

PAUL, THE LAW, AND THE DAWNING OF THE MESSIANIC AGE:
AN ESCHATOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR THE LAW/FAITH CONTRAST
IN GALATIANS 2: 15-21

By

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAGD	W. Bauer, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , translated and adapted by W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich from the 4 th edition, 2 nd edition revised by F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Dander (Chicago UP, 1979)
EDNT	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (ET of EWNT; 3 vols; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990-1993)
ET	English Translation
EWNT	<i>Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> , edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider (3 vols; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978-1980)
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament – Supplement Series
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NT	New Testament
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OT	Old Testament
LXX	Septuagint
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SJTh	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms

TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by G. Kittel
and G. Friedrich (ET edited by G. Bromily; 10 vols; Grand Rapids:
Eerdmans, 1964-1976)

WUNT Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

VERIFIED TEXT OF GALATIANS 2:15-21

Throughout our study, we shall refer to Gal 2:15-21 based on the following citation pattern:¹

- (2:15) ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί·
 (2:16a) ἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 (2:16b) καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν,
 (2:16c) ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,
 (2:16d) ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.
- (2:17a) εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ
 (2:17b) εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοί,
 (2:17c) ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος;
 (2:17d) μὴ γένοιτο.
- (2:18a) εἰ γὰρ ἂ κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ,
 (2:18b) παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω.
- (2:19a) ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον,
 ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω.
 (2:19b) Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι·
 (2:20a) ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ,
 ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός·
 (2:20b) δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (2:20c) τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.
- (2:21a) Οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ·
 (2:21b) εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη,
 ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν.

¹ Our versification follows that of E. Kok in his comprehensive study of 2:15-21. See Ezra Hon-seng Kok, *The Truth of the Gospel: A Study in Galatians 2:15-21* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2000), 4. The indented phrasing is structured according to the hermeneutical technique outlined in William D. Mounce, *A Graded Reader of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), xv-xxiii.

I. Introduction

By greeting the Galatians with a rebuke in the place of a thanksgiving,² Paul reveals his sense of urgency towards the churches he founded as the apostle to the Gentiles (1:6; cf 4:13-19; Acts 13-14).³ Certain “agitators” have come into the Galatian community, “disturbing” them (οἱ ταρασσόντες 1:7; 5:10) with a gospel different from Paul’s and thus one that inherently undermines his apostolicity. As a result, the Galatians are now “quickly turning away” (ταχέως μετατίθημι) from Paul to another gospel so-called (1:6-10; cf 1:8-9; 3:1-5; 4:11-20; 5:7-12), so that the churches which once received Paul “as an angel, as Christ Jesus” himself (4:14), are now abandoning the one who labored over them as his own children (4:19).⁴

This occasion for Paul’s polemic against the so-called “agitators” has, ironically, served as the backdrop for centuries of subsequent argument. For at the heart of Paul’s response to the Galatians stands a contrast between “law” and “faith” that has been a point of scholarly dispute for nearly five hundred years. In broad terms, the dispute hinges on the relationship between Paul’s understanding of the law to both the OT law itself and the NT use of δικαιοσύνη (“justification”). The debate has ranged from issues surrounding the location of justifying righteousness all the way to questioning Paul’s own

² Charles H. Cosgrove, *The Cross and the Spirit: A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 27 refers to 1:6-10 as a ‘thanksgiving parody’. For Paul’s normal practice of greeting churches with a word of thanksgiving (the *exordium* according to Betz), see Rom 1:8f; 1 Cor 1:4f; Phil 1:3f; Col 1:3f; 1 Thess 1:2f; etc. Cf James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990), 38-39.

³ On Paul’s founding of the Galatian churches, see James M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations: the Old Testament and Jewish background of Paul’s mission to the nations with special reference to the destination of Galatians*, WUNT 84 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995), 188f; Nicholas H. Taylor, “Paul’s Apostolic Legitimacy: Autobiographical Reconstruction in Gal 1:11-2:14,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 83 (June 1993): 68; G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Towards a New Understanding*, SBLDS 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 126; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Heremneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 10-11.

⁴ See Lyons, *Pauline*, 126-127, who observes that the present tense verbs in 1:6-7; 3:3; 4:16-18, 21, etc. suggest that the Galatians are in the process of desertion “and that the final step has not yet been taken” (cf 3:3-5; 4:8-11). So, too, Betz, *Galatians*, 47.

understanding of the role of the law within first century Judaism. And whereas Galatians appears prominent among the historical debates on Paul and the law, it is 2:15-21 that represents Paul's initial presentation of the relationship between law, faith and justification (νόμος, πίστις and δικαιοσύνη). Thus, any proposal for Paul's view of the law must take into consideration the argumentation and theology presented within these seven verses, especially 2:16, as corroborated by its prominence in the history of the debate.

The purpose of our paper, then, is to present a descriptive survey of the historical debate surrounding the significance of the law/faith contrast in 2:15-21, and then put forward a positive proposal that seeks to contribute to the historical discussion. Based on the findings of recent scholarship, this proposal will argue that the law/faith contrast introduced in 2:15-21 is in fact an eschatological contrast between "law" rhetorically functioning as a metonymy for the old creation/old covenant on the one hand, and "faith" functioning as a metonymy for the new creation/new covenant on the other.

The significance of this proposal is two-fold. First, by demonstrating from both the OT and subsequent Jewish tradition that Paul's view of the law was in fact an extant interpretive option within his own historical context, the eschatological paradigm is able to take into account the concern of the surveyed modern scholarship that the Mosaic law be understood on its own terms (as it were) rather than through the interpretive lens of a particular reading of particular passages in Paul (e.g. a Lutheran or traditional Protestant reading). Second, the proposal maintains a juridical understanding of justification that takes into account the concern of classical Protestant scholarship that sees Paul's use of δικαιόω consistently and inextricably linked to the cross of Christ. As such, our proposal

highlights a number of works within recent scholarship that we believe make a valuable contribution to the historical conversation surrounding Paul, the law, and Gal 2:15-21.

II. The Law/Faith Contrast of Galatians 2:15-21 in Historical Perspective

A. The Protestant Reformation

1. Martin Luther

In his lectures on Galatians (published 1535), Luther provides a thorough explanation of the Pauline phrase ἔργα νόμου (“works of law”). Building on his studies in Romans, Luther proposes that the term encompasses the law in its entirety, and thus should be read “in the broadest possible sense.”⁵ For Luther, this law is kept in two different ways: externally and internally (as summarized in the distinction between *opus legis* and *lex*). Keeping the law externally is what Paul refers to as the “works of the law” (*opera legis*, ἔργα νόμου), a universal legal concept embodied in the Mosaic “interpretation”⁶ of the law which humanity has the ability of fulfilling.⁷ However, keeping the law internally is the *essential requirement* of the law (known as the law’s spiritual obligation of perfection),⁸ which no man can do, since keeping the law spiritually requires a heart inclined solely towards the love of God that cannot obtain apart from God’s Spirit indwelling the person, which was universally lost at Adam’s fall.⁹ For Luther, it is this divine relationship that needs to be recovered in order for justification to obtain. Though no man can fulfill the law, he nevertheless bears God’s moral image as a creature and

⁵ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, vols. 26-27 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hansen (Saint Lois: Concordia, 1963-64), 26:122.

⁶ Watson argues this view of Moses as *interpreter* rather than *introducer* of the law is rooted in Luther’s understanding of the Mosaic law as the embodiment or codification of God’s universal law over creation. See Philip S. Watson, *Let God Be God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), 105-106.

⁷ Cf Luther, *Works*, 26:122ff; *Commentary on Romans*, translated by J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1954), 75.

⁸ Luther, *Works* 26:253. This understanding of the law as requiring *perfect* law keeping is commonly referred to as the *quantitative* view of the law. See Thomas R. Schreiner, “Works of the Law,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, 975-79 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993); Cosgrove, *Cross*, 10.

⁹ Cf Luther’s view of the fall in his *Bondage of the Will*, translated by J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revel, 1997), 231, 236.

thus lives out the “works of the law” in terms of the various external social offices (e.g. family, church, state, vocation, relationships, etc.) that in turn gives him the false assurance that he has fulfilled his obligation before God as he has done with his various offices. This distinction between *doing* the works of the law and *fulfilling* the law means that those who are of the works of the law only (those who live according to the economy of obligation/reward without spiritual regeneration) are inescapably accursed, since the inherent absence of internal righteousness merits only condemnation as declared by the fundamental requirement of God’s law.¹⁰

Thus for Luther the law is a declarative message to mankind, one that consistently calls forth a righteousness that paradoxically cannot be found either within mankind or within the law itself.¹¹ Against this legal (and hopeless) backdrop,¹² the gospel shines forth as the declaration to mankind that God has given that which he requires.¹³ The

¹⁰ See “Preface to Romans” in Luther, *Romans*, xiii-xxvi, *passim*; *Works*, 26:252-254; Watson, *Let God*, 105-110, 115.

¹¹ Here Luther rejects both the condign and congruent merit concepts that would have been part of his earlier *pactum* theology (cf *Works*, 26:124). This theology (at least the way it was taught by the *moderni* at Erfurt where Luther was educated) understood the expression *iustitia dei* as a subjective genitive that referred to God’s impartiality in rewarding the man who does *facere quod in se est*. In short, God graciously establishes a covenant between himself and mankind, where the precondition for justification is man “doing what is in him,” namely, humbling himself and turning to God for his grace rather than his own self-justification (Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2nd edn. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 192). If man does not satisfy the conditions, then God will condemn him. Thus, the righteousness of God refers to his impartial rewarding of justification to those who meet the preconditions or punishing those who do not meet the preconditions. The moral inability of humanity to respond to God’s demands is a key Augustinian presupposition of Luther, and the apparent historical precursor to his *Turmerlebnis*, the so-called “tower experience” where he supposedly experienced his doctrine of “justification by faith.” See Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 93f; *Iustitia*, 190f .

¹² For Luther, this legal backdrop is the necessary precondition for the intelligibility of the gospel, as per its primacy in the following comment: “Now the true meaning of Christianity is this: that a man *first* acknowledge, through the Law, that he is a sinner, for whom it is impossible to perform any good work” Luther, *Works*, 26:126 (emphasis mine).

¹³ Gerhard O. Forde, “Law and Gospel in Luther’s Hermeneutic,” *Interpretation* 37 (1983): 240-252 develops the conception of Luther’s law/gospel dichotomy as two *messages* or *declarations* rather than two principles. After providing an historical survey of the hermeneutical significance of the letter/spirit contrast of 2 Cor 3:6, Forde argues that Luther makes a notable break from Augustine’s understanding of the passage. Where the latter took *gramma* to mean the law, Luther took it mean that *preaching office* characteristic of “the whole long history of God’s struggle with his people culminating in the cross” (246).

gospel is the good news that God on account of the merits of Christ forgives sins through faith alone. The Pauline-term δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (*iustitia dei*) is not a subjective genitive referring to God's impartiality that (inevitably) punishes the sinner incapable of meeting his righteous demands (a medieval view that Luther earlier held but now attributes to the function of the law), but rather a "gift" which God gives to the sinner, namely a right relationship to the law which can never come through the law itself, but only through faith in Christ.¹⁴ Luther's theology of justification is thus rooted in a non-negotiable law/gospel distinction, the latter providing what the former requires.

2. John Calvin

The Genevan reformer, John Calvin, clearly follows Luther in terms of understanding the law/faith contrast in Gal 2:16 as signifying two different ways of relating to God, works versus faith, with justification obtained only by the latter.¹⁵ In terms of the significance of the expression "works of the law" (*opera legis*), Calvin also understands the expression entailing the whole law on the contextual basis of Paul's argument developed throughout the letter (cf 3:10, 12; 5:3).¹⁶ And like Luther, Calvin understands the law as entailing a promise of salvation upon its own requirement of perfect obedience (the so-called quantitative view), which is hopelessly unobtainable.¹⁷ Thus, following Luther, Calvin

Luther thus understands the letter/spirit distinction as two preaching offices, two *proclamations* of the will of God, the content being the gospel *gives* what the law can only demand, corresponding to the preaching offices of "you must have" versus "here it is" (252).

¹⁴ McGrath, *Reformation*, 95-96. As for when Luther arrived at his conclusions, McGrath cites the year 1515 as representative of the general consensus among Luther scholars.

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 67: "The first thing to be noticed is that we must seek justification by the faith of Christ, because we cannot be justified by works."

¹⁶ See, too, Calvin's comments in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), III.XIX.3.

¹⁷ Calvin, *Commentaries*, 67-8, 89, 91; cf *Institutes*, III.XI.14, 18, 19; III.XVII.2.

understands justification (*justificare*) in 2:16 as the result of the gift of God (the objective genitive “righteousness of God” as per his citing of Rom 10:3 in connection with 2:16) obtained by faith alone.¹⁸

However, Calvin differs from Luther in terms of the continuity that exists between the law and the gospel as both are related in terms of covenant. Following the Swiss reformers, Calvin understands an “eternal” covenant as encompassing the entire scope of salvation history.¹⁹ The variegated covenants throughout Scripture make up substantively the progressive revelation of a single unified covenant, differing only in external administration.²⁰ For Calvin, the old covenant became the new covenant as the result of the advent of Christ and the Spirit precisely because the new covenant broadly speaking is God’s one and only way of salvation by faith in Christ.²¹

This brings us to a pair of important distinctions within Calvin’s theology.

Lillback argues that Calvin uses the term “new covenant” in two senses.

In the strict sense of redemptive history, he understands the New Covenant as the gospel era brought to pass by Christ’s redemptive work and His apostolic sending of the Holy Spirit. Yet Calvin also views the New Covenant in a broader sense. The New Covenant is also the saving relationship between God and His elect throughout the ages. It either looked forward in promise to Christ’s coming or it harks back to his accomplishment of redemption.²²

After quoting Calvin’s own comments from his *Institutes*, II.XI.10, Lillback summarizes Calvin’s position thus: “The New Covenant has always been the place of salvation.”²³

¹⁸ Calvin *Commentaries*, 67.

¹⁹ Peter A. Lillback, *The Binding of God: Calvin’s Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 144, citing from Calvin, *Institutes*, II.X.2; II.X.7. For a development of Calvin’s relationship to the Swiss Reformers, see Lillback, *Binding*, 110-125.

²⁰ Lillback, *Binding*, 145, citing Calvin, *Institutes*, II.X.20.

²¹ Lillback, *Binding*, 153, citing Calvin, *Institutes*, II.XI.4.

²² Lillback, *Binding*, 158.

²³ Lillback, *Binding*, 159.

So what about all the passages that seem to argue for a discontinuity between the old and new covenants? Calvin makes a second distinction between the law (or the old covenant)²⁴ *broadly* and *strictly* speaking. The law can be thought of in broad terms (entailing the promises of the gospel as it functions as an administration of the eternal covenant) or in strict terms (the law in and of itself).²⁵ Drawing upon the letter/Spirit contrast of 2 Cor 3:6, Calvin argues that the law *as merely law* is but mere letter, in that it does not contain within itself the Spirit that evokes the righteous obedience required by the law.²⁶ However, when the Spirit is joined with the law, the law actually becomes Spirit (just as the old covenant becomes the new covenant) in that it is no longer a mere letter for the listener who hears its message in faith, and thus the distinction ceases.²⁷

The characteristics of the law in the narrow sense and the covenant of grace in the broad sense are developed throughout Calvin's commentary on Galatians. Lillback provides the following summary of Calvin's view of God's "two covenants with men" (Gal 3:17):²⁸

*Calvin's Explanation of the Two Covenants in Galatians:
The Contrast of the Righteousness of the Law with Free Adoption (2:15)*

<i>Covenant of Law</i>	<i>Covenant of Grace or Gospel</i>
(3:17, 4:2, 4; 5:3)	(3:19, 21, 29, 4:4)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reward for works by merit is possible only by divine promise (2:15, 3:17) 2. This requires perfect obedience (2:15, 3:25) 3. Obedience has the promise of eternal life (2:15) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Works are always stained by sins, but God rewards His adopted children in grace, not merit (6:9) 2. Holy Spirit produces good works in believer (5:3)²⁹ 3. Faith alone justifies (5:6) |
|--|--|

²⁴ See Calvin, *Institutes*, II.XI.10 for his use of "law" as a metonymy for the Old Testament.

²⁵ Calvin, *Institutes*, II.XI.7.

²⁶ Lillback, *Binding*, 154.

²⁷ Lillback, *Binding*, 154. For a development of Calvin's contribution to the *synthetic* view of justification in terms of the double-benefits brought about by faith-union with Christ, see McGrath, *Iustitia*, 219-226.

²⁸ Lillback, *Binding*, 160; see n.100 for the pages in Calvin, *Commentaries*, that correspond to the Scripture citations.

²⁹ The original has (5:63).

- | | |
|--|---|
| 4. Justification by merit (3:12, 17) | 4. Justification by grace of another (3:12, 17, 23) |
| 5. An impossible condition (3:12, 6:9) | 5. Believers keep Law as far as they can (3:12) |

B. Protestant Orthodoxy

1. The Westminster Assembly

The law/faith contrast is further developed in terms of two soteriological alternatives within the period of Protestant Scholasticism. It has been observed that this period represented a shift “from Calvin’s Christological emphasis to other matters, such as predestination, federal theology and the perseverance of the saints.”³⁰ Perhaps the most interesting development for our purposes is how the law/faith contrast is understood to represent the bi-covenantal hermeneutic inherent within federal theology.³¹ According to this view, there are two covenants that run through Scripture, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.³² God originally placed Adam and Eve under a covenant of works, where Adam functioned as a federal representative for all his future offspring. If he had been perfectly obedient to God’s stipulations during a probationary period in the Garden, he would have merited the reward of confirmed righteousness and everlasting life for himself and his posterity.³³ According to this understanding, after the fall, God made another covenant, the covenant of grace, by sending his Son into the world to obey the original probationary stipulations of Adam under the covenant of works and thus merit

³⁰ K.L. Onesti and M.T. Brauch, “Righteousness, Righteousness of God,” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, 834 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993); McGrath, *Iustitia*, 226f.

³¹ For a discussion on the development of federal theology, see McGrath, *Iustitia*, 226-240.

³² For a thorough overview of the chief characteristics of classical federal theology (despite occasional appearances of the author’s unnecessary and unhelpful partisanship), see Mark Karlberg, “Covenant and Imputation: The Federal System of Doctrine,” a paper delivered at the Evangelical Theological Society Eastern Regional Meeting, 2003.

³³ Cf *Westminster Confession of Faith*, VII.2.

confirmed righteousness and eternal life for all those that are united to him by faith (the so-called “elect”).³⁴

From this perspective, Westminster Orthodoxy understands the Pauline term ἔργα νόμου (“works of the law”) as analogous to or representative of the covenant of works.³⁵ Having introduced the moral law in question 92 as the “rule of obedience revealed to Adam,” question 93 of the Larger Catechism defines the moral law as “the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto ... promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.” Then, in question 94, Gal 2:16 is footnoted to the statement: “Although no man, since the fall, can attain to righteousness and life by the moral law...” There is thus a conceptual identification between “works of the law” in Gal 2:16 and the moral law universalized in the covenant of works. The “justification by faith” offered in Gal 2:16 is thus understood as obtained by an alternative soteriology, namely, faith in Jesus Christ,³⁶ which is tied explicitly to the covenant of grace by way of Gal 2:20 in the Westminster Confession XIV. 2. Moreover, both the Westminster Confession and catechisms cite Gal 3:12 as the *sole* proof-text for the quantitative nature of the covenant of works, demonstrating that the Westminster Divines based this perfective view (at least in part) on their understanding of Paul’s own teaching on the law rather than on an understanding of the law derived from the OT itself.³⁷

³⁴ Cf *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, VII. 3-6.

³⁵ Cf *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, XIX.6.

³⁶ Cf *Westminster Confession of Faith* XI.1; *Shorter Catechism* Question 33; *Larger Catechism* Question 70.

³⁷ Cf the citation of Gal 3:10 as the basis for quantitative obedience in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, VII. 2; *Shorter Catechism* Question 12; *Larger Catechism* Question 20, which does include Rom 10:5, which is the same Pauline OT citation (Lev 18:5).

2. Jonathan Edwards

Moving from the British Isles to the American colonies, the federal understanding of “works of the law” characteristic of Reformed Scholasticism is further evidenced in the work of the eighteenth century theologian, Jonathan Edwards.³⁸ In his monumental sermon series published under the title “Justification by Faith” (1738), Edwards explains the significance of the Pauline phrase “we are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law.”³⁹ Edwards writes,

This is given as the reason why Christ was made a curse for us, that the law threatened a curse to us, Gal. 3:10, 13. But the same law that fixes the curse of God as the consequence of not continuing in all things written in the law to do them (verse 10) has as much fixed doing those things as an antecedent of living in them (as verse 12). There is as much connection established in one case as in the other. There is therefore exactly the same need, from the law, of perfect obedience being fulfilled in order to our obtaining the reward...⁴⁰

The reason for this quantitative perspective for Edwards is rooted in his previous exposition on the covenant of works which is then developed throughout the publication.⁴¹ Edwards writes:

If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified, and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative. He would have been approved of, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it.⁴²

Therefore, in terms of Paul’s argument in Galatians, Edwards concludes:

³⁸ For an overview of Edwards’ view of justification, see Thomas A. Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith,” *Church History* 20 (December 1951): 55-67; John J. Bombaro, “Jonathan Edward’s Vision of Salvation,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 45-67; Samuel T Logan, “The Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 46 no 1 (Spring 1984): 26-52.

³⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 vols (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 1:630.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 1:636.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Works*, 1:623, 652-3.

⁴² Edwards, *Works*, 1:623.

