* (*eleēthōsin*)'. On the basis of this paradoxical repositioning of God's mercy, insiders as well as outsiders would also be included. Since God's mercy is directed to those levels of society where it is least anticipated, the community of believers would be especially concerned for the *feeble* (*asthenēs*), the *base*

17. As in 1 Cor. 5; 6; 8; 9; 10; 14.

18. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 299-300. See Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 104.

19. Paul used the verbal form of the noun, *spoudazō*, to express his own *zeal* to remember the destitute in Gal. 2.10 and his *eagerness* to return to Thessalonica after his forced departure (1 Thess. 2.17).

(*agenēs*) and the *despised* (*exouthenēma*) of the underside of society.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, mercy would not be denied to the members of the community who for one reason or another had stumbled in their discipleship. A cogent example is the individual, who, according to 2 Cor. 2.6-7, had been punished by the majority of the community, but, at Paul's urging, was to be forgiven and consoled in order not to be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

### 12.9-13. *Genuine Love*

The benefits derived from the gifts of grace, as they affect the individual members of the community of believers, would spill over into the pagan world and bear witness to the presence of God's New Humanity by its unprecedented acts of love and its unparalleled patterns of behavior. Paul characterizes the integrity of the corresponding deeds and words that are engendered in and through love (*agapē*) as *anhypokritos* (without hypocrisy). *Agapē* is not the love that originates within human beings. As already indicated in 5.5, it is the love that God's Spirit pours into human hearts. Paul does not repeat the distinctive attributes of love that he highlighted in 1 Corinthians 13 as 'the more excellent way'. Rather, he utilizes ten participial clauses that circumscribe it in its practice:

Abhorring the evil  
 Being glued to the good  
 Loving dearly with respect to brotherly love  
 Esteeming each other more highly with respect to honor  
 Not reluctant with respect to diligence  
 Being on fire in the Spirit  
 Being enslaved to the Lord  
 Rejoicing with respect to hope  
 Standing one's ground in affliction  
 Persevering with respect to prayer  
 Having a share in the needs of the saints  
 Pursuing hospitality

The first two participial clauses constitute a pair of opposites: 'abhorring the evil' and 'being glued to the good'. It is only here in 12.9 that Paul has chosen to use the substantive *ponēron* (evil, wickedness) instead of *kakos* (evil, morally bad), a word that he utilizes fourteen times in Romans. Of the two, *ponēron* conveys a more pernicious sense of opposition to goodness.<sup>21</sup> Both verbs, 'abhorring' and 'being glued', are unusually forceful and convey

20. 1 Cor. 1.27-28. On the social stratification of agrarian society, see Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 278-84.

21. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 740.

an undercurrent of passion.<sup>22</sup> Genuine love within the community of the New Humanity is impassioned in shunning evil and being joined to the goodness that is inherent in Christ Jesus.

Between these ten participial clauses Paul has inserted two non-participial phrases that, in view of their qualifying effect, contribute to an apparent formation of patterns of unity. The two pairs that follow reinforce each other: 'loving dearly with respect to brotherly affection' and 'esteeming each other more highly with respect to honor'. The adjective *philostorgoi* (loving dearly), which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, intensifies the affection of those joined together in a divine-human family that transcends blood relationships. The adjoining participial clause, 'esteeming each other more highly with respect to honor', is an echo of Phil. 2.3b, '...in humility regard others as better than yourselves'. It intimates Paul's repudiation of the dehumanization of honor-shame culture.<sup>23</sup>

The next two clauses also form a mutually reinforcing pair, though in terms of a characterization of discipleship that manifests itself in a burning commitment to the work of the indwelling and guiding Spirit of God: 'not reluctant with respect to diligence' and 'being on fire in the Spirit'. If God's love is poured out into hearts through the holy Spirit, and if the creation is to be 'set free from its enslavement to destruction and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God', it is mandatory that the members of the Body of Christ engage in their calling with a burning zeal.

The following two participial clauses, 'serving the Lord' and 'rejoicing in hope', form a pair in which each reinforces the other eschatologically. The manuscript variant of v. 11c, however, determines at least two different interpretations. The majority of the Greek manuscripts support the version of the English translations, 'serving the Lord (*tō kuriō*)'.<sup>24</sup> The variant, *tō kairō*, (the present season), according to the minority witness, would be translated, 'serving the now time/the present season' (*tō kairō*). The Church Fathers were familiar with both readings but preferred the former, 'serving the Lord'. Some of the recent commentators, however, favor the minority witness, 'serving the present season', on the basis of the text-critical principle

22. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 302.

23. On the acquisition of honor through challenge, see Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 38-43.

24. The variant, *tō kairō* (the present season), is the reading of the fifth-century Codex Bezae (with a correction made by a third scribe), the ninth-century minuscules, Codex Augiensis and Codex Seidelianus, and a few Latin manuscripts. While the participial clause, 'serving the present season', may be the more difficult reading, it is overwhelmed by the witness of the majority of the Greek manuscripts, the Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Ethiopic, Slavic translations and the lectionaries. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, p. 528, judges *kyriō* (lord) to be an A, or the most probable reading of the text.

that the more difficult reading is preferable.<sup>25</sup> In making a determination between the two possibilities, the participle of both readings, *douleuontes*, linked to the noun *doulos* (slave), should more correctly be translated as ‘being enslaved’. Accordingly, ‘being enslaved to the Lord’ following the clause, ‘being on fire in the Spirit’, is a more valid progression of thought than ‘being enslaved to the present season’. Finally, ‘being enslaved to the Lord’ is also an eschatologically meaningful and persuasive basis for ‘rejoicing in hope’.

Two more sets of participial clauses conclude Paul’s characterization of the *praxis* of genuine love that originates from the Spirit of God pouring out God’s love in the hearts of the members of the Body of Christ. Remaining steadfast or ‘standing one’s ground in adversity’ is an appropriate exhortation arising out of the consequences of ‘being enslaved to the Lord’. Paul’s own career attests to the ill-treatment and abuse he suffered as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Because love endures all things, as Paul maintained in 1 Cor. 13.7, love enables persistence and loyalty. Moreover, prayer, as a continuous well-spring of fellowship with God, is a source of divine encouragement and empowerment in the crisis of persecution. The verb *proskartereō*, used six times in Acts, characterizes the *persistence* of the early community of believers in prayer.<sup>26</sup> ‘Persevering (*proskarterountes*) in prayer’ is a tenacious mode of maintaining the identity of the Body of Christ, particularly when political and economic oppression test the commitment to ‘being on fire in the Spirit’ and ‘being enslaved to the Lord’.

The last set of participial clauses, ‘having a share in the needs of the saints’ and ‘pursuing hospitality’, induces solicitude toward those in need, those who are members of the community of trust, but also those who are not. Both require material assistance of one kind or another as an essential mark of belonging to the Body of Christ. The participial clause, ‘Having a share in the needs of the saints’, echoes 2 Cor. 8.4, in which Paul testified that the churches of Macedonia ‘voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of *sharing in this ministry to the saints*’. Paul is referring to the collection that he was motivated to undertake for the destitute of the Jerusalem Church. He himself will deliver this solicited gift, in spite of the foreboding risk posed by the ‘disobedient ones’ of Judea, but only after he has completed his

25. Karl Barth, *Romans*, p. 457; Schlatter, *Romans*, p. 237; Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 304. However, Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 346, concludes, ‘No definitive conclusion can be reached’; yet favors the reading *tō kairō*. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 528, explains the confusion of the minority witness and judges *tō kuriō* to be the original text. See also Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 634-36, and Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 742, and Jewett, *Romans*, p. 755.

26. Acts 1.14; 2.42, 46; 6.4; 8.13; 10.7.

present three-month visit in Corinth. '*Pursuing* (*diōkontes*) *hospitality* (*philoxenia*)' to those outside of the community, whoever they might be, is, of course, a traditional motive in both Israelite and Jewish religion. Leviticus 19.34 legislates, 'The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt'.<sup>27</sup> Yet the participle, *pursuing*, denotes 'running after', taking the initiative to offer material assistance, 'rather than waiting for strangers to beg for help'.<sup>28</sup> Paul himself will require *hospitality* when he arrives in Rome as a stranger.

#### 12.14-21. *Against Retaliation*

The exhortations that conclude ch. 12 presuppose the most habitual and consequent inclinations inherent in human beings—retaliation or vengeance. It is a form of reciprocity that belongs to the realm of debt, but, of course, a negative form of pay-back that reduces retribution to 'taking the law into one's own hands'. Although it is not explicitly linked to *hē hamartia* in vv. 14-21, retaliation may well be the fundamental attribute of *hē hamartia*. It appears to be its principal manifestation in human relationships. Of all the attributes of *hē hamartia*, retaliation, activated by the necessity to pay back in kind, may be the most powerful inclination of the human being and therefore the most difficult to control. Deeply embedded in the human being's affinity for the law of reciprocity, it cannot be restrained or mastered by law.

To counteract the natural inclination to retaliate, Paul formulates a series of imperatives and participial clauses that will reinforce community solidarity and obstruct retaliation through the grace of continually living in the state of reconciliation that essentially characterizes God's New Humanity. The first imperative, 12.14, is directed toward the experience of persecution: '*Keep on blessing* (*eulogeite*) those persecuting you!'<sup>29</sup> Paul has employed the present imperative, *eulogeite*, which denotes continuous action. The verb *diōkō* in v. 13, which invokes the community of faith to *pursue* hospitality, appears to serve as a catchword to be used again in v. 14, but here as a

27. See also Exod. 23.9; Deut. 24.17-18.

28. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 765.

29. The pronoun 'you', as the direct object of the substantive participle, *tous diōkontas* (those persecuting), is rejected by many commentators as a scribal interpolation on the basis of its similarity to Mt. 5.44. See Jewett, *Romans*, p. 755. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 640, comments that if it is not read, 'it is still natural to supply it'. The evidence supports both possibilities, but the oldest manuscript of Romans, P<sup>46</sup>, excludes it. Yet because the Roman community of believers had been suffering persecution as the result of the Claudian Edict, it would appear to be natural to include it.

reference to those *pursuing* the members of the community of faith in order to *persecute* them. On the one hand, those who belong to the Body of Christ are characterized as those who extend hospitality to strangers, and, on the other hand, they are summoned to *bless* (*eulogeite*) those who initiate persecution against them. Paul repeats the imperative, again in the present tense, but follows it immediately with a second imperative that is directed against a contradiction of the first, 'Keep on blessing and *do not curse!*' The repetition of the first imperative, 'Keep on blessing', followed by the negative imperative in the aorist tense, 'do not curse', is a forceful and compelling injunction against retaliation. Concomitantly, it serves to underline the freedom that is inherent in the continued pronouncement of blessing in the face of persecution. Cursing, on the other hand, as a reaction to persecution, initiates the vicious cycle of retaliation, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth', that marks the loss of freedom.

The continuous act of blessing builds solidarity, not only within the community of faith but also with the persecutors. It expresses itself in the imperatival infinitives of v. 15, 'Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep'. This kind of mutuality characterizes the solidarity of the New Humanity, not only, however, with fellow participants in God's New Humanity, but also solidarity with those who are still in the moral order of the old creation.<sup>30</sup> It is reinforced by the participial clause that follows in v. 16, 'Thinking the same thing toward one another'. Paul had issued the same mandate in some of his earlier letters (see 2 Cor. 13.11 and Phil. 2.2, 4), and he will repeat it in Rom. 15.5 when he arrives at the end of his ethical treatise. *Thinking the same thing* (*to auto phronein*) is not to be construed as an injunction to conformity. It distinguishes a unity in the fundamental commitment to fulfill the distinctive identity of God's New Humanity as life-giving spirits. At the same time, the diversity of human beings which this unity constitutes thrives and matures in the freedom in which its participants realize the natural endowment of their personal capabilities to the fullest extent possible. To live out of trust is also to live according to the trust that God has in God's own daughters and sons.

This solidarity of the one and the many, the unity in diversity, includes a shared orientation to modest and unpretentious things: 'not thinking exalted things but accommodating to humble things'. In this complex of participial clauses of v. 16, the verb *phronountes* (thinking) serves as a catchword to establish a united perspective toward that which is lowly and unpretentious. The participle *synapagomenoi* bears the meaning of *accommodating* but also the stronger sense of *being carried away*. Being carried away with

30. According to Lk. 23.34, Jesus enunciated this kind of solidarity during his crucifixion when he prayed, 'Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing'.

unpretentious things promotes a life-style that avoids extravagance and materialism. The rich and the powerful may be carried away by immoderation, indulgence, and opulence, yet, by their life-style, they promote inequality and alienation. There is no place for such values in the life-style of God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits. Membership in the Body of Christ embraces the perspective that Jesus taught and incarnated throughout his ministry: solidarity with the poor, the crippled, the blind, the oppressed, the imprisoned, and the victims of injustice. Paul articulated this perspective in 2 Cor. 8.9:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Related to this precept of 'Being carried away with unpretentious things' is the imperative that concludes v. 16: 'Do not be wise in the sight of yourself'. It is an admonition to the individual self-consciousness of the members of the community of faith. Participation in the Last Adam of life-giving spirits and the all too easily appropriated critical scrutiny of the world and its values can induce a sense of superiority and even an alienating arrogance. That would diminish the unity of the community of faith in as far as it would subvert the commitment to modesty in attitude and life-style, and at the same time it would reduce the solidarity of the community with the world. The gradual transformation of each believer into the image of the Christ, who, according to 2 Cor. 4.4 is 'the image of God', will continue to realize the destiny of the freedom of the glory of God's children into which God wills the creation to be drawn.

In v. 17 Paul returns to the stark reality that is presupposed throughout vv. 14-21, the natural inclination to retaliation: 'To no one returning evil in place of evil'. The substantive adjective, *mēdeni* (to no one) is placed at the beginning of the participial clause, emphasizing the absolute repudiation of all forms of retaliation. Consequently it conveys the proscription of initiating the cycle of 'an eye for an eye' more literally than the imperative of v. 14, 'Keep on blessing and do not curse'. All retribution is prohibited!<sup>31</sup> Two participial clauses follow that prescribe two predispositions that would inhibit retaliation. The first is: '*Thinking beforehand (pronooumenoi)* good things in front of all human beings'. This is the mind-set of God's New Humanity! It is distinguished by the vulnerability of a life-affirming orientation that characterizes the approach to all human beings. The presupposition

31. Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 51, summarizes Paul's rejection of all forms of retaliation, 'But beyond this, it is clear that the whole tenor of Paul's argument is to maintain that divine justice consists in the abolition of payback, of vengeance, of punishment'.



is that, in view of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, life, and not death, is the supreme reality in God's created world. No purity code or pollution system should predetermine human relationships, neither inside nor outside of the community of faith. No one is prejudged to be clean or unclean, good or evil. Every encounter with others produces its own *a posteriori* judgment. The defensive posture of suspicion or alienation that belongs to the old moral order has been superseded by the predisposition of reconciliation that is characteristic of the new creation.

The second participial clause reinforces this mind-set, but with a decisively critical condition: '*If possible*, as far as it depends on you, continue living in peace with all human beings'. Reconciliation is the fundamental mind-set of the New Humanity. It originates in the 'peace we have toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we also have access by the trust into this grace in which we stand' (5.1-2). Nevertheless, provocations that inflict injury of one kind or another are not simply to be assimilated. There is no presumption of submissive weakness. A response is essential and necessary. But it must be a creative response that is directed toward the elimination of any possibility of retaliation. In the fifth antithesis of Mt. 5.38, Jesus offers three examples of how the chain reaction of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' may be terminated:

...whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn also the other to him. And to the one wanting to take you to court to take your undergarment, give him your outer garment, and whoever will press you into service one mile, go with him two [miles].

God's objective through the peacemaking activity of God's sons and daughters is the cessation of all cycles of retaliation and concomitantly the eradication of the disease of *hamartia*.

That Paul is not yet ready to end this matter intimates that he perceives retaliation to be the most pervasive and destructive condition affecting human relationships. In this discernibly unyielding effort to confront his addressees with the critical necessity of excluding it from every circumstance of their family and social relationships, he appeals to them with the affectionate address, 'Beloved', that he has not used before. In 1.7 he had characterized them as 'beloved of God'. Now, as a term of endearment, he inserts it between a qualifying participle and an imperative, 'Not avenging yourselves, Beloved, but give place to *wrath* (*orgē*)!' Paul has used the noun *orgē* (wrath) before in 1.18; 2.5, 8; 3.5; 4.15; 5.9; and 9.22, and its employment here in conjunction with the participle *ekdikountes* (avenging) confirms its consistent meaning throughout his letter. *Wrath* is the consequence of injustice, initiated by human beings and generating cause-and-effect cycles of retribution that operate in the here-and-now of historical existence.

In this context, however, *wrath* (*orgē*) is the nemesis of retaliation. Initiated by revenge, it is the cause-and-effect nexus that spirals into mutual maltreatment, mutual dehumanization and ruination and finally death. *To give place to wrath*, therefore, signifies the shunning of all forms of revenge. Moreover, *to give place to wrath* implies a freedom from all forms of provocation, a freedom which, at the same time, obstructs the disastrous cycle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. *To give place to wrath*, therefore, relinquishes all forms of retribution in the recognition that it belongs to God as a divine prerogative! To confirm this, Paul cites an edited version of a scriptural text that, more emphatically than its probable source, ascribes to God alone the divine right to exact revenge. Literally, v. 19b, based in all probability on Deut. 32.35, reads, “‘*To me vengeance! I shall repay*’, *says the Lord*’.”<sup>32</sup> Both the opening prepositional phrase, ‘To me’, and Paul’s added designation, ‘says the Lord’, as a pronouncement spoken by God, accentuate God’s sovereign right of retribution.<sup>33</sup> God’s vengeance works in the actualities of historical existence through the consequential cause-and-effect cycles that are activated by human wrongdoing. As Paul enunciated in 1.24, 26, 28, God hands human beings over to the consequences of their deeds.

Back to back, without any intermediate commentary, Paul continues with a second quotation of Scripture drawn from Prov. 25.21-22 and introduces it with the adversative conjunction *alla* (but):

*But if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him to drink, for doing this you will heap coals of fire on his head.*

On the one hand, those who are members of the community of trust are mandated by Scripture to relinquish all vengeance to the sovereignty of God, while, on the other hand, they are charged by Scripture to feed and give drink to their enemies. Such a reorientation should not be construed as simply a means to obstruct retaliation by concrete acts of showing love to enemies. The adversative conjunction ‘But’ intimates that something more radical is implied. To elucidate, it requires a recovery of the aporetic eschatology that pervades Paul’s letter. His addressees have been confronted with the double-bind of the identity that they bear as participants in God’s New Humanity of life-giving spirits. They belong to two humanities. As

32. Lev. 19.18 also proscribes retaliation, but it is indeterminable to what extent it may have reinforced Paul’s edited scriptural warrant. Its injunction is ethnically limited to Israel, in contrast to Paul’s universal application.

33. Curiously, the identical wording of Paul’s quotation occurs in Heb. 10.30. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 349, accounts for it as ‘a variant translation’. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 777, sees it as ‘a different version of the Septuagint or an oral form of this saying that was current in the first century’.

descendants of Adam and Eve, they are living souls. As descendants of the 'Last Adam', they are life-giving spirits (1 Cor. 15.45). Neither ancestry is denied! In as far as they belong to both humanities, they do not surrender their solidarity with either one, neither with those who remain in the moral order of the old creation nor with those who, like them, have been regenerated into the new creation.

Consequently, by giving their enemies food and drink, they are communing with them on the basis of their participation in both humanities. On the one hand, they are manifesting solidarity with them by renouncing retaliation and returning their hostility and persecution with the kindness of gracious hospitality that empirically signifies their participation in God's New Humanity. On the other hand, since the act of giving them food and drink metaphorically signifies 'heaping coals of fire on their heads', they, as members of God's New Humanity, are identifying with their enemies as co-participants in the moral order of the old creation and preparing them, through the penetrating pain of the coals of fire of God's judgment, for entry into the new moral order. Psalm 140.10 reveals that 'heaping coals of fire on their heads' may be interpreted as a judicial act, a divine act of punishment: 'Burning coals will fall on them, in fire you cast them down'.<sup>34</sup> They, the members of God's New Humanity, are in solidarity with them as they give them food and drink in their diseased condition of *hamartia*. They are in solidarity with them as they experience the discomfort and guilt of the coals of fire heaped on their heads. And they are in solidarity with them as they approach the threshold of God's new creation. God will utilize the gifts of food and drink paradoxically as an occasion of justice to reprove and admonish the persecutors in order to beckon them into God's new creation.<sup>35</sup> Whether the enemies will respond to this experience of solidarity cannot be predetermined. Nevertheless, by doing so, the members of God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits will have acted in accordance with 8.21. They will have begun to actualize God's primordial hope of redeeming the creation from its enslavement to corruption. Coincidentally, they will have begun to fulfill the two imperatives of Paul's concluding charge: 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by means of the good'. Paul's use of the second person singular imperative in 12.21 corresponds to its

34. The text in the Septuagint is Ps. 139.11.

35. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 310-11, and Barth, *Romans*, pp. 471-75 (473), appear to be the only commentators who understand this text. Barth's commentary is perhaps the most eloquent analysis of vengeance as 'seizing the sceptre of God'. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 648, says, 'By the words *food* and *drink* we are to understand kindness of every sort'. The italics are his. So also Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 751. Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 777-78, concludes, '...they [the Roman believers] are to invite hostile neighbors and other enemies to their common meals'.

employment in the scriptural quotation of Prov. 25.21-22 and appears to anticipate the distinctive subject of 13.1 and the necessary use of the second person singular imperative that follows. To 'overcome evil by means of the good' is to implement the justice of God. It is also the sign of the eschatological actualization of the disclosure of God's daughters and sons that the creation has eagerly been anticipating since the Fall of Adam and Eve.

To overcome evil by means of the good characterized the ministry of Jesus, according to the witness of the gospels. Indeed, the ethical precepts of vv. 14-21 correspond specifically to the formulations of Jesus' fifth and sixth antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Mt. 5.38-39 and 5.43-45:

You heard that it was said, 'An eye in place of an eye, a tooth in place of a tooth'. But I say to you, 'Do not set yourself up in opposition to the wicked person, but whoever strikes you *unto (eis)* the right cheek, turn to him/her also the other. And to the one wishing to take you to court to sue even for your undergarment, let him/her [have] the robe. And whoever presses you into service one mile, go with him two.'

You heard that it was said, 'You shall love your next one and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, 'Love your enemies and pray on behalf of those persecuting you so that you become sons and daughters of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun shine on the wicked and the good, and the rain fall on the just and the unjust. Therefore you will be *whole/complete/mature (teleioi)*, as your Father in heaven is *teleios*.'

### 13.1-7. *Ethical Relationships to Government and Civil Authorities*

The renunciation of retaliation that has been mandated in 12.14-21 serves as a transition into ethical instruction on the face-to-face relations with the 'highly placed authorities' of government that Paul wants to prescribe in the first seven verses of ch. 13. No conjunction separates 13.1 from 12.21. In P<sup>46</sup>, the oldest manuscript of Paul's letters, 13.1 is simply an immediate continuation of 12.21.<sup>36</sup> The same paradoxical reality of being members of the Body of Christ is presupposed as indispensable actualities of self-understanding for this ethical instruction. By living and acting out of the prioritized double-bind of being *saint* and *sinner* and therefore identifying

36. Marcus Borg, 'A New Context for Romans xiii', *NTS* 19 (1972-73), pp. 205-18 (214-15), correctly claims that ch. 13 fits into this context in Romans, but he rejects its content as a 'generalized statement about the Christian's attitude to all civil authority at all times'. He considers it to be 'a statement with a particular meaning to the Roman church in their particular situation'. Paul takes no account of the possibility of the government acting unjustly because he is focusing on subordination, not obedience. Borg, however, does not differentiate between the two.

themselves with their fellow ‘living souls’ in the old creation, they may be able to draw their fellow human beings, including those who represent the ‘highly placed authorities’, into the new creation in which they, by grace, are already participating. Paul invokes his addressees to relate themselves ethically to those who serve within the officialdom of the various spheres of government.<sup>37</sup>

The kingdoms and nation states of antiquity, like those of today, were founded to establish an ordered environment in which stability, security and protection could be realized in a world in which the condition of *hamartia* produces ubiquitous estrangement and conflict. They are fallen powers and principalities because they are infected by the alienated and prone-to-retaliation human beings who establish them and use them to promote their own power and privilege. Wealth and office were the primary resources by which power and control were acquired; that is, the power of wealth enabled individuals to secure office or the power of office enabled individuals to secure wealth. Whether through wealth or office, they elevated themselves into positions of dominance and by rule organized and controlled the distribution of goods and services. The eventual rise of a market economy, in which trade flourished and capital wealth increased, generated greater resources of military power that enabled the ruler and the governing class to develop a warfare economy and establish widespread domination.<sup>38</sup> Neighboring kingdoms and nation states were conquered and politically consolidated through the structures of patron–client relationships for economic exploitation.<sup>39</sup> In villages and towns social relationships were based on the reciprocal exchange of subsistence goods, but, there as elsewhere, the alienating realities of honor–shame culture nurtured suspicion, deception and aggressive competition for honor between neighbors.<sup>40</sup>

The Roman empire, as it was established by Augustus and as it entered the first century CE, was celebrated by Rome’s poets as the beginning of a new age in which justice and tranquility would finally be actualized, inaugurated by a child of the gods. Virgil’s *Fourth Eclogue* exults in this emerging

37. Paul is offering an ethic to his addressees on how to relate to the fallen structures of government. Rom. 13 is not an apologetic; nor is Paul doing ‘his utmost to combat all political inclinations among the Christians’, as Ernst Bammel maintains in ‘Romans 13’, in Ernst Bammel and C.F.D. Moule (eds.), *Jesus and the Politics of his Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 365–83 (367–68).

38. On systems of reciprocity, redistribution, market and mobilization, see T.F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1975), pp. 83–224.

39. On patron–client relationships, see John H. Elliott, ‘Patronage and Clientism in Early Christian Society: A Short Reading Guide’, *Forum* 3–4 (1987), pp. 39–47.

40. Malina, *New Testament World*, pp. 93–106. On the social stratification of agrarian society, see Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, pp. 189–296.

Golden Age and anticipates the birth of a messianic child who will free the earth from its old wickedness and its never-ceasing fear:

Now is come the last age of the song of Cumae; the great line of the centuries begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns; now a new generation descends from heaven on high. Only do thou, pure Lucina, smile on the birth of the child, under whom the iron brood shall first cease, and a golden race spring up throughout the world! Thine own Apollo now is king! But in thy consulship, Pollio, yea in thine, shall this glorious age begin, and the mighty months commence their march; under thy sway any lingering traces of our guilt shall become void, and release the earth from its continual dread. He shall have the gift of divine life, shall see heroes mingled with gods, and shall himself be seen of them, and shall sway a world to which his father's virtues have brought peace.