So now he that refuses to obey the precepts that require an attendance on the sacraments of the New Testament, is exposed to damnation, by virtue of the law or covenant of works. It may moreover be argued that all sins whatsoever are breaches of the law or covenant of works, because all sins, even breaches of the positive precepts, as well as others, have atonement by the death of Christ. But what Christ died for, was to satisfy the law, or to bear the curse of the law; as appears by Gal. 3:10-13 and Rom. 7:3, 4.⁴³

C. SUMMARY: TRADITIONAL PROTESTANT UNDERSTANDING

What emerges from our brief survey of the traditional Protestant understanding of the law/faith contrast in Gal 2:16 is that the Pauline contrast is consistently representative of two antithetical soteriological alternatives: “works of the law” are representative of justification by works merited upon perfect obedience; “faith” represents justification entirely removed from works and effected by God’s grace alone revealed in Christ.⁴⁴ The reason no one is “justified” by the “works of the law” is because of the inherent demand within the law itself for (unobtainable) sinless perfection, a perfection that Christ alone provides and is obtained by the believer through the instrumentality of faith. Thus, the central question concerning “justification” for classical Protestantism is the *location* of the righteousness which justifies in relation to the believer (external or internal, imputation or infusion), the consensus overwhelmingly siding with a juridical understanding of justification (justification obtains by an act external to the believer).⁴⁵

⁴³ Edwards, *Works*, 1:639. Cf: “And by that righteousness being *imputed* to us, is meant no other than this, that the righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness which ought to be in ourselves” (*Works*, 1:635). Edwards’ bi-covenantal structure enables him to see justification as not merely “wiping the slate clean,” but rather the appropriation of eternal benefits and rewards, a “status of positive righteousness in God’s sight” (Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards,” 56).

⁴⁴ We have not explored the possible presence of a qualitative anthropological extension of the quantitative view. This view argues that the very attempt at keeping the law is itself sin, since the law’s demands *themselves* lead to sinful boasting and pride. For a helpful explication of the terms “quantitative” and “qualitative” views of the law, see Douglas Moo “Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40 (1987): 287-307; Kok, *Truth*, 111-12; and Cosgrove, *Cross*, 10f., especially the latter two and their discussion of Bultmann on the qualitative view.

⁴⁵ McGrath, *Iustitia*, 371f.

D. The Modern Period

With the advent of historical criticism beginning with Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860),⁴⁶ the modern period of interpretation gave rise to the plausibility within scholarship of a disjunctive relationship between the theology of Paul and the OT law itself, with Paul's perspective on the law and "justification by faith" being specific to his own polemical purposes. As the law was studied within its own canonical context, and ancient Judaism analyzed within its own historical context, Paul's negative statements against the law became increasingly perplexing. And with a progressively new understanding of the significance of the law within ancient Judaism came new questions concerning the nature of justification within the Pauline corpus. We will survey a selection from the more influential proposals in the modern period of Pauline interpretation as such proposals develop into what will be, in the words of Douglas Moo, a complete "paradigm shift" within scholarship on Paul and the law.⁴⁷

1. C.G. Montefiore

One of the first of Paul's interpreters to base his conclusions on an historical reconstruction of first-century Judaism, C.G. Montefiore developed his view on Paul and the law through a progression of three essays.⁴⁸ In his second essay, Montefiore explains Paul's view of the law by appealing to the variegated nature of ancient Judaism. Given that the law is represented in Rabbinic literature as a gracious and joyful gift of God to

⁴⁶ Richard N. Longenecker, "Galatians," in *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), lv-lvi.

⁴⁷ Moo, "Paul," 287; cf Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 8.

⁴⁸ Claude G. Montefiore, "First Impressions of Paul," *JQR* 6 (1894): 428-474; "Rabbinic Judaism and the Epistles of St. Paul," *JQR* 13 (1900-1901): 161-217; *Judaism and St. Paul: Two Essays* (London: Max Goschen, LTD., 1914). Cf Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*, NovTSup 61 (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1989), 2.

his people, Montefiore finds Paul's negative statements toward the law unintelligible, a perplexity that is resolved only when understood in light of the proposed pessimism of Hellenistic Judaism.⁴⁹ In other words, given that Paul does not appear acquainted with Rabbinic Judaism, he is revolting against a particular *kind* of Judaism.⁵⁰ Thus, Montefiore eventually proposed a sharp distinction between Rabbinic Judaism (Palestinian) and Diaspora Judaism (Hellenistic) as the *crux interpretum* for Paul.⁵¹ Such a distinction, however, was criticized as historically implausible by W.D. Davies, who argued that there was significant overlap between Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism, and that a number of important terms and concepts in Pauline thought can be traced to Palestinian Judaism.⁵²

2. G.F. Moore

G.F. Moore's 1921 work is important in terms of its corroboration of Montefiore's thesis.⁵³ Against the backdrop of a grace-centered Judaism that lacked the characteristics of boasting or merit, Moore put forward an historical tour of Christianity beginning with the NT, asserting that criticism accusing Judaism of inherent legalism derived from an apologetic motive inherent in Paul's message and early Christianity that sought to differentiate Christianity from Judaism, an apologetic differentiation that also found its

⁴⁹ In Montefiore's words, a "Hellenism refracted through a Jewish Medium" ("Rabbinic," 166); cf Thielman, *Plight*, 25.

⁵⁰ Cf the comments by Thielman, *Plight*, 4; E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977, 4-5, hereafter abbreviated *PPJ*).

⁵¹ Montefiore 1914; cf Colin G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law, and Justification* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 28-9; Thielman, *Plight*, 2-3.

⁵² W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: S.P.C.K., 1955 [1948]). See, too, the discussion of Davies' work in relation to Montefiore in Sanders, *PPJ*, 7-12.

⁵³ George Foot Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *HTR* 14 (1921), 197-254. On the importance of Moore's contribution to the debate on Paul's relation to the law, see Thielman, *Plight*, 4-5; Kruse, *Paul*, 29-30; Sanders, *PPJ*, 6.

way into the presuppositions of historical scholarship. Paul's criticisms of Judaism are explicable only from the point of view that salvation comes exclusively from Christ, with such criticisms remaining inexplicable from the point of view of Judaism.⁵⁴ In other words, the so-called bondage of the law "was conceived, not as a chapter of the history of Judaism but as a topic of Christian apologetic..."⁵⁵ Moore argued that it was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that scholarship sought to understand ancient Judaism on its own terms and without a Christian polemical or dogmatic context.⁵⁶

3. Albert Schweitzer

The famed scholar, musician, and physician, Albert Schweitzer, presented a distinctly apocalyptic understanding of Pauline thought.⁵⁷ Schweitzer accounted for the apparent discrepancy between Paul and Rabbinic Judaism by locating Paul's view of the law in the context of a supposed expectation within ancient Judaism for the disappearance of the law in the messianic age.⁵⁸ In light of this expectation, Paul decided to maintain the *status quo* for Jew and Gentile toward the law: Jewish believers continue to maintain law-observance, while Gentile believers are under no such obligation.⁵⁹ Thus, the doctrine of justification in Paul is a peripheral issue to his theology, in that it arose from Paul having

⁵⁴ Sanders, *PPJ*, 6; Kruse, *Paul*, 30.

⁵⁵ Moore, "Christian," 240.

⁵⁶ Moore, "Christian," 222f, who sees the modern period of Christian studies and its fair treatment of Jewish sources beginning with August Friedrich Gfoerer (1803-1861). Cf Kruse, *Paul*, 29.

⁵⁷ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931); *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912), 48-50.

⁵⁸ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 205-227; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 3; Kruse, *Paul*, 30; N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 12-14.

⁵⁹ Schweitzer, *Interpreters*, 246-247; cf Kruse 1997, 30.

to address the problems that his *status quo* approach invoked (the so-called “subsidiary crater” within Paul’s larger mystical or participationist theology).⁶⁰

4. W.D. Davies

Shortly after World War II, the Welshman W.D. Davies published his influential work that presented his own argument as a foil to the proposals of Montefiore and Moore.⁶¹ Davies argued against Montefiore’s position on the one hand (that Paul was concerned over a legalistic *type* of Judaism) and against Moore’s position on the other (that Paul’s attitude towards the law was a mere polemic corollary to his Christianity).⁶² Following Schweitzer, Davies argued that Paul is most plausibly understood as a rabbi for whom the messianic age has dawned in Jesus.⁶³ Rather than understanding the law as disappearing in the messianic age (contra Schweitzer), Davies argued (on the basis of OT texts such as Jer 31:31-34) that the law would continue into the world to come, though modified.⁶⁴ Thus, “the gospel for Paul was not the annulling of Judaism but its completion, and as such, it took up into itself the essential genius of Judaism.”⁶⁵

5. H.J. Schoeps

Following Schweitzer and Davies, H.J. Schoeps also understood Paul’s view of the law in relation to the dawning of the messianic age when the law as it was known until that time

⁶⁰ Cf McGrath, *Iustitia*, 372.

⁶¹ Davies, *Paul*; cf Kruse 1997, 31.

⁶² Davies, *Paul*, 1-16; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 9.

⁶³ Davies, *Paul*, 10f; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 9-10; Wright, *St. Paul*, 16.

⁶⁴ Davies, *Paul*, 71-2; Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the World to Come*, JBL Monograph Series, no. 7 (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952), though Davies finds little evidence within the primary literature for the idea that the Messiah would establish a new law. Cf Thielman, *Plight*, 10, 11n66.

⁶⁵ Davies, *Paul*, 323, as quoted in Kruse 1997, 31.

would cease.⁶⁶ However, unlike Schweitzer and Davies, Schoeps does not challenge the traditional Protestant understanding of the law entailing a legalistic soteriology within Pauline thought.⁶⁷ Schoeps follows Montefiore in understanding Paul's negativity toward the law in terms of his pre-conversion adherence to a Hellenistic Judaism that misunderstood the grace-centered place of Torah within Palestinian Judaism.⁶⁸

6. Krister Stendahl

It appears that if the previous studies laid the groundwork for a complete overhaul of the traditional Protestant understanding of Paul and the law and the centrality of justification to his thought, it was Stendahl's ground-breaking 1963 essay that "initiated and anticipated in programmatic fashion much of the later criticism of the Reformation approach to Paul."⁶⁹ Stendahl argues that the Western interpreter has understood the Pauline conception of sin and justification through the experiential lens of the introspective consciences of Augustine, late medieval piety, and Luther.⁷⁰ Through this interpretive lens, the solution of "justification by faith" to the problem of the individual's awareness of personal sin is brought to the text by the Western interpreter; such an introspective conscience is not inherent within the Pauline corpus.⁷¹ Thus, Stendahl argues for a major corrective in our understanding of Paul, one that removes the "justification of the ungodly" from the center of Pauline thought and replaces it with what

⁶⁶ H.J. Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (ET, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 171f; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 10; Kruse, *Paul*, 32.

⁶⁷ Hafemann, *Paul*, 9.

⁶⁸ Schoeps, *Paul*, 213- 218. Schoeps accounted for such a misunderstanding largely in terms of the conceptual differentiation between the reciprocal and voluntary oriented ברייה and the authoritarian oriented Greek translated διακη, kh (216-217). Cf Thielman, *Plight*, 10; Kruse, *Paul*, 32.

⁶⁹ Hafemann, *Paul*, 9.

⁷⁰ Krister Stendahl, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*, 78-96 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

⁷¹ Stendahl, "Paul."

Stendahl sees as Paul's main concern, namely, Paul's own wrestling with the "question of how Jews and Gentiles stand in relation to each other within the covenant purpose of God now that it has reached its climax in Jesus Christ."⁷²

7. C.E.B. Cranfield

Shortly after Stendahl's essay, C.E.B. Cranfield argued for a reassessment on the significance of the Pauline phrase ἔργα νόμου ("works of the law").⁷³ While not denying the centrality of justification by faith or the traditional legalistic profile of Paul's opponents, Cranfield did seek to address the problem of the absence of legalism within the law itself by recasting the object of Paul's argument as a perversion of the law into legalism.⁷⁴ When Paul speaks against the "works of the law," it is this legalistic perversion of the law by post-biblical Judaism that he is addressing, not the law itself that has for its goal the very Christ who refused to abolish it.⁷⁵ Cranfield's explanation for the unique phrase is simply that the Greek language provided no term equivalent to "legalism" for Paul to use in his description of this perversion.⁷⁶ Thus, Paul is not opposing the law *itself*, towards which, when freed from this legalistic development, he has a very positive attitude.⁷⁷

⁷² Kim Riddlebarger, "Reformed Confessionalism and the New Perspective on Paul: A New Challenge to a Fundamental Article of Faith," <http://www.modernreformation.org/krnpp.html> (1996); cf Kruse, *Paul*, 33.

⁷³ C.E.B. Cranfield, "St Paul and the Law," *SJTh* 17 (1964): 43-68; cf Hafemann, *Paul*, 9.

⁷⁴ Hafemann, *Paul*, 9.

⁷⁵ Cranfield, "St Paul," 50-3, 54f.

⁷⁶ Cranfield, "St Paul," 55.

⁷⁷ Hafemann, *Paul*, 9-10. Cranfield's proposal has been subsequently developed by Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum? The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980). For a critique of this view from the traditional Protestant perspective, see Schreiner, "Works," 975-79. Commenting on Schreiner's critique, Hafemann, *Paul*, 10n41 observes that Schreiner does not "pose the question of the relationship between 'works of the law' in Paul and the OT Law itself as raised by the work of Cranfield and Fuller."

E. The New Perspective

1. E.P. Sanders

With the 1977 publication of E.P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, the paradigm-shift was complete. Sanders' work, to this day, provides the definitive challenge to the legalistic profile of first century Judaism by providing historical evidence for a "covenantal nomism" that almost universally functioned as the presupposition of ancient Jewish self-understanding.⁷⁸ Sanders' survey of Jewish literature from 200 BC to AD 200 yielded the following observation:⁷⁹

The "pattern" or "structure" of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the Law. The Law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirements to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The Law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintained or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained by covenant obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement.

Then, after a comparison between the patterns of religious thought of ancient Judaism and the apostle Paul, Sanders concludes that Paul stands outside of the covenantal nomism characteristic of ancient Hebrew thought in favor of characteristic "participationist transfer terms," where one is called to die with Christ "obtaining new life and the initial transformation which leads to the resurrection and ultimate transformation ..."⁸⁰ The problem then, for the Jew, is simply that he is not in Christ. Thus, the concern Paul has with the Torah is not based on a misunderstanding or unfamiliarity of Palestinian Judaism (contra Montefiore and Schoeps), nor can the issue

⁷⁸ This *presuppositional* view of covenantal nomism was argued by Sanders in defense of his 1977 study at the 2004 regional SBL meeting in Baltimore, MD.

⁷⁹ Sanders, *PPJ*, 422.

⁸⁰ Sanders, *PPJ*, 514; cf Kruse 1997, 35-6.

be traced back to the law's specificity to a pre-advent age (contra Schweitzer and Davies). "It is the Gentile question and the exclusivism of Paul's soteriology which dethrone the Law, not a misunderstanding of it or a view predetermined by his background."⁸¹

Concluding his work, Sanders demonstrates what differentiates Paul from Palestinian Judaism by drawing from the expression found in Gal 2:16:⁸²

The righteousness terminology is related to the righteousness terminology of Palestinian Judaism. One does not find in Paul any trace of the Greek and Hellenistic Jewish distinction between being righteous (man/man) and pious (man/God); nor is righteousness in Paul one virtue among others. Here, however, there is also a major shift; for to be righteous in Jewish literature means to obey the Torah and to repent of transgression, but in Paul it meant to be saved by Christ. Most succinctly, righteousness in Judaism is a term which implies the maintenance of status among the group of the elect; in Paul it is a transfer term. In Judaism, that is, commitment to the covenant keeps one in it. In Paul's usage, "be righteous" ("be justified") is a term indicating getting in, not staying in the body of the saved. Thus when Paul says that one cannot be made righteous by works of Law, he means that one cannot, by works of Law, "transfer to the body of the saved." When Judaism said that one is righteous who obeys the Law, the meaning is that one thereby stays in the covenant.

The effect of Sanders' reconstruction of Palestinian Judaism on the paradigm argued by classical Protestantism should by now be obvious. Sanders' covenantal nomism renders implausible the classical Protestant view that understands the law *itself* teaching an unobtainable soteriology based on perfect obedience, since such a view cannot be historically sustained by the primary sources. Drawing from Sanders' research, Dunn offers a similar critique of the traditional interpretation of Paul. First, like Sanders, Dunn argues that the law never required perfect obedience. "The obedience it did call for was within the terms of the covenant, including the provision of atonement by covenant law.

⁸¹ Sanders, *PPJ*, 497, as quoted in Thielman, *Plight*, 17.

⁸² Sanders, *PPJ*, 544; cf Kruse 1997, 36; Riddlebarger, *Reformed*, n.p.

That obedience was considered practicable. And both Saul the Pharisee and Paul the apostle agreed.”⁸³ Second, the view that Paul’s concern is with the broader anthropological issue of works-righteousness fails to explain why Paul wrote “all who rely on works of the law are under a curse” and not “all without exception.”⁸⁴ Dunn has in view Paul linking Gal 3:10 with 2:16 where works of the law were assumed (by the circumcision party) to be an essential element to being a child of Abraham. Furthermore, Kok observes that the traditional reading of Gal 3:10 assumes a “suppressed” premise that no one in fact does the *whole law*, that is, keeps the law *perfectly*.⁸⁵ While there are passages that do seem to lend plausibility to this interpretation (cf 3:10-12; 5:3), Paul nowhere explicitly states or develops a quantitative view of the law in Galatians.

According to this “new-perspective,” what then are the “works of law” and what precisely is Paul arguing against in Galatians (and in his other epistles for that matter)? For its part, the so-called “new perspective” has yet to provide a unanimous alternative to the traditional reading of Galatians in particular or Pauline theology in general.⁸⁶ Sanders’ own contribution to the question of both the nature of “works of the law” and “justification” centers on Paul arguing “from solution to plight.”⁸⁷ Summarizing Sanders’ thesis, Thielman writes: “Paul’s central conviction was that Christ was savior of the world. His statements about the Law, therefore, do not provide reasons why Christ is savior of the world, but a variety of arguments that this is in fact the case.”⁸⁸ Because Paul was convinced of the solution Jesus provided, such an *a priori* conviction required

⁸³ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 361.

⁸⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 361-2.

⁸⁵ Kok, *Truth*, 113.

⁸⁶ Cf Hafemann, *Paul*, 14.

⁸⁷ E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 4; cf Moo, “Paul,” 291; Thielman, *Plight*, 18.

⁸⁸ Thielman, *Plight*, 18; hence Thielman’s counter thesis aptly titled *From Plight to Solution*.

Paul to reflect on precisely what was the problem with Judaism. In fact, Sanders asserts that Paul provides no less than three incompatible answers when dealing with the question of the purpose of the law.⁸⁹ But what appears non-negotiable in Sanders' reading of Galatians is that the traditional Protestant view that argued for a perfection requirement within the law on the basis of Gal 3:10, 12, and 5:3 fails to take into account (1) the absence of meritoriousness in the first century and (2) other passages in Paul (Phil 3:6; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23; 1 Cor 1:8) that support his view that the law was able to be kept.⁹⁰ Sanders' alternative understanding of the problem at Galatia was that Jewish Christians wanted to mandate law-observance as entrance requirements into Christianity, requirements that Paul understood as no longer valid in light of the advent of Christ.⁹¹

2. H. Räisänen

Following Sanders' historical reconstruction for first century Palestinian Judaism, H. Räisänen nevertheless sees Sanders as not going far enough in his reassessment of Paul's view of the law.⁹² In fact, Räisänen argues that a historically responsible exegesis of Paul's thinking demonstrates that Paul lacks any coherent theology of the law, assessing (at least) five crucial areas that exemplify this incoherence:⁹³

1. There is an incoherence in both the dimension of the law (sometimes Paul maintains that the law is indivisible, other times singling out the ethical) and the

⁸⁹ Sanders, *Law*, 75-81, 104, 144-48 107; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 18.

⁹⁰ Sanders 1983, 29-43; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 19.

⁹¹ Sanders, *Law*, 19; cf Thielman, *Plight*, 19.

⁹² See Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, WUNT 29 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983); *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays*, JSNTSup 43 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

⁹³ These five issues are arranged according to the list provided by Moo, "Paul," 290.

- recipients of the law (sometimes arguing the law was for Israel alone, other times universalizing it).⁹⁴
2. There is a discontinuity between Paul's statements that argue the law has been abolished and the abiding validity of the law.⁹⁵
 3. Paul at times argues the law cannot be fulfilled (Gal 3:10) and other times argues that Christians do fulfill it (Rom 2:12-16, 25-29).⁹⁶
 4. There are times Paul argues that the law was never intended to impart life (Gal 3:21), and other times he argues that the law was merely weak to impart life (Rom 7:10).⁹⁷
 5. In arguing that Judaism believed in a justification by works, Paul shows that Israel had forfeited her election by virtue of her rejection of grace; yet he argues elsewhere in Rom 9-11 that Israel's election and covenant is enduring.⁹⁸

Though Räisänen's work is respected for its exegesis and forthrightness, and continues to exercise an influential role in modern scholarship, his going so far as suggesting that Paul deliberately misrepresents the position of his adversaries has made it "worth asking whether some of [his] initial assumptions are adequately grounded."⁹⁹

3. James D.G. Dunn

On the other side of Sanders' work stands J.D.G. Dunn, whose 1983 essay coined the phrase "the new perspective on Paul."¹⁰⁰ Perceiving that Sanders went too far in

⁹⁴ Räisänen, *Paul*, 16-41.

⁹⁵ Räisänen, *Paul*, 42-93.

⁹⁶ Räisänen, *Paul*, 94-127.

⁹⁷ Räisänen, *Paul*, 128-161.

⁹⁸ Räisänen, *Paul*, 162-198.

⁹⁹ Moo, "Paul," 292.

¹⁰⁰ Now published in James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus*, 183-206.

understanding justification in terms of covenantal entry language, Dunn argues that covenantal nomism stands more in continuity rather than in contrast with Paul's theology.¹⁰¹ Utilizing sociological analysis,¹⁰² Dunn argues that the law/faith contrast in Gal 2:16 is not a contrast between justification by faith and the law, but rather a contrast between God's covenant defined in terms of nationalist exclusivism and multinational inclusivism.¹⁰³ With the advent of Christ, the covenant has been fulfilled in such a way that it can no longer exclude Gentiles from membership. At the heart of Dunn's argument is his emphasis on the sociological significance of the phrase "works of the law," with the term entailing (though not exclusive to) particular Jewish ceremonial observances that function as identifying boundary markers for the covenant people of God.¹⁰⁴ That the law is not exclusive to this sociological function accounts for Paul's positive statements about God's law as such are understood in the broader sense of God's ethical will for his people.¹⁰⁵ Thus Paul's polemic in Galatians is not against a legalism but against a particular "attitude to the Law"¹⁰⁶ as it functions to socially ostracize Gentile Christians from full acceptance as the new covenant people of God. Now that Christ has come, Paul is arguing against those who want to continue to embrace those aspects of the law that contradict the soteriological equality of Jews and Gentiles before God.

¹⁰¹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 186; cf Kruse 1997, 40.

¹⁰² Social-scientific criticism seeks to understand the Pauline epistles in light of an examination of the social environment of the early church and probing the internal structure of early Christian groups. As Kok 2000, 3 observes, this analysis asks, "What is the nature of the early Christian movement and how did it begin to separate from Judaism and the Jewish community? How was (ecclesiastical) power or authority understood in the early Church, and how did its exercise affect Paul's relationships with the other church leaders and local Christian community authorities?" For a brief analysis of social-scientific criticism, see Carol Newsom, "Probing Scripture: The New Biblical Critics," <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2179.html> (2001).

¹⁰³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 194.

¹⁰⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*; "4QMMT and Galatians," *NTS* 43 (1997): 147-153.

¹⁰⁵ Dunn, *Jesus*, 223-25; cf Kruse 1997, 42.

¹⁰⁶ Kruse 1997, 42.

4. N.T. Wright

In the year 1991, there surfaced the publication of an influential thesis by the British theologian N.T. Wright. Paul's theology represents the climax of Jewish monotheism, election, and eschatology in the advent of the messianic ministry of Jesus.¹⁰⁷ This messianic ministry of Jesus represented his embodying the redemptive role given to Israel as the new Adams elected by God to reconcile the fallen world to himself. As Christ fulfilled this role in his life, death, and resurrection, the redemptive role of Israel has been decisively accomplished, with the consequent ingathering of both Israel and the nations into one worldwide redeemed family of God originally promised to Abraham.

Turning to the role of the law in the third chapter of Galatians, Wright argues that the central issue for Paul is the covenantal issue of how to define the people of God in light of the coming of Christ.¹⁰⁸ If they are to be defined in terms of those symbols that marked off the people of God in the old covenant (e.g. circumcision, Torah, Temple, etc), then such a definition would contradict God's original promise to Abraham (as that promise was a reaffirmation of the original promise to Adam) that he would be the father of a worldwide covenant family. In a 1997 work, Wright argues that Gal 2:11f deals with this very issue.¹⁰⁹ Paul is not addressing the issue of how someone becomes a Christian or finds acceptance before God (contra Sanders). Rather, the issue Paul deals with at Antioch is the covenantal issue of how to define the people of God. Thus, Wright adopts Dunn's view of the "works of the law" as entailing a sociological barrier between Jew and Gentile (given its immediate context in the Antioch incident of 2:11-14), and draws a

¹⁰⁷ N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 18-55.

¹⁰⁸ Wright, *Climax*, ch. 7-8.

¹⁰⁹ Wright, *St. Paul*, 120-122.

definition of justification from this sociological context. “Justification, in Galatians, is the doctrine which insists that all who share faith in Christ belong at the same table, no matter what their racial differences, as together they wait for the new creation.”¹¹⁰ The significance of Wright’s thinking is that the concept of justification has shifted from a question of the location of saving righteousness (imputed or infused) to a question of its relationship to the definition of God’s people. In other words, Wright argues that the traditional juridical understanding of justification as that which marks the entrance for the believer into the covenant community (which Wright argues is specific to the Pauline concept of “calling”) is better redefined as marking assurance that one has already been defined as a member of the covenant community by the sole identification badge of faith.

F. “Not the New Perspective”

Like the traditional view, the new perspective and its variegated proposals have themselves come under scrutiny. Sanders’ methodology and conclusions have received skeptical review, especially in terms of its supposed selectivity among the sources.¹¹¹ Methodologically, Moo wonders why the NT documents are excluded as principle witnesses to the Judaism of the first century, especially when they collectively had (unlike the modern scholar) front row seats!¹¹² Among the five deficiencies in the new perspective observed by Stuhlmacher, he principally argues that the new perspective consistently down plays divine retributive judgment as the backdrop to Pauline justification, while Dunn’s view of the “works of the law” suffers from a reductionism

¹¹⁰ Wright, *St. Paul*, 122.

¹¹¹ See, for example, D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien and Mark A. Seifrid, ed, *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Vol. 1, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siedbeck; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

¹¹² Moo, “Paul and the Law,” 292.

that fails to take into account how the term entails the totality of the law in both Paul and second-Temple Judaism.¹¹³ Thielman concurs that it is not possible to limit Paul's critique of the law in Galatians or Romans to an attitude that sought to maintain "nationalistic badges."¹¹⁴ Schreiner likewise observes that the limited sociological/ceremonial focus assigned to the term ἔργα in the phrase ἔργα νόμου "collapses upon further reading of Galatians."¹¹⁵ And Wright's insistence on understanding justification as an ecclesiological rather than soteriological doctrine has been criticized by D. Garlington, a self-avowed proponent of the new perspective.¹¹⁶

F. Watson, a former proponent of the new perspective, has since rejected the paradigm shift partially on the grounds that it makes an unwarranted distinction between law and covenant.¹¹⁷ Watson argues that the distinction between entry into the covenant and maintenance through subsequently given covenant stipulations is challenged by the primary sources themselves. Citing a number of examples within second-temple literature, Watson argues that Sanders does not adequately acknowledge the extent to

¹¹³ Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), n.b. the essay by Hagner, 75-105. The implausibility of Dunn's equation of Paul's use of ἔργα νόμου with a subset of or attitude toward the law (i.e. ceremonial boundary markers over against God's ethical commands) is brought out notably by Stuhlmacher, who observes that the expression "works of the commandments" in 2 Baruch 57:2 refers to keeping the Torah *in general*, which is further reflected in Paul's equating "works" with obeying God's commandments (cf. Gal 5:6 with 1 Cor 7:19; 2 Cor 9:8; Eph 2:10) (Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting*, 44). For a development of the relationship between the term ἔργα νόμου and מעשי תורה in 4QMMT, see Dunn, "4QMMT," 147-153; Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting*, 43; Scott J. Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile of Israel in Galatians 3-4," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, ed. James M. Scott, 329-371 (Leiden: E J Brill, 1997), 342-343n33. It should be recognized that there is a distinction between the new-perspective (the affirmation that first century Judaism was not legalistic) and the proposals put forward for explaining Paul's theology in light of new perspective affirmations.

¹¹⁴ Thielman, *Plight*, 24.

¹¹⁵ Schreiner, "Works," 977.

¹¹⁶ Don Garlington, "'Even We Have Believed': Galatians 2:15-16 Revisited," <http://www.thepaulpage.com/Gal%202.15-16.pdf> (2005). For a critique of Wright's view of justification in Galatians from the traditional Protestant perspective, see C.E. Hill, "Justification in Galatians: New and Old Perspectives," *Modern Reformation* (September/October, 2003): 37-39.

¹¹⁷ Francis Watson, "Not the New Perspective," <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/divinity/staff/watsonart.shtml> (2001).

which covenant and law are indistinguishable from one another.¹¹⁸ Most notably is the characteristic subsuming of Abraham under the stipulations of Sinai, a move that is very natural for a theology that understands the concepts of law and covenant as inseparable.¹¹⁹ The crucial point that Watson makes is that if “law-observance is basic to the covenant, if it is in some sense a precondition of future divine saving action, then it becomes thinkable again that, in contrast to all this, the Pauline gospel should have laid all possible emphasis on an unconditional and already accomplished divine saving action.”¹²⁰ There thus emerges the plausibility of Paul hermeneutically understanding a covenant conditioned upon human action (Sinai) contrasted with a covenant conditioned on divine action (Abraham). But this is precisely the traditional Protestant paradigm on which the new perspective has imposed a veto. Watson has simply demonstrated that this veto “does not derive from any definitive insight into the theology of the intertestamental texts.”¹²¹

Watson’s keen observations, however, may reveal more than they intend, for what is most obvious in his presentation of the law/faith contrast in Galatians as a conditional covenant versus an unconditional covenant inherent in Paul’s hermeneutic is the implicit admission that such a contrast is not inherent in the law itself. In other words, the conditional/unconditional relationship between the law and gospel appears almost entirely dependent on a particular reading of particular passages in Paul. While Watson does limit his remarks specifically to a critique of the new perspective, it is precisely this reading that has come under scrutiny in the modern period. And as our historical analysis

¹¹⁸ Watson, “Not,” n.p.

¹¹⁹ Watson, “Not,” n.p., citing Sir 44:19-21.

¹²⁰ Watson, “Not,” n.p.

¹²¹ Watson, “Not,” n.p.

has shown, skepticism towards such a reading is not specific to the methodology employed by the new-perspective.¹²²

G. The Law/Faith Contrast in Paul: An Eschatological Proposal

Our historical survey of selected proposals for the nature of the law/faith contrast in Gal 2:16 in particular and a Pauline understanding of law and justification in general presents the opportunity to advance the scholarly discussion with the proposal of an exegetical paradigm that is able to account for the law as presented in the OT itself on the one hand (the concern of the surveyed modern scholarship) while maintaining a juridical understanding of Pauline justification on the other (the concern of traditional Protestant theology). This task may be achieved by reflecting on a number of works that understand Paul's thought against the backdrop of an eschatological (history-of-salvation) framework. A selection of proposals follows.

1. The Tübingen School

In contrast to both the traditional and the new perspective views, E. Käsemann's 1961 article "Gottesgerechtigkeit bei Paulus" ("The Righteousness of God in Paul") presents the thinking of Paul against the backdrop of Jewish apocalypticism, arguing that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is not a gift bestowed upon the believer (as per Luther) as much as it is an apocalyptic display of God's own cosmic and creative power by which God brings about the rule of Christ over a corporate people in anticipation of God's final cosmic

¹²² See, for example, the six views that offered as proposed meanings for the Pauline phrase ἔργα νόμου ("works of law") in Schreiner, "Works." But while Schreiner argues for the traditional view offered by Watson, he, too, fails to demonstrate how such a view can be sustained by the OT law itself.

triumph.¹²³ In this way Käsemann captures the eschatological relationship of God with creation in a forward orientation toward the consummation of God's saving acts in Jesus Christ. God's faithfulness is faithfulness to the creation, not simply to the individual. The "righteousness of God" is God's power in Christ reaching out to the world as God himself appoints Jesus as Lord and Christ over the cosmos.¹²⁴

This eschatological paradigm is developed by Peter Stuhlmacher who, against the backdrop of the OT and Jewish apocalyptic understanding of the righteousness of God, has argued that God's instrumental power to bring about salvation for his people has already broken into this age with the advent of Christ and the believer's proleptic participation in the new creation by the Spirit.¹²⁵ For Stuhlmacher, the righteousness of God is both imputed and effectual, in that one's participation in the mystical union with Christ is bound up with his forensic justification (contra Schweitzer). "For Stuhlmacher, being justified includes, for Paul, being put into the realm of and experiencing the reality of the Spirit as a proleptic realization of the future new creation (cf Rom 8:2-17; 1 Cor 12:13; Rom 8:10-11).¹²⁶

The development of the role of the law within the inauguration of God's new creation has been further developed by Stuhlmacher and H. Gese with the so-called "Zion

¹²³ Ernst Käsemann, "The Righteousness of God in Paul," in his *New Testament Questions of Today*, 168-182 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969); cf Scott J. Hafemann, "Paul and His Interpreters since F.C. Baur," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, 666-679 (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993), 676.

¹²⁴ Käsemann, "Righteousness," 182; cf Onesti and Brauch, "Righteousness," 835; P.T. O'Brien, "Justification in Paul and Some Crucial Issues of the Last Two Decades," in *Right With God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, edited by D.A. Carson, 69-95 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992).

¹²⁵ See Peter Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994).

¹²⁶ Hafemann, "Paul," 677. For a critique of Stuhlmacher's view, on the grounds that the Pauline concept of justification does not effect a change in the nature of the believer but only his or her status, see John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 72-74.

Torah.”¹²⁷ Retaining the traditional Protestant understanding of the centrality of forensic justification while rejecting its law/gospel contrast representing two antithetical soteriological options, Stuhlmacher and Gese understand the contrast to represent an eschatological contrast between two ages within God’s redemptive-history, commonly known as the old covenant/new covenant or old creation/new creation.¹²⁸ Redemptive history moves from the law’s function as “Sinai Torah” to its own redemption in the new creation as the eschatological “Zion Torah.” As such, the law functions in terms of its original “pre-fall” intention to bless God’s people with newness of life animated by the power of God’s eschatological Spirit.¹²⁹

2. F. Thielman

¹²⁷ See Peter Stuhlmacher, “Paul’s View of the Law in the Letter to the Romans,” *SEÅ* 50 (1985): 87-104; Hartmut Gese, “Der Dekalog als Ganzheit betrachtet,” in *Vom Sinai zum Zion: Alttestamentliche Beiträge zur biblischen Theologie*, 63-80, Beiträge zur Evangelischen Theologie, 64 (München, 1974); cf Hartmut Gese, *Essays on Biblical Theology*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981.

¹²⁸ Hafemann, “Paul,” 672.

¹²⁹ Hafemann, “Paul,” 672. Cf, too, the thesis of Peter von der Osten-Sacken, in his “Befreiung durch das Gesetz,” (in *Evangelium und Tora, Aufsatz zu Paulus*, 197-209 [München, 1987]), which argues that the law is the divine imperative that is always subsequent to the divine promise (199). The law demand is only opposed to grace when it is separated from the Spirit and thus becomes the means by which one seeks to autonomously relate to God (201). The gospel is the unity of divine promise and demand that function to save humanity. Osten-Sacken writes: “Mit anderen Worten: Gesetz und Gnade werden zum Gegensatz dann, wenn man mit dem Tun des Gesetzes die Anerkennung gewinnen zu können meint, man verhalte sich aufgrund dessen, was man als Mensch einzubringen habe, dem göttlichen Willen gemäß. Paulus bestreitet diese Mündigkeit des Menschen im Gottesverhältnis als menschliche Möglichkeit. Mündigkeit im Gottesverhältnis, Übereinstimmung mit dem göttlichen Willen, Rechverhalten im Verhältnis zu Got (‘Gerechtigkeit’), all das ist für ihn nur möglich als Gnadenhandeln Gottes selbst, mithin als im Empfangen lebendes Verhalten. Der nicht aus der gnädigen Zuwendung Gottes, aus seiner Verheißung, lebende Mensch ist ‘Fleisch’, in die Einsamkeit nicht asuzubrechen. Er hört aus dem Worte Gottes nur das ‘Du sollst’ die Forderung, das Gebot, das Gesetz. Will er diesem ‘Du sollst’ aus eigener Kraft entsprechen -- und nach Paulus ist das der Urstand eines jeden Menschen --, so besiegelt er damit seine Gefangenschaft in sich selbst. Denn mit seiner eigenen Kraft kommt er nie über sich selbst hinaus, auch wenn er meint, sein Wille und der Gottes fielen zusammen. In diesem Sinne wird die Forderung, das Gesetz Gottes, für den auf sich selbst stehenden Menschen zu einem Gesetz, das ihn in der Sünde, nämlich dem Ausschlagen der Gnade, und im Gefolge dessen im Tode, nämlich in der Gottesferne, in der Selbstverschlossenheit befreiten Paulus lautet demgegenüber: Wir erwarten kraft der Gabe des Geistes – der Kraft Gottes – aus Glauben heraus, nämlich in einem Vertrauen, das in der Kraft Gottes begründet ist, die vollständige Einlösung der Verheißung Gottes, die mit der Gabe des Geistes jetzt bereits angeldwiese Realität geworden ist (vgl. Gal 5,5)” (201). Cf Hafemann, *Paul*, 126n114.

In an attempt to understand Paul from the perspective of Jewish eschatology, F. Thielman's 1989 work argues that Paul's attitude towards the law "stands in continuity with parts of the Hebrew scriptures and with many Jewish contemporaries."¹³⁰ Thielman demonstrates that some expressions of Judaism spoke of Israel's failings in terms of disobedience to the law and of Israel's future redemption in terms of God's intervention on her behalf to enable her to keep the law.¹³¹ Paul's disparity towards the law is understood in terms of the inability to keep the law in "the present evil age" that encloses humanity under sin with its pronouncement of cursing upon humanity for its disobedience. Yet, Paul also affirms that in the eschatological age of deliverance from sin, believers keep the law by walking in the Spirit. According to Thielman, Paul does not argue against the law, but against a life "under law" absent the Spirit.¹³² Therefore, contrary to Sanders' "solution to plight" thesis, Thielman argues that Paul's understanding of the law has a unified coherence against the backdrop of the "plight to solution" pattern inherent in redemptive history and reflected in Jewish literature contemporaneous to Paul.¹³³

3. S. Hafemann

In his 1995 work on 2 Cor 3, S. Hafemann presented a further challenge to the classical Protestant law/gospel dichotomy. Interpreting the letter/Spirit contrast of 2 Cor 3:6 against the backdrop of the new covenant promise of Jer 31:31-34 and Ezek 36:25-27, Hafemann argued that 2 Cor 3:6 entails an entire understanding of the relation between

¹³⁰ Thielman, *Plight*, viii, 28.

¹³¹ Thielman, *Plight*, 26-27.

¹³² Thielman, *Plight*, 50.

¹³³ Thielman, *Plight*, 45.

old and new covenants as realized in the ministry of Paul. The “letter” (γράμμα) does not represent the law, but rather the law absent the Spirit, which has now arrived through the mediation of Paul’s ministry.¹³⁴ The argument Paul presents in 2 Cor 3 is thus a redemptive-historical tour that contrasts not the law versus the gospel, but rather the law with and without the Spirit, the former being the central promise of Jeremiah’s new covenant (cf Ezek 36:25-27).¹³⁵ Interpreting the OT tradition from Ex 34:29f (2 Cor 3:7-18), Paul wrote 2 Cor 3 as an explanation for the Corinthians that Israel could not obey the Mosaic law and obtain salvation because their hearts were “veiled” or hardened by virtue of God’s sovereign design to withhold the Spirit (for the exception of the remnant) from that particular age in his plan of redemption.¹³⁶ With the advent of Christ, the new covenant has dawned and is at present being mediated by Paul, not to remove or abrogate the law, but precisely with the power to keep the law in accordance with the original promise of Jeremiah. The Corinthians, in contrast to the Israelites, are now like Moses, with their faces unveiled by the glory of the Spirit, with the perennial problem of Israel’s history of disobedience now proleptically solved in their Spirit-renewed hearts.¹³⁷

H. Conclusion

The foregoing eschatological studies present a consistent account of how Paul’s theology of the law is shaped around the Christological fulfillment of God’s redemptive purposes for humanity and creation as promised in the OT. This eschatological focus on Paul’s thinking has been reflected in a number of proposals that observe similar eschatological

¹³⁴ Hafemann, *Paul*, 39-184.

¹³⁵ Hafemann, *Paul*, 171.

¹³⁶ Hafemann, *Paul*, 189-242.

¹³⁷ Hafemann, *Paul*, 407-28.

patterns of thought in Paul's epistle to the Galatians.¹³⁸ Thus, it appears that the stage is set to examine the law/faith contrast in Gal 2:15-21 in light of this eschatological paradigm. While each study may present its own methodological and exegetical vulnerabilities, such vulnerabilities are for the most part compensated by contributions from the other works. Thus, the following proposed eschatological reading of the law/faith contrast is presented in terms of the cumulative effect produced by these studies. Taken together, we believe they present the potential for a most stimulating and faithful reading of Paul, the law, and Gal 2:15-21.

¹³⁸ E.g. Moisés Silva, "Eschatological Structures in Galatians," in *To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry*, edited by Thomas E. Schmidt and Moisés Silva, 140-162 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994); J. Louis Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 31 (1985): 410-424; Robert G. Hall, "Arguing Like and Apocalypse: Galatians and an Ancient *Topos* Outside the Greco-Roman Tradition," *NTS* 42 (1996): 434-53; Cosgrove, *Cross*; Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002); Don Garlington, *An Exposition of Galatians: A New Perspective/Reformational Reading* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003); James M. Scott, "'For as Many as are of Works of the Law are Under a Curse' (Gal 3:10)," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, edited by James A. Sanders and Craig A. Evans, 187-221, *JSNTSup* 83, *Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity* 1, 187-221 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Mark A. Seifrid, "Paul, Luther, and Justification in Gal 2:15-21," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 65 no 2 (Fall 2003): 215-230; N.T. Wright, "Gospel and Theology in Galatians," in *Gospel in Paul: Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, edited by L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, 222-239, *JNSTSup* 108 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

III. An Eschatological Reading of Galatians 2:15-21

A. The Epistolary Occasion Behind 2:15-21

Before examining the eschatological characteristics of 2:15-21, it is important to establish our contextual bearings by addressing a number of preliminary issues such as the occasion of the letter, the recipients, and identification of Paul's "opponents." The question of destination for the epistle remains unresolved, including when it was written, though the majority of scholarly opinion argues for the North Galatia (territorial/ethnic) versus the South Galatia (provincial) hypothesis.¹³⁹ While it is clear that the recipients of Paul's letter are Gentile Christians (4:8; 5:2-3; 6:12-13),¹⁴⁰ the identification of Paul's opponents, the so-called "agitators" who appear throughout the epistle "disturbing" the Galatians with a "different gospel," is not so clear.¹⁴¹ The difficulty lies in the fact that we have no way of knowing who the agitators are or what they teach apart from Paul's comments about them in his letter. Given this fact, J.M.G. Barclay's 1987 study argues

¹³⁹ For a discussion on the North (territorial/ethnic) versus South (provincial) Galatia hypotheses from the perspective of ancient Jewish topography, see Scott, *Paul and the Nations*, *passim*. Scott argues that, for both Hellenistic and conservative Jewish thought, the Table-of-Nations tradition (Gen 10; 1 Chr 1:1-2:2; Josephus *Ant.* 1.122-147; *Jubilees* 8-9) served as the "fundamental point of orientation for describing Israel's place among the nations of the world and the basis for envisioning world geography and ethnography in both the present and the eschatological future" (216). Of significance for the discussion is Josephus' identification of Gomer, the first son of Japheth (Ἰαφεθ), with the Galatians (Γαλάται), "who are understood as occupying the whole Roman province of Galatia, including South Galatia (*Ant.* 1.123, 126). Hence, from a Jewish perspective, all the inhabitants of Roman Galatia are ethnic Gomerites/Galatians" (218). If such a tradition (with its entailed periodic "updating" in terms of Roman provincial names) forms the topography of Paul, then "Paul was sending his letter to the churches of Phrygia-Galatica, which he founded on his First Missionary Journey and then visited again on his Second Missionary Journey" (218). Cf the survey of discussions in D.A. Carson, Douglass J. Moo and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 290-293; Betz, *Galatians*, 3-5; Kok, *Truth*, 2 and the sources listed there. See Longenecker, "Galatians," lxxii-lxxxviii for a summary of the issues surrounding the dating of Galatians.