But for thee, child, shall the earth untilled pour forth, as her first pretty gifts, straggling ivy with foxglove everywhere, and the Egyptian bean blended with the smiling acanthus. Uncalled, the goats shall bring home their udders swollen with milk, and the herds shall not fear huge lions; unasked, thy cradle shall pour forth flowers for thy delight. The serpent, too, shall perish, and the false poison-plant shall perish; Assyrian spice shall spring up on every soil.<sup>41</sup>

Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* anticipated new wars, but they would abolish the remaining vestiges of the Iron Age and reconstitute the world in a Golden Age of peace. But no Golden Age of peace and tranquility emerged. An imperious and autocratic empire superseded the Republic and deployed its legions to control and protect its mobilization economy throughout its conquered territories.<sup>42</sup> Suetonius, who through access to the Imperial and Senatorial archives and through eye-witness testimony, attests to the scandalous and decadent lives of the Roman emperors in his biography, *The Lives of the Caesars*.<sup>43</sup> Wars expanded the slave markets of the Mediterranean world, and the cheap labor that the growing number of slaves provided undermined the work and the livelihood of artisans and peasants. Rome's systemic structures of government dominated its territories and propagated injustice, oppression, marginalization and dehumanization on every level of society. An indictment against its predatory operations is preserved in a speech that is attributed to Calgacus and addressed to his fellow Caledonians in Tacitus's biography of Agricola, the most famous governor of Roman Britain. A segment of its denunciation is an effectual substantiation of Rome's crimes against humanity:

41. Virgil, *Eclogue IV* (LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 29-31.

42. On 'mobilization economies', see Carney, *The Shape of the Past*, pp. 182-86.

43. Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars*, p. 53.

Brigands of the world, they have exhausted the land by their indiscriminate plunder, and now they ransack the sea. The wealth of an enemy excites their cupidity, his poverty their lust of power. East and West have failed to glut their maw. They are unique in being violently tempted to attack the poor as the wealthy. Robbery, butchery, rapine, the liars call empire; they create a desolation and call it peace.<sup>44</sup>

The colonial empire in and under which Paul conducted his apostolic ministry proved to be an incarnation of the *hamartia* of the moral order of the old creation in which it originated. Consequently, Rom. 13.1-7 is not and should not be read as a positive evaluation of Rome.<sup>45</sup> It is essentially an endorsement of government.<sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, should those who struggle to live and act out of their paradoxical identity as members of God's New Humanity relate themselves ethically to an empire that 'creates a desolation and calls it peace'? The conduct that Paul invokes his addressees to manifest in their confrontations with evil in 12.14-21 is equally applicable to the structures of government authorities as realities that inherently belong to the moral order of the old creation. Ironically, to 'overcome evil by means of the good', in a face-to-face relationship with the state and its extensive powers requires submission:

Let every soul *continue to subordinate him/herself (hypotassesthō)* to highly placed authorities (13.1a).

Curiously, Paul has shifted from the use of the second person singular imperative of 12.21 to the third person singular imperative of 13.1, *hypotassesthō*, and, as already observed, without a conjunction to separate 13.1 from 12.21. Most likely this is due to his unusual choice of introducing his ethical instruction regarding governing authorities with the phrase *every soul* (*pasa psychē*) to serve as the subject of the prescriptions of 13.1-7. Paul employs *psychē* sparingly—indeed, only twice in Romans. Here it is usually identified as a semiticism that echoes the language of the Septuagint.<sup>47</sup> The phrase, *pasa psychē*, and more frequently the single word *psychē*, occur principally in the law book of Leviticus. The former of the two appears in Lev. 7.17; 17.12, 15; and 23.29, 30. *Every soul, therefore, has the formal character of legal responsibility*. This is reinforced by the only other use of the phrase *pasa psychē anthrōpou* (every soul of a human being) in Rom. 2.9.<sup>48</sup> It too occurs similarly in LXX Lev. 24.17 and Num. 9.6, 7, 10 and

44. Tacitus, *Agricola* (trans. H. Mattingly; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), pp. 79-83.

45. As proposed by Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, p. 217.

46. Also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 307.

47. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 656, and Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 760.

48. There is a third use of *psychē*, but it occurs in the quotation of 1 Kgs 19.10, 14 in 11.3.



19.11, 13. In Rom. 2.9 it served as the anthropological basis of Paul's subsequent claim of 2.13. It may be in correspondence with this Septuagintal use of *every soul* (*pasa psychē*) and the legal responsibility that it implies that Paul has chosen this phrase to introduce his ethical prescriptions to those regenerated in baptism as to how they should relate themselves to government authorities.

There is, however, another textual reading of 13.1a that appears in P<sup>46</sup>, 'You continue to subordinate yourselves (*hypotassesthe*) to all highly placed authorities'.<sup>49</sup> The second person plural present middle imperative is employed—instead of the third person singular present middle imperative—and it is noteworthy that the same verb form occurs again in v. 5 of P<sup>46</sup>. In other words, the manuscript tradition of 13.1 and 13.5 poses a rather dramatic difference in readings. On the one hand, the greater majority of manuscripts present the third person singular present middle imperative, *hypotassesthō* (let every soul continue to subordinate him/herself), in 13.1 and the present middle/passive infinitive, *hypotassesthai* (to keep on subordinating oneself), in 13.5. On the other hand, P<sup>46</sup> D F G and the Old Latin bear witness to the second person plural present middle imperative, *hypotassesthe* (you continue to subordinate yourselves) in 13.1 and 13.5. This is a critical difference because the ancestor of P<sup>46</sup>, consisting of chs. 1–15, may have been the form in which the epistle was received at Rome.<sup>50</sup> Since ch. 16 appears to have been added to P<sup>46</sup> in Egypt, it may be inferred that the version of Romans that contains all sixteen chapters was already in circulation in Egypt.<sup>51</sup> In all likelihood this Egyptian text of Romans, which included ch. 16, was more or less identical to the copy of Romans that Paul sent to Ephesus in order to insure its circulation in the eastern Mediterranean.

These two manuscript variants of 13.1a and 13.5, as reviewed in the Introduction, lend support to the theory that Paul prepared two copies of Romans. The text of chs. 1–15, conveying the reading of P<sup>46</sup>, 'You continue to subordinate yourselves to all highly placed authorities!', was dispatched to Rome.<sup>52</sup> In view of 'the continuous disturbances at the instigation of

49. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 315–17, ignores the manuscript variant, *hypotassesthe*. See also Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 350–53, Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 660–63, and Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 760–61. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 781, acknowledges that it 'deserves a measure of respect', but it does not have 'as much support as the very terse formulation, *anagkē hypotassesthai*' (necessary to subject oneself).

50. Also Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 13.

51. Manson, 'St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others', p. 14.

52. As Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 62, says, '...this letter is by no means a general discussion that is addressed to no one in particular at no particular time, but is addressed precisely to certain people in Rome'. See especially his discussion of 'The Authorities', on pp. 70–77.

Chrestus' that resulted in Emperor Claudius' expulsion of Jews, including Jewish believers like Priscilla and Aquila, Paul may have considered the use of the more forceful second person middle imperative, 'You continue to subordinate yourselves', to be necessary.<sup>53</sup> If Roman rule was to be transformed in any way, it would be pivotal for the entire community of God's New Humanity in Rome to subordinate themselves to all the highly placed authorities in the name of and by the authority of God the Creator who was incarnate in Jesus Christ and who continues to be incarnate in them as they are 'in Christ Jesus':

In Romans 13 the God who grants authority to governmental agencies is not Mars or Jupiter, as in the Roman civic cult; nor is he represented by the pantheon of Greco-Roman deities that had been assimilated into the civic cult since the time of Augustus. The God of whom Paul speaks in chapter 13 of this letter is the same as announced in chapter 1, whose righteousness was elaborated for the next twelve chapters. It is the God embodied in the crucified Christ who is in view here, which turns this passage into a massive act of political cooptation. If the Roman authorities had understood this argument, it would have been viewed as thoroughly subversive.<sup>54</sup>

The more formal reading of a third person singular middle/passive imperative, 'Let every soul continue to subordinate him/herself to highly placed authorities', is directed toward individuals who are more removed from the immediate exercise of Roman power. The two variant imperatives, *hypotassesthō* and *hypotassesthe*, although they differ in person and number, may be parsed as middle voice or passive voice imperatives. If they are interpreted as middle voice imperatives, their subjects would simultaneously be acting and being acted upon. On the one hand, the third person singular middle imperative *hypotassesthō* would signify 'let every soul continue to subordinate him/herself', and second person plural middle imperative *hypotassesthe*, 'You continue to subordinate yourselves'. If, on the other hand, they were interpreted as passive voice imperatives, *hypotassesthō* would be translated, 'let every soul continue being subordinated' and *hypotassesthe*, 'You continue being subordinated'. Of the two, the middle voice imperatives would be the verb forms Paul employed in predisposition to respect the authority of his addressees in relation to their membership in the Body of Christ. Consequently, subordination would not be an automatic response to governmental authorities. As present heirs of God's reign, they

53. On the Claudian Edict, see Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, 'Claudius', p. 25. Also Acts 18.2.

54. Robert Jewett, 'RESPONSE: Exegetical Support from Romans and Other Letters', in Richard A. Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 58-71 (66).

would be expected to exercise their 'ruling in life', the sovereignty they bear as participants in the *reign of God*, to determine when and when not subordination would be the appropriate ethical response.

Nation states and kingdoms are governed on the basis of law, and law is directed toward justice. Its administration establishes boundaries in society that guarantee protection and offer a measure of security and well-being. Conversely, when those boundaries that law establishes are transgressed, law requires retribution. Ultimately, however, law cannot establish justice. The law of God's reign, the law beyond law, the law of love, fixes no boundaries, offers no protection, and leaves human beings vulnerable. But God's love, the love that God's Spirit pours out in human hearts, is the only law that will bring justice into our society. It is the only law that can end retaliation. It is the only law that can bring peace. It is the only law that can actualize healing and wholeness.

In this context especially it is imperative to recognize that the verb that Paul has employed in 13.1a and 13.5 is *submit* or *subordinate* (*hypotassō*). It is not the verb *obey* (*hypakouō*).<sup>55</sup> Membership in the Body of Christ establishes citizenship in God's commonwealth, as Paul had stated in Phil. 3.20, 'For our commonwealth is in the heavens from which we await a savior, Lord Jesus Christ'. Obedience, therefore, can never—and must never—be granted to the fallen institutions of government and government authorities that originate and operate from within the moral order of the old creation and accordingly infect their bureaus, departments, ministries and missions

55. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 311, 316, mistakenly translates the verb *hypotassesthō* in 13.1 as 'gehorsam sein', that is, 'to be obedient'. This, he claims, is the eschatological direction of 12.1-2 and serves as a presupposition for the obedience of 13.1-7. But he also insists that what Paul is enunciating here is to be directly related to the distinctive circumstances of the Roman congregation. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 351-52, states, 'For the apostle the obedience owed God demonstrates itself in earthly form in not leaving the state of subordination but in taking account of the *tapeivophrosynē* (humility) as the mark of a Christian life'. Neil Elliott, 'Paul and the Politics of Empire: Problems and Prospects', in Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Politics*, pp. 17-39 (39), identifies submission with obedience. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Paul and the Politics of Interpretation', in Horsley (ed.), *Paul and Politics*, pp. 40-57 (52), appears to agree with Elliott, for she too does not differentiate between submission and obedience. It is not a correct characterization of the Christian calling to say, 'Since subordination is appropriate to the calling of Christians, they must subordinate themselves to the authorities who wield the threat of punishment'. Submission is an act of freedom in obedience to God for those who are 'in Christ Jesus', and, like Paul, are participants in the lordship of Jesus Christ. See Cranfield's discussion of the verb *hypotassein* (to submit), *Romans*, II, pp. 660-63. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 198-208, consistently uses the verb 'submit' in his interpretation of 13.1-7. Reasoner, 'The Theology of Romans 12.1-15.13', p. 296, cites obligation as the rationale for obedience: 'The measure of faith that believers share places them all under a second common obligation—to obey the government'.

with the disease of *hamartia*. Paul's use of the verb *obey* (*hypakouō*) in 6.16 sharpens the contrast between obedience and subordination:

Do you not know, that to which you present yourselves as slaves unto obedience, you are slaves to that which you obey, either of *hamartias* unto death or obedience unto justice.

There are only two kinds of enslavement, and they are essentially binary oppositions. Paul differentiated them in 6.20-22:

When you were slaves of *hamartia*, you were free with respect to *dikaiosynē* (justice) (6.20).

But now you have been liberated from *hamartia* and enslaved to God (6.22).

Enslavement to *hamartia* denotes continued incorporation in the moral order of the fallen creation and therefore obedience to the powers and principalities that dominate it. It is a predestination to death, both the death of living and the death of dying. Liberation from *hamartia* through death and resurrection denotes an entry into being enslaved to God and consequently a total commitment to justice and a concomitant predestination to eternal life. There are no other alternatives.

Accordingly, in view of all that Paul states in 13.1-7, subordination does not and cannot mean or imply obedience to fallen governments and their ruling authorities.<sup>56</sup> Subordination is an act of obedience to God's will.<sup>57</sup> Yet it must be a subordination that is self-determined by the members of the Body of Christ who exercise their sovereignty as 'fellow heirs of Christ' in their participation in the *reign of God* and, therefore, are free to act in accordance with their divinely given sovereignty to engage in civil protest when the laws and policies of the higher authorities contradict God's will for justice and peace in society.<sup>58</sup>

To subordinate oneself to ruling authorities conforms to God's will because, as Paul continues, 'there is no authority except *by* (*hypo*) God, and

56. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 604, discusses the problem of Paul not taking into account the possibility of governments being unjust and punishing the good work. But Cranfield has not differentiated between 'obedience' and 'submission'.

57. It is completely wrong to conclude 'this is not Paul', as James Kallas has done, 'Romans xiii.1-7: An Interpolation', *NTS* 11 (1965), pp. 365-74 (369). See Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, pp. 217-26, where, in a lengthy discussion, Elliott expresses his own offense at 13.1-7.

58. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 351, is wrong in stating that the verb *hypotassein* (to submit) 'can be directed meaningfully against emancipatory tendencies on the part of, e.g., Christian slaves and women who demand equality, and it can be used as a superscription in household tables such as that of 1 Pet. 2'. Paul's letter to Philemon and 1 Cor. 7.21 indicate that emancipation was the objective of the gospel of salvation.

those that exist have been put into place *by (hypo)* God'. The preposition *hypo* is used in both parts of the second half of 13.1, and, since it governs the genitive case in both instances, it expresses agency or cause. *God is the agent by which authority is established!*<sup>59</sup> The verb *tassō* that Paul has employed in the perfect passive indicative (*tetagmenai eisin*) in 13.1c, occurs only twice in the letters of Paul, and, as its other use in 1 Cor. 16.15 conveys, it may be construed to signify 'to post' or 'to draw up in order'.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, 13.1c expands upon the phrase that immediately precedes it. God not only created authority, God posted or placed in order *all the authorities that exist*. Paul, therefore, invokes respect, but to what extent loyalty is to be included in submission may depend on the extent to which the governing authorities act in conformance with God's will. If 'our commonwealth is in heaven', as Paul professes in Phil. 3.20, loyalty belongs to the citizenship that is to be prioritized. All civic authorities are ordained by God, and, their function is to promote all that is humanly good and wholesome in society, and that, as v. 3 implies, necessitates the pursuit of justice and peace: 'For the ones ruling are not a fear to the good work but to the evil. Do you not want to fear authority? Keep on doing good, and you will have praise from it.' Authorities serve God by serving human beings in society, and they do so in both beneficial and adversarial ways, as Paul states in 13.4. On the one hand, they are 'God's *minister (diakonos)* to you toward the good'. On the other hand, they are God's *minister (diakonos)* as an agent of punishment unto wrath to the one doing evil'.

Therefore, according to 13.2, *the one who resists (ho antitassomenos)*, the one who opposes authority, *stands against (antheistēken)* the ordinance of God. For a second time, as emphasis, Paul attributes the establishment of *authority* to God's ordering. Systems of authority are essential to human beings living together in social, economic, political, cultural and religious relationships. Institutions of education, medicine, communication and government are indispensable to human existence because they serve the humanization of human beings by enabling them to realize their individual

59. It is from this perspective that monarchs and judges are admonished in Wis. 6.1-3: 'Hear, therefore, kings and understand! Learn, judges of the ends of the earth! Give ear, you, the ones ruling the multitudes and boasting of many nations! For the power was given to you from the Lord and the dominion from the Most High.'

60. In the Septuagint *tassō* translates thirteen different verbs of the Hebrew Bible bearing the general meaning of 'to arrange', 'to appoint', 'to order' and 'to station'. According to LXX Gen. 3.24, God stationed or posted the cherubim 'to guard the way to the tree of life'. In 2 Sam. 7.11 God informs David, '...I appointed judges over my people Israel'. At Josiah's passover, according to 1 Esd. 1.15, 'the temple singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place, as David had arranged'.

potentiality and to experience personal fulfillment and self-worth.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the one who *resists* or *opposes* (*ho antitassomenos*) authority *stands against* (*anhestēken*) the ordinance of God. A semantic analysis of the domain of the verb *anhestēken* (*anthistēmi*) indicates that its meaning bears the implication of hostile and even violent aggression.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, those who resist by actively engaging in opposing power, those who resort to conflict in opposition to authority, ‘will receive judgment to themselves’. That judgment, as vv. 4-5 point out, will draw them into the wrath of retribution administered as punishment by the authorities that God has constituted.

But how are these ‘highly placed authorities’ to be identified? Are they systemic structures, institutions, organizations? Or are they ‘organs and functions, ranging from the tax collector to the police, magistrates and Roman officials’?<sup>63</sup> Paul has utilized several related terms in 13.1-7 that do not appear to be synonymous. In all probability the plural phrase, *highly placed authorities* (*exousiais hyperechousais*) in v. 1a, refers to rulers and officials of government, while the singular form, *authority* (*exousia*) in v. 1b, may be more abstract and denote the authority structures of government. The substantive participle of v. 3, *the ruling ones* (*hoi archontes*), like the plural phrase, *highly placed authorities*, of v. 1a, may designate kings, governors and magistrates. In 1 Cor. 15.24 the cognate noun, *archē* (rule), is used in the singular number, along with *exousia* (authority) and *dynamis* (power), to refer to structures of power and institutions of government—and not to the officials who function within them. In 1 Cor. 2.6-8, however, the plural *hoi archontes* (the rulers) occurs twice and appears to allude to rulers and sovereigns who represent the old moral order or ‘the Domination Epoch’ (*ho aiōn*).<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the use of the same plural, *hoi archontes*, in 13.3 denotes rulers and civil authorities who bear the authority that, according to 13.1b, has been posted or ordered by God, and therefore ‘should not be considered a fear to the good work’.

That motivates Paul to ask the rhetorical question of v. 3, ‘Do you not want to fear authority? Keep on doing good, and you will have praise from it.’ For it is the authority exercised by the officials of government who act on

61. For a comprehensive treatment of God’s ordering of the authorities, powers and principalities, their fallen state and the potentiality of their redemption, see Walter Wink, ‘Engaging the Powers Nonviolently’, in *Engaging the Powers*, pp. 175-257. See also Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*, I (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), and *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence*, II (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

62. Louw and Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, pp. 492-95. See also Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, p. 185.

63. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 353-54; also Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 788-89.

64. The phrase ‘the Domination Epoch’ is taken from Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, pp. 60-61.



behalf of God as God's minister (*diakonos*) and reward doing good with praise. Analogously, therefore, 'If you continue to do evil, keep on being afraid! For it—the *authority* (*exousia*) that the officials of government exercise—includes the use of the *machairan* (sword)'. *Machaira*, according to a number of papyrus manuscripts contemporaneous with Paul, denotes the sword that the military police carried as a symbol of their civil authority.<sup>65</sup> The earlier use of *machaira* in 8.35, however, is posed as one of the many stark realities confronting the members of God's New Humanity, such as trouble, persecution, famine and danger, and intimates that the sword was also more than a symbol of law-enforcement authority and could become a weapon of intimidation and terror against those doing good. Yet, in this context of 13.1-7 it represents the authority of a magistrate or judge who, as a *minister* (*diakonos*) of God, is 'a punishing agent (*ekdikos*) unto wrath to the one doing evil'. *Wrath*, as in its other uses in Romans, signifies the cycle of cause and effect that subjects wrongdoers to the consequences of their deeds. Here it refers to the retribution that is imposed by the state on those who commit offenses and violate its laws.

Their laws, like all laws of societies in the old moral order, are punitive, and the believers of the called out assembly (*ekklēsia*) in Rome are exhorted to submit to them:

Now if you do evil, keep on fearing, for it does not bear the sword in vain, for it is a minister of God, an avenger unto wrath to the one doing evil. For this reason subordinate yourselves out of necessity, not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience.

God's ordered authority, as it is embodied in government officials, sanctions the use of the sword of law-enforcement to punish wrong-doers. This symbol of civil authority, that can all too easily be employed as an instrument of domination and persecution, induces Paul to repeat the imperative of v. 1a. As the believers subordinate themselves, they are living and acting according to the law of God's rule, the law that is beyond Roman law. It is the law of love that is directed toward transformation and restoration.

The manuscript tradition of 13.5, like that of v. 1a, offers two different readings: *hypotassesthai*, the present middle infinitive (to keep on subordinating oneself), and *hypotassesthe*, the second person plural middle imperative (you keep on subordinating yourselves). Each requires a different word order. The majority of the manuscripts read:

65. Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, p. 391, cite the term *machairophoroi* that appears in a number of papyri, and they characterize it as 'a kind of military police'. See Jewett, *Romans*, p. 795, who adds, '...in the Roman setting [they] were specially trained soldiers'. Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 199, states: 'The police soldiers who accompanied the Roman tax collectors (in Egypt) were called "sword bearers"'.



For this reason [it is] necessary to keep on subordinating oneself, not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience.

P<sup>46</sup> D F G and the Old Latin support the reading:

For this reason also you keep on subordinating yourselves, not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience.

The latter variant deletes the word *anagkē* (necessary) that occurs in the former. Yet both readings concur that the continuous practice of subordination precludes wrath, that consequential cause and effect cycle of retribution. Both also agree that subordination is a matter of conscience, certainly for those who are members of the Body of Christ and participate in the moral order of the new creation. However, since it is a matter of conscience, subordination can only be granted to governmental authorities if they are disposed to justice and equality for all members of society and, therefore, are not a fear to the good work.

The subordination that forestalls wrath and manifests obedience to God's will also motivates the payment of taxes: 'For on account of this also keep on paying taxes, for they are God's *attendants* (*leitourgoi*), busily engaged toward this very thing'. *Leitourgoi* are public servants and, according to this context, they are specifically those who collect taxes. In 15.15-16 Paul will employ this word to refer to himself: 'Now I wrote you more boldly on some points, as one reminding you on account of the grace given to me from God so that I am an *attendant/minister* (*leitourgos*) of Christ Jesus unto the nations (Gentiles) serving the gospel of God as a priest, sanctified by the holy Spirit'. As a *leitourgos* of Christ Jesus, Paul is a public servant ministering to the Gentiles from within the reality of the new creation.

Paul's ethics in relation to the state begins with officials of government, *highly placed authorities*, and continues with the structures of authority which they represent. In 13.3 he returns to the officials of government, *rulers and magistrates* (*hoi archontes*), and once again proceeds to relate them to the authority that is invested in them to serve God by serving those whom they govern. The authority structures that God has constituted, as they are embodied in government officials, are designed to promote what is good and to punish what is evil. Paul, therefore, renews his charge to his addressees in 13.5 to subordinate themselves, not only in order to avoid the wrath of retribution, but also for the sake of conscience. He ends in 13.7 more or less as he began, but more concretely with injunctions that are directed toward the fulfillment of obligations that are appropriate to the different individuals who serve society through the structures of government:

Render *the obligations (tas opheilas)* to all: tribute to the one tribute is due, revenue to the one revenue is due, respect to the one respect is due, honor to the one honor is due.<sup>66</sup>

Here in 13.1-7 Paul presupposes the fallen state of governments and authority structures, but instead of offering an analysis of *hamartia*-infected nation states and their rulers and magistrates, he invokes his regenerated addressees to follow a course of ethical practice that corresponds to the double-bind of their identity as members of the Body of Christ. On the one hand, therefore, they are to be conscious of the infected condition of the authority structures of government and law, but, on the other hand, they are to act ethically in their subordination to them, in obedience to God's will working for the good of society as participants in God's commonwealth. God's inauguration of the new creation and its inherent moral order of justice and peace anticipates the recovery of God's will in the reordering of power and authority as a correlate of the liberation of the creation from its enslavement to destruction. This restoration of God's created order is at the very center of Paul's eschatology as he expressed it in 1 Cor. 15.24-28. It is also, as he professed in 8.19-21, the 'eager anticipation of the creation'.

Paul's formulation of instructions on relating to authority structures and governments is enclosed by the ethical injunctions of 12.14-21 and 13.8-14. Ironically, subordination is the very beginning of ethical practice to redeem and restore the fallen powers and principalities of government:

Render to no one evil in place of evil. *Thinking beforehand (pronooumenoi)* good things in front of all human beings. If possible, as far as it depends on you, continue living in peace with all human beings. Do not avenge yourselves, Beloved, but give place to wrath, for it is written, 'Retribution is mine', says the Lord. But if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him to drink. For doing this you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Yet subordination is a paradoxical reality.<sup>67</sup> On the one hand, those who are 'in Christ Jesus' are mandated to subordinate themselves to the structural authorities of government, while God, at the same time, according to 1 Cor. 15.27, has subordinated 'all things under his feet'.<sup>68</sup> That is, Christ's feet! It

66. See Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, pp. 200-201, on the issue of loyalty as related to paying duty and taxes, in view of the extortionary practices of the tax collectors around 57 or 58 CE, as reported by Tacitus in his *Annals of Imperial Rome* (13.50-51).

67. Paul does not speak of subordination as a paradoxical reality, and yet it is an essentially inherent character of the self-understanding that the gospel of salvation promotes

68. It is noteworthy that the verb *subordinate (hypotassō)* in 13.1 and 5 is used six times in 1 Cor. 15.24-28.

is the eschatological reality of the moral order of the new creation! Christ, or the Christ, as the embodiment of the One and the Many, incorporates all the members of his Body into his lordship, and therefore all things have been subordinated to God's New Humanity. Consequently, as Paul declared in 1 Cor. 3.21-23, 'All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all things are yours, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's'.<sup>69</sup> In this ironic actuality the members of the Body of Christ are charged to subordinate themselves to the governing authorities so that in time they, the governing authorities and the authority structures they represent, will be subordinated to the moral order of the New Creation. That in essence is the stunning paradox in and by which God's New Humanity lives. It is the legacy of their birthright in Christ Jesus.