¹⁴⁰ Kok, *Truth*, 2.

¹⁴¹ For discussions on the identity and message of the agitators, see J. Louis Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *NTS* 31 (1985): 410-424; Kok, *Truth*, 80-86; Carson, Moo, and Morris, *Introduction*, 295-96.

that we have no choice but to engage in some kind of (cautious) “mirror reading.”¹⁴² On the basis of a proposed methodology consisting of seven criteria for accurate mirror-reading (type of utterance; tone; frequency; clarity; unfamiliarity; consistency; and historical plausibility),¹⁴³ Barclay concludes the following profile for Paul’s opponents under the heading of “Certain or Virtually Certain”:¹⁴⁴

1. Paul’s opponents were Christians
2. They wanted the Galatians to be circumcised and observe at least some other elements of Torah
3. They questioned the adequacy of Paul’s gospel and apostolicity
4. Their arguments persuaded the Galatians

Under the heading of “Highly Probable,” Barclay also concludes:¹⁴⁵

1. They were Jewish Christians
2. They argued from Scripture, perhaps focusing on the Abraham narrative
3. They expected the Galatians to become circumcised proselytes and to observe Torah as the essential characteristic of God’s people

In summary, the majority of scholars are convinced that the agitators are Jewish Christians, possibly from Jerusalem,¹⁴⁶ who maintain that keeping the “works of the law” is in some way essential to salvation (i.e. proponents of Judaizing).¹⁴⁷ While it remains uncertain just *how much* of the law is required to be kept,¹⁴⁸ the central issue is clearly the

¹⁴² Cf Kok, *Truth*, 80-81; Longenecker, *Galatians*, lxxix; also Betz, *Galatians*, 6, who points out that there is no necessary correlation between Paul’s denials and the agitator’s affirmations.

¹⁴³ See J.M.G. Barclay, “Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case,” *JSNT* 31 (1987): 73-93, 84-5 for a detailed development.

¹⁴⁴ Barclay, “Mirror,” 88.

¹⁴⁵ Barclay, “Mirror,” 88.

¹⁴⁶ Kok, *Truth*, 82, who cites 4:30 and Acts 21:20.

¹⁴⁷ Kok, *Truth*, 80-86; J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians: A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes and Dissertations* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 52-53; Herman Ridderbos, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Churches of Galatia: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1953), 15-17; Ronald Y.K. Fung, Ronald Y.K., *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 7-9; Carson, Moo, and Morris, *Introduction*, 295-96.

¹⁴⁸ Kok, *Truth*, 84-5 observes that Paul’s remark in 5:3 that those circumcised will have to keep the whole law is probably a *reminder* “that whoever accepts circumcision thereby accepts the obligation of the whole Torah and to take on a whole and wholly Jewish way of life.”

stipulations of circumcision (cf 5:2-3; 6:12-13; cf 2:3-4) and Jewish observance of “days, months, seasons, and years” (4:10).

Furthermore, it remains uncertain precisely why Judaizing tendencies arose within the church.¹⁴⁹ E. Baasland has put forward an argument for the advent of Judaizing based on the connection between persecution and suffering (as per 6:12).¹⁵⁰ Baasland argues that the most plausible explanation for the recurrence and centrality of the persecution (διώκω) motif in Galatians (1:13, 23; 4:29; 5:11; 6:12; cf πάσχω in 3:4 and ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς in 4:13) is that it was being used against Paul by the “agitators.”¹⁵¹ Specifically, Paul’s apparently law-free gospel is resulting in the curse of persecution promised in Deut 27:15-26; 28:16-20 for law-breakers (cf 3:10). By not practicing circumcision Paul “broke the Covenant of Abraham, and according to Jer 11:3; Mal 2:2 the curse will fall exactly on those who break the Covenant” (cf 1:10 with Jer 17:5).¹⁵² Moreover, that the converted Galatians are experiencing their own persecutions (3:4; cf 5:14) suggests that such a curse is now overtaking them.¹⁵³ Baasland argues: “Paul was accused of pushing

¹⁴⁹ The perplexity of the phenomenon emerges in light of Paula Fredriksen’s 1991 essay (“Judaism, the Circumcision of Gentiles, and Apostolic Hope: Another Look at Galatians 1 and 2,” *JTS* 42 [1991]: 532-564), where she observes that first century Jews made a distinction between “conversion” (i.e. to become a Jew) and “salvation” (which was available to Gentiles apart from conversion) in the context of both quotidian and eschatological categories (534-548). Thus circumcision could be an “entrance rite” that *further confirmed* one in his or her salvation, but was not necessary for that salvation (547). According to Fredriksen’s research, first century Judaism believed all that was needed for Gentile salvation was the turning away from idolatry to the one true God, not *conversion* to Judaism *per se*. In fact, their eschatological expectations mirrored this belief: “When God establishes his Kingdom, then, these two groups will together constitute ‘his people’; Israel, redeemed from exile, and the Gentiles, redeemed from idolatry. Gentiles are saved as Gentiles: they do not, eschatologically, become Jews” (547). Care should be taken to observe Fredriksen’s methodological qualifications yield only “probable” conclusions, as per her qualification on p. 534.

¹⁵⁰ Ernst Baasland, “Persecution: A Neglected Feature in the Letter to the Galatians,” *Studia Theologica* 38 (1984): 135-150.

¹⁵¹ Baasland, “Persecution,” 142. The centrality of the motif is defended rhetorically (as per Betz’s analysis) in terms of its positioning within central parts of the letter, appearing in the narratio, argumentatia, exhortatio, and the peroratio (143). Baasland points out that Paul’s mention of persecution in 1:13 and 23 serves as a “self-critical retrospective view of his own past as a persecutor” (139).

¹⁵² Baasland, “Persecution,” 141-142, 142.

¹⁵³ Baasland, “Persecution,” 142.

the issue to extremes in contrasting the gift of the Spirit and the fulfillment of the law. Receiving the gift of the Spirit does not mean that the law is made invalid or entail the loss of the specific character of being a Jew.”¹⁵⁴ In contrast to Paul, these Jewish-Christians are compelling the Galatians to become Jews (5:3), since to live like a Gentile, even as a Christ-believer, was to be outside of God’s covenant, and hence a “sinner” separated from the presence of God (2:15, 17).¹⁵⁵ Thus the central importance of circumcision (6:12) and Jewish diet, calendar, and religious festival observation (4:10, cf 21); in short, the Galatians must “live like a Jew.” Only then will the Galatians be able to overcome the curse that comes to all who reject God’s law, including Paul.¹⁵⁶

B. The Function and Structure of 2:15-21

In view of the apologetic context in which Paul is writing, he responds with an immediate defense of his apostolicity in v. 1 (1:11f)¹⁵⁷ that climaxes into the “hypocrisy” of the apostle Peter¹⁵⁸ at Antioch¹⁵⁹ (2:11-14) which, like the actions of the Galatians,

¹⁵⁴ Baasland, “Persecution,” 143.

¹⁵⁵ Scott J. Hafemann, *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 229-230.

¹⁵⁶ This appears a more plausible explanation for the advent of those who insisted on circumcision, contra Fredriksen, “Judaism,” who argues that the delay of the *parousia* is to account for the novel insistence on Jewish conversion among Gentiles. Her insightful observations regarding first century Judaism’s requirement of Gentiles to turn away from idolatry for salvation irrespective of their becoming Jews rightly calls into question the origin of this Judaizing missionary effort. But Fredriksen’s thesis (that Judaizers believed the *parousia* was being delayed because of a failure among believing Gentiles to observe Torah) does not take into account the persecution motif in Galatians and its connection with the rationale behind the Judaizing effort, as made explicit by Paul in 6:12. In line with Fredriksen’s own concern with Paul’s argument in Galatians, it is God’s threatened curses of Deut 27 and 28, not necessarily the delay of the *parousia*, that provides the rationale for Judaizing as defined by Galatians *itself* (see J. Scott’s analysis of 3:10 below).

¹⁵⁷ As Cosgrove, *Cross*, 34 observes, citing Schubert and Funk, “The emphatic self-description in 1:1, ‘an apostle *not from human beings nor through human beings*,’ announces the theme of ‘Paul the Apostle’ and shows that Paul’s apostolate and not simply his person is at stake in what we have therefore rightly termed the ‘apostolic autobiography’ (1:11-2:21).”

¹⁵⁸ That Κηφῶς is the Aramaic counterpart to the Greek name Πέτρος (cf 1:18; 2:9, 11 with 2:7-8), see Betz, *Galatians*, 76-77; Bruce, F.F., *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 120-121; Kok, *Truth*, 61-62.

threatened the “truth of the gospel” (cf 1:11; 2:2, 5, 7, 14).¹⁶⁰ Peter’s withdrawal from Gentile table-fellowship serves as the formal occasion for Paul’s argument in 2:15-21, which is perhaps a summary of what he said to Peter at Antioch.¹⁶¹ However, that the content of Paul’s argument in 2:15-21 applies to the Galatians materially (in terms of how they are turning away from the gospel) is demonstrated by the recurrence and development of key terms and concepts in 2:15-21 throughout the letter.¹⁶² Betz’s 1979 rhetorical study of Galatians accounted for such a development by understanding 2:15-21 as the *propositio* of the letter. In ancient rhetoric, a *propositio* “(1) identifies points that all parties agree upon, (2) identifies points that all parties do not agree upon, and (3) is marked out by conciseness and brevity, in order to be unpacked in more detail later.”¹⁶³ While not necessarily adopting Betz’s rhetorical analysis, most commentators acknowledge that 2:15-21 is a passage that presents “the larger argument of the letter in a highly condensed form, as a sort of preview to the thought he is about to develop.”¹⁶⁴ Gal

¹⁵⁹ For an excursus on Antioch-on-the-Orontes, see Betz, *Galatians*, 104-105.

¹⁶⁰ Cosgrove, *Cross*, 125 argues that Paul’s actions towards Peter function as an “expression of his loyalty to the Gentile cause at Antioch,” in that Paul was the only one who stood up for the Gentiles (2:11-14). Thus, Paul’s rebuke of Peter serves as a paradigmatic model for the Galatians – they should stand up to the agitators like Paul did to the Judaizers. Cf the emphasis on the paradigmatic function of Paul’s autobiography (as over against the apologetic) in Lyons, *Pauline* and Beverly R. Gaventa, “Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm,” *Novum Testamentum* 28, no 4 (1986): 309-326. For a discussion treating the multiple perplexities surrounding the issues of the relationship between Antioch and Galatia, see Kok, *Truth*, 61-88.

¹⁶¹ “It is generally accepted that Paul here [in 2:15-21] restates the position he argued for at Antioch in the confrontation with Peter” (James D.G. Dunn *The Epistle to the Galatians* [London: A & C Black, 1993], 132). So, too, Kok, *Truth*, 54-55; Fung, *Galatians*, 105; Seifrid, “Paul,” 216-7. The “majority” view basically argues that the thought of verse 14b is incomplete without the explanation of 2:15f. Bruce, *Galatians*, 136, refers to the commonly observed relationship between the Antioch incident and 2:15f as the passing from *Individualgeschichte* to *Weltgeschichte*.

¹⁶² “Indeed, it is at this point in the letter that Paul introduces ‘justification’ as a *Leitmotiv* which continues until the conclusion of the body of the letter” (Seifrid, “Paul,” 215).

¹⁶³ Richard N. Longenecker, “Defining the Faithful Character of the Covenant Community: Galatians 2.15-21 and Beyond,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, edited by J.D.G. Dunn, 75-97 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), 79; Betz, *Galatians*, 114.

¹⁶⁴ Seifrid, “Paul,” 215; Hays, *Faith*, 123. Most disagreements with Betz’s analysis of 2:15-21 stem from his insistence on separating 2:15-21 from any direct relationship to 2:11-14. See the alternative proposal for understanding 2:15-21 as part of the *Narratio* in Lyons, *Pauline*, 135; cf Kok, *Truth*, 55-6.

2:16 in particular entails terminological and conceptual indicators that are developed throughout the epistle. For example, R. Hays observes, there “is a sense in which all of Galatians 3 and 4 can be read as Paul’s ‘exegesis’ of the concise authoritative formulations of 2:16.”¹⁶⁵

In determining the structure of 2:15-21, we follow E. Kok’s analysis based on two important textual indicators. First, there is a shift of person from second person “you” (in the previous 2:14b) to first person plural “we” at 2:15-17 and then to the first person singular “I” at 2:18-21a. Second, 2:15-21 includes the optative expression *μὴ γένοιτο*, which Paul appears to use as a rhetorical device with a predictable structure consisting of an assertion, a question based on a false inference from the previous (true) assertion, a strong negation and finally clarification/s or reason/s for rejection.¹⁶⁶ Thus, 2:15-21 can be subdivided into the following six unit structure:¹⁶⁷

- 2:15-16 “We” – the Assertion
- 2:17 “We” – the Question and Negation
(*μὴ γένοιτο*)
- 2:18 “I” – Clarification 1 (*γὰρ*)
- 2:19-20 “I” – Clarification 2 (*γὰρ*)
- 2:21 “I” – Concluding Remarks; “Christ”
(2:21b links up to 2:2a; *γὰρ*).

C. 2:14a and the Truth of the Gospel: The Theological Occasion Behind 2:15-21

¹⁶⁵ Hays, *Faith*, 123.

¹⁶⁶ Kok, *Truth*, 91.

¹⁶⁷ Kok, *Truth*, 91. Though we are in basic agreement with the structure of 2:15-21 as presented by Kok, we do have significant differences of interpretation with regard to the passage, as the discussion below will make clear. This difference is primarily based on our understanding of the significance of the old covenant in Paul’s Antioch speech. Following J.D.G. Dunn, Kok takes the “sociological boundary marker” understanding, while we will be arguing for an “eschatological boundary marker” approach, at the same time agreeing on the overall structure of the argument. For a similar three section division around the shift of person, see Jan Lambrecht, “Paul’s Reasoning in Galatians 2:11-21,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, edited by J.D.G. Dunn, 53-74 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), 55.

Within the immediate context of Paul's response to Peter at Antioch, Paul's assertions and lexical referents in 2:15-21 delineate his prior assertion that Peter failed to be "straightforward" (ὀρθοποδέω) about the "truth of the gospel" (ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου) in Antioch (2:14a). Paul's reference to the "gospel" in 2:14a picks up his earlier reference in 2:2 (cf 2:5, 7) that (conceptually) links together the gospel with divine "revelation" (ἀποκάλυψις), a link that is itself earlier referenced in 1:12, 16. Situated strategically at what the consensus of scholars view as the beginning of the body of the letter,¹⁶⁸ Paul's denial of the human origin for his gospel in 1:12 is contrasted (ἀλλὰ; cf the divine/human contrast of 1:1, 10-11) with the unswerving affirmation of his receiving the gospel δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. That the construction functions as an objective genitive¹⁶⁹ is made explicit in 1:16 (ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ), where, in defending the legitimacy of his apostolic authority derived from his immediate encounter with the presence of God (1:11-12; cf 1:1), Paul points explicitly to the apocalyptic origin of his own calling. The apostolic authority inherent in this christophonic call is derived from Paul's use of a redemptive-historical *topos* from the calls of the prophets in the OT (1:15; cf Is 49:1-6; Jer 1:5-6; and Is 50:4).¹⁷⁰ S. Hafemann observes that the primary significance of these

¹⁶⁸ See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 21-22; Silva, "Eschatological," 146n25.

¹⁶⁹ Silva, "Eschatological," 146.

¹⁷⁰ Baasland, "Persecution," 143-144. Cf Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul – One of the Prophets?* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 4, who writes: "Even though Paul never unfolds the Damascus revelation, in Gal 1:15-16a significant similarities to prophetic call-narratives are demonstrable, with respect both to vocabulary and structure ... The basic structure, call, election, revelation, commission and definition of target group, corresponds to the basic structure of the commission texts of the OT prophets" (cf 58f). Sandnes further observes "... Paul did not understand his commission in terms of any particular prophet. He describes his call in terms and motifs that are analogous to the call of Isaiah, Jeremiah and the Servant of the Lord. The apostle Paul is, then, as a preacher of the gospel of God's Son a latter day prophet" (65). Cf Ciampa's observation that Paul's self-referencing of the term ἀπόστολος appears to reflect the OT/Jewish concept of מַלְאָכָא as it reflects the office of the OT מַלְאָכָא (Roy E. Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1998], 38). See also Hafemann, *Paul*, 40-41 n4. However, as Sandnes' study concludes, Paul's use of the term ἀπόστολος goes beyond the OT prophets in terms of its Christological and new covenant foundation (*Paul*, 240-242). For a development of Paul's theology as it related to the Christophony, see Dunn, *Jesus*, 89-107.

call narratives is the “insufficiency/sufficiency” motifs inherent in the call pattern: based on the call of Moses, these patterns consistently present an obstacle motif demonstrating the insufficiency of the prophet, which is subsequently overcome by the sufficiency of the prophet as the result of God’s grace.¹⁷¹ Thus, the διώκω/πορθέω motifs from Paul’s “former manner of life” (1:13-14) function to demonstrate Paul’s insufficiency for his apostolic ministry (cf 1 Cor 15:9), while 1:15-17 functions to demonstrate the grace (χάριτος) of God to overcome his insufficiency by the “apocalypse of his son” (1:16; ἀποκαλύπτω τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ).¹⁷² For Paul, this sufficiency by the grace of God carries an “implicit claim to speak with divinely sanctioned authority to the people of God,”¹⁷³ which comes as the result of his encounter with the immediate presence of God and his commission to mediate the prophetic content of that encounter to the nations (1:11-12, 16; cf Rom 16:25-26).

The entailment of apostolic authority in Paul’s announcement of the apocalypsed gospel is further evidenced in Paul’s defense of his apostolicity in 1:1 and the subsequent authoritative rebuke of the Galatians 1:6-9 for ταχέως μετατίθημι (“quickly turning”) from the gospel (cf 3:1-5; 4:12-20; 5:7). Crucial to the relationship between apostolicity and authority is Paul’s bridging his apostolic defense and authority with his sole announcement of Christ’s resurrection (1:1; τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν), which represents, apart from Romans, the only reference to the resurrection at the very

¹⁷¹ Hafemann, *Paul*, 60. See pp. 42-89 for his extensive survey of the call narrative in biblical/post-biblical traditions, especially in terms of the Mosaic call’s function as an authoritative presupposition for one’s own ministry.

¹⁷² Hafemann, *Paul*, 98; Silva, “Eschatological,” 146-47.

¹⁷³ Hafemann, *Paul*, 104; cf Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 71; Taylor, “Legitimacy,” 70f; Cosgrove, *Cross*, 119f., for corroboration that Paul’s autobiographical concern is one of authority.

beginning of a Pauline epistle.¹⁷⁴ This central event of redemptive history¹⁷⁵ has “rescued us from the present evil age” (1:4), a phrase that signifies an “eschatological mode of thought” that entails the dawning of a new age.¹⁷⁶ Thus, in light of 1:4, the Galatians’ “turning away” from the one who called them by the “grace of Christ” are (in some way) turning toward the age from which they were rescued by that very grace (1:6; cf *χάρις* in 1:3 with 1:4; 3:1-5).¹⁷⁷ This “deserting” on the part of the Galatians is authoritatively described by Paul as a “different gospel” (1:6) and a “distortion” of “the gospel of Christ” (1:7). And Paul’s setting forth the gospel as the basis for even *self* judgment (cf. the relation between *ἡμεῖς* and *ἀνάθεμα* in 1:8) not only demonstrates further that Paul’s defense of his apostolicity is penultimate to his defense of the gospel (cf 1:11; 2:5, 14), but that Paul serves the gospel with an uncompromising loyalty as the result of his apostolic commission.¹⁷⁸ In other words, because of Paul’s relationship as a “slave of

¹⁷⁴ As Cosgrove, *Cross*, 34 observes, citing Schubert and Funk, “It is characteristic of Paul that he expands the customary epistolary opening and thanksgiving in ways that reveal at the very outset his concerns in writing.” Cf Silva, “Eschatological,” 144-45, who points out: “When Paul alters his standardized greeting, it is normally for a reason directly related to the concerns of the letter.”

¹⁷⁵ For the development of the centrality of the resurrection to redemptive-history, see the monumental N.T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 3, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); cf Silva, “Eschatological,” 145.

¹⁷⁶ Silva, “Eschatological,” 146.

¹⁷⁷ Cf Silva, “Eschatological,” 151, with the same conclusion derived from Paul’s (equally direct) argument in 3:2-5.

¹⁷⁸ Cosgrove, *Cross*, 25. Though Galatians clearly has apologetic *content*, it is for this reason that Cosgrove (rightly) rejects the classification of Galatians as an “apologetic letter,” contra Betz. Paul’s purpose “is to persuade the Galatians not simply to change their minds about him but to change their present course of thinking and acting with reference to the gospel” (25). This inherent relationship between Paul’s defense (of apostolic authority) and goal (to bring about a change of *life* among the Galatians) should render invalid any insistence of an absolute dichotomy between an *apologetic* and *paradigmatic* function of Paul’s autobiography. Paul defends his apostolicity *in order* to demonstrate his mediatorial role of embodying the gospel *in order* to bring about the requisite imitation of that mediation among the Galatians, as will be demonstrated in Paul’s link between the *effect* of the mediation of the Spirit in his ministry and its demonstration of his *initial* justification by faith (cf 2:16 with 20c), which represents a pattern he will *apply* to the Galatians in 3:1-5. Moreover, an insistence of a paradigmatic function over against an apologetic defense for Paul’s autobiography fails to account for Paul’s use of OT prophetic call narrative for his own call as well as the apocalyptic genre that characterizes the letter (for the latter, see below). For a defense of the paradigmatic function of Paul’s autobiography, see Gaventa “Autobiography”; Lyons, *Pauline*.

Christ” (1:10, Χριστοῦ δοῦλος)¹⁷⁹ to the “gospel of Christ” (1:7, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ), one cannot reject the one without rejecting the other.¹⁸⁰

D. The Theological Occasion Behind 2:15-21: Conclusion

Paul’s autobiographical identification with the apocalypsed gospel announcing and effecting the rescue from the “present evil age” climaxes into the “hypocrisy” of the apostle Peter at Antioch (2:11-14) which, like the actions of the Galatians, threatened the “truth of the gospel” (cf 1:11; 2:2, 5, 7, 14) and thus provoked Paul’s response in 2:15-21. Indeed, Kok observes that it is plausible to read 2:15-21 “as part of Paul’s clarification of what he meant by ‘the truth of the gospel’.”¹⁸¹ And as what Paul has said prior to 2:14a serves to clue his readers as to what he now says,¹⁸² we understand Paul’s concern in 2:14a not in existential or soteriological terms, but rather in *eschatological* terms (cf 1:1-4, 12, 16; 2:2). Paul’s purpose in 2:15-21, then, is to explicate the significance of the

¹⁷⁹ See Brown, “Paul’s Use,” 728, who argues: “Slavery serves a powerful theological function in Pauline rhetoric ... Enslavement was one of the central metaphors the apostle used to elucidate his understanding of the relationship between the believer and God (e.g. Gal 1:10; 4:25-26; 5:13; 1 Cor 9:19; Rom 6:16-18 among others).” He goes on to demonstrate that the Roman view of slavery corresponded to Christianity in terms of the Roman classification of a slave as *res* rather than *persona*, meaning that “the slave lost his native status both in society and in legal fiction (the so-called natal alienation) ... and so he became something new. ... As the Roman slave becomes a ‘new creature,’ so too does the Christian. ...” (729-30). This use of the “slavery-in-Christ” motif stands over against the “bondage” motif throughout Galatians which represents the bondage of the old covenant/creation (2:4; 4:3; 4:25; 5:1). As elucidated in Phlm 16, this latter “bondage” as that from which Christ liberated us has real social ramifications (see Richard B. Hays, “Crucified with Christ: A Synthesis of the Theology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, and Galatians,” in *Pauline Theology*, edited by Jouette Bassler, 227-246 [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 245).

¹⁸⁰ This link is further confirmed by Paul’s rhetorically placing together the Galatians’ abandonment of the gospel with their abandonment of Paul within a self-contained unit in 1:6-10, which is situated between the epistolary prescript (1:1-5, ending with the ἀμήν) and the vocative in 1:11 signaling a new beginning (cf the vocative of 3:1). Cf Cosgrove, *Cross*, 27. See Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul’s Defense of his Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 78-79, esp. n.75 for the same conclusion regarding the apologetic situation at Corinth and Paul’s second canonical response. Also, see Taylor, “Legitimacy,” 70 n36 for a listing of sources which agree that Paul’s gospel was inseparable from the authority by which he preached it.

¹⁸¹ Kok, *Truth*, 59.

¹⁸² Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile,” 332.

“new age” for Peter and the Antiochenes formally and the Galatians materially. We therefore approach our interpretation of 2:15-21 as part of Paul’s explanation of the eschatological significance of the dawning of the new age announced in the “truth of the gospel.”¹⁸³

E. The Relationship between 2:15 and 16

Syntactically, 2:15 presents two predicate nominatives for ἡμεῖς Ἰουδαῖοι (modified by the dative φύσει) and ἁμαρτωλοὶ (modified by the prepositional ἐξ ἔθνων), separated by the adversative expression καὶ οὐκ. These modifiers follow the Ἰουδαῖος/ἔθνος distinction in 2:14b, where Paul presents his initial rebuke of Peter, who hypocritically Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἔθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆ on the one hand but who τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζει ἰουδαΐζειν on the other.¹⁸⁴ In light of the relationship between the second person singular

¹⁸³ The eschatological significance for the epistolary occasion of Galatians is the central thesis of Cosgrove, *Cross*, 1-86. Cosgrove argues by virtue of epistolary analysis that the central problem addressed in Galatians is not justification by faith, as per 2:15-21; or the ecclesiological concern over Jewish ceremonial boundary markers, as per Dunn’s hypothesis; or the issue of new covenant ethics, as per 4:31ff; rather, the central problem in Galatians is their attempt to promote and influence the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in their lives by means of the “works of the law” (86). Cosgrove demonstrates that (1) Paul’s argument in 1:6-2:21 is *penultimate* to his concerns; (2) the argument and concerns throughout 3:15-6:17 already *presuppose* that the main issue has been addressed; (3) Paul’s central question of whether the Galatians *initially* received the Spirit by “works of the law” or “faith” is preceded by the important conceptual indicator, “This is the only thing I want to find out from you” (3:2). Thus, Cosgrove concludes that 3:1-14 is the center of the letter, with 3:1-5 explicitly demonstrating that the Galatians’ justification is not at issue, but rather their ongoing experience of the Spirit (2; cf 3:3-5). Commenting on Cosgrove’s analysis, Hafemann writes: “The controversy addressed by 3:2b is a disagreement over the relationship between keeping the Law and experiencing life in the Spirit. The answers to the rhetorical questions in 3:2b and 5, based on the Galatians’ own experience, are therefore meant to settle the argument: the source of the Galatians’ continuing life in the Spirit is the same as their initial reception of the Spirit, i.e. ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (as seen in their experience of justification), and not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου” (“Paul and the Exile,” 340 n.29). Contra Carson, Moo, and Morris 1992, 300, who dismiss Cosgrove’s thesis on the basis of (1) an “unconvincing” epistolary analysis and (2) given the relationship between the “initiator matters of circumcision” and “conversion,” it is unreasonable to assume that Galatians is only about “progress in the life of the Spirit.” See, too, the critique of Silva, “Eschatological,” 150.

¹⁸⁴ On the significance of Paul’s terminology in 2:14b in the context of a sociological analysis of the Antioch incident in 2:11-14, see Dunn, “Jesus,” 129-182; Mark D. Nanos, “What was at Stake in Peter’s ‘Eating with Gentiles’ at Antioch?” in *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*, ed. Mark D. Nanos, 348-361 (Peabody: Hedrickson Publishers, 2002).

σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων (14b) and the first person plural ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι (15), there is little reason to read 2:15 other than a continuation of the Jew/Gentile distinction in 2:14b: “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles,” a reading corroborated by the majority of scholars.¹⁸⁵ However, the key issue to interpreting the significance of 2:15 for our text unit as a whole is the meaning of ἁμαρτωλός and its relationship to 2:16.¹⁸⁶ Given the range of meanings associated with ἁμαρτωλοῖ,¹⁸⁷ its limitation by ἐξ ἔθνῶν suggests that this expression is being used in a covenantal sense; that is, to be a member of the ἔθνος is to be outside the covenantal context of the people characterized by law (νόμος; תּוֹרָה).¹⁸⁸ This would then pick up from the previous distinction in 2:7-9 (cf 2:3) when Paul’s gospel to the ἔθνος was compared with Peter’s

¹⁸⁵ Kok, *Truth*, 102, who also observes in n.46 that of the twelve occurrences of φύσις in the NT (Rom. 1:26; 2:14, 27; 11:21, 24; 1 Co. 11:14; Gal. 2:15; 4:8; Eph. 2:3), it always refers to nature or the natural order. See further “φύσις” in BAGD 3rd edn, 1069, and H. Köster, “φύσις κτλ,” *TDNT* 9:251-77 (n.b. 271-75).

¹⁸⁶ See Kok, *Truth*, 101, who arrives at this conclusion after surveying four proposals within German scholarship (99-101).

¹⁸⁷ For the various range of meanings, see Dunn, *Jesus*, 61-86. In addition, see K.H. Rengstorff, “ἁμαρτωλός κτλ,” *TDNT* 1:317-333, which points out that ἁμαρτωλός refers to the Hebrew idea of wickedness (עֲשֵׂרָה) (320) especially in relationship to νόμος (cf Ps 1), but developed in later Judaism to have a more sociological significance: “Israel has received the Torah according to the will of God, who in this way made it His people with the aim of sanctification (Ex 19:5f, etc). He Himself is the Holy One, and therefore those who belong to Him are to be holy (Lv 19:2). For the Rabbis, therefore, the thought of sanctification bound up with the Torah acquires a strong sociological element. Only the Jew who has the possibility of sanctification through the Law can be holy (אֲגִיּוֹס)...Hence it is quite impossible to be holy outside Judaism...If the Jews are by nature holy, the Gentiles are by nature sinners...For the Jews, therefore, the Gentiles were to be equated quite simply with ‘sinners,’ i.e., with those whose basic attitude in no way corresponded with what God expects, and must expect, of man...Thus it came about that the word ἁμαρτωλός, destined in the Jewish sphere to describe a radical or practical alienation from the Jewish Law as a declaration of the will of the one holy God. Inevitably it became a technical term for the Gentile. The Gentile was a ἁμαρτωλός in virtue of his not being a Jew and his failure to regulate his conduct according to the Torah” (324-26).

¹⁸⁸ See ‘ἔθνος’ in BAGD 3rd edn, 276-279, 2a: “those who do not belong to groups professing faith in the God of Israel, *the nations, gentiles, unbelievers...*” Cf. ‘ἔθνος’ in *EDNT* 1:381-383; Räisänen, *Jesus*, 115; Betz, *Galatians*, 115; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 98; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 115. Longenecker, “Defining,” 81, helpfully summarizes 2:15 thus: “...‘Jews by nature’ and ‘gentile sinners’ function as stereotypical depictions of insiders and outsiders to the covenant – stereotypes common in much of Jewish literature of the time ...”

gospel to the περιτομή¹⁸⁹ (i.e. Paul's gospel understood in relation to Peter's gospel).¹⁹⁰

This appears further confirmed by the use of the term ἔργα νόμου in 2:16a,c which is attributed to the Jewish ἡμεῖς in 2:16b and the first person plural (δικαιωθῶμεν) in 2:16c. Thus, 2:16a,c identifies φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι with ἔργα νόμου, thus rendering by contrast (καὶ οὐκ) Gentiles as “outside the works of the law” (= sinners; cf the previous distinction between the circumcised and uncircumcised in 2:7-9).

The fact that the phrase ἡμεῖς Ἰουδαῖοι in 2:15 is carried over into 2:16a as the implied subject of εἰδότες and as the common ἡμεῖς in 2:16b, suggests that 2:15-16 should be read as a single sentence.¹⁹¹ This unity further underscores the concessive (as per the participle εἰδότες) relationship between 2:15 and 2:16a, with εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι functioning to introduce a well known fact that is generally accepted.¹⁹² The fact that what is known in 2:16 is objective to both Peter and Paul, together with “we Jews” (ἡμεῖς Ἰουδαῖοι) in 2:15 functioning as the subject of εἰδότες, has led some to conclude that the theological formulation of 2:16a represents an early (perhaps pre-Pauline) Christian tradition formula.¹⁹³ Regardless, the εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι clause indicates that the content of 2:16a served as a point of agreement with Jewish Christians and, together with its (at

¹⁸⁹ For an helpful biblical/post-biblical analysis of “circumcision,” see Ciampa, *Presence*, 132-136.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Kok, *Truth*, 105, n. 62. For the argument that the Jew/Gentile gospel distinction is rooted in Isa 41:4 and 49:1-6, where the servant of the Lord will (1) “restore the preserved of Israel” and (2) be “a light to the nations, that salvation may reach to the end of the earth,” see Ciampa, *Presence*, 145-46.

¹⁹¹ Kok, *Truth*, 107; Lambrecht, “Paul’s Reasoning,” 56.

¹⁹² See οἶδα in BAGD 3rd edn, 693, 1e: “foll. by ὅτι...is freq. used to introduce a well-known fact that is generally accepted...” Both Kok, *Truth*, 108n77 and Fung, *Galatians*, 113n7 cite J. Munk, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company), 126: “The formula that Paul uses to introduce the view of Peter and the other Jewish Christians, εἰδότες (or οἶδαμεν), occurs frequently in his letters, usually introducing a dogmatic proposition as something commonly known.”

¹⁹³ Given the meaning of οἶδα and the *recitativum* function of ὅτι, as per Kok, *Truth*, 109. For the view that 2:16a represents an early (perhaps pre-Pauline) Christian tradition, see Hays, *Faith*, 123: “These summaries, furthermore, are not new doctrines invented by Paul, but they represent commonly acknowledged confessional traditions of the early church, including Jewish Christianity”; cf. Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, 94-109.

least *prima facie*) parallel in 2:16d, thus accounts for how 2:16a,d function as logical grounds for the assertion in 2:16b,c.

F. Issues Surrounding the ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστου Contrast in 2:16

We begin our analysis of 2:16 with the ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστου contrast, which appears three times in this verse. In the Pauline corpus, ἔργα νόμου appears eight times (2:16a,c,d; 3:2, 5, 10; Rom 3:20, 28) while the phrase πίστις (Ἰησοῦ) Χριστου occurs explicitly only four times other than the references in 2:16 (3:22; Rom 3:22, 26; Phil 3:9).¹⁹⁴ To date, there is no consensus for the structure of 2:16 and its threefold use of ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστου.¹⁹⁵ With regard to the significance of ἔργα νόμου, the issue primarily involves its referent: is it a term that embraces the whole law or does it refer to (an attitude about) a subset of the law? The former would entail similarity with the use of νόμος throughout the letter; the latter would imply a significant differentiation. With regard to πίστις Χριστου, the issue centers on whether the phrase represents a subjective or objective genitive (Christ being either the subject or object of faith).

G. The Law/Faith Contrast in Galatians: Apocalyptic Antinomies?

From an eschatological perspective, J.L. Martyn, in his 1985 essay, observes that the ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστου contrast presented in 2:16 is situated within a larger constellation of oppositions running throughout Galatians: God/humans 1:1, cf 11-12; the messianic age/the present evil age 1:4; the true gospel/false gospel 1:6-9; life in Judaism/life as a Christian 1:13-17; law/faith 2:15-4:31; Jew/Greek, slave/free 3:27-28; Hagar/Sarah 4:21-

¹⁹⁴ Kok, *Truth*, 110, 119; see his 119n128 for a brief discussion on the variant in P⁴⁶.

¹⁹⁵ For example, while offering his own proposal for the structure of 2:16 at the annual SBL meeting in Philadelphia (2005), R. Barry Matlock produced no less than five alternative structures of the verse.

5:1; Spirit/flesh 5:16-7; old world/new creation 6:15; etc.¹⁹⁶ Martyn argues that these oppositions reflect a widespread and ancient *topos* concerning the fundamental structure or building blocks of the universe set in binary terms.¹⁹⁷ Martyn contends that when we probe into the nature of these pairs of opposites (Paul's abrogation of binaries and introduction of new ones), we find ourselves dealing with motifs clearly *apocalyptic*.¹⁹⁸ After surveying three major antinomy texts in Galatians (3:27-8; 5:16-7; 4:21-5:1), Martyn concludes that "Paul's theology in Galatians rests upon an apocalyptic narrative about the end of the old age and the beginning of a new one," with the cross representing the "event in which he rescues humanity from slavery."¹⁹⁹ Whatever is made of Martyn's analysis, his work at the very least demonstrates that the ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστου contrast functions within a larger conceptual framework of antinomies that accounts for both the prior Antioch situation and the subsequent conceptual development in 3:6-14, the former representing the generally preferred context for determining the significance

¹⁹⁶ Cf the observations made by Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," *passim*.

¹⁹⁷ Martin, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 413. Cf L. Gregory Bloomquist, "Methodological Criteria for Apocalyptic Rhetoric: A Suggestion for the Expanded Use of Sociorhetorical Analysis," in *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse*, edited by Greg Carey and L. Gregory Bloomquist, 181-202 (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999), 193.

¹⁹⁸ Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 416. In challenging Käsemann's definition of apocalyptic in terms of "the expectation of an imminent Parousia," Martyn seeks to employ Galatians to "play its own role in showing us precisely what the nature of Paul's apocalyptic was" (412).

¹⁹⁹ Hays, *Faith*, xxxix, commenting on Martyn's essay. Martyn's internal analysis has been corroborated by R. Hall's 1996 rhetorical analysis ("Arguing"). Rather than studying Galatians in light of the forensic, epideictic, and deliberative genres in the progymnasmata of Greco-Roman rhetoric, Hall analyzed Galatians as a rhetorical apocalyptic indigenous to Jewish apocalypticists found among a diverse tradition of ancient Mediterranean rhetorical practice (435). Hall argues "that Paul models his logical (as opposed to ethical) argument in Galatians on a rhetorical tradition which survives in several Jewish apocalypses. ...[where after claiming inspiration, Paul reveals that] in Christ God has inaugurated a righteous sphere, urges the Galatians to stand fast in this righteous sphere, and shows how standing in the righteous sphere entails cleaving to himself and to his gospel and repudiating the gospel of circumcision and those who preach it" (436).

of ἔργα νόμου and δικαιοῦ among the so-called “new perspective” exegetes, the latter representing the generally preferred context among traditional Protestant exegetes.²⁰⁰

H. The Law/Faith Contrast in 3:1-14

The ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστοῦ contrast materially addressed to the Galatians in 2:16 becomes formally addressed to them in 3:2-5. Paul now sets the contrast (with the substitution of ἀκοή to modify πίστις) in relation to the epistolary introduction of τὸ πνεῦμα, a term that for Paul has eschatological significance.²⁰¹ Such significance is inextricably linked to a time of fulfillment and the arrival of a new age (cf 1:4; 6:15), to which Paul already seems to have alluded within the immediate context in his description of Christ living “in me” (2:20; ζῆν δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός). The subsequent Pauline link between the “gospel” and the “Spirit” (cf 3:8, 14) further indicates that the Galatians’ “turning away” from the gospel “signifies a return to the old aeon, that is, the present evil age (1:4), the age of the flesh (3:3, ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελείσθε;).”²⁰²

Paul’s identification of ἔργα νόμου with σὰρξ in 3:2, 5 is a further indicator that Paul’s

²⁰⁰ The contextual importance of Antioch to our understanding of the controverted terms in 2:16 has led a number of scholars to conclude that the epistolary evidence weighs heavily in favor of a sociological or covenantal significance for the terms (e.g. Dunn, *Jesus, Galatians*; Kok, *Truth*; Wright, *Saint Paul*). Given that the issues at Jerusalem (2:1-10), Antioch (2:11-14), and Galatia (5:2-6, 11-12, 6:12-16) deal explicitly with circumcision and food laws, it is asserted that these covenantal markers essential for Jewish social identity appear to be not only the defining characteristic of Paul’s concern throughout the epistle, but in fact provide the rationale for the Jew/Gentile covenantal/sociological distinction in 2:15. Thus, the sociological or covenantal context of 2:1-14 provides the determinative framework by which the significance of the controverted terms in 2:16 is defined (see Kok’s arguments in *Truth*, 110-119, 129-139). In contrast, the traditional Protestant approach tends to understand ἔργα νόμου, πίστις Χριστοῦ, and δικαιοῦ more in terms of their repetition and development in chapters 3-5. For example, while acknowledging that the term ἔργα νόμου is raised with regard to the law’s ceremonies by Paul’s opponents, Calvin argues that the context *subsequent* to 2:16 deals with the moral nature of the law and therefore provides the interpretive key for Paul’s argument in 2:15f (*Galatians*, 67-8). In his article on the “works of the law,” Schreiner argues that the limited sociological/ceremonial focus assigned to the word ἔργα in the phrase ἔργα νόμου “collapses upon *further* reading of Galatians” (“Works,” 977, emphasis mine).

²⁰¹ Silva, “Eschatological,” 150-51; Cosgrove, *Cross, passim*; Garlington, *Galatians*, 135; Hafemann, *Paul, passim*; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), *passim*.

²⁰² Silva, “Eschatological,” 151.

(eschatological) thinking in 3:2-5 parallels the content of his thought in 2:16 (cf the similar identification of ἔργα νόμου with σάρξ in 2:16d), corroborated by the motif of Christ's death functioning as both the conclusion of 2:15-21 and the opening of 3:1-5 (cf 2:20-21; 3:1).

The historical dimensions of Paul's concern are further developed in 3:6f, where the πνεῦμα/πίστις identification in 3:2-5 is cast in terms of the fulfillment of the original Abrahamic promise (3:8, 14, 16).²⁰³ That this fulfillment involves the nations (3:8, 14) corroborates its eschatological nature for Paul (cf 1:16 with Rom 16:25-26). In contrast to the multinational blessings, Paul identifies those (Jews) who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου explicitly with τον βιβλίον τοῦ νόμου containing the stipulations of the Sinai covenant in 3:10, all of whom are ὑπὸ κατάραν as promised by the covenant itself.²⁰⁴ The concomitant promise of redemption from "the curse of the law" by πίστις in Paul's citation of Hab 2:4 in 3:11²⁰⁵ is realized in the "coming" of Christ in 3:13-14 (cf 3:19, 23), the coming of whom would temporally qualify the law (ὁ νόμος ... προσετέθη ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα in 3:19).