### 13.8-14. *The Indebtedness of Love*

Paul, however, has not completed his ethical instruction. The preceding injunctions against retaliation (12.14-21) and the prescriptions of the necessity of subordination to authority structures (13.1-7) are incomplete. *Paul proceeds to anchor them in the fundamental motivating power of love.* While certain obligations are necessary, specifically to those who represent the authorities of government, liabilities of any other kind are proscribed: 'Owe nothing to no one...' The second negative reinforces the first and intensifies Paul's imperative. Every indebtedness results in a subjection to the creditor to whom something is owed.<sup>70</sup> Reciprocity is the actuating force of all

69. See also Rom. 14.8.

70. Mediterranean antiquity indebtedness produced debt bondage, a condition that involved a pledge of certain services to be applied toward the liquidation of the debt and might include a third person who would guarantee the necessary security for the debt. Seizure of property, arrest and imprisonment were possible consequences of indebtedness, as Jesus' vivid 'Parable of the Unmerciful Servant' in Mt. 18.23-34 dramatizes. Debt bondage could also result in slavery, if the bondsman was unable to free himself from the debt. Indebtedness as co-dependency was intrinsic to the widespread institution of patronage and clientism in antiquity. A reciprocal relationship would be established between two or more persons of unequal status that involved the exchange of goods and/or services that would be beneficial to both patron and client. The former provided protection, career advancement and various kinds of legal and civil services; the latter would be obligated 'to enhance the prestige, reputation and honor of his patron in public and private life...support his political campaigns...and give constant public attestation and memorials of his patron's benefactions, generosity and virtue'. This system was reinforced by the culture of honor-shame that dominated the Mediterranean world and controlled human relationships in the hierarchically constituted ladder of society. See de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, pp. 136-40 and 162-70. See also Jewett, 'RESPONSE: Exegetical Support from Romans and Other Letters', p. 67.

relationships in the honor–shame culture of the Mediterranean world. Indebtedness is the dynamism that determines the hierarchical ordering of the ‘natural groupings’ of the family and the ‘optional groupings’ of trade guilds, municipalities and religious parties. The patron–client relationships of ‘optional groupings’, involving the continuous ‘challenge-and-response’ of honor, require the endless striving to align one’s public ego-image, behavior and self-assessment with the perceived image of society in order to maintain the appearance of honor.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, the freedom to be an authentic self and to realize Christ’s legacy to ‘rule in life’ are nullified.

There is, however, one indebtedness that is perpetual and endless, ‘...to love one another’. It is the debt beyond indebtedness! For, according to 13.8b-10, it is the one and only permanently binding obligation, for ‘the one who loves has fulfilled *the other law*’.<sup>72</sup> The other law that is fulfilled is specifically the Second Table of the commandments that Moses delivered to Israel at Sinai; and Paul proceeds to recite it in v. 9: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet’ (see LXX Exod. 20.13-17). To these he adds, ‘...and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, “You shall love your *next one* (*ton plēson*) as yourself”’. This summation of the commandments of the Second Table is a literal rendition of the Septuagint translation of Lev. 19.18. *Plēson*, the object of the verb *agapēseis* (you shall love), is usually translated as ‘neighbor’, but its sense denotes anyone in any place who happens to be ‘the next one’.<sup>73</sup>

Paul probably appropriates the word *plēson* because of its unrestricted ethnicity, and combines it with the noun *agapē* (love) in order to absolutize the limitless boundaries of love.<sup>74</sup> ‘*Agapē for the next one* (*tō plēson*) does not work evil. Therefore, the *fullness* (*plērōma*) of law is *agapē*’. The first and the last references to *agapē* in Romans enunciate its divine origin:

71. Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 44-46 and 58-67. In this context it should be added that nothing supports a possible endeavor by the apostle to enable the Romans to establish their identity, either within the structure of Roman society at large or within the Mediterranean order of honor–shame culture, as contended by Moxnes, ‘Honor, Shame, p. 209.

72. Badiou, *Saint Paul*, pp. 88-89, says, ‘It is incumbent upon love to become law so that truth’s postevental universality can continuously inscribe itself in the world, rallying subjects to the path of life. Faith is the declared thought of a possible power of thought. It is not yet this power as such. As Paul forcefully puts it, *pistis di’ agapēs energoumenē*, “faith works only through love” (Gal. 5.6).’

73. In Greek, the word *geitōn* designates *neighbor* in the more limited sense of the person who lives next door or on the same street or in the same village.

74. Jesus’ parable of ‘The Good Samaritan’ in Lk. 10.25-37 dramatizes the limitless boundaries of love in relation to the *plēson*. On *geitōn*, as the ‘neighbor’ next door or ‘neighbor’ in an ethnic sense, see Lk. 14.12; 15.6, 9.

Now hope does not put to shame, for the *love (agapē)* of God is poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit dwelling in us (5.5).

I appeal to you through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the *love (agapēs)* of the Spirit to strive together with me in prayers on my behalf toward God so that I am delivered from the disobedient ones in Judea (15.30).

All of Paul's references to *agapē* between 5.5 and 15.30 presuppose that God alone is the source of *agapē*.<sup>75</sup> That, in fact, is the preconception behind all of the references to *agapē* in Paul's letters. *Agapē*, whether it is his *agapē* for the congregations he established or the *agapē* that constitutes relationships in community, does not and cannot arise from within human beings.<sup>76</sup> It originates only from God; and it is God's power that is communicated through the holy Spirit. As 'the fruit of the Spirit', according to Gal. 5.22, *agapē* is God's gift to the world, but it is dispensed through the deeds and words of those who belong to the Body of Christ. Because of its divine origin, *agapē* can fulfill what the law could not achieve. *Agapē*, and only *agapē*, is able to defeat *hē hamartia* and restrain retaliation. As Paul concludes in v. 10b, 'Therefore, *agapē* is the *fullness (plērōma)* of the law'. *Agapē*, unlike law, cannot be deconstructed. Paul's hymn to love in 1 Corinthians 13 may be a written text—as law is by necessity—but the love that he distinguishes is indeterminable in its measurement and its limitations.<sup>77</sup>

Because of its divinely powered capacity to conquer *hē hamartia*, *agapē* is the potentiality that can actualize God's justice and therefore establish the moral order of the new creation. When, therefore, it is incarnated in deeds and words, the ontological reality of the new creation is manifested empirically. Because of God's hope that God's sons and daughters can begin to actualize the possibility of God's justice through the love that the Spirit is pouring out into human hearts, Paul alerts his addressees to be conscious of the actuality of *the time (ton kairon)*. He juxtaposes night and day, darkness and light, as symbolic images of the double-bind of eschatological time: 'The night is far gone, and the day has arrived'. It is the night of the old moral order that is being eclipsed by the dawning of a new day, and therefore, '...it is already the hour that *we* awaken from sleep'. This change in the actuality of time signifies, as Paul professes in 13.11b, that God's work of transformation is moving forward in the world through the proclamation of the gospel, and therefore, '...our salvation is nearer than when we began to

75. Rom. 5.8; 8.35, 39; 12.9; 13.10; 14.15.

76. For references to *agapē* in human relationships, see 1 Cor. 13; 16.14, 24; 2 Cor. 2.4, 8; 5.14; 6.6; 8.7, 8, 24; Gal. 5.13, 22; Phil. 1.9, 16; 2.1-2; 1 Thess. 3.6, 12; 5.8, 13.

77. See Jennings's discussion of 'Paul and Outlaw Justice', in *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, pp. 39-43.

trust'.<sup>78</sup> This coincides with the eschatology that Paul enunciated in 1 Cor. 15.24-28. The old moral order is still a present reality, but the domination of the powers and principalities is ending. The day of God's new creation has dawned, inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christ, therefore, the Last Adam and the Pioneer of the New Humanity of life-giving spirits, has received God's gift of God's reign. The legacy of Jesus Christ and the abundance of grace 'to rule in life' must now begin to be actualized for everyone in the world by the practice of *agapē*. The justice that the law could not achieve, *agapē*, as *the fullness of the law*, can and will accomplish. Yet the integrity of *agapē* must be maintained by ethical conduct that corresponds to the eschatological reality of the new moral order. To that end Paul summons his addressees with a series of hortatory subjunctives in the first person plural that enables him to include himself:

*Let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and let us clothe ourselves with the tools of light* (13.12b).

*Let us behave decently as in the day, not with carousings and drunkennesses, not with sexual excesses and licentiousness, not with strife and jealousy* (13.13).

The conduct that is cited here in 13.13 as 'the works of darkness' corresponds to 'the works of the flesh' that he delineated in Gal. 5.19-21: 'fornication, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these'. 'The tools of light' are not enumerated, but analogously may correspond to 'the fruit of the Spirit' that Paul named in Gal. 5.22-23: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.' All of these tools are more than attributes of decent behavior. They are actions and activities requiring integrity and commitment that manifest the presence of God's New Humanity in the world.

Paul concludes his ethics of God's New Humanity with two imperatives in the second person plural, 'But *clothe yourselves* with the Lord Jesus Christ, and *do not continue to make provision* toward inordinate desires'. The second command of v. 14b, however, seems superfluous and unnecessary in the light of the first. For to clothe oneself with the Lord Jesus Christ is to be crucified with Christ. That is Paul's comprehensive determination when he reaches the end of his list of 'the fruit of the Spirit' in Gal. 5.24, 'Now those of Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires'.

78. In view of the context, the verb *episteusamen* (we trusted) may well be construed as an 'ingressive aorist, representing the point of entrance'. See Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 10.

At the same time, the reality of resurrection must also be included! Accordingly, to clothe oneself with the Lord Jesus Christ culminates in putting on the new human being that is constituted by being resurrected with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul had invoked this frame of mind earlier in 6.11, ‘So you also consider yourselves to be dead with respect to *hē hamartia* and alive to God in Christ Jesus’.

There is, however, another dimension of meaning that is related to putting on the Lord Jesus Christ as a garment. To clothe oneself with the exalted Jesus Christ, who is co-bearer of the divine epithet ‘Lord’, implies a participation in the sovereignty he exercises on God’s behalf. For if he, as the Christ, has received the ‘kingdom’, according to 1 Cor. 15.24, those who are members of his Body, the Christ, have been granted the same entitlement. This new status effects a movement from childhood into adulthood, from child-like dependency on God into a mature inter-dependent relationship with God through the empowering indwelling of God’s Spirit. Paul characterizes this as a mind-set that no longer engages in any *forethought of the flesh toward inordinate* desires. It is the mind-set of the Spirit, as he stipulated earlier in 8.6, and it engenders love, justice and peace.

To put on the Lord Jesus Christ as a garment, therefore, is a rite of passage into spiritual adulthood. In Paul’s time it would be analogous to the Roman ritual of bestowing the toga, the official civilian dress of the Roman citizen, upon a young man to signify his passage into adulthood and its legal responsibilities as a member of society. Paul alluded to this in Gal. 3.27-29:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, *you clothed yourselves with Christ*. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male and female; for you all are one in Christ Jesus, and if you are of Christ, consequently you are the seed of Abraham, heirs according to the promise.

‘Heirs according to the promise’ is not to be construed as a future realization. It is an actuality in the present because the promise has been fulfilled, as he acknowledged in Gal. 4.1-7:

Now I say, as long as the heir is an infant, he or she, being lord of all, differs nothing from a slave but is under guardians and householders until the fixed time of the father. So also we, when we were infants we were enslaved under the *abc’s* of the world.<sup>79</sup> But when the fullness of (measured) *time (tou chronou)* came, God sent forth his Son, born from a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. Because you are sons and daughters, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba’, Father, so that you are no longer a slave but a son and a daughter, and if a son and a daughter, also an heir of God.

79. The Greek word that is translated here as *abc’s* is the plural *stoicheia*, which the lexicon defines as the fundamental principles that serve as the foundation of knowledge. They are the elemental truths of God. See Danker (ed.), *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 946.



14.1–15.6. *The Unity and Inclusiveness of God's New Humanity*

Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and the entry into the adulthood of the New Humanity is an appropriate transition into 14.1–15.13. The conjunctive particle *de* establishes the connection. Yet neither of its two primary senses, *and* and *but*, is applicable here. It may remain untranslated, but it may also be rendered as *now*, a marker linking 14.1 back to the previous verse, 13.14. ‘Now welcome the one who is weak with respect to *trust* (*tē pistei*), not for *quarrels of opinion* (*diakriseis dialogismōn*)’. Paul’s addressees are mandated, as members of the Body of Christ who have put on the Lord Jesus Christ as a garment and entered into spiritual adulthood, to be inclusive.<sup>80</sup> They are to receive into their fellowship and communion ‘the one being weak with respect to *trust* (*pistei*)’. Moreover, they are to avoid all conflicts about differing points of view as to what is admissible as divinely acceptable food.

Who, then, are the so-called weak? The substantive participle, *ton asthenounta* (the one being weak), that Paul has employed, corresponds to his earlier use of two similar forms of this verb: *ho asthenōn* (the one being weak) in 1 Cor. 8.11 and *syneidēs in asthenousan* (conscience being weak) in 8.12. Whether the believers in Rome, like those of Corinth, are conflicted between the weak who eat vegetables and those who eat all things is indeterminable.<sup>81</sup> Paul never designates those who eat all things as ‘the strong’, neither in 1 Corinthians nor in this context in Romans.<sup>82</sup> In fact, he never

80. This is the focus of Eung Chun Park’s monograph, *Either Jew or Gentile: Paul’s Unfolding Theology of Inclusivity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). See also Jewett, ‘RESPONSE: Exegetical Support from Romans and Other Letters’, pp. 67–68.

81. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 834, claims that this was ‘the current jargon of the community dominated by the strong’. See Campbell, *Paul’s Gospel in an Intercultural Context*, p. 21, who follows Jewett and others in acknowledging that the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ refer to real groups in the Roman churches, but recognizes Paul’s accentuation on the equality of Jews and Gentiles in sin, in a common patriarch, Abraham, and in a common salvation. So also Reasoner, ‘The Theology of Romans 12.1–15.13’, p. 288, and Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, for his discussion of the ‘Weak’ and the ‘Strong’, pp. 86–92. He is convinced that the problems of food and special days are ‘a real situation in Roman Christianity’, but he prefers to adopt Wayne Meeks’s view that Paul is utilizing an ‘oblique approach’ to the issue. See also Wayne Meeks, ‘Judgment and the Brother: Romans 14.1–15.13’, in Gerald F. Hawthorne with Otto Betz (eds.), *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament. Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 290–300 (293), who states, ‘Furthermore, Paul takes pains to state the issue in terms general enough that a former Jew is not necessarily on one side and a former gentile on the other’. See also A.J.M. Wedderburn, *The Reason for Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), and Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 331–32.

82. To juxtapose *ton asthenounta* (the weak) of 14.1 and *hoi dynatoi* of 15.1, as though they are oppositions is a transgression of Pauline ethics. Such a dichotomy could

identifies the weak or the so-called strong ethnically. He remains in solidarity with both, and his objective continues to be the solidarity of Jews and Gentiles in God's salvation of justice. Consequently, and perhaps as the result of his earlier experience among the Corinthian believers, he is compelled to prescribe practical guidelines, if only to reinforce the solidarity of the New Humanity. Re-socialization may be a necessity for both groups within this new moral order of God's new creation. Both have been implicated in Paul's concluding verdict of 3.9, 'For we already charged both Jews and Greeks all to be under *hamartia*'.<sup>83</sup> Both groups have been confronted with Paul's deconstruction of law, and both have been established equally as 'heirs of the promise' that originated in the trust of Abraham and that culminates in the trust of Jesus Christ.

Paul characterizes those who eat vegetables as people who are *weak with respect to the trust* (*asthenounta tē pistei*). The phrase conveys a debilitating capacity. Earlier, in 4.19, he utilized this verb *astheneō* to characterize Abraham as one who was *not weak* (*mē asthenēsas*) *with respect to the trust* as he contemplated his own *worn-out* body, literally 'deadened' by age, 'being about one hundred years old'. On the basis of his trusting relationship with God—with the crediting of justice that would follow naturally—the promise of a son was fulfilled and ultimately also the promise that he would inherit the world through the coming of his lineal descendant, the Christ. To be '*weak with respect to the trust* (*hē pistis*)' characterizes those who have not entered completely into the freedom of the new indebtedness of God's new creation. Like Abraham, their faith would be credited to them 'unto justice', but they may be apprehensive about the extent to which they have been set free from the old indebtedness of the law of the Sinai covenant. They have not entered completely into the trust of Jesus Christ.

Those 'who trust to eat all things' are forbidden to engage in *quarrels over opinions* (*diakriseis dialogismōn*). Their fellow members of the Body of Christ, who are *weak with respect to the trust*, may have a weak conscience, but as weak as it may be, there is still a measure of participation in

easily result in the polarization of the community, and that has no place in Paul's theology. Yet that is done by Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 333; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 366; Cranfield, *Romans*, II, pp. 690-91; Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 797-98; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 219. The term *hoi dynatoi* does not necessarily designate those who eat all things.

83. See Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans*, pp. 59-64, on 'Jewish and Christian Self-Definition' with its specific focus on Rome, necessitated by the edict of Claudius in 49 CE for Christians and Jews. Paul, however is not writing his letter to the Romans in order to assist both Jews and Gentiles in their self-definition. Rom. 1-8 has laid a foundation for that. If anything else is required for the solidarity of Jews and Gentiles, it is a practical application of the love that God's Spirit is pouring out in the hearts of both in relation to matters of ethnic religious piety.

the trust of Jesus Christ. It is only when that trust ends, when they in trust no longer exercise the authority that is rightfully theirs as heirs of the legacy of Christ, that they will regress into the old moral order of *hamartia*. Paul will wait until the end of his ethical discourse in 14.23 to state: 'Now everything that is not *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) is *hamartia*'.

The weak conscience must not be wounded, for, as Paul had indicated in 1 Cor. 8.12, it would be a sin against Christ. Accordingly, as he continues in 14.3, 'Let not the one eating *despise* (*exoutheneitō*) the one not eating'. To reduce another human being to 'no account', as the verb *exoutheneitō* (treat with contempt) implies, would be a destructive act that would indeed be a sin against the Body of Christ. At the same time, however, those who eat everything must also be respected: 'and let not the one not eating judge the one eating'. Critical evaluations from both sides, those who eat and those who do not eat, evaluations that all too easily generate disrespect and conflict, must be shunned. At the same time, however, Paul is aware that those who embrace a stricter piety may be more inclined to judge those whose devotion to God is less circumscribed. They specifically are to know, as Paul warrants in 14.3b, that God also welcomes those who in trust act with less restraint and therefore eat all things.

If God welcomes both those who eat all things and those who eat vegetables, any and every judgment directed by either side against the other would be an appropriation of God's jurisdiction. Such an arrogation of the prerogative that belongs to God alone induces Paul to confront his addressees with the rhetorical question:

You, who are you who judges a household slave belonging to another? To his/her own master/lord he stands or falls. But he/she will stand, for the Lord is able to make her/him stand.

God's will for those who have become God's daughters and sons is 'ruling in life'. That is the legacy of grace that will 'rule through justice into eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord', as Paul professed in 5.21. As long as there is a measure of trust, regardless of how weak or strong it may be, God's indwelling Spirit will continue to fulfill God's objective.<sup>84</sup>

Piety, of course, manifests itself in many different ways in the Body of Christ. Even as there are differences in the discernment of which foods may or may not be eaten, there are also diverging evaluations of sacred and secular time. 'One prefers a day more than another day, but another prefers every day', as Paul states very literally in 14.5. Days, like food, are differentiated according to the perspective of heritage and conscience. Some judge

84. In Mt. 12.18-21, the evangelist cites a quotation from Isa. 42.1-4 in order to express its fulfillment in Jesus' ministry, and v. 4 of that quotation conveys God's concern for the weak, 'He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick'.

specific days to be holy and therefore to be distinguished from other days, while others consider every day to be holy or perhaps paradoxically both holy and profane at the same time. Jewish believers and perhaps also Gentile believers, who formerly had been proselytes, may be hesitant to relinquish the sabbath as well as special feast days. To all Paul emphatically stipulates, 'Let everyone be convinced in her or his own mind!' As in the case of food, decisiveness is imperative. That is his criterion for all practices of piety. Conformity to a single standard of godliness is precluded. In the unity of the Body of Christ individual difference is distinguished by the individual exercise of authority that is characteristic of an active participation in God's rule on God's behalf:

The one who is disposed to the day is disposed to the Lord and the one who eats, eats to the Lord for he or she gives thanks to God. And the one who does not eat, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God (14.6).

Motivation should determine all expressions of piety! Eating or not eating, observing the holiness of certain days or not observing the holiness of certain days, indeed, all manifestations of personal devotion are to be directed to the honor of God—with thanksgiving. Accordingly, the tradition that constitutes Jewish heritage and the identity that it establishes must be respected.<sup>85</sup>

But there are realities that transcend the piety of heritage and tradition. The establishment of boundary lines for the observance of dietary laws and calendrical feast days, independent of or in defiance of the believing community, would fracture the community and destroy its unity as the Body of Christ. The ideology of separation that had characterized Judaism would be re-introduced, and once again Jewish and Gentile believers would be segregated from each other.<sup>86</sup> Paul responds to this intolerable possibility, which he already had experienced in his relationship with the Corinthian community, by acknowledging the general truth, 'For none of us lives to oneself and none of us dies to oneself' (see 1 Cor. 8). If God is the incentive and motivation of human existence, all forms and manifestations of personal piety are transcended by God's ownership of all who profess to be members of the Body of Christ and therefore pursue the justice that the law of love

85. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 806.

86. Paul had encountered conflict between the so-called 'strong' and the 'weak' in the Corinthian community of believers, and that experience, in all likelihood, has determined his treatment of this matter of religious asceticism in his 'theological testament' of Romans. It does not necessarily imply that he is directing 14.1-23 to a division of believers in Rome. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 366, urges 'great caution' in postulating this reality of the Roman community. See also Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament*, p. 115, and Karris, 'Romans 14.1-15.13 and the Occasion of Romans', p. 71.

requires. 'For', as Paul continues in 14.8, 'if we live, we live to the Lord; if we die, we die to the Lord; so whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's'.

Living and dying constitute the limits of human existence. What is done within those limits determines how much or how little of the life that is lived is self-serving or is altruistically directed to community participation and community well-being. The one is a manifestation of the 'mindset of the flesh', the other is a demonstration of 'the mindset of the Spirit', and Paul differentiated between them in 8.6 in terms of their end-result, 'For the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace'. The mind-set of the Spirit, of course, presupposes incarnation, the indwelling of God's Spirit that unites all those who participate in God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits in order to form a community in which God's love is the law of living and dying. Living to the Lord and dying to the Lord, therefore, do not merely presuppose living and dying for God. That can easily be or become an individualistic perspective. But living to the Lord and dying to the Lord characterize a life that is directed toward the corporate physical manifestation of God's New Humanity in the world. Whether, therefore, this mind-set is actualized in living or in dying, it presupposes and, at the same time, expresses the certainty that 'we are the Lord's'. God can lay claim to all human beings who in their living and their dying have been incorporated into God's New Humanity through the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which has liberated them from *hē hamartia* and death. Accordingly, they are the Lord's! They belong to God!

It is specifically to this end, as Paul professes, that 'Christ *died* and began to *live again* so that he begins to be lord of both the dead and the living'.<sup>87</sup> But specifically to what end did Christ die and begin to live again? Does Christ himself begin to be lord of both the dead and the living? Or does God, through Christ's death and resurrection, begin to be lord of both the dead and the living? The previous six references to the 'Lord' in vv. 6-8 pertain to God the Creator. The members of the Body of Christ who eat all things, eat to God and give thanks. The members of the Body of Christ who refrain from eating all things, do so to God and give thanks. Both groups, in their living, live to God, and in their dying, die to God. Both groups belong to God. As Paul states, 'We are the Lord's'. On the one hand, therefore, consistency would appear to determine that Christ died and began to live again so that God the Creator would become lord of both the dead and the living. Paul's conflation of Isa. 45.23 and 49.18 affirms that all will be judged at the

87. Both verbs in 14.9, *ezēsen* (he began to live again) and *kurieusē* (began to be lord), are best construed as ingressive aorists. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 708 n. 3, limits the ingressive aorist to the verb *kyrieusē* (begin to be lord); Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 372, limits the ingressive aorist to the verb *ezēsen*.

tribunal of God the Creator. But does Christ's death and resurrection make God the Creator lord of both the dead and the living? Is not God already lord of both? On the other hand, here in v. 9, the lordship of God appears to be shifted over to the lordship of Christ, and consequently it is he who, by his death and resurrection, begins to become lord of both the dead and the living.<sup>88</sup> The scriptural conflation of Isa. 45.23 and 49.18 in v. 11 corresponds to the conclusion of the christological hymn of Phil. 2.10-11: 'at the name of Jesus every knee will bend of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth and every tongue will confess *Lord Jesus Christ* to the glory of God the Father'. Earlier in 8.34 Paul had related Christ Jesus, 'the one who died, but rather being resurrected', to the one 'who is at the right hand of God'. Exalted and co-enthroned with God, Jesus, as the one who died and began to live again, also began to be lord of both the dead and the living.<sup>89</sup> It is through his lordship and his redemption of the creation, in which the New Humanity of the Body of Christ are actively engaged, that God the Creator will begin to be the lord of both the dead and the living. Paul's eschatology, as he formulated it in 1 Cor. 15.27-28, concludes:

Now when all things are subordinated to him (the Christ), then the Son himself will be subordinated to the One who subordinated all things to him (the Christ) so that God is all things in all things.

If, as Paul professes, all the members of the Body of Christ belong to the Lord in their living and their dying as they actualize God's justice in their commission to liberate the creation from its enslavement to destruction, the same rhetorical question with which he confronted his addressees in 14.4 warrants repetition: 'Now why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why also do you *despise (exoutheneis)* your brother or sister? For we all shall present ourselves to the tribunal of God.' Paul underlines the certainty of this divine judgment with a scriptural quotation that combines the oath formula that God employs in Isa. 49.18 with the oath that God swears in Isa. 45.23:

As I live, says the Lord, for to me every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge itself to God.

88. Most likely the dead, who, under the lordship of Christ, are named prior to the living, refers to those who have expired. See also Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 708; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 372; Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 808; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, p. 225. Notably, none of these scholars appears to perceive the problem of the relationship between Jesus' and God's lordship.

89. Christ's lordship of the dead and the living is exercised on behalf of God, for, as Paul stated in 1 Cor. 15.24-27, Christ has received the kingdom, and it is his and those who belong to his Body to exercise it here and now on behalf of God the Creator. See also Witherington, *Romans*, p. 337.

To this eschatological pledge Paul adds his own acknowledgment of the truth of this Scripture by accentuating the individuality of the reckoning that will take place: 'Consequently each of us will give an account to God about himself or herself'. God's judicial inquiry will scrutinize the relationships that human beings have carried on with each other in order to determine their commitment to the *love* (*agapē*) that originates from God and is divinely willed to be fulfilled in all human relationships. The personal piety of eating or not eating, observing holy days or not observing holy days, will have no significance. Accordingly, any and every critical measurement of another person's godliness is a worthless endeavor. Paul offers a more appropriate alternative, 'Therefore, let us judge no longer; but judge this rather, not to place a stumbling block or offense before our brother or sister'. Because hurtful criticism of those who are weak in their trust can damage their relationship with God, those who engage in it will be guilty of loveless and unjust conduct and will be subject to God's judgment. On the other hand, the removal of any and every obstacle that would harm another person's trust is a concrete manifestation of the *agapē* that is 'the fullness of the law'.

Up to this point Paul has been reserved in voicing his own perspective on the validity of purity codes and the piety of living according to their prescriptions. Apparently this is now the appropriate, perhaps even necessary, context for its disclosure. He enunciates his conviction about this decisive issue emphatically with two different verbs in two different tenses: '*I know* (*oida*) and *I have been persuaded* (*pepeismai*) by the Lord Jesus that nothing is profane in itself'. The present indicative of the first verb, *oida*, conveys Paul's intellectual certainty about the goodness of God's creation. There is nothing in the world that is common or ordinary that necessitates a differentiation between the sacred and the secular. The creation itself and attendant the continuity of time and space are sacralized by God's redemption of the world through Jesus Christ, and therefore holiness and wholeness are the only mode of being in terrestrial existence. The second verb in the perfect passive indicative, *pepeismai* (I have been persuaded), expresses the result of external influence originating, in this case, from the Lord Jesus himself. The preposition, *en*, that governs the phrase *kyriō Iēsou* (Lord Jesus) conveys agency. Jesus, and more specifically the teaching of Jesus that Paul received, has been decisive in convincing him of the truth that he is articulating here in 14.14. Both Mk 7.14-23 and Mt. 15.17-20 have preserved this aspect of Jesus' teaching. No purity code can be legitimated to build a pollution system that dichotomizes the world into the oppositional realms of the sacred and the profane. Paul's intellectual certainty about the cancellation of all purity codes is founded in Jesus' teaching, and it is a grounding principle of his eschatology of the moral order of God's new creation.



Not all who are members of the Body of Christ may be willing to accede to Paul's conviction. Yet he does not hesitate to acknowledge them and give them a voice, for he continues in 14.14b by recognizing, 'Except the one who considers something to be profane, to that one it is profane'. There can be no dispute about that because, in the reality world of such individuals, there are things that are unclean and therefore must be renounced. Such a perspective must be respected in order to avoid harming that person's relationship to God. Paul is adamant about maintaining the integrity of both groups of individuals. 'Ruling in life', and therefore, as he urged in 14.5b, 'each being convinced in his or her own mind', is decisive for living in the moral order of God's new creation: 'For if your sister or brother is grieved on account of food, you are no longer walking according to *love (agapē)*'. In each case the trust-relationship with God is being affected. The person whose piety is inherent in his or her relationship to God is being wronged, and the person who is causing the wrong has become detached from God's *agapē* in the relationship of trust with God. Of the two, Paul specifically addresses the wrong-doer, the one who has no scruples about foods, emphatically forbidding such lovelessness: 'With respect to your food do not ruin that person on whose behalf Christ died'. Such an act would be equally ruinous to the one who damaged the other's relationship to God, and therefore Paul counsels those among his addressees, 'Don't let your good [name] be slandered!' That would produce more harm within the community of the Body of Christ by discrediting the reality of God's actualization of a new creation. 'For the reign of God (*hē basileia tou theou*)', according to Paul's qualification in 14.17, 'is not food and drink, but justice and peace and joy in the holy Spirit; for in this the one enslaved to Christ is pleasing to God and acceptable to human beings'. Surprisingly, for the first time in Romans, Paul acknowledges the present reality of *hē basileia tou theou* (the reign of God). If God's reign is characterized by 'justice and peace and joy in the holy Spirit', the coincidental intimation is that those who are enslaved to God are engaged in actualizing these conditions on behalf of God.

Earlier in 6.18 Paul characterized those who have been liberated from *hē hamartia* as those who 'became enslaved to justice'. Works of justice and peace by 'those who are enslaved to Christ' are pleasing to God because they manifest the present reality of God's reign and at the same time give flesh and blood being to the New Humanity that Christ has inaugurated. Heaven and earth, God and human beings, are joined together when those who are enslaved to Christ engage in works of justice and peace. Moreover, in that conjunction, joy is generated by the indwelling Spirit of God as a celebration of the fulfillment of God's purposes for the world. The natural resolution, therefore, is conveyed in Paul's consequential exhortation, 'Accordingly, let us pursue the things of peace and the things of up-building toward each other'. 'The things of peace'! Whatever form they may take,

they fulfill the vocation, the calling, that is directed toward acts and activities that are spiritually, morally and physically edifying. Peace is attainable through the actualization of justice; and justice is achievable through *agapē*, the love that originates from God and is the only power that can conquer *hē hamartia*. This is God's eschatological objective through the gospel of salvation that is confessed and proclaimed, but above all incarnated in the flesh and blood activities of human beings. To that end Paul issues a stark command in 14.20, 'Do not tear down the work of God on account of food'.

Piety and devoutness are not the essence of discipleship. That was implied in 14.14-17. Once more, however, Paul is constrained to express his unequivocal conviction about the things of the created world, but now in a more positive formulation, 'All things are pure'. This continues to be a grounding principle. Yet even if it is a categorical truth, it must not be used destructively to inflict spiritual injury on those whose piety is determined by a purity code: 'All things are pure, but it is wrong to the human being who eats by [being] a stumbling block'. As in 14.15, Paul addresses those who transcend the purity code and eat everything because they have no scruples about clean and unclean, sacred or profane. Paul explicitly refers to meat and wine. In one way or another both would be associated with pagan deities: meat that had been sacrificed to some deity, and wine offered in libation to the gods. Those who abstained from these things due to their observance of the purity code and its kosher laws might be forced to withdraw from the community fellowship and thereby polarize the Body of Christ. To prevent such a segregation, Paul advocates, 'It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or in anything by which your brother or sister stumbles'. Refraining from anything that causes others to separate or to stumble maintains the solidarity of God's New Humanity, and, therefore, those who in their freedom are willing to abstain from meat and wine in order to maintain the unity of the Body of Christ, convey the love that originates from God.

The counsel that Paul offers, however, is pertinent to both groups, those who eat everything and those who adhere to a purity code, 'Before God keep your convictions to yourself!' Parading them in the community of believers would stir up controversy and undermine the peace that inherently is the character of God's reign. Paul pronounces a benediction upon all those who embrace this counsel and are at peace with themselves:

Blessed is the one who does not find fault with himself/herself by that which he or she approves.

To put oneself down after approving one's own piety, whether eating or not eating, engenders a schizophrenic condition. An individual who resolves to refrain from eating meat and drinking wine and then proceeds to find fault with himself or herself experiences a disruption of inner unity and wholeness. The self is divided against itself in dissension, and the result is a

condition of disorientation, brokenness and self-alienation. The conscience of such a fractured individual is no longer engaged in ‘with-knowledge’ (con-science) with itself and therefore is no longer whole. Such a conscience has become preoccupied by the ‘with-knowledge’ of others, a conscience determined by their values and expectations rather than its own. It is precisely that kind of a conscience that was characteristic of the honor–shame culture of Mediterranean antiquity and therefore the kind of conscience that is characteristic of the moral order of the old creation.<sup>90</sup>

Participation in God’s reign necessitates the active exercise of ‘ruling in life’. It is God’s expectation of those who have received the abundance of grace and the legacy of justice through their dying and rising with Jesus Christ. God’s will for the human conscience, therefore, is a ‘with-knowledge’ with itself, not a conscience that is schizophrenically bound to the ‘with-knowledge’ of what others may think or feel. Salvation is directed to the recovery of human wholeness, the divinely intended state of being for all who participate in the Body of Christ. Consequently, as Paul declares in 14.23,<sup>91</sup>

The one who is at odds with oneself (*diakrinomenos*) is condemned because it is not out of trust (*ek pisteōs*). Everything that is not out of trust (*ek pisteōs*) is *hamartia*.

This is not and should not be interpreted as the erosion of the certainty of faith. A conscience that is determined by the motives and attitudes of others not only has lost its individual selfhood but also has subordinated itself to authoritarianism and cultural conformity:

Conscience is sensitivity to what others think about and expect of a person; it is another word for shame in the positive sense (just like mind is another word for heart). As a result, the person in question does not think of himself or herself as an individual who acts alone regardless of what others think and say. Rather, the person is ever aware of the expectations of others, especially significant others, and strives to match those expectations.<sup>92</sup>

90. See Malina’s *The New Testament World*, pp. 58-76, on ‘conscience’ and its formation in the relationship between the individual and the group in ‘The First-Century Personality’. Unfortunately, Malina does not examine the ethical significance of that condition of ‘with-knowledge’, its damage to human beings. Consequently he does not comprehend the efforts of Paul and others to undermine this condition of brokenness so that a human being’s conscience could be restored to its divinely willed unity. Because he does not appear to perceive the *hamartia*-character of honor–shame culture, his characterization of Paul on pp. 59-60 is mistaken.

91. It should be noted that it was at this point, 14.23, that Marcion ended his redacted version of Romans.

92. Malina, *The New Testament World*, p. 75,

In honor–shame culture the exercise of power and the appearance of invulnerability are paramount virtues in human relationships.<sup>93</sup> Weakness and vulnerability are reprehensible liabilities. The so-called *strong* (*hoi dynatoi*) in the community of trust, who in their freedom in Christ eat all things, would be motivated by their culture to show strength and invulnerability. Those who are weak in their convictions would be susceptible to the loss of integrity by vacillating in their own certainty about what observances honor God and what observances dishonor God. By living according to the expectations of others, by subordinating themselves to the approval of others, or by conforming themselves to the piety of others, they are suffering the loss of selfhood and wholeness.<sup>94</sup>

It is that loss of selfhood and wholeness that the trust of Jesus Christ is divinely willed to restore. Accordingly, it is the diminishment of the believer's new humanity in Christ by the loss of selfhood and wholeness that induces a relapse into the condition of *hamartia*: 'Everything that is not *out of trust* (*ek pisteōs*) is *hamartia*'. Becoming disconnected from the trust of Jesus Christ results in the loss of 'ruling in life' and attendant the surrender of Christ's legacy of decisive determination in all matters of daily life.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, it signifies a withdrawal from the law that God's Spirit is writing on tablets of human hearts and therefore a return to the law of Sinai. Such a regression is a descent into the moral order of the old creation and its power of *hamartia*.<sup>96</sup>

93. Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 76-77.

94. It is not an erosion of faith, as Michel maintains, *Römerbrief*, p. 350. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 379, states, 'Paul is warning against a violated conscience and protecting against a straying conscience in order to preserve man's humanity'. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 828, emphasizes the perfect tense of *katakekritai* (he/she has been condemned) and characterizes the individual of v. 23 as one who has made an irrevocable breach in the covenant because he/she has eaten. He goes on to define 'pistis as the dependent reliance of creature on creator'; and he ends by saying, 'The balance of faith, liberty, and love must be maintained, however, difficult'. But how is this balance determined? Jewett, *Romans*, p. 871, quoting Franz Leenhardt, construes the meaning of v. 23 more correctly, '...the wrong lies in not obeying one's own sincere conviction, in a divided personality which agrees to act in contradiction to an inner persuasion'. He goes on to say, 'In effect, they are rendering final loyalty to a lord other than the Lord who saved them'. It is not a matter of loyalty to the Lord, however, but a matter of integrity and spiritual wholeness that is the objective of the trust of Jesus Christ.

95. Jesus formulated this authority of 'ruling in life' in another way in Mt. 16.19, 'I shall give to you the keys of God's reign and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven'.

96. Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 729, wrongly concludes, 'Whereas he [Paul] usually thinks of *hamartia* as a power controlling man, he is here using the word in a more relative way, to characterize the conduct of the Christian who does a particular action in spite of the fact that he has not received the inner freedom to do it, contrasted with the

Such members of the Body of Christ, who in their weakness are unable to appropriate the authority that their participation in God's rule makes available to them, need the support of the community. Their participation in God's New Humanity must be affirmed. Consequently, Paul uses the first person plural to summon those who have attained to a greater measure of the legacy of Jesus Christ to engage in sustaining such individuals: 'Now *we* the ones *who are able* (*hoi dynatoi*) ought to bear the weaknesses of the powerless (*adynatōn*), and not to please *ourselves*'. Paul is not hesitant to include himself in this kind of selfless support and affirmation that is characteristic of the Body of Christ. If the power of God's grace can be made perfect in Paul's weakness, as he boasted in 2 Cor. 11.9, that same power of God's grace, communicated through the support of those who are able, will sustain the powerless in the community of trust. Moreover, 'the ones who are able', by not pleasing themselves, manifest the love that originates from God. Undisguised *agapē*, as Paul highlighted it in 12.9, will divine the ways and means of supporting the so-called weak through deeds and words that edify.<sup>97</sup> Here, in 15.2, by continuing to include himself, Paul urges his addressees, 'Let us please the *next one* (*plēsion*) for the good toward up-building'. The model is *the Christ* himself, as Paul indicates in his exhortation of 15.2-4:

Let each of us please the *next one* (*plēsion*) for the good toward edification.  
For *the Christ* (*ho Christos*) did not please himself; but even as it is written,  
'The abuses of those abusing you fell on me'.

This is the second of Paul's three uses of the titular form, *ho Christos* (the Christ) in Romans. It was first employed in 9.5, in a context in which he recounted the incredibly rich heritage of the Jewish people. *The Christ* is among the divine gifts which they have received. Paul will use the titular form again in 15.7 as he concludes his formulation of the ethics of God's New Humanity and concomitantly affirms the inclusion of the Gentiles on the basis of Christ's establishment of the truth of God by fulfilling the promises of the patriarchs:

Wherefore receive each other even as *the Christ* (*ho Christos*) received you into the glory of God. For I say [that] Christ has become a minister of circumcision on behalf of the truth of God in order to establish the promises of the fathers, but the Gentiles on behalf of mercy to glorify God (15.7-8).

conduct of the Christian who does possess the inner freedom to do that which he does'. *Hamartia* is the broken condition into which such a believer lapses.

97. Love without pretense, love that does not please itself, is a polar opposite of the ethics of honor-shame culture, whose challenge-response orientation is directed toward the exercise of power to gain honor and advantage over the weak. See Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 40-43.

The incorporation of the Gentiles in God's salvation of justice is directly dependent on the coming of *the Christ* in fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham. In all likelihood Paul, on the basis of his experience with the Corinthian believers, affirms this for the benefit of his Jewish addressees who, by their adherence to the purity code, may be judged, possibly even despised, by their fellow Gentile believers as 'weak' and 'powerless' in their relationship to the trust of Abraham and the trust of Jesus Christ. By employing the titular form, *ho Christos*, Paul also is confronting his Gentile addressees with the reality that Jesus as *the Christ* is ethnically the Jewish Messiah and they, as Gentiles, are expressly dependent upon the Christ as beneficiaries of his fulfillment of the conditions of the testament of inheritance that God constituted with Abraham.<sup>98</sup>

The Christ, as the Jewish Messiah whose establishment of the promises of the fathers has benefited the Jews as well as the Gentiles, did not please himself in his ministry of exercising God's rule on God's behalf in order to actualize God's justice. The work of healing and restoration to which he directed himself resulted in suffering reproaches, insults and death. To support his exhortation to both ethnicities among his addressees, Paul presents *the Christ* as the speaker of the words of LXX Ps. 68(69).10b:

For the Christ did not please himself, even as it is written, 'The abuse of the ones abusing you fell on me'.<sup>99</sup>

The insults that *the Christ* suffered doing God's work were directed toward God but they fell on Jesus as God's surrogate. Similarly, his addressees, as members of God's New Humanity of life-giving spirits, are to emulate *the Christ* by not pleasing themselves as they engage in the same works of justice and restoration and suffer similar reproaches and abuses. Accordingly, they, as members of the Body of Christ, may rightfully appropriate the words of the Psalmist for themselves, 'The abuse of the ones abusing you fell on me'. Whatever ill-treatment they may suffer is directed toward God, but it is falling on them as God's representatives.<sup>100</sup>

98. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 355-56, on the basis of Ps. 69.10, identifies the titular form, *the Christ*, of 15.3 with the Suffering Servant of the Lord. Paul uses its fulfillment in Jesus Christ to exhort the Roman believers to follow Jesus in self-denial and bear with the weaknesses of the powerless. Michel is reminded of Phil. 2.6-7. See also Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 732; Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 382; Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 838; Jewett, *Romans*, p. 879.

99. LXX Ps. 68.10b (69.10b).

100. Of the many commentators, only Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 355, appears to recognize that the abuses of the abusers were directed at God but suffered by the Psalmist. Yet in view of Paul's use of the titular form, *the Christ*, he does not apply that recognition to the members of the Christ, namely the Body of Christ.

## 15.4. Scribal Interpolation

Disturbingly, the application of this text of LXX Ps. 68(69).10b is validated by the following verse, 15.4, in a mode that is uncharacteristic of Paul:

For such things *written beforehand* (*proographē*) were written for our instruction so that through *perseverance* (*hypomonē*) and through the *encouragement* (*paraklēsis*) of the Scriptures we have *hope*.

Paul does not legitimate his use of Scripture! More specifically, he does not utilize a catechetical or moralistic justification of Scripture to defend the relevance of a particular passage. The one possible exception appears to be 4.22-23:

Wherefore it was credited to him unto justice. Now it was written not only on account of him, 'It was credited to him', but also on account of us to whom it is going to be credited ...

Prior to 4.1-22, Paul laid a foundation for a clarification of the meaning of the double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *ek pisteōs eis pistin* (out of trust into trust). The justice of God that the gospel discloses begins with *ek pisteōs*. It is Abraham, who according to 4.16, lived 'out of trust' and 'it was credited to him unto justice'. In ch. 4 Paul distinguished Abraham as the origination of the trust that was determined by the trusting relationship he and God shared and the commitment to justice that it presupposed. The apostle employs 4.23-25 as a transition from the underlying significance of *ek pisteōs* in Abraham's relationship of trust into the second of the double prepositional phrase of 1.17, *eis pistin*. As Paul approaches his interpretation of the Christ event in relation to *eis pistin*, he pauses to apply God's accreditation to those who journey *out of the trust* (*ek pisteōs*) of the first testamentary heir, Abraham, to those who will enter into the trust (*eis pistin*) of the second testamentary heir, Jesus Christ. The initiating clause of 4.23, 'Now it was written not (*ouk egraphē*) only on account of him', is not offered to the addressees as a legitimation of the quotation of Gen. 15.6. It serves simply as a transition from the elucidation of *ek pisteōs* into *eis pistin*.

The compound verb *proographē* (it was written beforehand), which is used to point back to the Scriptures, is suspect because of its superfluous significance in this context.<sup>101</sup> The truth that it conveys, especially in view of the use of the simple *egraphē* that follows, would naturally be presupposed. The Scriptures were written beforehand, and, in fact, they do teach. Indeed, they teach patience and encouragement, but that is not Paul's basis of

101. The only other use of this compound verb form, *proographē*, in the letters of Paul is found in Gal. 3.1, but there it bears the meaning of a portrayal of the crucified Christ through the preaching of the gospel.



hope.<sup>102</sup> 'We are saved by hope', as he stated in 8.24-26, but it is a hope that is reinforced by God's gift of the *deposit* (*arrabōn*) of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. 1.22).

Verse 5 is the appropriate continuation of v. 3. It is the God of perseverance and encouragement who, in spite of the differences between the weaknesses of the powerless and the able or the powerful (*dynatoi*), who will enable them together to realize their divine solidarity. The God of Israel, who has persevered with Israel throughout the centuries of Israel's history, will continue to persevere. The God of Israel, who also encourages, will continue to comfort and console through those entrusted with prophecy, ministry, teaching and those who are called to encourage and console within the community of believers, as Paul designated in 12.6-7.

Consequently, it may be concluded that the *perseverance* (*hypomonē*) and the *encouragement* (*paraklēsis*) that the Scriptures offer as the basis of hope, according to v. 4, have been drawn from v. 5. It is not the Scriptures, but the God who perseveres and encourages who will unite them in the solidarity of the Body of Christ.

Romans 15.4, therefore, in all likelihood is another of the many interpolations that the text of Romans suffered in its subsequent scribal transmission.<sup>103</sup>

#### 5.5-6. *Continuation of the Ethics of God's New Humanity*

Verse 5, then, continues Paul's movement of thought as he reaches the end of his formulation of the ethics of God's New Humanity. Accordingly, God will continue to persevere with this New Humanity that God has generated through Jesus Christ, and, at the same time, God's encouragement will enable them 'to think the same thing among each other according to Christ Jesus':

102. Because the manuscript tradition of v. 4 deletes the second of the twofold use of the preposition *dia* (by), only the clause 'we have encouragement' would be linked to the Scriptures. Perseverance (*hypomonē*), then, would not be included in its instruction; it would be a state of being, analogous to that which Paul in 8.25 related to waiting in hope for 'the redemption of our bodies'.

103. Michel, *Romans*, p. 319, refers to 15.4 as an *eingesprengter Lehrsatz* (inserted article of instruction), but nevertheless considers it to be authentically Pauline. See also Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 382. But Leander E. Keck, 'Romans 15.4—An Interpolation?', in John T. Carroll, Charles H. Cosgrove and E. Elizabeth Johnson (eds.), *Faith and History: Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 124-36, has examined 15.4 from various perspectives and, in view of his analysis of its problematic function in 15.1-6, concludes with a judgment of 'probable' *vis-à-vis* the possibility of interpolation.

Now the God of perseverance and encouragement grant you to think the same thing among each other according to Christ Jesus in order that unanimously with one mouth you glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (15.5-6).

For Paul, 'thinking the same thing' refers to a unified commitment of mind and body to a common purpose: to live and to relate to each other as representatives of a New Humanity. Such a community embodiment of God's will is implicit in the phrase, *Christ Jesus* (*Christou Iēsou*), that is, the union of heaven and earth that is represented by the New Humanity of life-giving spirits. The unity in deed and in word which they express in their solidarity will be analogous to 'one mouth [that] glorifies the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' which coincidentally will manifest the empirical reality of God's New Humanity.

#### 15.7-13. *Conclusion of the Ethics of God's New Humanity*

Consequently, in view of all that they have in common in their mutual inclusiveness as members of the Body of Christ, Paul urges his addressees to embrace that inclusiveness: 'Wherefore welcome each other *into the glory of God* as Christ welcomed you'. In their freedom of upholding and supporting each other in and through the love of God's indwelling Spirit, their metamorphosis according to the image of the Christ will evolve 'from glory into glory' (2 Cor. 3.18). In 14.1 Paul exhorted his addressees to welcome those who are 'weak with respect to trust'. Now all of them, as a New Humanity that is constituted as a universal family of God, are charged to welcome each other, regardless of their differences in piety and ethnic origin.<sup>104</sup> The vision of a cosmic Tree of Life that Paul had offered in 11.16-26, one that is destined to include all human beings, is grounded in God's universal mercy through the work of Jesus Christ: 'For God consigned the all [Jews and Gentiles] unto disobedience so that God might show mercy to the all'. Here in 15.7-13 Paul has come full circle. The gospel, as he declared in 1.16, is 'the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek'. Through the work of Jesus Christ and through the power of the gospel the two ethnicities are united in the New Humanity of the Body of Christ. On this basis, therefore Paul exhorts both groups:

104. In this context it is natural to conclude that Paul's exhortation 'to think the same thing' is intended for the so-called strong and weak. But, in view of his separate addresses to Jews and Gentiles in different contexts of Romans, it is more likely that at the conclusion of his ethics of the New Humanity he is exhorting the ethnicities of Jews and Gentiles among his believing addressees. So also Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 741, and Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 845. See also 1 Cor. 1.10; 2 Cor. 13.11; Phil. 2.2; 3.16; 4.2.

Wherefore receive each other into your homes (*proslambanesthe*), even as the Christ received you into his home (*proselabeto*) into the glory of God.<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, the Jews naturally remain first, as Paul implies in 15.8, 'For I say Christ has become a *diakonon* (servant, intermediary) of *circumcision* for the sake of God's truth so that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs'.<sup>106</sup> It is significant that the Jews are not identified by name but by circumcision, the sign of the covenant, in this conclusion to the lengthy exhortation of 14.1–15.6 that Paul addressed to the so-called weak who eat vegetables and those who have no compunction about a purity code and eat everything. It is 'the capstone' of his paraenesis.<sup>107</sup>

The Gentiles, of course, are included, as Paul has certified as early as 4.10–13 and more recently in 11.17–22, by their incorporation into the cosmic Tree of Life. Now again in 15.9, he reaffirms their inclusion: 'but the Gentiles for the sake of mercy glorify God'. However, the correlation between these two clauses of 15.8–9, 'Christ the servant of the circumcision' and 'the mercy for which the Gentiles glorify God', is somewhat obscure because the grammatical relationship between vv. 8 and 9 is awkward. The opening causal clause of v. 8, 'For I say...', is Paul's personal response to the exhortation of v. 7: 'Wherefore you (plural) receive each other even as *the Christ* received you into the glory of God'. Christ has received both ethnicities, and therefore they are to receive each other through *the Christ* (*ho Christos*) into the glory of God. Paul's response to this divine inclusion is conveyed at the beginning of v. 8, 'For I say...', and it conveys a strong apostolic tone that binds the two verses together and prepares the reader for the first person pronouns embedded in the verbs of LXX Ps. 17(18).50, which is cited in v. 9b, *I shall confess (exomologēsomai)* and *I shall sing (psalō)*:<sup>108</sup>

For I say Christ to have become a *diakonon* (agent, intermediary) of circumcision on behalf of the truth of God in order to fulfill the promises of the fathers, and the Gentiles on behalf of mercy to glorify God, even as it is written: 'On account of this I shall confess you among the Gentiles and I shall sing to your name'.

105. For the verb *proslambanō* in Rom. 15.7, Danker (ed.), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 883, offers the basic meaning of 'to extend a welcome' but more specifically 'to receive into one's home' or 'to receive into one's circle of acquaintances'.

106. Leander E. Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God (Romans 15.7–13)', in Fortna and Gaventa (eds.), *The Conversation Continues*, pp. 85–97 (87), has determined 'what makes this paragraph, 15.7–13, potentially important for the interpretation of chaps. 14–15 is the fact that here, and only here, does the text speak of Jews and Gentiles'.

107. Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God', p. 85.

108. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 846, citing Cranfield, Michel and Käsemann, characterizes Paul's opening words of 15.8, 'For I say...' as 'a solemn doctrinal declaration'.

As God's apostle to the Gentiles, Paul is establishing a necessary interdependence between Christ as God's agent to the Jews to fulfill God's promises to their ancestors *and* Christ as an intermediary to the Gentiles for the sake of mercy.<sup>109</sup> The contrast between 'for the sake of God's truth' and 'the Gentiles for the sake of mercy', is particularly significant because it implies the priority of the Jews. Paul, as an apostle to the Gentiles, is stating that the Gentiles have been mercied because Christ established the truth of God by fulfilling the promises God made to the ancestors of the Jews. The inclusion of the Gentiles, therefore, is directly dependent on the coming of Christ in fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham.<sup>110</sup> Indirectly they are equal beneficiaries with the Jews.

To reinforce this divinely willed inclusiveness, Paul cites four scriptural texts, selected from the three divisions of the Scriptures—the Writings, the Law and the Prophets—in order to consolidate his pronouncement of vv. 8-9. The first is drawn from LXX Ps. 17(18).50 and its parallel in 2 Sam. 22.50, omitting only the word *Kyrie* (Lord), the one to whom the verse is addressed, because it is easily presupposed:

On account of this, *I* shall confess you among the Gentiles, and *I* shall sing praises to your name.