I. The Law/Faith Contrast in 3:15-4:31

At this point, in 3:17f, Paul's argument develops clearly into one that contrasts two ages within God's plan of redemption. Just how consistently does Paul articulate this temporal concern in terms of a contrast between νόμος and πίστις?

²⁰³ Silva, "Eschatological," 152.

²⁰⁴ See Scott, "For as Many," for the development of Paul's citation in 3:10 as reflecting an understanding of Deut 27-32 read as a literary unit.

²⁰⁵ The promise of redemption is also contained in the Deut 27-32 literary unity (Deut 30:1-8), as per Scott, "For as Many."

- 3:17 relates νόμος μετὰ τετρακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἔτη to the προκεκυρωμένην covenant promises to Abraham
- 3:19 understands νόμος as added to the promise of Abraham ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα
- 3:22 understands νόμος as a particular application of Scripture consigning all things under sin so that the promises to Abraham and his seed might be realized by πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and given to those who believe (cf 2:16b?)
- 3:23 contains two temporal contrasts in chiasmic form:
 1. Paul characterizes the time πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν as being kept under ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα
 2. Such a time is further characterized by συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι
- 3:25 affirms that ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν
- The κληρονόμος/νήπιός motifs in 4:1 are qualified by the dual temporal modifiers ἐφ’ ὅσον χρόνον and ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς in 4:1-2.
- Analogous to the ὁ κληρονόμος/νήπιός motifs (οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς), Paul identifies those who were held in bondage under τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in 4:3 with those ὑπὸ νόμον (4:5) in relation to a particular *time* (τότε; cf νῦν δὲ in 4:9) in 4:8 prior to the τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου (4:4)
- 4:4-5 parallels 3:23-25 with the temporal clause ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου and its messianic relationship to redeeming τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον
- In 4:10, Paul is explicitly concerned over the Galatians’ observance of temporal markers (ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς), which in context were superseded ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου
- 4:25-6 contrasts the ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ with the νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ²⁰⁶

J. The Metonymic Function of the Law/Faith Contrast

Hafemann’s own reading of the law/faith contrast in Galatians in his 1997 work reflects this analysis of Paul’s eschatological view of the law. Following C. Cosgrove’s 1988 study, Hafemann begins by observing the temporal significance of Paul’s use of

²⁰⁶ This insight in particular I owe to Silva, “Eschatological,” 155.

πίστις in the letter.²⁰⁷ Paul personifies the noun πίστις in 3:23-25 to denote the “coming” of the promised seed, a coming that is explicitly “apocalypsed” in 3:23 (cf 1:12, 16; 2:2).²⁰⁸ That πίστις is personified in 3:23-25 as “coming” (πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν) in relationship to the temporal clause ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθη τὸ σπέρμα ᾧ ἐπήγγελλται in 3:19 entails its bringing rescue in 3:25 from the παιδαγωγός function of the law in 3:24 (ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως; cf also the parallel temporal clause ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου in 4:4 and its messianic relationship to redeeming τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον in 4:5). Thus, Hafemann concludes that Paul’s use of πίστις can be interpreted as a “marker within the history of redemption”²⁰⁹ in a manner equivalent to the “coming of Christ.” In other words, as Cosgrove has observed, “‘faith’ [is used] by itself to designate the soteriological reality which, with and like Christ, ‘comes’.”²¹⁰ Paul presents πίστις to the Galatians as a metonymy for the (eschatological) reality of the gospel itself.²¹¹

Moreover, observing the distinction between the law and the Abrahamic covenant in 3:15-18, with 3:19 temporally qualifying the law in relation to the “coming of faith” in 3:23, and with verse 23 further identifying being “kept in custody under the law” as the *period of time* “before faith came” (cf 3:24-25), Hafemann concludes that νόμος is also

²⁰⁷ See Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile,” 333.

²⁰⁸ As per Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies,” 417.

²⁰⁹ Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile,” 333.

²¹⁰ *Cross*, 56; cf 55-57.

²¹¹ Cf Bultmann, “πιστεύω κτλ” in *TDNT* 6:220: “The ‘coming of πίστις is the eschatological time (Gal 3:23ff).” See G.B. Caird’s definition of “metonymy,” where he writes of the relationship between metonymy and personification thus: “Metonymy is calling a thing by the name of something typically associated with it: e.g. the Bench, the stage, the turf, the bottle may stand for magistrates, the theatrical profession, horse-racing and alcoholic liquor. In the Old Testament we find scepter (Gen 49:10) and key (Isa 22:22; cf Rev 3:7) standing for authority, sword for war (Lev 26:6); and in the NT tongues for languages (1 Cor 12:30; 14:1-9), thrones for superhuman powers (Col 1:16), and the Circumcision for the Jews (Gal 2:7-9, 12; Eph 2:11; Col 4:11)...Closely allied to metonymy is personification, which is particularly common in proverbial literature. ‘Wine is an insolent fellow’ personifies wine and makes it stand for all addicts (Prov 20:1; cf 27:4; 30:15-16; Eccles 10:10). Death is personified in Eccles 41:1-4...” G.B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980), 136-37. In Galatians, Paul has already used “faith” as a metonymy for the gospel in 1:23 and “circumcision” for Jewish Christians (or a sub-set of Jewish Christians) in 2:12.

being used as a metonymy, in this case for the covenant at Sinai, made explicit by Paul’s identifying those who want to be under “the law” as those who want to be “in bondage” to the “bondwoman-birthed” Sinai covenant (cf 3:17 and 4:21-25).²¹² In the context of its usage in 3:17f, the terminological significance of Paul’s use of νόμος is best explained when it is “seen to be a short-hand reference back to Paul’s explication in 3:10-13.”²¹³ This observation is crucial for our understanding of Paul’s law/faith contrast in 2:16. For in 3:10-13, Paul reminds the Galatians that those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου are ὑπὸ κατάραν (3:10; cf 3:22), with 3:11 contrasting law/faith in relation to justification in a manner almost equivalent to 2:16 (without the ἔργα modifier). In fact, 3:11a can be discerned as a conflation of 2:16a and the Ps 143:2 allusion in 2:16d, demonstrating an interchangeability between the terms ἔργα νόμου and νόμος:

2:16	2:16	2:16	2:16	2:16
ὅτι	οὐ ἄνθρωπος/ οὐ πᾶσα σὰρξ	δικαιοῦται/ δικαιωθήσεται	ἐξ ἔργων νόμου	-----
3:11	3:11	3:11	3:11	3:11
ὅτι	οὐδεὶς	δικαιοῦται	ἐν νόμῳ	παρὰ τῷ θεῷ
Ps 143:2	Ps 143:2	Ps 143:2	Ps 143:2	Ps 143:2
ὅτι	οὐ πᾶς ζῶν	δικαιωθήσεται	-----	ἐνώπιόν σου

K. The ἔργα νόμου/πίστις Χριστοῦ Contrast in 2:16: Conclusion

Given the foregoing analysis, together with the fact that the term ἔργα νόμου does not come back at any point in the letter after 3:10 (suggesting that its significance as introduced in 2:16 is picked up by the short-hand use of νόμος, cf 2:19a, 21b), we therefore find Hafemann’s conclusion plausible that the term ἔργα νόμου in 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10 functions as a subjective genitive embodying that which the Sinai law itself

²¹² Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile,” 342.

²¹³ Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile,” 342.

commanded as a whole.²¹⁴ The terms νόμος (2:19, 21; 3:10-13, 17-19, 21, 23-24; 4:4-5, 21, etc) or ἔργα νόμου (as that which the law itself commanded as a whole) and πίστις are thus being used to summarize two covenants within God’s plan of redemption, the Sinai or old covenant (cf 2 Cor 3:14) and the messianic or new covenant (cf 2 Cor 3:6). As such, ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστου in 2:16 do not conceptually function so much as sociological boundary markers, but rather as eschatological boundary markers between two different ages within God’s plan of redemption. Nor should the terms be read as two contrasting existences or soteriologies before God, a works versus faith based soteriology, since this framework is neither explicit within 2:16 nor developed in the epistle.²¹⁵

L. The Significance of πίστις Χριστου

The eschatological understanding of the phrase πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ thus brings us to the issue of the scholarly debate surrounding the objective genitive understanding of the phrase (i.e. the faith *in* Christ) and the subjective genitive understanding (i.e. the faith *of* Christ).²¹⁶ The phrase πίστις Χριστου appears seven times in the Pauline corpus,²¹⁷ with a similar construction of πίστις followed by τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:20b and the parallel

²¹⁴ Hafemann, “Paul and the Exile,” 342-43.

²¹⁵ Contra the traditional Protestant interpretation, we find that Paul nowhere explicitly states or develops a quantitative view of the law in Galatians. The closest Paul gets to such a view is 5:3, hardly a lynch pin verse. In terms of the significance of Paul’s argument in 3:10f, we offer Scott’s 1993 tradition-history analysis (see below).

²¹⁶ For a sample of the argument in support of the subjective genitive, see Hays, *Faith, passim*; Kok, *Truth*, 119-129; Longenecker, “Defining,” 79; in support of the objective genitive, see Dunn, *Theology*, 379-385; Cosgrove, *Cross*, 55-56; Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting*, 65-66. For the argument in support of a genitive of quality, source, or possession, see Seifrid, “Paul,” 218-19. For a survey on the history of the debate, see Hays, *Faith*, 142-50; Sigve Tonstad, “πίστις Χριστου: Reading Paul in a New Paradigm,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 37-59.

²¹⁷ Rom 3:22, 26; twice in Gal 2:16; once in Gal 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9.

ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 3:22.²¹⁸ The evidence for both proposals can only be presented here in summary manner. Proponents for the subjective genitive have argued the following:

- There are twenty-four cases in Paul where πίστις is followed by a person's name or personal pronoun in the genitive case, all of which are subjective genitives.²¹⁹
- The expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ/ (Cristou/) (3:22; Rom 3:26) has a precise parallel in Rom 4:16, ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, and is similar to πίστις τοῦ θεοῦ/ (“faithfulness of God”) in Rom 3:3, both of which are clearly a subjective genitives.²²⁰
- According to the 9th edition of LSJ (1940) there is not a single instance where πίστις is followed by an objective genitive.²²¹
- The meaning of “faithfulness” dominates the LXX usage of πίστις.²²²

Proponents for the objective genitive have argued the following:

- There is no definite article in the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ any time it occurs, with the resulting translation “faith of Christ” rather than (what would be expected) “the faith of Christ” (cf the definite article supplied in Rom 3:3).²²³
- The context of 2:16 presents πίστις in a triple antithesis with “works of the law,” moving from πίστις in 2:16a to “belief” in 2:16b (where Ἰησοῦς Χριστός is clearly the direct object of πιστεύω) back to πίστις in 2:16c, with the repetition serving to underline Paul's point that the works of the law are no longer necessary.²²⁴
- In those contexts where it is clear that Paul has Christ's faithful obedience in view the apostle speaks of Christ's “obedience” (ὕπακοή) but not of his “faith” (Rom 5:18-21; Phil 2:5-11).²²⁵

²¹⁸ Kok, *Truth*, 119.

²¹⁹ See the argument and sources detailed in John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 353-359; cf Kok, *Truth*, 121.

²²⁰ Kok, *Truth*, 120.

²²¹ Kok, *Truth*, 120.

²²² Douglas A. Campbell, “‘Faith’ in Paul with particular reference to the questions of divine and human agency,” http://www.abdn.ac.uk/divinity/Gathercole/paper-campbell.htm#_ftnref14 (2004).

²²³ Dunn, *Theology*, 381.

²²⁴ Dunn, *Theology*, 381.

²²⁵ Cosgrove, *Cross*, 55-6.

- Paul never describes or develops Jesus' special relationship with God in terms of "faith" (πίστις) or "believing" (πιστεύειν).²²⁶

The exegetical task at hand is to determine whether the eschatological reading of the law/faith contrast in 2:16 can provide any leverage for either the objective or subjective rendering. Perhaps the most significant passage for our attention is 3:23-26, which speaks of the "arrival" or "coming" of faith which was "later revealed" (cf 3:23, μέλλουσιν πιστεῖν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι). In light of Paul's statements about the πίστις of Abraham (3:6, πιστεύω), it would appear that he is talking about πίστις in two different ways, one that was present during the time of Abraham and one that would be "later revealed." With the synonymous relationship between "faith" and "Christ" as detailed above, the former functioning as a metonymy for the latter, the most natural explanation would be that the "coming" of faith "later revealed" is the faith of Christ, thus rendering the phrase a subjective genitive.²²⁷ However, Cosgrove's analysis of the synonymy between "faith" and "Christ" in 3:23-26 has concluded no such thing, but rather opts for the objective genitive in 2:16 as per the reasons above.²²⁸ Hafemann, who bases his Galatian study on the epistolary occasion outlined by Cosgrove and concurs with the synonymy of "faith" and "Christ," has decided in favor of the subjective genitive.²²⁹ Stuhlmacher is a proponent of the objective genitive, while Hays and Martin are proponents of the subjective genitive.²³⁰ Thus, it appears that the eschatological paradigm has yet to bring leverage to either side of the debate. Against the backdrop of this absence of consensus,

²²⁶ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting*, 65-6.

²²⁷ See Campbell, "Faith," n.p., for a similar argument on behalf of the subjective genitive.

²²⁸ Cosgrove, *Cross*, 55-56.

²²⁹ Hafemann, *God of Promise*, 230. For Hafemann's dependence on Cosgrove's study, see Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile," *passim*.

²³⁰ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting*, 65-6; Hays, *Faith*, *passim*; for an analysis of Martine's proposal, see Tonstand, "Reading Paul," 47-49.

we shall therefore render the phrase πίστις Χριστου, however cumbersome, “faith in/of Christ.”

M. The Significance of δικαιόω

Given that ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (2:14a) is explained against the backdrop of the ὁ αἰών τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ that consigns both Jew and Gentile ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, it is highly significant that Paul presents this gospel in terms of δικαιόω “bound up with the entrance of the new creation in Jesus Christ, in which the realities of the fallen world have been transcended.”²³¹ Indeed, that Paul can exclude the “works of the law” from justification means that the distinction between Jew and Gentile affirmed in 2:15 is a characteristic that no longer obtains. In other words, “justification for Paul presupposes the end of the world as we know it. The reserve with which he speaks in the following verse likewise shows that he is thinking of justification in terms of an eschatological event: believers are those who are ‘seeking to be justified in Christ’ (Gal 2:17). In a crucial sense, they do not yet have their justification but wait for it in hope (see Gal 5:5).”²³²

The *δικ root appears five times in 2:15-21 and twelve times throughout the letter.²³³ The verb δικαιόω appears three times in 2:16, is referenced again in 2:17 and four more times in the development of Paul’s epistolary argument (3:8, 11, 24; 5:4). The noun δικαιοσύνη is found in 2:21; 3:6, 21; 5:5, with a single articular occurrence of

²³¹ Seifrid, “Paul,” 218.

²³² Seifrid, “Paul,” 218.

²³³ Longenecker, “Defining,” 81n17 observes that all five occurrences in 2:15-21 appear in strategic positions: at the points of agreement (2:16), disagreement (2:17), and conclusion (2:21).

δικαιος in 3:11 (quoting Hab 2:4).²³⁴ The significance of the *δικ root words is a subject of considerable discussion among scholars.²³⁵ In the western church, the sixteenth century saw debates over the location of justifying righteousness (alien to or within the believer) and between whether justification was a forensic declaration or a process, debates influenced by a rediscovery of Augustine's doctrine of justification by monergistic grace over against Pelagius' anthropology.²³⁶ The historic Reformed emphasis on the significance of *covenant* for justification has recently resurfaced (*mutatis mutandis*) with the post-Sanders debate surrounding whether δικαιώω is language that signifies entry into the presence of God or maintaining one's previous entry.²³⁷ In the context of Jewish Christianity, it is a question of whether one must maintain covenant membership by transferring from one form of Judaism to another (messianic) form, or whether one must in fact "convert" to a new religion (i.e. Christianity).²³⁸ Adding to the historical complexity surrounding justification is the important recognition that the "doctrine of justification" is of a distinct intellectual domain from δικαιοσύνη in biblical exegesis.²³⁹

²³⁴ In addition to Galatians, see e.g. Rom 2:13; 3:4, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5; 5:1; 6:7; 8:30, 33; 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:7.

²³⁵ Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, 68-93; 2001; D.A. Carson, "Reflections on Salvation and Justification in the New Testament," *JETS* 40/4 (1997): 581-608; Carson, O'Brien, and Seifrid, ed., *Justification*; Charles H. Cosgrove, "Justification in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Reflection." *JBL* 106 (1987):653-70; Hafemann, "Paul and his Interpreters"; Richard B. Hays, "Psalm 143 and the Logic of Romans 3." *JBL* 99/1, (1980): 107-115; Käsemann, "Righteousness"; Onesti and Brauch, "Righteousness"; O'Brien, "Justification in Paul"; etc. For a comprehensive history of the "doctrine of justification" in western Christian thought, see McGrath, *Iustitia*.

²³⁶ McGrath *Iustitia*, 188-89, 196.

²³⁷ Kok, *Truth*, 130-131, who uses the distinction of *transfer* versus *covenantal* terminology. See also Longenecker, "Defining," 75f.

²³⁸ Kok, *Truth*, 131.

²³⁹ Carson, "Reflections," 583. Carson (584) goes on to point out that the intellectual domain of δικαιοσύνη within biblical studies recognizes that (1) different NT writers use δικαιοσύνη in different ways; (2) Paul himself uses δικαιοσύνη in different ways; (3) the concept "justification" is not specific to the *δικ word group.

Given the enormity of the subject, the following points will attempt to summarize the features of δικαίω/δικαιοσύνη for 2:15-21 in terms of their significance for the letter as a whole:

First, there is broad agreement that the NT use of δικαίω has a declarative or forensic, rather than causative, meaning (e.g. to declare someone righteous, vindicated or acquitted),²⁴⁰ the significance of which is picked up from the use of δικαίω in the LXX influenced by the Hebrew (rather than a Hellenic) semantic background.²⁴¹ As the Roman Catholic theologian, Joseph Fitzmyer, has observed:

When, then, Paul in Romans says that Christ Jesus “justified” human beings “by his blood” ([Rom] 3:25; cf 5:9), he means that by what Christ suffered in his passion and death he has brought it about that sinful human beings can stand before God’s tribunal acquitted or innocent, with the judgment not based on observance of the Mosaic Law. Thus “God’s uprightness” is now manifested toward human beings in a just judgment, one of acquittal, because Jesus “out Lord... was handed over (to death) for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (4:25). This was done for humanity “freely by his grace” (3:24). For God has displayed Jesus in death (“by his blood”) as “a manifestation of his [God’s] uprightness... at the present time to show that he is upright and justifies [= vindicates] the one who puts faith in Jesus” (3:26; cf 5:1). Thus God shows that human activity, indeed, is a concern of his judgment, but through Christ Jesus he sets right what has gone wrong because of the sinful conduct of human beings. Paul insists on the utter gratuity of this justification, because “all alike have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23). Consequently, this uprightness does not belong to human beings (10:3), and it is not something that they have produced or merited; it is an alien uprightness, one belonging rightly to another

²⁴⁰ Carson, “Reflections,” 594; Alan Torrance, “Justification,” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, edited by Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, Hugh Pyper, 362-4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 362. For a survey of Roman Catholic exegetes who acknowledge the centrality of the forensic nature of justification in Paul and the NT, see Klaas Runia, “Justification and Roman Catholicism,” in *Right With God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, edited by D.A. Carson, 197-215 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992). For a survey on the interaction between Catholics and Protestants over justification since the 1960’s, see Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 107-112, 179-80.

²⁴¹ For the common meaning of the Hebrew קָדַשׁ as “to declare to be in the right” see Carson, “Reflections,” 589. For the development of *dikaio-,nh* and its cognates in terms of its forensic significance derived from קָדַשׁ, see David Hill, *Greek Words with Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (SNTSMS 5; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1967), 82-162. Hill goes on to argue that the passive form of δικαίω in 2:16 reflects the Qal of קָדַשׁ which is not qualitative but retains its forensic significance (141). Cf G. Schrenk, “*dikaio-,w kt1*,” *TDNT* 2:214-219; cf the forensic relation between קָדַשׁ and δικαιοσύνη in McGrath, *Iustitia*, 12-14.

(to Christ) and attributed to them because of what that other has done for them. SO Paul understands God “justifying the godless” (4:5) or “crediting uprightness” to human beings quite “apart from deeds.”²⁴²

Second, the *δικ terms are consistently tied to the cross of Christ throughout Galatians (2:20-21; cf 1:1-4; 3:1, 13-14; 6:12, 14-17). In particular, the nominal δικαιοσύνη is linked explicitly to the death of Christ in 2:21, and the blessings promised to Abraham (cf δικαιοσύνη in 3:6 and the verbal δικαιοῶ in 3:8) are realized through Christ’s γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρρα (3:13-14). Moreover, the verbal δικαιοῶ in 3:24 is sandwiched by the “coming” of the personified ἡ πίστις which represents the coming of Christ in 3:23, 25, and the use of δικαιοσύνη in 3:21 is virtually parallel to Paul’s cross-centered argument in 2:21. Both the verbal δικαιοῶ and nominal δικαιοσύνη in 5:4-5 are immediately preceded by ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν (5:1), an expression paralleling an earlier explicit representation of the cross (cf 3:13; 1:4). And if the proposals for the subjective genitive for πίστις Χριστοῦ sustain scrutiny, then the threefold verb δικαιοῶ in 2:16 is expressly linked to Christ’s faithfulness (i.e. his death on the cross, as per 2:20-21).

Third, this explicit link between “justification” and the “cross” arises from the fact that “Scripture has shut up everything under sin” (3:22), with the law and the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου representing the particular applications of this universal condition for the Jew and Gentile respectively (3:23; 4:3; cf 3:10). This universal sin condition results in the judgment of not inheriting the kingdom of God (5:21; cf 5:10; 6:7). Thus the cross event is understood as that event by which Christ “gave himself for our sins” with the result that we are now “rescued from the present evil age” (1:4). We are rescued

²⁴² Quoted in Carson, “Reflections,” 594-95.

by Christ entering into the curse of the law on our behalf (3:10, 13), an act that enables the Spirit of God to dwell in our midst in fulfillment of the divine promises to Abraham (3:14; 5:4-7).