God, of course, is the addressee. The pronoun 'I' of the verb 'I shall confess' is not the Psalmist but in all likelihood the 'I' of the verb 'I say', introducing v. 8.<sup>111</sup> Accordingly, the first quotation is coincidentally autobiographical.

109. As Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God', p. 90, says, 'Christ's becoming a servant of the circumcision has a dual purpose (*de* now regarded as "and"): confirmation of the promises and evocation of the Gentiles' glorification of God'. The perfect infinitive, *gegenēsthai* (to have become), is preferable to the aorist infinitive, *genesthai* (to become once and for all) because, as Keck acknowledges, it is the more difficult reading and because it conveys Christ's having become and continuing to be a servant of the circumcision. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 846, notes this as the only Pauline reference to Christ as a *diakonos*.

110. Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God', p. 91, has said it more correctly than others: 'Had he [the Christ] not been a Jew, the promise that the Gentiles would be blessed through Abraham could not have been kept, and this would have violated the integrity, the fidelity, and the truthfulness of God'. See Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pp. 397-98, and Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 385. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 847, asks, 'Does Paul think of the promises as "fulfilled" in the extension of Abraham's promised blessing to the Gentiles?' See also Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 892-93.

111. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 386, states, '...the apostle to the Gentiles finds his own task delineated in Scripture'. See also Jewett, *Romans*, p. 894. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 849, alternates between reading the quotation messianically, 'as words which express the gentile outreach of the mission set in motion by Christ, or that these are the words of the devout Jew (David) foreshadowing the situation of the Jew, and now particularly the Jewish Christian'. Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God', p. 93,

Paul, in the light of vv. 8 and 9 and in accordance with his earlier acknowledgment as an 'Apostle of the Gentiles' in 11.13, is implying its fulfillment in his own ministry. Throughout his apostolic career he has been confessing God among the Gentiles, and the work that he has been engaged in is offered as a sacrifice of praise to God.

The second quotation is an edited fragment of the concluding eight-line stanza of the Song of Moses drawn from Deut. 32.43. Paul has appropriated only the third line; the rest of it is irrelevant and therefore precluded. While, on the one hand, it implies the union of the Gentiles with the *people of God* (*laos*), it may also function as an invocation to the Gentiles to rejoice with them because Christ's coming to fulfill the Scriptures has brought God's mercy to them. For if they have received mercy by Christ, the servant of circumcision, the distant summons of Moses is appropriately addressed to them:

Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.

The third citation is especially appropriate in view of the inclusiveness that Paul validated in 15.8-9. It is derived from LXX Ps. 116(117).1. Paul has revised the Septuagint version before inserting it into this context. The addressees of 15.11a, namely the Gentiles, have been relocated and placed immediately after the opening imperative, 'Praise, all Gentiles, the Lord'. That change makes 15.11a correspond to the placement of 'the Gentiles' in 15.10 and reinforces the focus on the Gentiles who through Christ have been mercied by God. In the first sentence of the quotation all the Gentiles are invoked to praise God; in the second sentence, 15.11b, the third person plural of the aorist imperative has been substituted for the second person plural imperative of LXX Ps. 116(117).1b. Paul's revision intimates the inclusiveness of the Gentiles in the third person imperative of 15.11b, and therefore the command to praise the Lord is no longer addressed unilaterally to God's people Israel. As the result of their incorporation into God's people, they, the Gentiles, together with God's people as part of *all the peoples* (*pantes hoi laoi*) sharing in a common salvation, are enjoined to praise God.<sup>112</sup>

Praise, all Gentiles, the Lord; and let *all the peoples* (*pantes hoi laoi*) praise him.

The fourth quotation in 15.12, more than the previous three, is more immediately related to 15.8-9. It is a literal rendition of Isa. 11.10, except for the necessary deletion of the eschatological phrase, 'in that day', which, in view of the Christ event, is no longer apposite:

ascribes the 'I' of the two verbs in the first person singular, *exomologēsomai* and *psalō*, 'to Christ—that is, to the pre-existent Christ's declaring in advance the purpose of his impending incarnation'.

112. Also Jewett, *Romans*, p. 895.

There will be the shoot of Jesse, even the one raised up to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles will hope.

Christologically speaking, Paul has come full circle. At the beginning of his letter in 1.3-4 he introduced a fragment of a creedal formula which connects God's Son to the ethnic Messiah of 'the seed of David according to the flesh'. Here, at the end of his letter, he refers to *the Christ* as the one who receives both Jews and Gentiles into God's glory. And he does so in the context of returning to 'the seed of David' under its ethnic equivalence, 'the shoot of Jesse', in order to relate the Messiah of the Jewish people to the rule of the Gentiles.<sup>113</sup> In Paul's reading of Isa. 11.10, the participle, *the one raised up* (*anhistamenos*) would imply resurrection. First Thessalonians 4.14 and 4.16 bear witness to his use of this verb *anhistēmi* in that sense. Consequently, it is as *the resurrected one* that the shoot of Jesse will rule the Gentiles. As *the resurrected one* he, in the christological identity of the Davidic Messiah, has inaugurated a new creation and therefore also has fulfilled the messianic vision of Isa. 11.6-9 that precedes the text that is cited here in 15.12. The Gentiles will submit to his rule because his rule is identifiable with *the reign of God* that he, the shoot of Jesse, the seed of David, has established. They will hope in him because the salvation that he originated in fulfillment of the promises God made to the patriarchs ultimately includes them as full participants.

Paul concludes this third major section of this letter with the benediction of 15.13: 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in trusting so that you abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit'. The God of hope is the God who subordinated the creation to futility, not willingly, but in the hope that the creation would be liberated from its bondage by God's daughters and sons who have been generated and empowered by God's Spirit. As sons and daughters of God's family of both Jews and Gentiles, Paul's addressees are to be filled with the fullness of joy and peace in their mutual relationship in their participation in the trust of Abraham and the trust of Jesus Christ.

113. Keck, 'Christology, Soteriology, and the Praise of God', p. 92, convinced that Paul himself created 15.7-13, nevertheless, claims that he adopted a tradition that consisted of vv. 8+12 and inserted into it the threefold quotation as well as certain phrases in order to bind it to his larger context. He goes on to say, 'The tradition made the legitimacy of Gentile Christianity conditional on the acceptance of Jesus' Davidic messiahship, not unlike what we find later in Matthew'. Perhaps. Yet so much of this remarkable conclusion in its relation to 14.1-15.6—the apostolic use of the pronoun 'I' that may be correlated to the 'I' of the quotation of LXX Ps. 17(18).50, the intimated prioritization of the Jews—and the replication of 1.3-4 in the quotation of Isa. 11.1, 10 appears to preclude an earlier tradition.

# 12

## PLANS FOR THE IMMINENT FUTURE

### 15.14-21. *Motives for Writing*

To write a letter that is addressed to two different communities, one that is known only by hearsay and the other that is known intimately through a three-year sojourn of preaching and teaching, requires a delicate sensitivity that will evade every possibility of evoking resentment and indignation in either community. Greater mindfulness and solicitude would naturally be conveyed toward the addressees of the unknown community, while a certain trust, based on personal endearing relationships, would anticipate a charitable and perspicacious understanding of the intention of the letter by the well-known community.

Paul's Letter to the Romans, which was addressed to the circumstantially known church at Rome but also delivered as a second copy to the church in Ephesus, perhaps by Phoebe of Cenchrea, conveys a discriminating perceptiveness by Paul of how to present himself and his teaching as an apostle of Jesus Christ. The members of the house churches at Ephesus know him and are familiar with his theology; and their reading of this letter will re-engage them in the theologizing he shared with them during his sojourn in their city. In their reading they may well discover new insights that Paul has synthesized into his theology as the result of continued reflection. Moreover, they will be recipients of his affectionate, family-like greetings of ch. 16.

To the congregation in Rome, however, he is a stranger distinguished only by the reports of his person and apostleship that have been circulating in the Mediterranean world. Although he does not hesitate to communicate his apostolic authority in and through his employment of rhetorical strategy, he appears to be deeply concerned that, whatever preconceptions of his apostleship might prevail among them, he will not be perceived as an intimidating personage. He closes his letter with intonations of benevolent and engaging affinity similar to that which he had expressed in the preamble of his letter, 1.8-16. Now, having reached the end of his theological and ethical formulations, he evidently realizes that, as a stranger to the churches



at Rome, it is necessary to state his motive for sharing what he has written. Verses 15-16 are directed to them:

Now *I* have been convinced, my brothers and sisters, *even I myself* concerning you that you are full of goodness, having been filled with all knowledge and enabled to instruct each other. But I wrote you more boldly in part as a way of reminding you by virtue of the grace given to me by God, so that I am a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, in priestly service to the gospel of God so that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Paul utilizes both the first person singular of the verb, ‘*I am convinced*’, and the combination of the first person pronoun, *I* (*egō*), preceded by the conjunction *kai* (translated here as *even*) and the reflexive pronoun *myself* (*autos*) in order to stress his complete confidence that his addressees, first of all, are ‘full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and capable of instructing each other’. This is a necessary acknowledgment because he, as a stranger, has addressed them with an unsolicited letter of an instructional discourse on his theology and ethics. By assuring them that they are ‘full of goodness’, he is able to hope for a benevolent, even sensitive, responsiveness to what he has shared with them. By expressing his confidence that they ‘have been filled with all knowledge’ to the extent that they are able to instruct each other, he is intimating that they also have the capacity to comprehend the complexity of the theological thought that he has formulated.<sup>2</sup> But the meaning that is ascribed to the prepositional phrase *apo merous* (in part) in 15.15 is determined by the presupposed objective of Paul’s letter. If it is judged to have been designed to offer supplementary or corrective instruction specifically to the congregations at Rome, the translation, *in some points*, encountered in the RSV and the NRSV, is appropriate.<sup>3</sup> But Paul’s letter was not written to correct or augment the theological beliefs or ethical practices of the Roman community of believers. The structure and content of

1. The phrase *kai autoi* (you yourselves also) is omitted in the translation because it is omitted in P<sup>46</sup> D F G and the Old Latin.

2. The text of 15.14 in P<sup>46</sup> includes a definite article between the adjective *all* (*pasēs*) and the noun *knowledge*. In such a case the adjective *pasēs* is generally translated as *all*. See Moule, *Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*, pp. 93-95. P<sup>46</sup> also includes the pronoun *my* (*mou*) after the noun, *brothers*. Note that the conjunction *kai* (also) followed by the second person reflexive pronoun, *yourselves*, does not appear in P<sup>46</sup>.

3. The NIV translates *apo merous* as ‘on some points’. See Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 905-906, who, after examining the various possible meanings of the prepositional phrase, *apo merous*, concludes, on the one hand, that ‘Paul’s discourse is “partially” a reminder of what the Roman converts already know and believe’. Yet, on the other hand, he goes on to say, ‘Honest and effective rhetoric requires Paul to admit that part of his letter moves beyond reminder toward a timely, prophetic claim against their present and future behavior, a claim consistent with the grace of God shown in the Christ event’.

Romans require it to be identified as a theological treatise addressed to a growing communion of Jews and Gentiles in the Mediterranean world—initially, in terms of its addressees, in Rome and Ephesus. Romans represents Paul's objective to establish a theological foundation that will unite Jews and Gentiles in and through a gospel of salvation in which the redefined justice of God, no longer disclosed by the punitive law of Sinai but by the law of love, is directed toward world reconciliation and restoration.

The phrase, *apo merous*, placed between the verb *I wrote* (*egrapsa*) and the present participle *calling to mind* (*epanamimnēskōn*), undoubtedly qualifies both the verb and the participle, and, as in 15.24, 2 Cor. 1.14 and 2.5, it conveys a sense of *to some extent* or *in some degree*. Because the Roman believers are 'full of goodness, having been filled with all knowledge and able to instruct each other', he wrote more boldly, to some extent at least, to call to mind what they already know. The participle that he has utilized, *epanamimnēskōn* (call to mind, remind), 'occurring only here in biblical Greek', is a rhetorical form that 'appears occasionally in literary Greek'.<sup>4</sup> It is a gracious acknowledgment of their own advanced theological understanding, but qualified by the phrase, *apo merous* (to some extent). In other words, he wrote more boldly to remind them of what they already know, but, on the other hand, to share with them what he also has to offer—beyond what they already know. He has the capacity to do this 'because of the grace that was given to me by God so that I am a *leitourgon* (minister) of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, serving the gospel as a priest of God so that the offering of the Gentiles becomes acceptable, consecrated by the holy Spirit'.

In this fresh self-introduction he has chosen not to re-identify himself as an *apostolos*, the designation that distinguishes his office as an *apostle* of Christ Jesus which he employed in his salutation to his addressees in 1.1 and then again in 11.13 in a qualification of his apostleship to the Gentiles. What he has written is determined primarily by God's grace which has qualified him as a *leitourgos* of Christ Jesus toward the Gentiles'. This is the only occasion in all his letters in which he refers to himself in this distinctive way. A *leitourgos* is a person engaged in a special service, either administrative or cultic.<sup>5</sup> In 13.6 Paul designated certain administrative officials of government as *leitourgoi*, specifically those who are engaged in collecting taxes and tolls. In Phil. 2.25 he referred to Epaphroditus, the bearer of a monetary gift to Paul on behalf of the Philippian congregation, as 'your apostle and minister (*leitourgon*) of my need'. Moses, according to Josh. 1.1 was God's *leitourgon*. In Isa. 61.6, it is stipulated that brokenhearted Israel

4. Taken from Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 859. See also Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 391-92.

5. In the Greek world *leitourgos* designated a public official who discharged a particular task for society, sometimes at his own expense. See H. Strathmann, 'leitourgos', in *TWNT*, IV, pp. 221-38 (236-38); see also *TDNT*, IV, pp. 526-29.

will be called ‘priests of the Lord’ and will be named ‘*ministers (leitourgoi)* of God’. Paul, in his service as a *leitourgos* of Christ Jesus, is acknowledging his distinctive engagement by the grace of God in a ministry ‘unto the Gentiles’. He implies that it is a cultic ministry, for he has been ‘*serving the gospel of God as a priest (hierourgounta)* so that the *offering (prosphora)* of the Gentiles would be acceptable, consecrated by the holy Spirit’.<sup>6</sup> It is the special service to which he was called, and it is from that perspective that he has formulated his theological testament as a legacy or even a constitution to ground two ethnic communities, his own people, the Jews, and the Gentiles in God’s gospel of salvation.<sup>7</sup>

To establish his credentials as a *leitourgos* of Christ Jesus, who in the priestly service of the gospel has been offering up the Gentiles as an acceptable sacrifice to God, Paul claims that in Christ Jesus he has a boast of ‘those things toward God’. That is, he has no hesitation to be proud of *those things* that he has achieved as he has directed the fulfillment of his apostolic vocation toward God, who, according to Paul’s autobiographical recitation of Gal. 1.15-16, ‘appointed me from my mother’s womb and called me through his grace to disclose his Son in me so that I proclaim him among the Gentiles’. In this capacity as one who was appointed and called by God, he has been extremely successful. His boast, however, as he professes in v. 18, is determined by and limited to the things that Christ has accomplished through him for the obedience of the Gentiles. As a totality, *those things* include what he has done ‘in word and in deed, in the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit’. The first pair, word and deed, would denote his apostolic preaching and teaching, activities that he engaged in during his sojourn in the cities in which he evangelized. The latter pair, *signs and wonders*, are not enumerated. But Paul’s inclusion of this formulaic combination, in view of its frequent occurrence in conjunction with the mighty works of God that characterize the liberation event of the Exodus, implies that he correlates himself and his ministry to the Gentiles with the new Exodus that God has constituted through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> He had formulated that eschatological–theological equivalence between the Old Exodus and the New Exodus in 9.16-26. Consequently, God’s deliverance of humankind from the bondage of *hamartia*, like God’s emancipation of Israel from Egyptian enslavement, must be accompanied by

6. The word *offering (prosphora)*, occurring only here in the letters of Paul, supports the cultic significance of *leitourgos* in v. 16, for, like the uses of *prosphora* in LXX Ps. 39.6 and Dan. 3.38, it bears the sense of *sacrifice*.

7. Similarly, Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 867, says, ‘This is Paul’s way of underscoring his theological exposition of the gospel in its outworking in his own missionary vocation’.

8. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 910, cites these texts: LXX Exod. 7.3; Deut. 7.19; 29.3; 34.11 and Ps. 135.9.

signs and wonders. This formulaic phrase also occurs five times in the Acts of the Apostles to characterize God's inauguration of the reign of God through the new Exodus that Jesus Christ has accomplished.<sup>9</sup> 'In word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the holy Spirit', this is the sum total of Paul's ministry in the priestly service of the gospel, and it has been concentrated in the eastern half of the Mediterranean world. As he states in vv. 19-21,

So that from Jerusalem as far around as Illyricum I have completed the gospel of Christ. And so *aspiring* to evangelize where Christ has not been named, in order that I do not build on another foundation, but as it is written, '*They will see*, those to whom it was not disclosed about him, and those who have not heard will understand'.<sup>10</sup>

To vindicate his apostolic strategy to evangelize where Christ has not been named, Paul cites LXX Isa. 52.15, but moves the verb, *they will see*, to the beginning of the quotation, apparently to emphasize the positive response of seeing that he has experienced in the fulfillment of his apostolic commission to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. It is the reason why he has been prevented from visiting them earlier.

### 15.22-33. *Rome, Spain and Jerusalem*

But now Paul is looking westward to Rome and beyond. As he stated in 1.11, he has longed to see the believers at Rome, and he would like to impart a spiritual gift to them or, as he rephrased his intention in 1.12, 'to be mutually encouraged among you through the mutuality of trust, both yours and mine'. His intention has been thwarted many times, but now that area in which he has been laboring is closed to him, perhaps because the churches of the cities in which he labored have begun to saturate the rural countryside with the preaching of the gospel. Whatever the reason may be, he is finally able to fulfill his desire to visit them. But his aspiration to evangelize where Christ has not been named is also motivating him to move on into Spain. Now, for the first time, he informs them of his projection of a continued ministry in Spain:

9. In Lk. 9.31 Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus about the *exodus* that he would accomplish in Jerusalem; and Moses and Elijah are present in the empty tomb on Easter morning to bear witness that the Exodus has been actualized. On *signs and wonders* in Acts, see 4.30; 5.12; 6.8; 14.3; 15.12.

10. The neuter participle *philotimoumenon* (aspiring) is certainly the more difficult reading, and, because it is not related to any other word in v. 20, it may serve along with the following infinitive as Paul's enunciated missionary principle. Paul used this verb earlier in 1 Thess. 4.11 and 2 Cor. 5.9 to convey the same meaning: to aspire, to strive earnestly.

But now, no longer having a place in these regions and having a longing for many years to come to you, with a view [that] I might proceed into Spain.

Spain is his ultimate goal. Nothing was said of this in the preamble of 1.8-16. He professed only that he longed to see them and to be encouraged among them through the mutual sharing of faith. More in that context was unnecessary.

As abrupt as this announcement of continuing into Spain may be, it is expressed in terms of contingency or indefinite time: 'with a view [that] I might proceed (*hōs an poreuōmai*) into Spain'. The adverbial conjunction *hōs* followed by the particle *an*, which expresses indefiniteness or contingency, requires the use of the subjunctive mood in the verb *poreuōmai* (I might proceed). Evidently Paul is uncertain about the prospect of evangelizing in Spain.<sup>11</sup> The indefiniteness of that intention may be linked to the original uncertainty of being able to visit the saints in Rome that he expressed earlier in 1.10, '...praying if somehow now at last by the will of God I might have a prosperous journey to come to you'.<sup>12</sup> What, then, is the reason for this hesitation? He does not immediately say.

Before he continues to share his plans, he pauses to reassure the members of the Roman house churches that he wants to spend some time with them: 'For passing through I hope to take you in with my own eyes (*theasasthai*) and to be sped on my journey (*propemphthēnai*) there, if first I may to some extent (*apo merous*) enjoy your company'. The aorist passive infinitive, *propemphthēnai*, includes the necessary assistance in sending someone on a journey by providing food, money and even companions that will enable the traveler to reach his/her destination. Paul is anticipating that the church at Rome will help bear the expenses of his journey to Spain.

But he breaks off this sentence of v. 24 in order to inform his addressees that he is prioritizing a trip to Jerusalem: 'But now I am proceeding to Jerusalem rendering assistance to the saints'. In these closing verses of ch. 15 Paul announces that he is anticipating three trips: to Rome and

11. According to 1 Clem. 5.7, 'To the whole world he taught righteousness, and reaching the limits of the West, he bore his witness before rulers'. Translation from *Early Christian Fathers: The Library of Christian Classics* (trans. and ed. Cyril C. Richardson; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 43-73 (46). According to Acts, Rome is 'the limits of the West'. According to Cranfield, *Romans*, II, p. 768, the phrase in 1 Clem. 5.7, *to terma tēs dusōs*, refers to Spain and, judging Clement's witness more positively, he is inclined to think that Paul did get there. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 872, who is more doubtful, indicates how obviously Spain was a step beyond Rome.

12. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 397, surmised that Paul 'must avoid the suspicion that he wants to make the world capital his own domain, and he does not want to say brusquely that he regards it merely as a bridgehead'.

beyond Rome to Spain, but more immediately to Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> Before he can undertake this long-anticipated journey to Rome, he must first fulfill the promise he made at the Jerusalem Council approximately ten years earlier. In the context of that Council, as he had shared with the Galatians (2.10), the pillars of the Jerusalem church, having validated his ministry to the Gentiles, exhorted him to remember the *destitute* (*ptōchoi*). Paul's response, 'the very thing I would make every effort to do', gradually materialized in the form of a collection that he undertook to fulfill his promise.<sup>14</sup> The earliest reference to his effort at achieving its fulfillment occurs in 1 Cor. 16.1:<sup>15</sup>

Now concerning the collection for the saints, even as I instructed the churches of Galatia, so also you do. On the first day of the week let each of you set aside and store up whatever extra he or she earns, so that there will be no collections then when I come. And when I arrive, I shall send by letters those whom you approve to carry the gift to Jerusalem. And if it should be appropriate that I also go, they will accompany me.

Now, at the writing of this letter, Paul is in Corinth again; it may be the year 58 CE. The offering that he solicited from his established congregations has been collected, and the decision has been made that he too would go to Jerusalem. In fact, his journey to Jerusalem appears to be very imminent: 'But now I am going to Jerusalem'. As the leader of this Gentile-Jewish delegation, he will present this monetary gift as an offering to the Jerusalem church for the welfare of the *destitute* (*ptōchoi*).<sup>16</sup> 'Macedonia and Achaia

13. Keck's question in 'What Makes Romans Tick?', p. 17, can be asked in this context: '...in a letter that twice speaks of Paul's travel plans, why does he not once allude to Jewish Christians' return to Rome (including Prisca and Aquila)?'

14. Antoinette Clark Wire, 'RESPONSE: Paul and Those outside Power', in Horsely (ed.), *Paul and Politics*, pp. 224-26 (224), construes Paul's collection as an effort to vindicate one Judaism in the eyes of another. Batiou's interpretation, *Saint Paul*, p. 29, is worth adding, 'By accepting their donations, the center ratifies the legitimacy of the Gentile-Christian groups. It demonstrates that neither membership of the Jewish community, nor the marks of that membership, nor being situated on the land of Israel are pertinent criteria for deciding whether a constituted group does or does not belong within the Christian sphere of influence.'

15. On the collection, see 2 Cor. 8-9. See also Keith F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy* (Studies in Biblical Theology, 48; Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1966), and Dieter Georgi, *Die Geschichte der Kollekte des Paulus für Jerusalem* (Theologische Forschung; Hamburg-Bergstedt: Reich, 1965).

16. The word *ptōchoi* may denote the unemployed poor, the destitute, in contrast to the employed poor (*penētoi*). See Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Gospel and the Poor* (trans. Dietlinde Elliott; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 32-38. The general consensus is that the phrase, *the poor of the saints*, is a partitive genitive. Here, as well as in Gal. 2.10, *ptōxoi* almost certainly refers to the poverty-stricken members of the Jerusalem church.

were pleased to undertake *a specific fellowship* (*koinōnia tina*) toward the destitute of the saints in Jerusalem.’ The *specific fellowship*, of course, is the offering taken up by the Gentile churches, apparently quite substantial in terms of amount. Paul considered it to be a rightful obligation to the church from which the Gospel had originated, and evidently his Gentile–Jewish congregations concurred. ‘For’, as he repeats in v. 27, ‘they were pleased, and they are their debtors. For, if the Gentiles shared in their spiritual things, they ought also to minister to them with material things’. Moreover, as an act of solidarity with the poverty-stricken of the Jerusalem church, this offering, characterized as a *specific fellowship*, also served to communicate Paul’s unyielding aspiration to maintain an identifying unity with the Jerusalem church. Chapters 9 through 11 substantiate this resolute disposition.

When he has completed this task, as he says in v. 27, ‘I shall go off into Spain by way of you’. But only after ‘sealing to them this fruit’. Delivering and sealing this fruit to the saints of the Jerusalem church will involve an attestation, a confirmation, by the recipients of the church that they have received this monetary gift and, at the same time, have certified to Paul that its intention and design are embraced as a manifestation of the trust that they share. For they are united in ‘the justice of God that is disclosed “out of trust into trust”’, the trust of Abraham and the trust of Jesus Christ, that Paul distinguished in 1.17, 3.21, 4.16–25 and 5.1.

Paul is convinced his coming to them will be a coming in the fullness of Christ’s blessing, when he has fulfilled this mission to Jerusalem. But he is very apprehensive about this mission. Will the church in Jerusalem receive the offering of his Gentile–Jewish congregations? Will they welcome it as a sign of solidarity? Will they affirm it as a benevolent demonstration of desired unity? In view of all that has happened since the Apostolic Council and its validation of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, will that earlier bond of mutual trust be effectively present to bridge any misgivings and suspicions that may have developed on the basis of hearsay? His anxiety induces him to appeal to his addressees to intercede for him in prayer:

Now I implore you through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit to strive together with me in prayers toward God on my behalf so that I shall be delivered from the disobedient in Judea and my *ministry-service* (*diakonia*) unto Jerusalem should become welcome to the saints so that coming to you in joy through the will of God I might be refreshed among you (15.30–32).

Noteworthy in this invocation to contend in prayer with Paul is his use of the verb *synagōnisasthai*. Found only here in the New Testament in its compound form, it means *to join with someone in a common effort*. Knowing the risks involved in this undertaking, Paul is entreating all his addressees, the recipients of his letter at Rome and those at Ephesus, to agonize with him, to



join him in putting forth great effort in prayer so that, as he says in v. 31, 'I shall be delivered from the disobedient in Judea and my ministry-service unto Jerusalem should become welcome to the saints'. Paul is aware of the danger of this mission and shares his two fears. His language intimates the possibility of death at the hands of the *disobedient of Judea*; and more explicitly it also poses the possibility of rejection by the *saints of Jerusalem*.<sup>17</sup> The participle, *apeithountōn* (the disobedient ones) is all too often translated as *unbelievers*, but, as its other uses in Romans indicates, it refers to those who are 'disobedient' to God.<sup>18</sup> As Jews, they are believers! But presently there are some in Judea and in Jerusalem who, in spite of being believers, are disobedient to God's truth and therefore pose a threat, not only to Paul's mission but also to his life. If his service to the Jerusalem saints is favorably received and he is delivered from the peril posed by the disobedient of Judea and Jerusalem, he will be able to come to Rome *in joy through the will of God in anticipation of mutual refreshment*.