Thus Paul argues in 2:16 that justification comes through faith in/of Jesus Christ, demonstrably achieved by Christ's death on the cross (2:20-21). This explicit link between "justification" and "judgment" means that one is delivered from the "present evil age" (1:4), the "curse" of the law (3:10), and the "elements of this world" (4:3) to stand in the presence of God as innocent (or acquitted; cf 3:1-9) by virtue of the Messiah's suffering and death (2:16, 20-21; 3:13-14; etc). Gal 2:16a thus argues that it is because of Jesus (specifically his death on the cross, 3:13) that God makes this declaration. Though obedience will be a key aspect of the letter (cf 5-6), this declaration is solely identified with the death of Christ and nothing in "a man" apart from his identification with (belief in) Christ.

Hafemann's 1995 study appears to further uncover a pattern in Paul's thought that conceptualizes justification in terms of entrance into the new age inaugurated by Christ, not maintenance.²⁴³ Paul's language in 2:16 moves from justification by faith to sanctification by that same faith in 2:20. Against the backdrop of Paul's own encounter with the presence of God (1:15-17) and its subsequent apostolic impact in the Galatians' pneumatic experience (3:1-5), the justification by means of πίστις Χριστου in 2:16 forms the basis for Paul's experience of the Spirit defined as "life to God" lived out continually "by faith in the Son of God" (2:20). Thus Paul is able to move theologically from his own encounter with the presence of God (1:15-17) to its foundation in justification through πίστις Χριστου (2:16), and from that foundation back to his own experience of the Spirit

²⁴³ Cf Longenecker, "Defining," 75-6.

(2:20) and forward to the Galatians' primary and ongoing pneumatic experience (3:1-5; cf Rom 1:16b-17; 5:1, 5; 8:2-3; 2 Cor 3:8-9).²⁴⁴ This beginning and ongoing work of God lived out by faith provides the foundation for Paul's rhetorical question: "Are you so foolish? Having *begun* by the Spirit, are you *now* being perfected by the flesh (3:3)?" In the words of Hafemann: "...to Paul, the dynamic presence of the righteousness of God in the life of the believer, secured and manifested in the death of Christ for the ungodly (cf Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:16-21), was expressed and evidenced by his/her new life in and through the Spirit ...The presence of the one supports and leads *inextricably* to the presence of the other."²⁴⁵

N. The "Problem" of ἐὰν μὴ

The eschatological relationship between νόμος/πίστις in 2:16 may indeed contribute to resolving a perplexing exegetical problem for relating ἐὰν μὴ in 2:16a to the antithetical relationship between the νόμος/πίστις motifs in 2:16c,d.²⁴⁶ Our proposal for ἐὰν μὴ is to take seriously Paul's consistent use of instrumental prepositions throughout the passage that denote origin (ἐκ) and agency (διὰ).²⁴⁷ Understanding ἐκ to indicate source, the sphere from which something originates, the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου may be transliterated

²⁴⁴ cf Hafemann, *Paul*, 318-19.

²⁴⁵ *Paul*, 319.

²⁴⁶ The difficulty here arises with Paul's use of the conjunction ἐὰν μὴ in 2:16a to designate the relationship between ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ, while using οὐκ in 2:16c to highlight an *adversative* relationship between the νόμος/πίστις motifs in 2:16c, d. If the ἐὰν μὴ clause functions as an exceptive in 2:16a and modifies the whole preceding phrase, then it would be saying that the works of the law justify *if* they are somehow joined to the faith of Jesus, which would appear to contradict not only the antithetical relationship between faith/law in 2:16c but indeed throughout the whole of the epistle. However, if the antithesis in 2:16c requires the ἐὰν μὴ be read as an oppositive or adversative, then why did Paul *not* use the unambiguous ἀλλὰ to mark an adversative conjunction in 2:16a? Further, if one insists on the exceptive ἐὰν μὴ qualifying *only* the verb δικαιόω in 2:16a, then this results in a syntactically problematic reading of the verse, since there is no inherent limit for a mere verbal qualification. See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 83-84; Kok, *Truth*, 143-144.

²⁴⁷ Garlington, *Galatians*, 111; Cosgrove, "Justification," 656-662.

“originating from the life of faith and obedience defined by the Sinai covenant,” while διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ may be rendered “through (the agency of) faith in/of Jesus Christ.” The point, then, of 2:16a is that justification does not originate from or is not by means of the old covenant response to God’s saving righteousness, but rather through the agency of faith in/of Jesus. Thus, it is faith in/of Jesus, not keeping the Sinai covenant, that saved those (who believed like Abraham! 3:6) under the Sinai covenant.²⁴⁸ This instrumental significance of the controverted phrases appears further corroborated by Paul’s use of Ps 143:2 in 2:16d.²⁴⁹ As the psalmist hopes in God’s righteousness²⁵⁰ (and not his own) for his justification, so Paul teaches in 2:16a that God’s saving righteousness has now been manifested in the faith in/of Jesus Christ, which, as Paul makes clear in Rom 3:21-26 after his parallel use of Ps 143:2 in Rom 3:20, is the means through which

²⁴⁸ Hafemann, *God of Promise*, 230, who understands πίστις Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive (“the faithfulness of Christ”).

²⁴⁹ Though the Ps 143:2 reference is not incontestable, the list of those who argue that 2:16d represents either a quotation of or an allusion to Ps 143:2 is impressive: Bruce, *Galatians*, 140; Ciampa, *Presence*, 178-220; Dunn, *Jesus*, 254; Betz, *Galatians*, 118; Lambrecht, “Paul’s Reasoning,” 90n40; Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 100; Garlington, *Galatians*, 113f; Hafemann, *God of Promise*, 229n4; Fung, *Galatians*, 118; Kok, *Truth*, 148f.

²⁵⁰ It has become almost commonplace in the contemporary discussion to understand Paul’s use of the *δικ word group in relation to the more comprehensive range of OT meanings signified by the expression the “righteousness of God” (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) (Carson, “Reflections,” 596). Scholars have concluded three options for the term “righteousness of God” in the OT. First, the expression can refer to an attribute of God. This view has been notably argued by the works of J. Piper, who argues that God’s righteousness consists in his unswerving commitment to the display of his own glory in all that he does (John Piper, *The Justification of God: An Exegetical Study of Romans 9:1-23*, 2nd edn. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993], 111-122). It is God’s faithfulness to God (to the display of his own glory) that fundamentally constitutes his righteousness, and thus the basis for both his covenant faithfulness and worldwide judgment. Second, the “righteousness of God” can refer to a *status* given by God (his vindication or acquittal), as per the traditional Protestant understanding of the phrase. And third, Käsemann and Stuhlmacher have argued that the expression refers to an *activity* of God (his salvific intervention on behalf of his people). According to Ps 143:11, this “righteousness” is presented as God’s instrumental (preceded by ἐν; cf 143:1) power of deliverance, a righteousness which OT/Jewish understanding relates to God’s *future worldwide judgment*, where only the “saved community of God’s elect will emerge from this judgment purified” (cf. Zech 14; Joel 3; Mal 4; the so-called Isaiah Apocalypse in Isa 24-27; Dan 7; 12:1-4; 1Q27 1:6-7; 1QS 11:1-15; 4 Ezra 8:35-36) (Stuhlmacher, “Revisiting,” 14f, *Reconciliation, Romans*; Käsemann, “Righteousness”; cf Dunn, *Galatians*, 134). Given that they are not mutually exclusive, we find all three proposals contributing valid insights.

believers under the Sinai covenant were saved.²⁵¹ Thus, the two different ages symbolized by the Sinai response to God's saving righteousness (ἔργα νόμου) and the new age manifestation of God's saving righteousness (πίστις Χριστοῦ) relate in terms of the former being effectual by virtue of its connection with the latter, with ἔάν μη providing the connection.

And what accounts for the retroactive (as well as proactive) salvific efficacy of such a relationship is the dawning of the messianic age and the presence of the Spirit, for as Paul makes clear, the gospel from which the Galatians are turning away (1:6-9) is the gift of the Spirit as promised to Abraham (3:8-9) and actualized by the cross of the Messiah (3:13-14; cf 2:20-21; 3:1-5). Thus, 2:16 as a whole would signify the eschatological significance of Jesus' coming by asserting that all Jews (represented by Abraham in 3:6) saved under the Sinai covenant were saved by the agency of the eschatological faith in/of the Messiah as he *alone* brings the Spirit.

Thus, understood in eschatological terms (an age characterized by the absence of the Spirit versus an age characterized by the presence of the Spirit), the exceptive clause in 2:16a does not entail a discontinuity to the absolute either/or in 2:16c and the absolute negation in 2:16d.²⁵² In fact, the exceptive relationship in 2:16a provides the *basis* for

²⁵¹ Hafemann, "God of Promise," 230. The eschatological significance of Paul's citation of Ps 143:2 is acknowledged by Silva, "Eschatology," 148, who observes that Paul's parallel use of Ps 143:2 in Rom 3:20 clearly has the final judgment in view (cf Rom 2:5-16). Silva's work further indicates that the terminological significance of ἔργα νόμου, πίστις Χριστοῦ, and δικαιώω should be "set within the context of cosmic, eschatological realities ... [and] not divorced from the 'objective' judgment at the end of the age" (148-49).

²⁵² Though agreeing with the continuity of thought between 2:16a and c over against Dunn (and Kok), Räisänen, *Jesus*, 120, does so by denying the exceptive (and thus eschatological) significance of ἔάν μη by pointing to its adversative use as per 1:7. This failure to recognize the eschatological significance of 2:16a (and 2:16 as a whole) contributes to Räisänen's conclusion that Paul, along with early Christianity, "breaks" from Judaism so that "God's ancient offer no longer counts" (*Jesus*, 126). However, as Scott, *Adoption* and "Curse," Hafemann, *Paul*, and Thielman, *Plight* have demonstrated, God's ancient offer entails the curse of exile and the promise of a messianic second-Exodus deliverer the advent of whom

Paul's assertion in 2:16b,c: "We [Jews] also believed²⁵³ in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified²⁵⁴ by faith in/of Jesus and not by the works of the law." 2:16a,c represent two different temporal relationships to faith in/of Christ, the first prior to Christ's "coming" (cf 3:23-25), the latter representing the appropriate response now that Christ and the messianic age have come (1:4; 6:15). The present tense δικαιούται in 2:16a would then probably function as a "durative" or "progressive" present.²⁵⁵ As 2:16a states, Jews believed in Jesus precisely because they came to understand, in light of passages such as Ps 143:2, Gen 15:6, and Hab 2:4, that the Jews of the Sinai covenant and the world it represented were saved only by God's proleptic gift of the Spirit as such redemptive righteousness climaxed in the coming of the Messiah and the dawning of the new age.²⁵⁶ The significance of this eschatological contrast is then drawn out explicitly by Paul's interpretive addition of σάρξ to the Ps 143:2 citation in 2:16d: "[We Jews are justified by believing in Jesus] because by the works of the law no flesh [representing an age absent the Spirit] will be justified."²⁵⁷

brings a new covenant that realizes *precisely* that ancient offer (i.e. obedience to the law and justification, as per Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36:25-27).

²⁵³ Understanding the aorist passive ἐπιστεύσαμεν as "a once-and-for-all step", as per Räisänen, *Jesus*, 116.

²⁵⁴ The subjunctive aorist passive δικαιωθῶμεν with the ἵνα is here taken as a purpose clause, as per James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Kamham: University Press of America, 1979), 120.

²⁵⁵ Brooks and Winbery, *Syntax*, 84-5: "An action or a state of being which began in the past is described as continuing until the present. The past and the present are gathered up in a single affirmation."

²⁵⁶ The eschatological significance of 2:16 further clarifies Paul's use of the Jew/Gentile-sinner distinction in 2:15, in that the Sinai economy which defined both Paul and Peter *nonetheless* did not in and of itself save them. See Dunn, *Galatians*, 133, who suggests that Paul was echoing the language used by the "men from James," which though plausible is not necessary to understanding the flow of thought between 2:14b-2:16.

²⁵⁷ For the relationship between "flesh" and the old creation in Galatians, see Garlington, 2003, 116. For clarification, our assertion that the Sinai age represented for Paul a pre-Pentecost era and thus an age of disobedience and cursing, being that the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of law obedience (and thus blessing) for Paul (cf 5:22-25 with Rom 2:25-29; 1 Cor 12:3), does not negate the presence and function of the remnant throughout redemptive history (e.g. Heb 11). Indeed, Paul's historical argument traces out the work of the Spirit in the lives of Abraham (3:6-9, 13-14), Isaac (4:23, 29) and Habakkuk (3:11) as proleptic realizations of the messianic age inaugurated by the cross and the Spirit. For the exegetical and theological significance of the remnant concept in the OT and Paul's thought in Rom 11, see Dan G. Johnson, "The Structure and

O. The Jeremiah New Covenant and 2:18

Hafemann's eschatological understanding of the law/faith contrast in Galatians, and our particular application of such a contrast in 2:16, may in fact tune our ears to an allusion to Jeremiah in 2:18 that, with the exception of the work of Dunn and Garlington, tends to go unnoticed in the commentaries.²⁵⁸ Regardless of whether 2:17 is understood in *realis* or *irrealis* terms, Paul's absolute negation (μὴ γένοιτο) is directed (at least) to the assertion that Christ could be in service on behalf of²⁵⁹ lawlessness (ἀμαρτίας διάκονος).²⁶⁰ In response, Paul offers two clarifications for his absolute negation.²⁶¹ His first clarification appears to be an appeal to Jer 31:28 (LXX 38:28) (cf Jer 1:10; 12:16-17; 24:6; 33:7) in

Meaning of Romans 11," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 91-103, who argues that it is the presence of the remnant (λείμμα) who overcome judgment, and by virtue of their overcoming judgment their presence *secures the hope of future blessing*, as per Noah for humanity and Elijah for Israel. "The remnant, like the ark, guards 'the hope of future life'" (94). For a development of the argument presented by Johnson and the function of the remnant in Rom 9-11, see Scott J. Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32: A Response to Krister Stendahl." *Ex Auditu*, 4 (1988): 38-58.

²⁵⁸ See Dunn, *Galatians*, 142-143; Garlington, *Galatians*, 118. Given the scholarly recognition of the perplexing terminology used by Paul in 2:18, it is a wonder why more scholars do not understand such unusual Pauline terminology to be an indication of an OT allusion or citation.

²⁵⁹ Our translation for διάκονος follows Weisner, *EDNT* 1:302; cf also Kok, *Truth*, 205.

²⁶⁰ The intensive function of the plural pronoun αὐτοί ("we ourselves") together with the adverbial intensive/ascensive καὶ ("too," "also," "even," etc), seem to indicate that the implied "we" of the first person plural εὐρέθημεν refers to the ἡμεῖς in 2:15-16 (i.e. "we Jews by nature"). This appears further confirmed by the mutual reappearance of the ἀμαρτωλοί motif in 2:17b. Given the tightness of the argument, there is no reason to assert that Paul has switched meaning on either the still-resonating use of ἡμεῖς or ἀμαρτωλοί in 2:15 (contra Calvin's assertion that Paul's response to Peter ends at 2:16). Our analysis of the contrast between ἡμεῖς and ἀμαρτωλοί in relation to the immediate surrounding context of 2:14b and 2:16 finds 2:15 to be a sectarian contrast between the covenant people of Torah over against nations who lived life outside the parameters and obligations of the Mosaic law (cf the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου motif of 4:3, 9 and the "slavery to idolatry" in 4:8). Further, Paul's use of the aorist passive εὐρέθημεν may be a reference to the Antioch incident in 2:11-14 and Peter's rationale for "withdrawal" from Gentile table-fellowship, which is the event that sparked the speech in the first place. In this case, the mixed table-fellowship at Antioch had the appearance of "life like a Gentile" (= ἀμαρτωλοί) and thus Paul and Peter "were found sinners" potentially in the eyes of the party of the circumcision, accounting for Peter's φοβούμενος (2:12). With 2:17b deriving its meaning from both the Antioch incident and 2:14b-16, Paul's false inference (*realis*) in 2:17c appears to engage in a word play between ἀμαρτωλοὶ/ἀμαρτία: how can Christ-believing Jews be ἀμαρτωλοὶ (outside the law) without being ἀμαρτίας (lawless)? Cf Kok, *Truth*, 200-201; Dunn, *Galatians*, 141.

²⁶¹ As per Kok, *Truth*, 211 and the structure of 2:15-21 above.

2:18,²⁶² contextually identifying the opposition between κατέλυσα and οἰκοδομῶ in the protasis with the ἔργα νόμου (ἃ ταῦτα) of 2:16.²⁶³ This would not be Paul's first allusion to Jeremiah in Galatians, since his listeners have already heard how Paul "casts his call to apostleship in the mold of Jeremiah's call to be a 'prophet to the nations' (Gal 1:15; cf Jer 1:5), for Jeremiah prophesied not only to Judah but to 'all nations' as well (Jer 32:15, 18-26)."²⁶⁴ If Paul is alluding to the preamble of Jeremiah's "new covenant," such an allusion would be significant for his clarification, since the central promise of the Jeremiah new covenant is the writing of God's law on the heart on the basis of the forgiveness of sins (Jer 31:33-34).²⁶⁵ By alluding to the new covenant in Jeremiah, Paul would be clarifying his absolute denial of Christ's ministry of lawlessness by appealing to the expectation for a new age of righteousness (i.e. lawfulness) which, through the ministry of Paul, has now arrived!²⁶⁶ And in terms of Jeremiah's new covenant promise rooted in the forgiveness of sins (Jer 31:34), this allusion would be further enhanced by Paul's appeal to the sacrificial death of Christ, framed in terms of the Lev 16 and Isa 52:13-53:12 atonement traditions inherent in the παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν and ἀποθνήσκω motifs of 2:20 and 21 (cf 1:4; 3:13-14), as the basis for righteousness (2:21).

²⁶² We approach Paul's use of intertextuality in light of Sandmel's influential article (Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 [1962]: 1-13) and the definitive work on the subject by Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1989, where Hays provides *seven tests* for the presence of a Scriptural echo (see 29-32).

²⁶³ So too Kok, *Truth*, 224.

²⁶⁴ Scott, *Nations*, 154 n93.

²⁶⁵ נ תתי אֲתִתְּוֹרְתִי בְּקֶרֶב בָּם וְעַל־ל בָּם אֲכַתְּבֶנָּה ...
כִּי אֶסְלַח לָעוֹנִים וְלִחַטָּא תָּם לֹא אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ:

²⁶⁶ Therefore, we believe Garlington's analysis of Paul's use of the related Jeremiah idioms "building" and "planting" as referring to the establishment of a new community (and thus Paul is tearing down the Torah-observant community and building a Christ-centered community) to be true as far as it goes. However, given that Paul is clarifying his absolute denial that Christ is a minister of lawlessness, we think that the allusion is more precisely in terms of the new community's divinely-gifted ability to keep the law as over against the Sinai community, as developed below. See Garlington, *Galatians*, 118.

Furthermore, by framing this appeal in the first person singular, 2:18 (in light of 1:15f) can be understood as a confirming summary of Paul's self-understanding of the nature and significance of his own apostolic ministry as the means by which the dawning of the new covenant is mediated. In the words of Hafemann:

From Paul's perspective that which was promised in Jer 31:31-34 is now being fulfilled through his own ministry. Specifically, Paul sees himself as a servant (= "mediator of the message," ...) of the eschatological reality of the new covenant, since fundamental to Paul's self-understanding is his conviction that he is participating with those "upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor 10:11; [cf Gal 1:4; 6:15]). As the context of 1 Cor 10 demos, this conviction determines his understanding of the applicability of the Scriptures to the church, as well as his ethical expectations for the people of God who now find their identity in Christ, since as believers they are the eschatological ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ which is being gathered from among both Israel and the Gentiles (cf Gal 6:15f). Paul is convinced that those who have been justified and set apart in the name of Christ and are living in the Spirit are *now already* participating in the present reality of the kingdom of God, while the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God when it comes in its fullness (1 Cor 6:7-11; cf Gal 1:4 with Gal 5:21).²⁶⁷

It therefore seems plausible to understand Paul's first-person singular allusion to the new covenant preamble of Jer 31:28 (cf Jer 1:10) in 2:18 as part of his apostolic defense as a minister of the new covenant, since Paul, like Jeremiah, is called to proclaim the divine lawsuit against his covenant people and call them back to covenant obedience (in this case, call them back to the gospel as per 2:14a; cf 1:6-9; 3:1-5; 4:9-20; 5:2f; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10)!²⁶⁸ In light of the "anathema" in 1:6-9, the Galatians are turning away from the sphere "in Christ" in relation to which Jeremiah's covenant lawsuit has ended into a sphere "in the law" in relation to which it still applies.

P. The Significance of παραβάτην

²⁶⁷ Paul, 135-136, emphasis his. Cf the words of Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, 70: "Paul came to see that in Christ God had brought the revelation at Sinai to its goal and inaugurated the time announced in the promises in Jer 31:31ff. and Isa 2:2-4 (1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Gal 4:21ff)."

²⁶⁸ Cf Hafemann, *Paul*, 122, quoting Lane's observations of Paul's parallel use of the passage in 2 Cor 3.