The concatenation of these circumstances and possibilities that Paul confronted at the time of writing this letter intimates a more effectual motive for the distinctive situational character of the Letter to the Romans. Of the three trips he is planning, the immediate journey to Jerusalem poses the greatest risk and makes the two that follow provisional. In view of the eventualities that he may encounter in Jerusalem, he may not reach Rome or Spain. The real possibility of martyrdom, implied in 15.30-32 and reinforced by Acts 21.8-14, necessitated a formulation of his theology of the gospel to be transmitted in the form of a letter. If the worst of his fears are actualized and he is killed, the Roman community of faith will at least possess what he hoped to accomplish by his letter, a formulation of his theological testament.<sup>19</sup> As such, Romans transcends Paul's earlier writings, and both its content and its situational character establish its singularity.

Paul concludes his letter to the church at Rome with the benediction of v. 33, 'The God of peace be with all of you! Amen.' In the previous benedi-

17. Cranfield, Romans, II, p. 778, concludes, '...here the thought that Paul's life may well be in danger is suggested'. According to Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 407, the verb *rysthō* (I am delivered) 'suggests danger of death'. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 878, states, 'Paul fears for his life'.

18. In 2.8 Paul associated 'those who are disobedient to the truth' with 'those who are committed to injustice'. In 10.21 he cited Isa. 65.2 to characterize Israel as 'a disobedient and obstinate people'. In 11.30 and 31 he contrasts the Gentiles and the Jews, 'For even as you once were disobedient to God, but now received mercy by their disobedience, so they are now disobedient so that by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy'.

19. In this context also it should be acknowledged again that Günther Bornkamm is the pioneer of identifying Romans as Paul's testament ('The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament', pp. 16-28).

ction of 15.13 Paul characterized God as ‘the God of hope’. As the God of hope, God is also the God of peace. For it is through ‘our Lord Jesus Christ [that] we have peace towards God’. Moreover, as Paul continued in 5.2, it is through ‘our Lord Jesus Christ [that] we have access by the trust into the grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God’. God, through the peace constituted by Jesus’ reconciling death, is the God who hopes that the peace in which God’s sons and daughters participate will be disseminated throughout the world by their engagement in activities of justice and peace.

Paul ends his letter with a concluding *Amen*. Galatians appears to be the only other letter that he ended in the same way. Whether that signifies that the Amen marks the conclusion of the letter cannot be determined with any finality. The manuscript tradition of his other letters appears to indicate that the final Amen was interpolated by later scribes.

There are no greetings attached to this edition of the letter that was sent to Rome. Yet no greetings are necessary because he knows no one in that church community. All the greetings are reserved for ch. 16, the appendix introducing Phoebe, that was attached to the letter that he sent to Ephesus. Paul generally concluded his letters with a benediction of *grace* (*charis*), as in 1 Cor. 16.23; 2 Cor. 13.13; Gal. 6.18; Phil. 4.23; 1 Thess. 5.28 and Philemon 25. But it should not be concluded that 15.33 cannot be the end of his letter to the Roman church because he has not pronounced that same benediction here. He had enunciated such a benediction in the salutation of his letter in 1.7b; and, as already observed, he pronounced an earlier benediction in 15.13. More seems to be unnecessary.

#### 16.25-27. The Doxology Following 15.33 in P<sup>46</sup>

The doxology of 16.25-27, which was appended to the three editions of Paul’s letter to the Romans that were circulating during the second and third centuries, is inauthentic.<sup>20</sup> Codex G does not include it anywhere; and it was absent in the ancestor of D F G. Linguistically it is not a Pauline formulation, although some of the words appear to be Pauline and probably were drawn from Paul’s letters: *stērizēin* (to confirm), *kata to euangelion mou* (according to my gospel), *apokalypsis* (revelation), *phaneroun* (to manifest), *hypakoē pisteōs* (obedience of trust), *gnōrizēin* (to know). The juxtaposition of *chronois aiōniois* is unusual and even contradictory, for it combines

20. This is the general consensus of the interpretation of 16.25-27, sometimes including the additional note that it was first added to Marcion’s edited version of Romans that ended at 14.23. However, Witherington, *Romans*, p. 400, considers the doxology to be an original part of Romans.

*measured time (chronois)* with *prolonged time (aiōniois)*. Together they must denote a very lengthy period of time, very likely the entire history of the Old Testament. That would signify that nothing in the Old Testament, none of its prophetic expectations of a new moral order, disclosed the truth of the gospel or the proclamation of Jesus Christ. They remained a mystery throughout that *prolonged period of time*. According to the eschatological perspective of vv. 25 and 26, none of the scriptural quotations of chs. 1–14 of Romans are necessarily perspicacious of Paul's interpretations. These citations do not naturally or inevitably convey the meaning that is drawn from them. Indeed, it could be concluded that Paul's distinctive hermeneutical orientation discloses the meaning, or, to use the term of v. 25, the mystery of these Old Testament texts. Accordingly, these texts remained a mystery for a prolonged period of time, though their meaning is now revealed through Paul's exposition of the Scriptures and God's authoritative directive. Paul's interpretations, therefore, are viewed analogously to the *peshet interpretation* of dreams in Daniel that are judged to be mysteries that transcend human understanding and require the wisdom of divine illumination, that is, the illumination of 'the only wise God'.<sup>21</sup>

If 'the mystery kept silent for long ages' has 'now been manifested through the prophetic writings', the referent of the phrase, 'the prophetic writings' cannot be identified with the Old Testament or its canon of the prophets. It must refer to more recent texts that would be regarded as both Scripture and prophecy. That determination would correspond to a Marcionite orientation. The last of the New Testament writings, 2 Peter, written perhaps in the context of the beginning of the canonization of the New Testament, identifies Paul's letters with 'the other Scriptures'. The Church's extension of Scripture in the second half of the second century, by constituting a New Testament in response to Marcion's rejection of the Old Testament and his canonical substitution of ten letters of Paul and the Gospel according to Luke, included Paul's letters as well as other writings originating from within the Israel of God. If Paul's letters are among 'other Scriptures', according to 2 Pet. 3.16, and if Scripture, according to 2 Pet. 1.20, is a bearer of prophecy, the phrase 'the prophetic writings' may also designate the letters of Paul. Moreover, as v. 21 continues, 'all prophecy of Scripture does not happen by one's own explanation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but moved by the holy Spirit human beings spoke from God'. Consequently, 'the mystery' of the Gospel was made known to all the Gentiles through 'the prophetic writings' of Paul.

21. For an analysis of the *peshet* method of interpretation encountered in the Qumran commentaries, see F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), pp. 7-17.

Yet the eschatological disparity between vv. 25 and 26 does not correspond to the eschatological perspective that Paul has conveyed throughout this letter or in any of his other letters. Although the scriptural quotations of this letter may not bear the immediate transparency of Paul's expositions, there are appropriations of Old Testament texts in other letters of Paul that more plainly and lucidly convey an eschatological anticipation of a time in the future when God's salvation would be actualized. The transparency of LXX Jer. 38(31).31-33 and its prophecy of a new covenant in which God will write the law on the hearts of the people of Israel is perceptively evident in 2 Cor. 3.3-6. The fulfillment of Isaiah's expectation of God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth is transparent in 2 Cor. 5.17 and Gal. 6.15.<sup>22</sup> From this point of view, the clause of v. 25, 'the mystery kept silent for ages of time', is eschatologically antithetical to the clause of v. 26, 'but now manifested through the prophetic writings'.

In all likelihood the doxology of 16.25-27 is a Marcionite composition, and P<sup>46</sup> bears witness to its placement at the end of Romans 15 in one or more of the earlier fifteen-chapter ancestors of P<sup>46</sup>. Marcion himself, of course, could not have attached it for he had deleted ch. 15 from his edition of Romans.<sup>23</sup> His disciples may have formulated this doxology, but since they would have been faithful to Marcion's fourteen-chapter edition of Romans, they would not have appended it to the letter at the end of ch. 15. The only probability that remains is that a scribe of the church at Rome appropriated it from Marcion's fourteen-chapter edition of the letter and attached it to one or more of the ancestors of P<sup>46</sup>. The function of the doxology in the context of an emerging New Testament canon would attest to the readers of the letter during the second half of the second century that Romans qualifies as one of the prophetic writings that, by the ordinance of God, reveals the long-kept secret of the mystery of the gospel. Because the synagogue and the church had become estranged and crossed the great divide of separation, Romans could now be directed 'unto the obedience of trust toward all the Gentiles'.

22. See Isa. 65.17 and 66.22.

23. According to Adolf Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1960), p. 49, later Marcionites added the doxology at 16.24, perhaps to serve as a conclusion to Romans. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, p. 227, accepts Harnack's view that the doxology is of Marcionite origin, but 'the addition was made, not by Marcion himself, but by some unknown followers of his'. Dieter Lührmann, *Das Offenbarungsverständnis bei Paulus und in paulinischen Gemeinden* (WMANT, 16; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965), p. 123 n. 4, also locates its origin in Marcionite circles. He is convinced that the doxology served as a 'Schlussdoxologie' for the entire Pauline corpus. Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans*, pp. 110-11, on the other hand, argues against a Marcionite origin; instead, he is convinced that originally it was placed at the end of ch. 14. See also his discussion on pp. 122-24.

# 13

## CONCLUSION OF THE LETTER SENT TO EPHESUS

### 16.1-2. *The Commendation of Phoebe*

Paul's Letter to the Romans was addressed to the saints in Rome, as attested by 1.7-15 and 15.14-33. But what is the status and function of ch. 16? The general consensus is that it does not have the character of an independent letter that was eventually attached to Romans. The usual epistolary form that includes prescript, salutation and benediction is missing. Moreover, the particle *de* (and/but) at the beginning of v. 1 implies continuity. If it is original, as it appears to be, ch. 16 must have been an appendix of chs. 1 through 15. But was it part of the letter that was sent to Rome?<sup>1</sup> Or was it the closure of a second copy that was carried to Ephesus?

Acts 20.16-17 states that Paul decided not to sail across the Aegean Sea from Cenchrea to Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem:

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Yet, according to Acts 20.17, he sent a message to Ephesus requesting 'the elders of the church' to meet him at Miletus; and there, after hearing his final exhortations, they said farewell to him, grieving because 'they would not see him again'. The historicity of this meeting with the Ephesian elders is questionable. Miletus may belong to another stage of Paul's journeys.<sup>2</sup> His

1. The general consensus is that ch. 16 was an original part of the letter Paul sent to Rome. Witherington, *Romans*, p. 376, maintains that the named persons in ch. 16 were 'Jewish Christians Paul knows in Rome, most of whom he met in the east between 49 and the writing of this letter'. Chapter 16 'is addressed primarily to the Gentile community in Rome, and is urging them to welcome, be hospitable to, build fellowship with these Jewish Christians in Rome, many of whom are in a tenuous position. In other words, ch. 16 is part of Paul's strategy to effect unity and reconciliation among the divided Roman Christians.'

2. For a similar judgment, see Gerd Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 230.

itinerary after his three-month sojourn in Corinth—during which he wrote Romans—included a return to Philippi in Macedonia and from there by sea to Troy, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos and Miletus.<sup>3</sup> But why not Ephesus, the city in which he had labored for three years? Ephesus is located north of Miletus, perhaps by no more than twenty-five or thirty miles. If this in fact was Paul's itinerary on his way to Jerusalem, a brief stop at Ephesus would appear to be more logical than summoning the elders of the Ephesian congregations to Miletus.

During his last three-month stay in Corinth his earlier journey from Ephesus through Macedonia to collect the monetary offering for the Jerusalem saints lies behind him. As he composes his Letter to the Romans and expresses his great wish to visit the 'called out believers' at Rome and beyond that the possibility of continuing his apostolic ministry in Spain, his immediate focus is on Jerusalem. Why, then, would it be necessary to return to Macedonia and Asia? Acts 20.3 offers the rationale of a 'plot made against him by the Jews'. Additionally, Acts 20.16 attests that 'Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost'. But in all likelihood Paul sailed from Cenchrea to Tyre or Ptolemais in order to reach Jerusalem as quickly as possible, perhaps, in order to be there on the day of Pentecost. Bypassing Ephesus, however, and therefore never to return, would account for Paul's need to send the Ephesian house churches a copy of his theological testament combined with intimate greetings to many, if not most, of the individuals whom he had come to love and cherish. The lengthy farewell speech that Acts 20.17-35 attributes to Paul and the emotions that it evoked at this Miletus meeting with the Ephesian elders correspond to the affectionate relationship between the apostle and the Ephesian community that the greetings of ch. 16 disclose.

Apart from the interpolation of vv. 17-20, the content of ch. 16 consists of Paul's greetings to twenty-six named individuals and related others, as well as the greetings of eight persons who are currently with Paul in Corinth.<sup>4</sup> Together, whether they are those who are being greeted or those who are doing the greeting, they form a radically new kind of community. It is not comparable to honor-shame society's *voluntary* or *optional* grouping<sup>5</sup>—'In

3. For Paul's itinerary after his three-month sojourn in Corinth, see Acts 20.1-21.17.

4. Jewett, 'Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission', like other interpreters, acknowledges that 1.16-17 conveys the main theme of Romans. Yet all that follows 1.17 up to 15.13 executes that proposition. Chapter 16 is included with 15.14-33 as Paul's peroratio, the 'practical enactment' of all the previous material that carries out the main theme of Romans.

5. For the difference between the two types of groupings, see Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 44-46.

optional groupings public opinion is sovereign'<sup>6</sup>—nor does it correspond to that society's *natural* grouping. The horizontally structured, family-like character of the community which they constitute transcends the blood relationships and the hierarchical formations that are representative of *natural* groupings. The manner in which these addressees are to greet each other on behalf of Paul and his co-workers discloses a relationship of intimacy, affection, honesty, trust and equality that could never emerge and burgeon in any of these groupings because the values and structures of honor–shame culture promoted inequality, competitiveness, alienation and dehumanization.

The ideological values of the Mediterranean world's honor–shame culture determined both family life and socio-economic relationships in society. Boys were raised to be husbands and fathers who would be sexually aggressive. They would exercise power over their wives, and their children would be their possessions to be used to maintain their social status and honor and to advance their power and prestige through patron–client relationships. They would defend their family's honor by any means. They would engage in power contests of honor to aggrandize themselves at the expense of others. Lying, deception, use of rhetoric to convince and overpower were acceptable means of achieving more honor. Girls were brought up to maintain their shame as a positive value. As wives they would be sexually exclusive, submissive to authority, deferent, passive, timid and restrained.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his missionary work Paul contended against these ideological values. The gospel that he proclaimed, taught and exemplified subverted the hypocrisy, the superficiality and the despotic preference of appearance that honor–shame culture sanctioned. The community he promoted was directed toward incarnating the ethics of the New Humanity that culminates this circular letter to the Romans and the Ephesians. His earlier letters bear witness to the family metaphors he employed in order to intensify family-like relationships among his addressees. He counseled, exhorted, rebuked in the role of a mother, a nurse or a brother. He chided the Galatians in 4.19 to return to the gospel he had proclaimed earlier, 'My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you'.<sup>8</sup> He reminds the Thessalonians in 2.7-8: 'But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply caring for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our very selves, because you became beloved to us'. Before he returned to the Corinthians for a third time, he expressed his unconditional love to them in

6. Malina, *The New Testament World*, p. 45.

7. Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 30-53.

8. On Paul's metaphorical images of 'mother' and 'nurse', see Beverly R. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2008).



2 Cor. 12.14-15 in order to affirm the reconciliation that had been re-established between them after a temporary estrangement:

Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I shall not be a burden to you, for I seek not what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I most gladly shall spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you the more intensely, am I to be loved the less?

The communities of trust that Paul founded represent a new family, a family called into existence by God, a family that enjoys an interdependent relationship with God, a family inaugurated by the Christ, who, according to Rom. 8.29, is the 'first-born of many brothers and sisters'.

Consequently, the distinctive content of ch. 16, apart from the interpolation of vv. 17-20, must be addressed to a community of believers with whom Paul had experienced an intimate and loving family relationship that had developed over a period of time spent in sojourn with them. This would rule out the saints of the church at Rome because Paul has yet to fulfill his intention to visit them. Only a community in the eastern Mediterranean would qualify as the family that the gospel has constituted, and that would have to be the city of Ephesus where he had evangelized for approximately three years.<sup>9</sup> If, in fact, ch. 16 was attached to the letter that was intended for the church at Rome, it would necessitate the wholesale move to Rome by all these named individuals. Yet there is evidence that at least two of them are still in Ephesus continuing the work of the gospel that they had shared with Paul, and if this holds true for them, it may be true of some of the others as well. It seems best to infer that ch. 16 belonged to a second copy of the letter to the Romans that was sent to Ephesus.

The conjunctive particle *de* (and/but/now), as already indicated, implies continuity with the previous chapter, but only in terms of an addendum or a supplement, not as the continuation of previously expressed thought. The immediate objective is the commendation of Phoebe. She is introduced as 'our sister', bearing the title of *deacon* (*diakonos*) of the assembly or church (*ecclēsia*) at Cenchrea. Moreover, as Paul testifies, she became a *patron* (*prostatis*) of many and indeed of Paul himself. The role of *prostatis* involved service to a community by *standing at its front as a benefactor*, defender or guardian and therefore being vigilant of the well-being of others. Evidently she is accompanying this letter to its destination, and she is coming with formidable credentials. Whether, in fact, she is serving as its bearer is not indicated, but it may be assumed. Paul is entreating his addressees to give her the hospitality that is 'worthy of the saints' and to 'stand by her in whatever matter she may have need of you'. They are to be at her

9. See the discussion of Rom. 16 in Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 314-20.

disposal when she reaches the destination of the letter. What she intends to do or what that matter may be to which Paul is alluding is not disclosed.<sup>10</sup> But in view of her charitable support of Paul and the many others, probably members of the churches of Cenchrea and Corinth, she undoubtedly intends to use her resources for the community to which the letter is intended. This inference corresponds to the eschatological reorientation that Paul invoked in 1 Cor. 7.29-31. If, as he professes in that text, the form/scheme of this world is passing away, and those who deal with the world are to be as those who do not deal with it, the mandate that is implied is to uncouple from ideological values of honor/shame culture in an ongoing work of love. Phoebe's project may well be 'of vital significance to Paul'.<sup>11</sup> More likely, however, that project would be designated for a community that Paul knew personally, such as the church at Ephesus. It would, however, have no bearing on 'Paul's interests in the east', but it would serve to consolidate a stronger bond of solidarity between the communities of Cenchrea, Corinth, Ephesus and perhaps other city churches.<sup>12</sup> That much would certainly be in Paul's interests.

### 16.3-16. Greetings

A flood of greetings follow. The formulation that Paul employs is an aorist imperative, though in the second person plural, *you all greet (aspasasthe)*, and he uses it sixteen times. It is not Paul who is conveying his greetings directly to the named individuals and those associated with them. Rather, those who are named immediately after the second personal plural imperative are to be greeted by the members of the community who are with and among them. It is a far more personal greeting because it is communicated to them directly and physically on behalf of Paul by their fellow believers,

10. Karl P. Donfried, 'A Short Note on Romans 16', in Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate*, pp. 44-52 (50), accounts for ch. 16 and its catalog of greetings by contending that Paul, by writing to help solve problems in the Roman church, will 'try to marshal all the support he could by listing persons whom he met along the way and who were not in Rome'. Jewett, 'Paul, Phoebe, and the Spanish Mission', in Neusner (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, pp. 142-61 (153), suggests 'that the greetings [of ch. 16] can be understood in relation to Phoebe's mission to prepare the way for Paul in Rome in the months prior to his expected arrival after the journey to Jerusalem. This list is comparable to a roster of potential campaign supporters that political operatives bring into a city as they begin to establish a campaign for their candidate.'

11. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 947.

12. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 948, is quite correct in stating that 'Paul's plan in 15.20 [is] to relinquish responsibility for the eastern mission field'. But, at the same time, Paul would not exclude the possibility of solidifying the community relationships of the churches he had established in the eastern Mediterranean.

and in all likelihood, it would include a hug and a holy kiss. In the Mediterranean world of honor–shame culture the intimacy and affection this kind of greeting conveys would be characteristic of a *natural grouping*, certainly not a *voluntary grouping*. The ‘you all’ of the second person plural may be identified as the congregation of each house church who is expected to communicate Paul’s greetings on Paul’s behalf to those whom he names. In fulfilling his expectation they would be reinforcing their family relationship to each other and to Paul.<sup>13</sup> Certainly not all the individuals who are to be greeted would belong to one and the same house church.

In many of his greetings Paul is acknowledging something distinctive about a particular individual or group of individuals, and he appears to be doing this as though the Ephesian congregation knows nothing about these things. This should not be interpreted as strange and inappropriate.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the fifteen-chapter edition of Romans that is addressed to the believers at Rome, this sixteen-chapter edition is addressed to the Ephesian believers *whom he will not see again* because he is going to Jerusalem and then on to Rome and possibly Spain. Because he will not see them again, he is not only charging the community of believers to greet each other affectionately on his behalf, but at the same time he is giving recognition to these persons, as though he himself were present, by acknowledging them in terms of the work they have accomplished or the relationship that he has enjoyed with them:

You all greet Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ.

You all greet Epanaetus, my beloved, who is the first-fruit of Asia unto Christ.

You all greet Mary who labored much unto you.

You all greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and fellow prisoners who are notable among the apostles who also were in Christ before me.

You all greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

You all greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

You all greet Apelles, the one proven in Christ.

You all greet the family of Aristobulus.

13. T.Y. Mullins, ‘Greeting as a New Testament Form’, *JBL* 87 (1969), pp. 418–27 (425–26), suggests that, ‘The extensive use of second-person type greetings warns us not to assume that the explanation lies in the fact that Paul was “introducing himself” to the congregation at Rome with this epistle. It implies that he had close enough rapport with that congregation to let them act for him. Moreover, the closeness to the congregation at Rome did not lie altogether in the presence there of the list of friends he was greeting. The use of the second-person type greeting means that the persons greeted might not be among those who read the letter.’

14. This is claimed by Wolf-Hennig Ollrog, ‘Die Abfassungsverhältnisse von Röm 16’, in D. Lührmann and G. Strecker (eds.), *Kirche: Festschrift Günther Bornkamm zum 75. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1980), pp. 221–44.

You all greet Herodion, my relative.  
 You all greet the family of Narcissus, the ones who are in the Lord.  
 You all greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa.  
 You all greet Persis, the beloved who labored much in the Lord.  
 You all greet Rufus, the elect in the Lord and his mother and mine.  
 You all greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobus, Hermas and the  
 brothers and sisters with them.  
 You all greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister.  
 You all greet Olympus and all the saints with them.

Paul could have used the verb *aspasasthe* once and followed it simply with an aggregation of individual names. But his tireless repetition of the verb and his identifying remarks about each individual and the unnamed who are associated with them imply a larger family community even though they belong to different house churches. As already stated, they are a natural grouping, constituting God's new family that transcends the boundaries of race, class and gender.<sup>15</sup> The intimacy that they experience with each other is affirmed by Paul's characterization of the relationship that he has enjoyed with them as individuals and as a community.

Prisca and Aquila are the first to be greeted. They are a wife and husband partnership identified by Paul as 'my co-workers in Christ Jesus'. Prisca is named first. Earlier, in the greetings of 1 Cor. 16.19, Paul had identified them in the more traditional order of husband and wife, 'Aquila and Prisca'. During their three-year collaboration in Ephesus, Prisca may have distinguished herself in some significant way, perhaps as the more gifted preacher and teacher. According to Acts 18.2-3, Paul met them in Corinth when they were already engaged in their mission work, after having been expelled from Rome under the Edict of Claudius. Together, with Paul, they collaborated in the work of evangelization as they supported themselves in the trade of tent-making. Subsequently, with Paul, they moved across the Aegean Sea and introduced their mission activity in Ephesus. There, according to Acts 18.26, 'Priscilla and Aquila', as they are named by Luke, took Apollos aside and 'explained to him the Way of God more accurately'. All three of them, as 1 Cor. 16.12, 19 indicate, were residing with Paul in Ephesus, when he wrote 1 Corinthians. But there is no evidence that Prisca and Aquila left Ephesus and returned to Rome around the time that Paul composed Romans in Corinth. The combined witness of 2 Tim. 1.16 and 4.19 may not be historically reliable, but the Ephesian household of Onesiphorus is commended for not joining with those in Asia who turned against Paul, and subsequently, in 4.19, Prisca and Aquila are named and greeted with the household of Onesiphorus.

15. Again, for the difference between the two types of groupings, see Malina, *The New Testament World*, pp. 44-46.

Both of them, Prisca and Aquila, are especially distinguished because, as Paul acknowledges, 'they risked their own necks on behalf of my life', and therefore not only he but all of the Gentile churches thank them. As in the witness of 1 Cor. 16.19, and now in the present context of this letter, their home has continued to be a house church for their fellow believers in Ephesus, and Paul may know those who gather there for worship and instruction, and he greets them as well.

Epaenetus is acknowledged, in the greeting that Paul conveys to him, as the very first person of the province of Asia Minor who was incorporated into the Body of Christ through his apostolic evangelization. He was the 'first-fruit in Asia unto Christ' and therefore he is especially beloved to Paul. He probably was a Gentile and, since he is named immediately after Prisca and Aquila, he may belong to their house church.<sup>16</sup>

Mary is identified only as the one who 'who labored much unto you'. In the manuscript tradition she is named both *Marian* and *Mariam*. The former, *Marian*, is Hellenistic, while the latter, *Mariam*, is Hebrew (like the name of Moses' sister). In P<sup>46</sup> she is named *Mariam*, and she probably is Jewish by birth. No leadership role is ascribed to her, but she is distinguished by her untiring commitment to the well-being of the community. Paul's commendation intimates the paramount significance of women in the first generation of the Church.

Andronicus and Junia have a special distinction. They are Paul's relatives, and they suffered incarceration with him. They may have been his 'fellow prisoners' at Ephesus, the imprisonment that he refers to in Phil. 1.7-26 and 2.17 and 1 Cor. 15.32. Junia is a woman, as most commentators appear to agree, and in all likelihood she is the wife of Andronicus.<sup>17</sup> They are additionally recognized as being *prominent among the apostles*, and, moreover, as Paul states, 'they have been in Christ before me'. To be ranked *among the apostles*, to be characterized as *notable* and to be acknowledged as having been in Christ before Paul, poses the very real possibility that they may have been among the *apostles* to whom the resurrected Jesus appeared, according to the tradition that Paul cites in 1 Cor. 15.7. It may even be supposed that they were among the original Hellenistic Jewish believers of Jerusalem and possibly members of the circle of the seven so-called deacons of Acts 6.1-7, of which Stephen was the spokesperson.

Ampliatius is to be greeted as 'my beloved *in the Lord*'. The prepositional phrase, *in the Lord*, may simply be a variation of 'in Christ'. Yet in view of

16. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 893.

17. Text-critically, lexically and exegetically, Eldon Jay Epp, *Junia the First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), has established the identity of Junia as a woman, and, along with Andronicus, as an apostle. See especially pp. 69-81. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 894, considers them to be 'husband and wife'.

the manner in which Paul has employed the phrase in his earlier letters, it appears to have the distinctive function of implying someone who is still a slave but who, in view of his being *in the Lord*, is regarded by Paul and by the community as a ‘freedman’.<sup>18</sup> In his letter to Philemon, Paul acknowledges the slave Onesimus to be ‘a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you [Philemon] both in the flesh and *in the Lord*’. The same phrase is used in 1 Cor. 7.21-24a to acknowledge that a slave, who is *in the Lord*, is to be validated by the community as a free human being:

Were you a slave [when] called? Never mind. But if you are able to become free, rather take advantage of it. For *in the Lord* the one called a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise the one called free, is a slave of Christ. You were purchased with a price! Do not become slaves of human beings.

To be *in the Lord* or to stand *in the Lord* designates a participation in the lordship of Jesus Christ, even as to be *in Christ* signifies being a member of the Body of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Urbanus, who is to be greeted as ‘our co-worker in Christ’ is engaged in mission activity. Paul apparently knows him, but, in view of the use of the pronoun *our*, he may not directly or immediately have been involved in Paul’s circle of evangelizing work.<sup>20</sup>

Stachys is to be greeted as ‘my beloved’. As in the case of Epāenetus, Paul enjoyed an especially close relationship with him.

Apelles, characterized as ‘the one proven in Christ’, is also to be greeted on behalf of Paul. The distinctive commendation, *proven in Christ*, indicates that Paul not only knows him but is aware of something significant about his discipleship. Through some issue or event, Apelles was tested and proved to be genuine in his ‘living in the faith’. Not only Paul but the community to which Apelles belongs know that he has authenticated his membership in the Body of Christ.

‘The ones from those of Aristobulus’ are to be greeted in the name of Paul. Aristobulus himself is not included; evidently he is not a believer. In fact, it is only ‘the ones from those of Aristobulus’ who are to be greeted. Apparently only some, but not all, who belong to his household are believers. Whether they are slaves remains indeterminate. Noteworthy is that the phrase ‘in the Lord’ has not been added to this greeting, as it has in v. 11b. A speculative possibility is that Aristobulus is married to a woman who, as a believer, has not divorced him; and, certain members of his household in

18. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 380, identifies the name ‘Ampliatius’, on the basis of its frequent appearance in inscriptions, as a slave. See also Jewett, *Romans*, p. 964,

19. For Paul’s use of the phrase ‘in the Lord’, see 1 Cor. 1.31; 9.2; 15.58; 2 Cor. 2.12; 10.17; Gal. 5.10; Phil. 2.19, 24, 29; 4.1, 2, 4; 1 Thess. 3.8; 5.12. Col. 4.7 refers to Tychicus as a faithful deacon and a fellow slave *in the Lord*.

20. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 380.

solidarity with her belong to the same community of faith. Perhaps this is a circumstance analogous to that which Paul had posed in 1 Cor. 7.13-16.

And the wife who has an unbelieving husband and he consents to reside with her, let her not divorce the husband. The unbelieving husband is sanctified by his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by her husband, for otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. But if the unbelieving one divorces, let him/her divorce. The brother or sister is not enslaved by these things. But it is in peace [that] God has called you. For who knows, wife, if you may save your husband? Or who knows, husband, if you may save your wife?

Herodion is the next individual to be greeted. Like Andronicus and Junia, he is identified as 'my compatriot'. He is a member of Paul's extended family and naturally therefore of Jewish descent, but nothing more is added about his role or activity in the community.

'The ones from those of Narcissus who are *in the Lord*' are also to be greeted on behalf of Paul. Like Aristobulus, Narcissus is not a believer, but there are some members of his household, specifically slaves, who belong to the Ephesian house churches. Here again, as in v. 8, the phrase 'in the Lord' implies slaves who, because they are *in the Lord*, are recognized and accepted as free people by their fellow believers.

Two women by the name of Tryphaena and Tryphosa are to be greeted. Their names, encountered in Greek and in Latin inscriptions, bear the meaning of 'Dainty' and 'Delicate', yet they are commended as 'the ones laboring in the Lord'.<sup>21</sup> Identified by similar sounding names and characterized together by the plural participle *kopiōsas* (laboring), they most likely are sisters, perhaps even twins. The appended phrase, 'in the Lord', in this instance does not imply the status of slaves but rather women who participate in the lordship of Jesus and therefore are acknowledged to be women of independence.

Persis is to be greeted as 'the beloved who labored much in the Lord'. Paul's employment of the aorist tense, 'who *labored* much', refers to the time in the past when she, like Mary in v. 6, was working with or at least in the same local context with Paul. Here also the phrase 'in the Lord' intimates a ministry that draws its authority and strength from being resurrected with Jesus Christ and therefore also a participant in his lordship.

Rufus, as his name implies, must have been a 'redhead'. He is to be greeted as 'the one elected in/by the Lord'. The adjective *eklektos* occurs only twice in Paul's letters, both in Romans (8.33; 16.13). The prepositional phrase that follows, 'in/by the Lord', does not imply slave status, but more dramatically one who was *called* or *chosen by the Lord*. He may be identifiable with the Rufus of Mk 15.21 and therefore the son of Simon of Cyrene, the peasant

21. On the meaning of their names as 'Dainty' and 'Delicate', see Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 897.



who carried Jesus' cross.<sup>22</sup> Rufus's mother is included in the greeting, and significantly as 'my' mother. As Paul's 'mother', she may have provided hospitality for him.<sup>23</sup> But more importantly perhaps, she was a spiritual mother to him, and therefore a source of love and inspiration that he could never have experienced in his relationship to his own mother, who may have died before he responded to the revelatory call of Christ Jesus. Through her and therefore indirectly through her husband, Simon, Paul has had a connection with Jesus of Nazareth.

Two groups of names follow. The first consists of five men, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas and Hermas, and they are to be greeted along with 'the brothers and sisters with them'. The names they bear are Greek and may, according to scholarly analysis, reflect servile status.<sup>24</sup> Most likely they are the leaders of the congregation to which the unnamed sisters and brothers belong. Whether one of them is the patron who may be supporting them as a house church cannot be determined. More than that cannot be said with any certainty about them.

The second group, consisting of Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, is more diverse and therefore more difficult to identify in terms of role and status. Philologus and Julia are suspected of being husband and wife and Nereus and his sister are understood to their children. If that is a valid inference, they may constitute a family, perhaps even an upper class family that supports a house church, similar to Philemon, Aphia and Archippus, the addressees of Paul's letter to Philemon. They too are to be greeted, along with Olympas and 'all the saints who are with them'. Of Olympas, unfortunately, nothing is known. But then there is nothing in v. 15 that would explicitly recommend any of these conclusions.

As already stated, Paul's use of the second person plural imperative, *you greet*, suggests that those who are to convey Paul's greetings and those who are being named all know each other. Together they constitute God's new family in Ephesus. By a culminating imperative Paul charges them to express their family relationship to each other with a holy kiss, as he did in 1 Cor. 16.20.

#### 16.17-20a. *Scribal Interpolation*

The sudden harsh polemical character of 16.17-20a that interrupts the two sets of greetings, 16.1-16 and 16.21-23, evokes the suspicion that this is another of the scribal interpolations that are encountered in Paul's letter, and, in view of its location in the final chapter, naturally the last:

22. Michel, *Römerbrief*, p. 381; Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 897; Jewett, *Romans*, p. 969.

23. Jewett, *Romans*, p. 969.

24. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 898; Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 970-71.

Now I implore you, sisters and brothers, to keep your eyes on those doing dissensions and offenses against the teaching you learned and keep on turning away from them. For such are not serving our Lord Christ but their own belly, and through smooth talk and flattery they are deceiving the hearts of the simple. For your obedience reached unto all. Over you I rejoice and I want you to be wise toward the good and without horns toward the evil. Now the God of peace will shatter Satan under your feet swiftly.<sup>25</sup>

Even the possible parallels of 1 Cor. 16.21-24 and Gal. 6.11-18, that are cited to establish 16.17-20a as characteristically Pauline, do not complement the abrupt change of mood that this passage conveys.<sup>26</sup> Equally suspect is the vocabulary of vv. 17-20a. At least seven of the key words are non-Pauline *hapax legomena*:

*ekklinō* (turn away): only in v. 17 and Ps. 52(53).3-4, which is cited in Rom. 3.12.

*chrēstologia* (smooth speech): only in v. 18.

*akakos* (simple): only in v. 18.

*aphikneomai* (reach): only in v. 19.

*syntribō* (shatter): only in v. 20.

*en tachei* (swiftly): only in v. 20

*dichostasia* (dissensions): only in v. 17 and Gal. 5.20.

The word *didachē*, as it is used in 16.17, implies doctrine received through apostolic tradition. In contrast, Paul's employment of this word, as for example in Rom. 2.21 and 12.7 or in 1 Cor. 14.6 and 26, conveys ongoing instruction within the community. Yet more incisively, Paul does not employ the christological phrase *kyrios hēmōn christos* (Lord our Christ), and furthermore the separation of 'Lord' and 'Christ' from each other by the pronoun 'our' never occurs in his writings. Finally, the being of Satan is never the object of God's direct intervention, as it is in 16.20a. Paul always refers to Satan as the subject of a particular circumstance or possible condition.<sup>27</sup> It is only in 1 Cor. 5.5 that Satan is posed as the indirect object of an act of punishment by the Corinthians congregation.<sup>28</sup>

25. The warning that Paul issues in his farewell speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20.28-30 bears a remote similarity to the interpolation of Rom. 16.17-20, and it elicits speculation as to whether the latter text had already been incorporated into Rom. 16 by the time the author composed Luke-Acts at the end of the first century CE.

26. Michel, *Römerbrief*, pp. 383-84, claims that 16.17-20 is a distinctive Pauline signature that is characteristic of such polemical transitions as the movement of Phil. 3.1 into 3.2. Käsemann, *Romans*, pp. 417-19 (418), considers it to be a Pauline warning against newly arrived teachers. The passage reflects 'an early battle against heresy'. Dunn, *Romans*, II, pp. 901-902, regards it as a Pauline postscript. Jewett, 'Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission', p. 90, identifies it as an interpolation. Witherington, *Romans*, pp. 396-97, considers it to be an authentic part of ch. 16.

27. See 1 Cor. 7.5; 2 Cor. 2.11; 11.14; 12.7; and 1 Thess. 2.18.

28. If, Satan, as sometimes presupposed, is representative of 'the powers and principalities', it is the Body of Christ acting under the authority and power of God that is

Finally, the incongruence of vv. 17-20a in this context is reinforced by its separation of the greeting of 16.16b from the multiple greetings of 16.21-23. There is a natural continuity between 16.16b and 16.21-23:

All the churches of Christ greet you.

Timothy my co-worker greets you, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

Tertius, the one writing the letter, greets you in the Lord.

Gaius my host and the host of the whole church greets you.

Erastus the steward of the city and Quartus the brother greet you.

There is nothing in 16.17-20 that would recommend it as a genuine Pauline transition or postscript.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, its elimination as a scribal interpolation secures a natural continuity between 16.16b and 16.21-23. Indeed, vv. 21-23 follow more naturally upon v. 16b, 'All the churches of Christ greet you'.

Having reached the end of his list of personal greetings to those whom he has named, Paul proceeds to convey to them the greetings of 'all the churches', followed by the greetings of those who are with him in Corinth. Paul can greet the Ephesians on behalf of 'all the churches in Christ' because the collection for the saints of the Jerusalem church has involved him in visiting all the communities of faith that he had established during his past apostolic activity in this part of the Mediterranean world, a world that he is now leaving. 'All the churches of Christ' would include the Thessalonians, the Philippians, the Galatians, the Corinthians, perhaps the Colossian community of Philemon, Aphia and Archippus, and any others with which Paul may still be in contact. The Ephesians are reminded that, even as they constitute a new family of God, they belong to a larger family of brothers and sisters with whom they form the New Humanity that God continues to enlarge through the work of Paul and others.

#### 16.21-23. *The Greetings of Those with Paul in Corinth*

Finally, there are personal greetings from those who are immediately with Paul during his final three-month sojourn in Corinth. None of them was named at the end of ch. 15 that forms the conclusion of the letter that was

divinely willed to transform them and therefore to defeat their personification in Satan. For a more comprehensive perspective on 'Satan', see Chapter 1 in Wink's *Unmasking the Powers*, pp. 9-40.

29. See Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 987-88, for other possible grounds to reject 16.17-20 as a later interpolation. In his essay, 'Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission', p. 105, Jewett identifies others who, like him, regard it as an interpolation. In contrast, see Sampley, 'Romans in a Different Light', pp. 127-28, for arguments on the authenticity of 16.17-20a.

sent to Rome because its core apparently is intended to bear only Paul's signature. Timothy, who appears to have accompanied Paul throughout his missionary work in the eastern area of the Mediterranean, was Paul's most dependable and trustworthy co-worker. He is named in all of Paul's letters, except Romans 1–15, and in Phil. 2.19–24 he is eulogized by Paul:

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.

'Also Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, [greet you].' Lucius, in Greek *Loukios*, or in its alternative spelling, *Loukas*, may possibly be identifiable with Luke of Philemon 24 and therefore also as a co-worker of Paul.<sup>30</sup> Jason and Sosipater are acknowledged to be Paul's kinsfolk and therefore Jewish co-workers. Sosipater may be Sopater, a delegate of one of the Pauline churches of Macedonia, who, according to Acts 20.4, was chosen to accompany Paul with the offering of the Pauline churches designated for the saints of Jerusalem. He is presently in Corinth, and, with the other delegates, he is awaiting their time of departure for Jerusalem.

Personal greetings are added independently by Tertius, 'the one writing the letter *in the Lord*' (*en kyriō*). How much of the letter he composed has been disputed, but in all likelihood, he served essentially as Paul's scribe.<sup>31</sup> According to Dunn, 'He wrote to Paul's long-hand dictation, or he used some form of shorthand'.<sup>32</sup> Although Tertius's concluding prepositional phrase, *en kyriō*, is often linked by commentators to the verb *aspazomai* (I greet), it stands in apposition to 'the one writing the letter'. Tertius's use of *en kyriō*, therefore, like Paul's acknowledgment of Ampliatus as, 'my beloved *in the Lord*' (*en kyriō*) implies that he is a slave. Yet within the community of believers he is a participant in the lordship of Jesus Christ. The inclusion of his greetings, like many of the others, is sensible only if he is known to the addressees of ch. 16, namely the Ephesians.

Gaius, an individual of considerable wealth, whom Paul acknowledges as 'my host and [the host] of the whole church', wants his greetings to be added. In all probability, Paul is staying at his home and experiencing his hospitality during the time that he is composing this letter, perhaps even for

30. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 909.

31. See 1 Cor. 16.21 and Gal. 6.11.

32. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 910, cites Seneca, *Epistle* 90.25 on the use of shorthand: 'the shorthand symbols by means of which even a rapidly delivered speech is taken down and the hand is able to keep up with the quickness of the tongue'.

the entire three-month period. Gaius may well be identifiable with the Gaius of 1 Cor. 1.14 and the Gaius Titius Justus of Acts 18.7, who, along with Crispus, is cited by Paul as one of the few among the Corinthians whom he baptized. To be host 'of the whole church' intimates that he has continued to provide hospitality to all the house churches of Corinth, though certainly not all at one time since his own house would not be large enough to accommodate the entire community of believers in Corinth. Yet, if there were gatherings of all the members of the Corinthian church in the Craneum, the wooded slopes at the base of the Acro-Corinth, Gaius might well have provided the hospitality for such occasions.<sup>33</sup>

The final greetings are offered by Erastus and Quartus. The first of the two, Erastus, is acknowledged as 'the *oikonomos* of the city'. He may hold the office of public treasurer that administrates the material resources in the local government of Corinth.<sup>34</sup> As a civic manager he may well have been obliged to respond to the honor of his office by philanthropic patronage. There is an inscription that commemorates an Erastus by name as an *aedilis*, a municipal official who gifted the city of Corinth with the paving of a street. It is probable but not conclusively certain that this civic administrator is identifiable with the Erastus of 16.23, 'the *oikonomos* of the city' who also is sending greetings to the Ephesian addressees.<sup>35</sup>

Who Quartus is and why he follows Erastus as the last of the greeters is puzzling. He is referred to simply as *ho adelphos* (the brother). The combination of the conjunction *kai* (and) that follows 'Erastus, the *oikonomos* of the city' and the definite article *ho* that stands between Quartus and the word *brother* (*adelphos*) may be intended to identify him as the brother of Erastus.<sup>36</sup> Generally, however, Paul identifies sister and brother relationships, as well as esteemed relationships, by employing the appropriate pronoun in the genitive case. This is certainly true of Romans 16. What, then, can be said about Quartus? He may indeed be the brother of Erastus and therefore the last of those in Corinth who wants his greetings to be included in the letter. Paul, however, may be sensitive to relating Quartus explicitly to Erastus because he does not want Quartus to be diminished by identifying him more specifically as the brother of a distinguished municipal official. In his own right Quartus is *the brother*, a member of the community of believers in Corinth. More than that is unnecessary to conclude the greetings that are addressed to the church at Ephesus.

33. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Corinth that Saint Paul Saw', *Biblical Archeologist* 47/8 (September 1984), pp. 147-59 (150).

34. Dunn, *Romans*, II, p. 911; Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 76-83, claims that Paul's use of the word *oikonomos* refers to the office of *quaestor*.

35. See Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 981-83, for more details.

36. Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 983-84.

16.24. *The Problem of the Concluding Benediction*

The doxology of 16.25-27, according to an earlier examination, is a Marcionite formulation and therefore a non-Pauline interpolation that could not have ended ch. 16. There is a benediction that concludes ch. 16, but it is located in two places. The one at the end of v. 20, which is usually included in the English translations, does not occur in the uncial manuscripts D F G and many of the Vulgate manuscripts. Its location at the very end of the scribal interpolation of vv. 17-20 is suspect because it would tend to impose God's blessing of grace on all those who act in accordance with the admonition of v. 19. Moreover, it precedes the greetings of vv. 21-23 and therefore could not serve as the final benediction of this version of Paul's letter. The benediction that followed v. 23, according to the attestation of later manuscripts, a benediction that is similar to the one that the manuscript tradition places after v. 27, is almost identical to that which is encountered at the conclusion of Paul's other letters.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine if it is a scribal interpolation or in fact the authentic closure of the copy of the letter that Paul sent to Ephesus.<sup>38</sup> Its multiple attestation in v. 20b and in vv. 24 and 27b of the manuscript tradition of ch. 16 may be adequate to establish it as Paul's conclusion to the sixteen-chapter edition of his Letter to the Romans that was directed to the Ephesian community of believers:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

16.25-27. *The Doxology*<sup>39</sup>

To the one empowered to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of a mystery kept silent for long ages, but now manifested through the prophetic writings according to the ordinance of the eternal God *unto (eis)* the obedience of faith being made known *unto (eis)* all the Gentiles, to the only wise God through Jesus Christ to whom be glory into the ages of ages. Amen.

37. The benediction of v. 24 is placed in the footnotes by the NRSV and NIV.

38. Compare 2 Cor. 13.13; Gal. 6.18; Phil. 4.23; Phlm. 25; but especially 1 Cor. 16.23 and 1 Thess. 5.28.

39. The doxology of 16.25-27 was analyzed at the end of ch. 15 in conjunction with its location in P<sup>46</sup>, and, as indicated, is considered to be a formulation of Marcion's followers.

APPENDIX  
CRITIQUE OF LUTHER AND CALVIN ON JUSTIFICATION  
BY FAITH IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF ROMANS

Francis Watson's critique of contemporary Pauline studies is pertinent to any and every effort to interpret the writings of the Apostle Paul, particularly his Letter to the Romans: '...modern Pauline studies are still dominated to a remarkable extent by Luther's interpretation of the apostle'.<sup>1</sup> Watson focuses specifically on Luther's use of Romans to attack those who, by striving to be justified by the works of the law, deny the righteousness of faith. With a critical focus on Luther's second and third uses of the law, namely, to expose human sinfulness and to serve as a guide to those who are justified by faith, he elucidates the influence that Luther's interpretation of Romans exercised in subsequent Protestant biblical scholarship, particularly in the writings of Rudolf Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann.<sup>2</sup> Yet as necessary as his disclosure is, it deserves to be more comprehensive in its analysis of Luther's construction of Romans and the far-reaching influence that it has exercised. Moreover, the writings of John Calvin, which also have contributed to the domination of the Reformation's doctrine of justification by faith, should be included in this exposure.

Beyond Watson's critique, the Reformation's legacy of *Sola Gratia*, 'salvation by grace alone without the works of the law', must be confronted in the light of its predominant characterization of the gospel. It is a gospel of individual salvation.<sup>3</sup> Underlying it foundationally is a 'law-oriented God'

1. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, pp. 2, 178-81. Stendahl, 'Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West', initiated the indispensability of differentiating between Paul and Luther, between Paul's struggle to determine the place of the Gentiles in the Church in the face of the problem of the law and Luther's introspective struggle to find a gracious God whose law made crushing demands on his conscience. Stendahl states on p. 27: 'This indicates to me that the doctrine of justification is not *the* pervasive, organizing doctrinal principle or insight of Paul, but rather that it has a very specific function in his thought. I would guess that the doctrine of justification originates in Paul's theological mind from his grappling with the problem of how to defend the place of the Gentiles in the Kingdom—the task with which he was charged in his call' (italics in original). See also Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, pp. 66-68 and 73-75.

2. Elliott, *Liberating Paul*, pp. 3-10.

3. Contrary to Stephen Chester, 'It Is No Longer I Who Live: Justification by Faith and Participation in Christ in Martin Luther's Exegesis of Romans', *NTS* 55 (2009),



whose justice is grounded in the law of the Sinai Covenant and who, therefore, exacts retribution of all who transgress its commandments. Humanity, in its ineradicable sinful condition, can only be reconciled to God on the precondition of expiation that God's retributive justice requires. Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, procures that atonement on behalf of corrupted humanity by satisfying God's justice through his death on the cross. By grace alone, God imputes God's righteousness to all who make a faith commitment to Jesus Christ. The resulting hierarchically structured, dependent relationship with God promotes a debilitated self-understanding and a deplorably dis-empowered faith that is unable to actualize God's rule on earth.

The injustices of class, race, and gender that have prevailed throughout the world have been exposed by Latin American and African-American liberation theologies as well as world-wide circles of feminist movements in Bible, theology, literature and philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, biblical scholarship's innovation of 'social-scientific criticism' in the interpretation of biblical texts during the past fifty years has disclosed more acutely the summons to justice that the biblical texts evoke.<sup>5</sup>

Yet world-wide Christianity, in as far as it has embraced the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith, continues to preach and teach a gospel of individual salvation on the basis of the gift of God's imputed righteousness. Many of the scholarly interpretations of Romans seem to be implicated in this perpetuation of Luther and Calvin's formulations of 'justification by faith' and their theology of a punitive deity. For the justice of God that is

pp. 315-37 (317), Luther's participatory understanding of justification is still a gospel of individual salvation because its focus is entirely on the bride-groom relationship between Christ and the believer, as Luther states his 'Treatise on Christian Liberty', in *Works of Martin Luther*, II, p. 320.

4. Some of the more significant contributions are Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973); Letty M. Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985); Adela Yarbro Collins (ed.), *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

5. Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979); John H. Elliott (ed.), *Social Scientific Criticism of the New Testament and its Social World* (Semeia, 35; Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1986); John H. Elliott, 'Social Scientific Criticism of the New Testament and Its Social World: More on Method and Models', in Elliott (ed.), *Social Scientific Criticism*, pp. 1-33; John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter—Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988 [Twentieth anniversary edn, 2008]); Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

revealed in the gospel is assumed to presuppose the law of Sinai and therefore also God as a punishing Judge. A recent pronouncement on the centrality of imputed righteousness is worth citing:

The message of justification [by faith] forms the middle and center of the proclamation of the Apostle Paul and remains for Christendom the ‘standing article of faith and the cadence of the Church’.<sup>6</sup>

Paul’s replete transition of 1.17, with its forward-projecting phrase *dikaio-synē theou*, naturally serves as the point of departure for the construction of ‘justification by faith’. Usually translated as the ‘righteousness of God’, *dikaio-synē theou*, according to 1.17, is disclosed in the gospel. That in and of itself is, or at least should be, a startling pronouncement. Justice presupposes law! Justice is determined by law. Countless texts in the Old Testament ground God’s justice in the law of the Sinai Covenant. Paul’s disclosure, therefore, that the justice of God is revealed in the gospel is a jarring deviation from conventional perception and should alert readers to the possibility of a paradigm shift in the development of his gospel of salvation.

#### *Martin Luther on Romans*

Martin Luther, in his interpretation of 1.17, acknowledges that the gospel reveals the ‘righteousness of God’ (*dikaio-synē theou*). As he says in his *Lectures on Romans*:

But only the gospel reveals the righteousness of God (i.e., who is righteousness and how a man can be and become righteous before God) by that faith alone which one believes the word of God. ‘He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieves shall be condemned’. (Mark 16:16.) For the righteousness of God is the cause of salvation. Here, too, *the righteousness of God* must not be understood as the righteousness by which he is righteous in himself, but as that righteousness by which we are made righteous (justified) by Him, and this happens through faith in the gospel.<sup>7</sup>

For Luther, the ‘righteousness of God’ proves to be a personal righteousness; it is the righteousness that God accredits to repentant sinners who in and by their faith open themselves to the presence of Christ. God’s righteousness, therefore, is the cause of their personal salvation. It is not a

6. Eduard Lohse, ‘Christus des Gesetzes Ende’, *ZNW* 99 (2008), p. 32, states: ‘Die Botschaft von der Rechtfertigung bildet Mitte und Zentrum der Verkündigung des Apostels Paulus und bleibt für die Christenheit der “articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae”’. See also John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N.T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007).

7. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, pp. 17-18. Biblical scholarship considers Mk 16.16 to be a scribal interpolation.

‘righteousness’ that is outwardly directed toward social justice and the liberation of the creation by God’s family of sons and daughters. It is a gospel of individual salvation, and those who repent, believe the gospel and acknowledge Jesus Christ to be their Savior are justified.

However, in spite of the ‘righteousness’ that God accredits to human beings through Christ, God is ‘righteous’ in God’s very being, and human beings, who have been made in the image and likeness of God, are to be ‘righteous’ like their Creator. But if human beings are unalterably corrupted by sin from the time of their conception to the time of their death, God’s only recourse is to accredit to them God’s own righteousness through the indwelling of Christ. That, is the basis of Luther’s and Calvin’s theology of salvation.

Luther, in spite of his acknowledgment that God’s righteousness is unveiled in the gospel, continued to presuppose that God’s righteousness must be identical to the righteousness that is disclosed in the law of the Sinai Covenant. Since the law of Sinai, and indeed all law, is directed toward retributive justice, God is of necessity a punitive deity.<sup>8</sup> Consequently for Luther, God’s salvation is predetermined by the ‘righteousness’ or justice that the law requires. Accordingly, Jesus’ death on the cross is necessarily construed to be the expiation that satisfies God’s law-oriented retributive justice on behalf of sinful human beings. Jesus, God’s Son, is the divinely approved victim who redeems corrupt humanity from God’s condemnation.<sup>9</sup> Unlimited forgiveness is available to those who by faith receive Christ’s presence into their lives, and, as forgiven sinners, they may remain secure in God’s act of accrediting to them God’s own righteousness. Noteworthy, however, is the delimitation of Jesus’ atonement. His sacrificial death removes ‘the sins of the world’, that is, the transgressions and offenses of the law, but the underlying human condition of sin that produces idolatry and injustice remains unaffected:

So there is nothing left to us but to remain in sins and, setting our hope on the mercy of God, to pray fervently that we may be freed from them. We are like a convalescent: if he is in too much of a hurry to get well, he runs the chance of suffering a serious relapse; therefore, he must let himself be cured little by little and he must bear it for a while that he is feeble. It is enough that our sin

8. Luther’s presupposition of God as a punitive deity is evident throughout his lectures on Romans. As an example, see Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 71, ‘First, when he [God] punishes the unrighteous, for then he shows himself as righteous and his righteousness is manifestly acclaimed by the punishment of our unrighteousness’.

9. As Luther stated in his ‘Preface to the Epistle to the Romans’, in *Works of Martin Luther*, VI, p. 454: ‘They are all sinners and without praise from God, but they must be justified, without merit, through faith in Christ, who has earned this for us by His blood, and has been made for us a mercy-seat by God, Who forgives us all former sins’.

displeases us, even though it does not entirely disappear. Christ bears *all sins*, if only they displease us, for then they are no longer our sins but his, and his righteousness is ours in turn.<sup>10</sup>

‘Our whole present life’, Luther says, ‘is a time wherein we will righteousness but never accomplish it; this happens only in the life to come’.<sup>11</sup> He proceeds to explain this on the basis of what he apparently believes to be God’s own rationale in locking repentant sinners into this status quo:

The reason why God leaves us in sin (of which we spoke), in the ‘tinder’, in concupiscence, is that he wants to keep us in fear of him and in humility so that we may always keep running to his grace, always fearful that we may sin, i.e., always praying that he does not impute our sin on us and that he does not let it get dominion over us. Indeed, we fall into sin precisely by having no fear, for this evil in us (i.e., security) is by itself sin since, because of it, we do not love God above everything.<sup>12</sup>

Faith, however, as Luther maintains, makes Christ dynamically present in the life of a believer, for faith has great power:<sup>13</sup>

...in the soul faith alone and the Word have sway. As the Word is, so it makes the soul, as heated iron glows like fire because of the union of fire with it. It is clear then that a Christian has in his faith all that he needs, and needs no works to justify him.<sup>14</sup>

This union of Christ with the soul engenders an obedience to God’s law in exchange for the salvation of the Christ event. ‘But’, as Luther goes on to say, ‘this obedience is not rendered by works, but by faith alone’.<sup>15</sup> And ‘faith’, as he characterizes it in his ‘Preface to the Epistle to the Romans’, is ‘a divine work in us’.<sup>16</sup>

10. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 121 (italics are mine).

11. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 135.

12. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 135.

13. Chester, ‘It Is No Longer I Who Live’, pp. 332-37, acknowledges this in order to establish the relationship in Luther’s theology between justification by faith and christology, specifically Christ’s active presence in faith. His defense of Luther, however, discloses his inadequate understanding of Romans. Chester, on p. 326, rightly characterizes Luther’s understanding of grace, ‘To be under grace is to have passive, justifying righteousness’. Paul, however, is oriented to an active justice in the life of the believer that is the result of dying and rising with Christ in baptism and entering into a collaboration with God through God’s indwelling Spirit in the work of delivering the creation from its enslavement to destruction.

14. Luther, *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, in *Works of Martin Luther*, II, p. 318.

15. Luther, *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, in *Works of Martin Luther*, II, p. 319.

16. Luther, ‘Preface to the Epistle to the Romans’, in *Works of Martin Luther*, VI, p. 451. See also p. 452, ‘No one can give himself faith, and no more can he take away his own unbelief; how, then, will he take away a single sin, even the very smallest?’

It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John i). It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different human beings in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and brings with it the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith; and so it is not impossible for it not to do good works incessantly.<sup>17</sup>

Luther celebrates this exchange by utilizing the analogy of marriage in which Christ, as the bridegroom, is united with his bride, the believer, through the union of incarnated faith. The bridegroom takes upon himself the 'sins, death and hell' of his bride and bestows on her all the things that are his: grace, life and salvation.

And by this mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh. And if they are one flesh and there is between them a true marriage, nay, by far the most perfect of all marriages, since human marriages are but frail types of this one true marriage, it follows that all they have they have in common, the good as well as the evil, so that the believing soul can boast of and glory in whatever Christ has as if it were its own, and whatever the soul has Christ claims as His own. Let us compare these and we shall see things that cannot be estimated. Christ is full of grace, life and salvation; the soul is full of sins, death and condemnation. Now let faith come between them, and it shall come to pass that sins, death and hell are Christ's, and grace, life and salvation are the soul's. For it behooves Him, if He is a bridegroom, to take upon Himself the things which are His bride's, and to bestow upon her the things that are His. For if He gives her His body and His very self, how shall He not give her all that is His? And if He takes the body of the bride, how shall He not take all that is hers?<sup>18</sup>

In his commentary on Romans, Luther, apparently presupposing this analogy of marriage between Christ and the Church, utilizes an allegorical interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan to pose his doctrine of *Simil justus et peccator*, literally 'simultaneously justified and a sinner':<sup>19</sup>

Can one say that this sick man is healthy? No; but he is at the same time both sick and healthy. He is actually sick, but he is healthy by virtue of the pure prediction of the physician whom he believes. For he reckons him already healthy because he is certain that he can cure him, indeed, because he has begun to cure him and does not reckon him his sickness as death. In the same way, Christ, our good Samaritan, brought the man who was half dead, his patient, to an inn and took care of him (Luke 10.30ff.) and commenced to heal him, having first promised to him that he would give him absolutely

17. Luther, 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans', in *Works of Martin Luther*, VI, p. 451.

18. Luther, *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, in *Works of Martin Luther*, II, p. 320. See also Chester, 'It Is No Longer I Who Live', pp. 322-23.

19. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 127. See also Chester, 'It Is No Longer I Who Live', pp. 319-20.

perfect health unto eternal life. He does not reckon him his sin, i.e., his sinful desires, for death, but in the meantime, i.e., holding up to him the hope that he will get well, he forbids him to do or not to do anything that might impede his recovery and make his sin, i.e., his concupiscence, worse. Now can we say he is perfectly righteous? No; but he is at the same time both a sinner and righteous, a sinner in fact but righteous by virtue of the reckoning and the certain promise of God that he will redeem him from sin in order, in the end, to make him perfectly whole and sound. And, therefore, he is perfectly whole in hope, while he is in fact a sinner, but he has already begun to be actually righteous, and he always seeks to become more so, always knowing himself to be unrighteous.

In as far as Christ dwells in the believer by faith, Christ, as the bridegroom, not reckoning sin, makes the believer, analogous to the wounded individual of the parable, perfectly righteous and therefore justified. The believer, while perfectly whole in hope, is in fact still a sinner, and, although having already begun to be righteous and even seeking to become more so, must always acknowledge this paradoxical reality of being just and unrighteous at the same time. This corresponds to the schizophrenic condition that the interpolation of 7.25b has continued to promote, ‘Consequently, therefore, I with respect to my mind am enslaved to the law of God, but with respect to the flesh [I am enslaved] to the law of *sin* (*hamartia*)’.

The Luther research of the nineteenth century that produced the Luther Renaissance promoted Luther’s dynamic understanding of faith by correlating it with Hermann Lotze’s philosophical explication of Being as a ‘standing-in-relation-to’ that produces a mutual exchange of effects.<sup>20</sup> Things, according to Lotze, are experienced as effects and not as substantive objects. Consequently, Luther’s emphasis on Christ’s actual presence in faith effects Christ’s righteousness in those who believe in Christ, who cling to Christ, who are one with Christ and therefore who share his righteousness with him. Accordingly, the presence of Christ in faith mediates the experience of a divine–human interaction within the soul that generates—in contrast to rational knowledge—a unity of willing and working that occurs in and through God’s penetrating presence in the lives of those who believe.<sup>21</sup>

Lotze’s philosophy of ‘effects-thinking’ (*Wirkungsdenken*) contributed to the New Protestantism of Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann which generated a far-reaching influence of Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith and its attendant theology of ‘faith as Christ present’. God’s accreditation of God’s righteousness to repentant sinners and the ‘exchange effect’ of Christ’s presence in faith by which believers enter into a divine–human

20. Tuomo Mannermaa, ‘Theosis als Thema der finnischen Lutherforschung’, in Simo Peura and Antti Raunio (eds.), *Luther und Theosis: Vergöttlichung als Thema der abendländischen Theologie* (Helsinki: Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, 1990), p. 13.

21. Mannermaa, ‘Theosis als Thema der finnischen Lutherforschung’, p. 16.

willing and working fellowship with God are manifested in obedience and love that validate the gift of justification.<sup>22</sup>

But to what extent is the underlying condition of sin, the power of *hamartia*, that generates the acts of disobedience and transgression, affected by the 'exchange effect' of faith that the real presence of Christ communicates to believers? What effect does the real presence of Christ in faith have on *hē hamartia* (the sin), the word that Paul uses 46 times in the singular number in Romans? Luther identified *hē hamartia* as 'original and not... actual sin'.<sup>23</sup> But because he concurred with Augustine that it is transmitted by 'propagation', and not 'imitation', he believed it to be ineradicable from the historical existence of humanity:

For properly understood, the terms 'unrighteousness' and 'sin' must not be related to her who conceives and brings forth, but to the one who is conceived and brought forth, so that what the text says, is this: Behold, when I was conceived, I was in unrighteousness before thee; I was not righteous because I lost my righteousness through Adam and was thus conceived without it. For thou reckonest as unrighteous all that are conceived on account of the sin which is there transferred by the parents, even when they do not sin.<sup>24</sup>

Yet he appears to contradict himself in his 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans' when he states that '...through faith a man becomes sinless and comes to take pleasure in God's commandments...' <sup>25</sup> But that sinlessness is not the eradication of the condition of sin (*hamartia*) as such. It is only the 'exchange effect' of faith by which sinlessness is communicated to believers through the real presence of Christ:

Now let faith come between them, and it shall come to pass that sins, death and hell are Christ's, and grace, life and salvation are the soul's.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time this 'exchange effect' of faith makes the sinful believer sinless, it also motivates the forever sinful believer to engage in living and acting according to God's law:

Therefore we have enough to do all our life long in taming the body, slaying its lusts, and compelling its members to obey the spirit and not the lusts, thus

22. Käsemann, *Romans*, p. 174. Dunn, *Romans*, I, p. 295, states: '...Paul can think of righteousness as a gift, a potency or status or relationship received from God'.

23. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 165; see also pp. 167-69 (168), Accordingly, the ancient fathers were correct when they taught that it is this original sin which is the 'tinder' of sin, the law of the flesh, the law of our members, the feebleness of nature, a tyrant, our original disease, etc.'.

24. Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, p. 140; also pp. 130, 172.

25. Luther, 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans', in *Works of Martin Luther*, VI, p. 452.

26. Luther, *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, in *Works of Martin Luther*, II, p. 320.



making our lives like the death and resurrection of Christ and completing our baptism—which signifies the death of sin and the new life of grace—until we are entirely pure of sins, and even our bodies rise again with Christ and live forever.<sup>27</sup>

As dynamically as God's imputed righteousness generates ethical conduct in the daily life of believers, it does not affect the condition of *hē hamartia* (sin). The power that actualizes idolatry and injustice remains invincible throughout historical existence, and therefore God's hope that God's daughters and sons would deliver the creation from its enslavement to destruction remains unfulfilled.

### *John Calvin on Romans*

Calvin, in his interpretation of Romans, like Luther, acknowledges the effects of the righteousness of faith:<sup>28</sup>

We see now how the righteousness of faith is the righteousness of Christ. When, therefore, we are justified, the efficient cause is the mercy of God, Christ is the substance (*materia*) of our justification, and the Word, with faith, the instrument. Faith is therefore said to justify, because it is the instrument by which we receive Christ, in whom righteousness is communicated to us. When we are made partakers of Christ, we are not only ourselves righteous, but our works are also counted as righteous in the sight of God, because any imperfections in them is obliterated by the blood of Christ.

Initially that effect is 'peace with God'.<sup>29</sup> Circumstantially, baptism into Christ's death and resurrection establishes a 'spiritual ingrafting' into Christ from whom 'the strength and sap of life' is derived, ending the bondage to sin and beginning to form the image of Christ.<sup>30</sup> In his interpretation of Rom. 6.18, Calvin exhorts:

The believer ought to maintain the state of freedom which he has received. It is not fitting, therefore, for believers to be brought under the dominion of sin, from which they have been set at liberty by Christ. The argument here is derived from the efficient cause, and the argument which follows is derived from the final cause: 'You have been liberated from the bondage of sin, in order that you may pass into the kingdom of righteousness. It is fitting, therefore, that you should wholly forget sin, and turn your whole heart to righteousness, into the service of which you have been brought.'<sup>31</sup>

27. Luther's 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans', in *Works of Martin Luther*, VI, p. 457.

28. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 73.

29. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 104.

30. *Calvin's Commentaries*, pp. 124-26.

31. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 133.

Like Luther, Calvin recognized the distinctiveness of Paul's use of *hamartia*. He generally speaks of sin in the singular and adds 'the corruption of the flesh', either as a synonymous reality or, more likely, as its origin. In his exegesis of Rom. 7.7-12, he comments:

Sin, therefore dwells in us, and not in the law. Its cause is the corrupt desire of our flesh, and we come to know it by our knowledge of *the righteousness of God which is declared to us in the law*.<sup>32</sup>

It appears that the corruption of the flesh engenders sin as specific acts, and these acts, in turn, produce evil. Because his interpretation of 'sin' or 'the corrupt desire of our flesh' was derived from Augustine's conception of original sin, Calvin construes the 'old human being' that Paul relates to 'the body of sin' as 'our whole nature which we bring from the womb'.<sup>33</sup> Is there, then, in Calvin's interpretation of Romans deliverance from the corruption of the flesh and the evil that it generates? On the one hand, his construal of the Good Friday event of Jesus' death does not appear to include the termination of the old moral order and its domination by *hē hamartia*:

Christ washes us by his blood, and renders God propitious to us by his expiation, by making us partakers of his Spirit, who renews us to a holy life.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, however, he proceeds to interpret the death of Christ as the efficacious destruction of 'the depravity of the flesh':

What he [the apostle] does is to expound a doctrine which he will later use as a basis for exhortation. His doctrine, as we may clearly see, is that the death of Christ is efficacious to destroy and overthrow the depravity of the flesh, and his resurrection to renew a better nature within us.<sup>35</sup>

That 'better nature' originates through the rite of baptism in and through which the death of the Old Adam occurs, and it begins to manifest itself through the 'mortification of the flesh' and 'the life of the Spirit'. The mortifying of the flesh, he insists, must be done once and forever, while the life of the Spirit must never cease.<sup>36</sup> Yet the sinful nature that human beings bring into the world from the womb is never extinguished. And the law, which could not be fulfilled because it could not control the power of sin, is reintroduced into the ongoing 'life of the Spirit' that the death and resurrection experience of baptism engenders.

32. Calvin's *Commentaries*, pp. 142-43. 'All evil therefore proceeds from *sin and the corruption of the flesh*' (italics are mine).

33. Calvin's *Commentaries*, p. 125.

34. Calvin's *Commentaries*, p. 122.

35. Calvin's *Commentaries*, p. 123.

36. Calvin's *Commentaries*, p. 126.

Calvin, in his exposition of salvation, has entangled himself in a double bind. On the one hand, God's righteousness is accredited to human beings as a gracious gift on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ. It is an imputed righteousness, and therefore the phrase 'the righteousness of God' is a genitive of origin. On the other hand, the righteousness that arises through the life of the Spirit is '*righteousness* [understood as] the law and the rule of righteous living'.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, the law that initially was divorced from the gospel, because it could not be fulfilled due to the ineradicability of original sin, is reinstated as the justified believer enters into the 'mortification of the flesh' and 'the life of the Spirit'. Now 'the righteousness of God' has become an objective genitive, and therefore a quality that God requires of those who participate in God's salvation. In his commentary on Rom. 7.3, Calvin says:

The word *law*, moreover is not used here everywhere in the same sense. In one place it means the mutual right of wedlock, in another the authority of a husband to whom the wife is subject, and in another the teaching of Moses. We must keep in mind that Paul is referring here only to that part of the law which is proper to the ministry of Moses. We must never imagine that the law is in any way abrogated in regard to the Ten Commandments, in which God has taught us what is right and has ordered our life, because the will of God must stand forever.<sup>38</sup>

In both senses of the genitive construction of 'the righteousness of God', Calvin unequivocally presupposes that God's righteousness is essentially retributive because it is determined by punitive law.<sup>39</sup> It is confirmed by his inconsistent identification of the origin of 'the knowledge of the righteousness of God'. On the one hand, he claims that it is derived from the law, and the law, of course, is the law of Sinai.<sup>40</sup> But, on the other hand, as he acknowledges in his interpretation of 1.17, it is revealed in the gospel from faith unto faith.<sup>41</sup> But if it were already disclosed by the law, why would it be necessary for it to be revealed by the gospel? Moreover, if it were already disclosed by the law, it would necessarily be determined by the character of the law, for all law, whether Israelite, Jewish or Roman, is directed toward the justice of retribution. Yet Calvin associates the knowledge of the righteousness of God that is derived from the law with the knowledge of the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel. If, on the one hand, the

37. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 134.

38. *Calvin's Commentaries*, pp. 138-39.

39. This is equally true of Luther. As Wright commented, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, p. 102, 'If you read Paul in Latin, as Luther did, that is the impression you would probably get from the word *iustitia*'. That is, 'God's moral activity of punishing evil and rewarding virtue'. In this respect the Latin text of Rom. 5.12 should also be noted.

40. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 142.

41. *Calvin's Commentaries*, p. 28.

righteousness of God is disclosed by the law, it would be directed toward punishment and therefore would require the expiation of Jesus' death. If, on the other hand, the righteousness of God is also revealed in the gospel, that is, the imputed righteousness of God, which is gradually actualized through 'the life of the Spirit', it is the righteousness of God as it is predetermined by the law of Sinai that, in spite of the ineradicability of sin, must be fulfilled by the believer regardless of its supposed impossibility.

Luther and Calvin, in view of the limitations of their hermeneutical perspective, did not, and most likely could not, comprehend the construction of the phrase *dikaiosynē theou* (the phrase that is usually translated as 'righteousness of God') in its relationship to the double prepositional phrase *ek pisteōs eis pistin* (out of trust into trust) that follows in Rom. 1.17. Their identification of *dikaiosynē theou* (righteousness of God) with the gospel did not prevent them from confusing God's justice with both gospel and law and therefore also from presupposing that the God of the New Testament is a punishing God, but who, in view of the ineradicability of sin, could do no more than impute God's righteousness in those who believe the gospel and open their lives to the indwelling of Christ.

The translation of *dikaiosynē theou* as 'righteousness of God', in its association with the gospel of individual salvation, is completely inadequate.<sup>42</sup> God's righteousness, according to Romans, is not to be identified with the punitive law of Sinai that requires the justice of retribution. The being or essence of God's righteousness is the love that God's Spirit pours out in the hearts of human beings (5.5). It is the law beyond law, and it is directed toward the justice of restoration and healing. Because its benefits are divinely intended to be universal, the phrase 'righteousness of God' is an inadequate rendition of *dikaiosynē theou*. A more appropriate translation, in the light of Paul's theological legacy in Romans, would be 'justice of God'.<sup>43</sup> The Christ event of both Good Friday and Easter, according to Paul's gospel, is the manifestation of God's justice of restoration that is determined by the eschatological perspective of Jewish apocalypticism, specifically its anticipation of the end of the old moral order and its dominating power of *sin* (*hē hamartia*) and its replacement by a new creation and the birth of a New Humanity. The Easter event of Jesus rising from the dead, therefore, is construed as the inauguration of a new heaven and a new earth,

42. At the same time, as Stendahl points out in *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans*, p. 16, that the Latin term, *iustitia*, which Augustine, Luther and Calvin encountered in their reading of the Latin text of Romans, means both 'righteousness' and 'justice'. Because of the continued association of 'righteousness' with a gospel of individual salvation, the translation of *dikaiosynē* in Romans requires the substitution of the word 'justice'.

43. Also Jennings, *Reading Derrida/Thinking Paul*, p. 5.

that is, the reconstitution of the world as an ontological reality! The power of death has been vanquished, according to 1 Cor. 15.45-57, and a new humanity of 'life-giving spirits' has replaced the old humanity of 'living souls'.

By theologizing backwards from Easter and its interpretation of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, Paul, in the light of Jewish apocalypticism, has assumed the perspective, like others among his contemporaries, that the event of Jesus' death signifies the termination of the old creation and its diseased humanity that have been predestined by the power of *sin* (*hē hamartia*).<sup>44</sup> Within the moral order of the old creation no law, not even the Sinai law, could control, much less defeat, *hē hamartia*. In Rom. 7.5, Paul, in his deconstruction of law, asserts that the law activates the passions of sins. On the one hand, it arouses offenses and transgressions, and, on the other hand, it punishes those who offend and transgress. Consequently, as Paul deduces in 4.15, 'the law works wrath'. The power of *hē hamartia*, aggravated by the law, produces cause and effect cycles of idolatry and injustice that culminate in death.

Yet, as Paul insists in 7.12, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good; but it is the *power of sin* that reacts to the 'Thou shall not' of the commandments and overthrows the good intentions of those who commit themselves to obeying the law. The law cannot give life, as Paul stated in Gal. 3.21. Nevertheless, in spite of its powerlessness, the law remains valid, for it serves humanity by raising its consciousness to the objective underlying all law, namely justice. At the same time it also confronts human beings with their diseased *condition of sin* (*hē hamartia*) that obstructs conformity to the law and, therefore, prevents the realization of justice. Consequently, 'the works of the law', are also rejected because they are infected with *sin* (*hamartia*) as the sinners themselves are who produce the works of the law. The law, which fulfills its purpose by evoking the consciousness of sin, arrives at its termination when it serves as a *paidagogos* (guardian or truant officer) that, like the slave of the Mediterranean world, guides the child safely to its school teacher in order to enable it to enter into its education. 'Christ is the *telos*, the goal and termination of the law' (10.4).

Beyond the initial divorce of law and gospel, a new union of law and gospel emerges. It is the law beyond the Sinai law. It is 'the law of God' or 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' that Paul distinguishes in 7.22 and 8.2, 7. It is the law of God that God's Spirit writes on the tablets of human hearts. It is the law of love that God's Spirit pours out in those who have been reconciled to God through their participation in the death of Christ. God's love, not human love, is the only power that can defeat the

44. Mt. 27.51-52 conveys this ontological reconstitution in terms of the eschatology of Jewish apocalypticism, specifically the Messiah Apocalypse of 2 Bar. 53-74. See Waetjen, *The Origin and Destiny of Humanness*, pp. 248-49.

power of *hē hamartia*, forestall all the forms and forces of retaliation and actualize God's justice. If this is truly the gospel that reveals and manifests the justice of God, the hope by which God subordinated the creation to absurdity at the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise should begin to be fulfilled.

The abolition of *hē hamartia*, like the termination of the law, is a basic and necessary reality that the gospel of Paul unites with the beginning of the reconstitution of the world that Jesus' death and resurrection actualize. That was not and perhaps could not be acknowledged as such by Luther and Calvin, and, if it is acknowledged by contemporary commentators, it tends to be an ambiguous prospect of the gospel. Salvation is the entry into Christ's death and resurrection and consequently the entry into the paradoxical condition of both *having been healed of the condition of sin* and *continuing to be healed of the condition of sin*. *Being* precedes *becoming*! Accordingly, the imperative of the new indebtedness that Paul prescribes is: 'Be what you have become!' A New Human Being emerges from the death and resurrection experience of baptism. Coincidentally a gradual metamorphosis into the image and glory of Christ is initiated by God's indwelling Spirit that actualizes the possibility of the impossible, the justice of God in human society. 'Become what you already are!' is thereby established as the concomitant imperative of the new indebtedness.

According to Paul, Israel's relationship to God was constituted at the beginning of Israel's history, grounded in the trust of Abraham and not in the law of Sinai. Moreover, that relationship of trust between Abraham and God was accredited to Abraham 'unto/toward justice'. That is, it presupposed that out of the relationship of trust, Abraham would naturally begin to actualize the justice of God. But Abraham lived 430 years before the law of Sinai, and therefore he was not conscious of his diseased condition of *hamartia*. According to Gal. 3.19-20, the law is the codicil that was added to the testament of inheritance that God established with Abraham. Consequently, Paul cannot attribute the law of the Sinai Covenant to God: 'Constituted through angels, in the hand of a negotiator. But the negotiator is not of one, but God is one.' Moses served as the mediator between God (one of the two parties at Sinai) and Israel (the party representing Abraham) in order to include the law under the testament of inheritance. The law is directed toward the realization of justice, but ultimately it discloses injustice and its underlying *condition of sin (hamartia)*. Nevertheless, the law and the injustices that it reveals do not cancel the promises of the testament of trust that God enacted with Abraham. There is a justice beyond that which the law of Sinai envisions but cannot deliver, as there is also a law beyond the law of Sinai that Moses mediated to Israel. It is the original law of God that, according to 2 Cor. 3.3, God's Spirit writes on the tablets of the human

heart, the law of love, and it is constituted in the hearts of those who have been reconciled to God.<sup>45</sup> This is the gospel Paul interprets in Romans, the gospel that is divinely destined to transform human society. It is the gospel of salvation as justice, and therefore the gospel of salvation for all humanity on this side of the grave. Consequently, it is also the gospel that exposes the bankruptcy of the Reformation theology of individual salvation and its justification by faith through imputed righteousness.

45. This is the fragile absolute that Slavoj Žižek writes about in *The Fragile Absolute*, p. 100: ‘What if the Pauline *agape*, the move beyond the mutual implication of Law and sin, is *not* the step towards the full symbolic integration of the particularity of Sin into the universal domain of the Law, but its exact opposite, the unheard-of gesture of leaving behind the domain of the Law itself, of “dying to the Law”, as Saint Paul put it (Romans 7.5)? In other words, what if the Christian wager is *not* Redemption in the sense of the possibility for the domain of the universal Law retroactively to “sublate”—integrate, pacify, erase—its traumatic origins, but something radically different, the cut into the Gordian knot of the vicious cycle of Law and its founding Transgression?’ (italics in original).



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