Of further significance for this observation is Paul's use of the term παραβάτην as the consequence of "rebuilding" the age of the law, an association that is repeated in 3:19, where Paul identifies the law given τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν (cf the association of παραβάτην with νόμος in Rom 2:25 and 2:27). Paul's observation in 3:19 would certainly echo the convicting judgment of Jeremiah, whose promise of a new covenant is set against the backdrop of the perennial problem of Israel's stubbornness and disobedience characteristic of the Sinai covenant (Jer 3:17; 7:24-26; 9:12-16; 11:1-14; 13:10; 14:11; 15:1; 16:12; 17:23; 18:12; 19:15; 23:17). In continuity with Jeremiah, Paul understands the giving of the law in 3:19 in terms of God keeping Israel "in custody" under the law (3:23-25), a custody that functioned as Israel's own particular application of God's consigning "all things under sin" (3:22; cf the perennial problem of Israel's disobedience in Jeremiah). In other words, the historical context of Sinai was one of an age characterized by ἁμαρτία (with regard to Gentiles; cf 2:15 with 4:3-11) and παραβάτην (with regard to Jews; cf 3:19 with 22-24 and 4:21-5:1), which Paul will develop later in the letter as a period of time preceding the inheritance (the Spirit) promised to *the* heir (i.e. Israel; cf 4:1-2) and the Gentiles (4:8-11).²⁶⁹

What emerges from this portrait painted by Paul with the help of Jeremiah is that if the stipulations mandated at Sinai were in some way specific to the characteristics of a world consigned to universal moral hopelessness (characterized by Israel's status as a child ὑπὸ νόμον and the Gentiles ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου), then by definition the law's stipulations are not mandatory for those who are no longer characterized by such universal moral hopelessness. Now that the dawning of the messianic age (represented by the metonymy of "faith;" cf 2:16) has overcome the "present evil age" (1:4; 3:13-14; 4:3-

²⁶⁹ Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile," 341f; Scott, *Adoption, passim*.

7), Peter's (passive) insistence on the abiding validity (i.e. Paul's use of "rebuilding" in 2:18) of the law specific to the Sinai age (by withdrawing from gentile table-fellowship) even for Jews is an insistence on the continuation of the global παραβάτην conditions to which that law was specific, and thus constitutes a denial of the sufficiency of the cross to inaugurate the messianic age (2:21b)! As an apostle called to embody the new covenant inaugurated by the Messiah (2:16, 20), Paul believes that for him to assert the mandatory validity of the old covenant stipulations even over Jews would in effect reconstitute temporal pre-Pentecost conditions that God ordained to characterize the "present evil age" which "consigns all things under sin," thus consigning Paul himself as a "transgressor" (1:4; 3:10, 19-25; 4:1-2, 21-20).

Q. A Proposed Tradition History Behind 2:19-20

Gal 2:19 offers the second explanation (as per the explanatory γάρ) for Paul's assertion in 2:17 by developing the law/faith contrast in terms of ἀποθνήσκω and ζάω motifs (cf συνεσταύρωμαι with ἐν πίστει ζῶ).²⁷⁰ The subsequent parallel terminology in 3:10-14 and 3:19-4:7 suggests that Paul consciously develops and clarifies the meaning of 2:19-

²⁷⁰ Ridderbos, *Galatians*, 104, observes that the "death/life" motifs in 2:17 function as the Galatians' counterpart to the "letter/Spirit" contrast in 2 Cor 3:6. What is not observed, however, is that the "death/life" motif in 2 Cor 3:6 is itself immediately preceded within the verse by an allusion to the Jer 31 new covenant! In fact, Hafemann, *Paul*, 39-186 demonstrates 2 Cor 3:1-6 logically moves in a similar pattern as Gal 1-2. Paul *evidentially* grounds the legitimacy of his apostolicity in the spiritual encounter of the Corinthians (3:2-3; cf Gal 3:1-5); Paul *temporally* grounds the legitimacy of his apostolicity in his own encounter with the presence of God shaped in terms of the OT prophetic call narrative (3:5); Paul appeals to the new covenant as the mediated content of his apostolic ministry (3:6); and Paul understands the significance of this new covenant ministry in *eschatological* terms, with the old covenant representing the death dealing γράμμα (the law without the Spirit) and the new covenant representing the life giving Spirit (the law with the Spirit). Hafemann further argues that Paul understands the "death of the law"/"life of the Spirit" contrast in 2 Cor 3:6 not as a contrast between the law and the gospel *per se*, "but the contrast between not encountering and encountering the glory of God, or between the absence and presence of God's Spirit among and within his covenant people. This is the contrast which is represented in the respective ministries of Moses and Paul on the one hand, and in the distinct nature of Israel under the old covenant over against those Jews and Gentiles who now make up the new covenant people of God" (439-440).

20 in the course of his argument throughout the letter (cf esp. 6:14!).²⁷¹ Of significance to Paul's argument in 3:10-14 and 4:1-7 are the two strands of tradition history analyzed by J. Scott in his 1992 and 1993 studies.²⁷² Corroborating Thielman's "plight to solution" thesis, Scott argues Paul's citation in 3:10 is a conflation of Deut 27:26 with Deut 29:19b (or 28:58), reflecting a penitential prayer tradition that developed from Deut 27-32 which understood contemporary (first-century) circumstances in the lives of God's people in *exilic* terms.²⁷³ This tradition draws from the use of Deut 27-32 in the prayer of Daniel 9, where, in response to the appeal for national restoration in view of the end of Jeremiah's 70 year exile (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; cf Zech 1:12; 2 Chron 36:20-21), God extends the Deuteronomic curse seven-fold (cf. Lev 26:18, 21, 24, 28), continuing 490 years of perpetual exile "to be ended only by the intervention of God and the inauguration of the eschatological era, a point which is now widely recognized."²⁷⁴ Thus a subsequent tradition developed within the penitential prayers tradition and Second Temple literature expressing the sentiment that the Deuteronomic curse extends throughout the Second Temple period with God's promised deliverance yet to be realized (E.g. Bar 1:15-3:8; 4:5-5:9; Prayer of Azariah, Dan 3:26-45 LXX; Sir 36:1-17; 2 Macc 1:10-2:18;

²⁷¹ See Longenecker, *Galatians*, 91; Fung, *Galatians*, 123; Cosgrove, *Cross*, 139f.

²⁷² It should be noted that the use of tradition-history (*traditionsgeschichtliche*) serves to demonstrate that Paul's readings of the OT were historically available readings, not something he just made up *de novo*. It should be further noted that we in no way see tradition history as "hand-cuffing" Paul's interpretive options, as if he were not allowed to provide a critique of the available interpretive options. We believe tradition history to be useful in historically establishing the organic theological unity between the OT and NT, thus showing that Paul's readings of the OT are in terms of their grand historical fulfillment in light of strands of second temple hopes and expectations, themselves grounded in the OT. But their significance for Paul can only be established by a *synchronic* analysis of his text, especially in terms of the ability of the tradition history to account for the synchronic rationale in Paul's arguments. For the important distinction between diachronic and synchronic analysis, see Tremper Longman III, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation," in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, edited by Moisés Silva, 95-192 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996); Vern S. Poythress, "Analysing a Biblical Text: Some Important Linguistic Distinctions," *SJTh*, Vol. 32 (1979): 113-137.

²⁷³ Scott, "Curse," 198-208.

²⁷⁴ Scott, "Curse," 198-208, 200.

4QDibHam [esp col 5 and 6]; 1QS 1:24b-2:1; 2 Macc 7 [n.b. 37-38]; the Animal Apocalypse of *1 En* 85-90 [n.b. *1 En* 89:59-67]; The *Testament of Levi* [*T. Levi* 16:1-2,5; cf 14-18], *et al.*).²⁷⁵ Scott's diachronic analysis of the Deut 27-32 exile tradition produces a "sin-exile-redemption" pattern that accounts for the synchronic structure of 3:10-14, where Paul's argument moves from "curse" (3:10) to "redemption" from the curse through "Christ" (3:13) and from there to the reception of the "Spirit" (3:14; 4:5-6), drawing from the Deut 30:1-8 promise (cf 32:36-43) that God would restore his people from exile, to which the OT prophets typologically referred as a messianically realized second-Exodus "redemption" (1 Macc 4:9-11; Bar 2:11-18; cf Dan 9:15).²⁷⁶ In relation to this "redemption" the tradition compares the Messiah's work to that of Moses (*Farg Targ* Exod 12:42), together with the hope of God's Spirit anointing on both the Messiah and his people Israel (cf *T Jud* 24:3; *Jub* 1:23-24). Thus, as Scott concludes, "all four

²⁷⁵ Scott further observes a parallel biblical concept of protracted exile in Ezekiel 4:4-8, where the 430 days the prophet lies on his sides represent the total years of punishment for the nations' sin, recalling the 430 years which Israel spent in Egyptian bondage (Ex 12:40; cf Gen 15:13). This corresponds to Ezek 20:33-38 (cf Dan 9:15-19; 1QM 1:2-3) which "views the deliverance from exile as a 'redemption' of Israel from bondage and as a new exodus" ("Curse," 208). See p. 208f for a further development of Qumran's self-identity in relation to the "430 years" motif in CD 1:3-11a; cf N.T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, Vol. 1, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 269 and 271, where he sets out the relationship between Isa 40-55 and Deut 27-32 in a "fairly regular pattern within the 'apocalyptic' writings."

²⁷⁶ Scott, "Curse," 215. Contra Dunn, whose own reading of the "curse of the law" in 3:10 is "a curse on Lawlessness, and so as a curse which the Law has interposed between the Gentiles (Lawless) and their share in the promise" (*Jesus*, 248). Thus, he goes on to argue that Paul's objection to the law is an objection to "covenantal nomism understood as it then was consistently through Judaism – that is, covenantal nomism as restricting the covenant to those within the boundaries marked by the Law, to Jews and proselytes" (*Jesus*, 249). Dunn therefore argues for a racially *ecclesiastical* concern on the part of Paul, as opposed to a consistently *eschatological* concern. It should be noted that Paul does not argue at any point in Galatians against an abuse of the law *per se* (as if the law was being racially abused in the new covenant era), but rather argues that *because the messianic age has dawned*, the works of the law are no longer mandatory for the Jew in the new age, let alone the Gentile (2:14b-16, 20a, 21b). It is in support of precisely this point that Paul embarks on his historical exile/second-Exodus survey, with the conclusion in 3:23-25 that "we" (Jews!) are no longer under the law's function as a παιδαγωγός (οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἔσμεν) because "faith" has come (ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως)! Therefore, how much more are Gentiles not under the law (4:8-11). See below for a development of Paul's rhetorical strategy. For a defense of reading the first-person plurals in 3:23-25 in light of 2:15-16 as referring to Jews, see Hafemann, "Paul and the Exile," 337f.

elements of Gal 3:10, 13-14 – curse, Christ, redemption, and Spirit – are determined by the traditional expectation.”²⁷⁷

Scott further argues that the messianic significance of the singular τό σπέρμα in 3:16 (cf Gen 15:5) reflects the precedent of a Jewish tradition which linked Gen 15 by *gezera shawa* to its fulfillment in the royal promise to David in 2 Sam 7 and its universal application to God’s people in Isa 43:1-7 (cf 3:19, 23-25; cf 2 Sam 7:12; cf. Ps 72:17; Sir 44:21).²⁷⁸ For example, Sir 44:19-21 expresses the promise to Abraham “in terms of the universal sovereignty of the Messiah.”²⁷⁹ This tradition precedent serves to account for the rationale behind Paul’s discussion of the Abrahamic heir (ὁ κληρονόμος) as “lord of all” (κύριος πάντων ὧν) in 4:1, a *Hoheitstitle* applied to God’s people as the result of their participation in the universal sovereignty of the Messiah by virtue of divine “adoption” (υἰοθεσία 4:5; cf the αββα ὁ πατήρ reference in 4:6).²⁸⁰ Scott’s extensive 1992 study concludes that, with the Second-Exodus redemption backdrop, the adoption spoken of in Gal 4:5b “very likely alludes to the eschatological expectation in Jewish tradition which applies the promise of divine adoption in 2 Sam 7:14 to the Messiah (4QFlor

²⁷⁷ “Curse,” 216. Unfortunately Scott’s analysis does not explore the relationship between the penitential prayer tradition and Ps 143 (cf 2:16d; 3:11). Acknowledging that Ps 143 is one of the seven penitential psalms as designated by the early church, C. Hassel Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, revised and expanded (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 136, explains: “Although Psalm 143 is not penitential in the strict sense of the word, it does take cognizance of the larger context of the sinfulness of the human race (143:2).” Could there be a relationship between the penitential prayer tradition and Ps 143:2, and thus with Paul’s argument in 2:16 itself?

²⁷⁸ See Scott, “Curse,” 217; *Adoption*, 180-2; and Hafemann “Paul and the Exile,” 333 n.10.; Ciampa, *Presence*, 196.

²⁷⁹ Scott, *Adoption*, 182.

²⁸⁰ Scott, *Adoption*, 182; cf 131-134 for sources demonstrating the phrase κύριος πάντων as a *Hoheitstitle* (title of universal sovereignty), and 134f linking the phrase with the eschatological expectation that Israel would inherit and rule the world in accordance with the promise to the patriarchs (cf Rom 4:13a; Jub 22:11b, 13-14; 32:19; Sir 44:19-23; etc).

1:11), to Israel (Jub 1:24), and to both the Messiah and Israel (TJud 24:3), in the time when Israel would return from Exile in the Second Exodus.”²⁸¹

If the studies of Scott sustain scrutiny, then Paul’s unusual statement of his διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον in 2:19 would signify that the law resulted in an exile curse that, according to Paul’s exegetical Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι in 2:20 (cf 3:13-14; 4:3-7), was entered into and effectively overcome by the Messiah for the whole world.²⁸² Thus, Paul can “through [understanding the history and purpose of] ²⁸³ the law die to the law,” so that he (in accordance with the hope of the Deut 27-32 penitential prayer tradition) might “live to God,” now in terms of the realization of that new covenant hope in the coming of Christ.²⁸⁴ Moreover, Paul’s allusion to Hab 2:4 in “living to God” (cf 3:10-11)²⁸⁵ would provide another association with (the Babylonian) exile, since Hab 2:4 served as the salvific hope within the era of God’s judgment upon Judah under the wicked King Jehoiakim. Habakkuk’s prayer invoking the mercies of God in light of his covenantal promises (Hab 1:12) is answered with the promise of a future redemption in Hab 2:2f,²⁸⁶ a promise that is paralleled in the Deut 27-32 expectations and its subsequent tradition (e.g. Deut 30:1-8; cf the צַדִּיק motif in Hab 1:12 with Deut 32:15, 18, 37; cf also Hab 2:4a,b with Deut 29:19b). Thus, Paul’s “death to the law”/“life to God” contrast means:

²⁸¹ Scott, *Adoption*, 178.

²⁸² Cf the similar observation by Cosgrove: “Since Paul equates his ‘death to the Law through the Law’ with ‘crucifixion with Christ,’ the logic of verse 19 must depend on the thought that *Christ* died to the Law” (*Cross*, 139).

²⁸³ Understanding the διὰ plus the genitive as suggesting instrumentality; see Cosgrove *Cross*, 139.

²⁸⁴ See Scott, *Adoption*, 108, who points out that like Jer 31:31-34 and Ez 36:25-27, the covenant renewal envisioned by Jub 1:23 is in terms of the “divine intervention in the heart of man” (108). For a development of the significance of Jer 31:31-34 for the messianic age, see Davies, *Torah*, 12-28.

²⁸⁵ For the function of Hab 2:4 in Paul’s argument in 2:15-21, see Ciampa, *Presence*, 178-220.

²⁸⁶ See William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 217-221; Raymond B. Dillard, and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 409-413.

The *old covenant* is no longer the locus of the revelation of God's glory in the world; the new covenant of the new age has arrived. And as the prophets promised, the cross of Christ reveals, and the pouring out of the Spirit through Paul's apostolic ministry confirms, God's purpose in the new covenant is no longer to reveal his glory in the judgment of death, as in the old covenant, but in the life of the Spirit.²⁸⁷

Moreover, the *συν*-compound in relation to Paul's "co-crucifixion" with Christ (Χριστῷ *συνεσταύρωμαι*) in 2:19b further underscores the eschatological nature of Paul's thought.²⁸⁸ Kok's survey of the debate among scholars over the significance of Paul's use of the *συσταυρόμαι* motif concludes:

The apocalyptic or eschatological view [which argues that "the death of believers took place *when* Christ died on the cross; *when* Christ the representative died, all (potential believers) were already included in that decisive death of Christ"] ...takes seriously the apocalyptic framework in Paul's thought and argues that the believer's "dying with Christ" should be seen in the context of the two-aeon framework (cf 1:4; Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18; 2 Cor 4:4). According to 1:4, the sacrificial death of Christ is described in an apocalyptic framework: Christ "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age" (τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος πονηροῦ). According to 4:4-7, the coming of Christ ("God sent forth his Son") marks the turning point in the salvation history of God for humankind: "the time had fully come"; the Holy Spirit is sent into believers' hearts; redemption and adoption become reality ... Paul describes also the radical character of his experiences in Christ as *καινή κτίσις* ("new creation"; 6:15): all things have become new (2 Cor 5:17; cf Rom 8:20-21).²⁸⁹

R. Paul's Ministry: A Lived-Out Parable of the Cross

The two motifs by which this new age is inaugurated – the death and resurrection of Christ – together characterize Paul's apostolic ministry, as Paul's co-crucifixion with Christ is accompanied by "Christ's (resurrection) life in me" (2:20a; cf 1:16). Here Paul

²⁸⁷ Hafemann, *Paul*, 324.

²⁸⁸ Kok, *Truth*, 240, who cites Rom 6:6 as the only other reference to *συσταυρόμαι* in the Pauline corpus.

²⁸⁹ Kok, *Truth*, 241-249, 243-244. In his study on *σὺν Χριστῷ*, Grundmann observes: "Its primary reference is to eschatological being with Christ as eternal, non-terrestrial being ... In fellowship with Him, the Christian shares in the victory, dominion, and glory of Christ. 'With him' the universe is the Christian's" (*TDNT* 7:781-785). Cf, too, Silva's comment on 2:19-20: "Paul's claim that he has already died – by crucifixion no less – and yet has been raised to life (how else could he continue to life?) is unabashedly eschatological" ("Eschatological," 149).

seems to speak (at least materially) to the Judaizers at Galatia, for if Paul's sufferings and persecutions were being used against him by the Judaizers (claiming that Paul was under a curse of God because of his attitude towards the law), Paul's apostolic self-identity in 2:19b and 2:20a would demonstrate that Paul's sufferings and persecutions signify a lived-out testimony to the very suffering and persecution of Christ that ushered in the new aeon of the Spirit which Paul has been called to embody.²⁹⁰ Thus, against the backdrop of his own encounter with the presence of God (1:15-17), Paul can appeal to both the pneumatic experience of the Galatians (3:1-5) and his own bearing of the *στίγματα* of Jesus (6:17) as the evidential basis for the legitimacy of his apostolic call to serve as mediator of the dawning of the messianic age, since it is the very presence of God that the Galatians experienced that *continues* to sustain Paul in the midst of adversity *by faith*, and so it will with the Galatians (cf 2:20b with 3:2-5; 5:5-6)! This is brought out explicitly in 3:1-5, where Paul's mediation of the Spirit in the lives of the Galatians was through his lived-out public portrayal of Christ crucified (3:1; cf 4:12-15), a portrayal that Paul wants the Galatians to understand from his Antioch speech as a life lived "now" (*νῦν*) by the same "faith" (*πίστις*) in/of the "Son of God" (2:20b) through which a person is declared "justified" (2:16). This ongoing work of God lived out by faith provides the foundation for Paul's rhetorical question: "Are you so foolish? Having *begun* by the Spirit, are you *now* being perfected by the flesh (3:3)?"

Furthermore, Paul's appeal to his own sufferings as the model of selfless love for the Galatians to imitate (4:12-14) is presented in terms of keeping the *whole* law (5:14; *πᾶς νόμος*) by the power of the Spirit (5:22). With a rhetorical flourish against the claims

²⁹⁰ That Paul understands his ministry in terms of embodying the cross of Jesus is reflected in his use of the perfect tense of *συσταυρόομαι* indicating a past event with ongoing effects. Cf, too, the passive voice of *συσταυρόομαι* functioning as a divine passive (i.e. an act of God in Christ), as per Kok, *Truth*, 248.

of the Judaizers, far from abrogating the law as God's ethical requirements, Paul as the mediator of the new covenant and in essential unity with the Jerusalem apostles is demanding its radical obedience (cf 5:1-6:16)!²⁹¹ For as the promise of Jer 31:31-34 (cf its Spirit-centered parallel in Ez 36:25-27) makes clear, God does not have in view a different law that will be written upon the heart, but it is precisely the Sinai law itself that will be obeyed.²⁹² Thus Paul is subsequently able to understand the obedience of the Spirit in terms of the primacy of love (5:22) as the fulfillment of a command derived from the Mosaic law itself (5:14; Lev 19:18).²⁹³

Moreover, Paul's assertion that the new covenant realizes the indwelling of the messianic presence within himself (2:20) and all believers demonstrates that the new age, in contrast to the Sinai age, is characterized by the indwelling of the Christ who cannot be a minister of sin (2:17c,d).²⁹⁴ Thus, Paul demonstrates that far from lawlessness, the inauguration of the new covenant through the dawning of the messianic age writes God's

²⁹¹ See Hafemann, "Paul and his Interpreters," 674 for this very point.

²⁹² Thus, it should be noted that Paul's "dying to the law" by being "crucified with Christ," against the eschatological backdrop, is a dying/crucifixion to (i.e. separation from) the "curse" of the law (not the law *itself*; cf 3:13 with the end of its *παιδαγωγός* function in 3:24-25!) as the result of Israel's reception of the Sinai stipulations absent the Spirit to keep those stipulations. Cf the Deut 27-32 tradition in 3:10-14, 19-24 to Scott's development of the messianic Spirit and the 2 Sam 7 tradition in 3:1-9, 13-18, 25-4:7 (*Adoption, passim*).

²⁹³ Cf Hafemann, *Paul*, 138. It should be further noted therefore that Paul's distinction between the "works of law" as a metonymy for the commandments of the Sinai covenant from the law-obedience required as the result of the inauguration of the new covenant is a distinction between law *specific* to the Sinai Age (circumcision, ritual purity laws, etc, now no longer mandatory) and law that fulfills God's ethical holiness (the so-called moral law, which is not specific to Sinai and thus perpetually abiding), a distinction widely recognized especially in the history of Protestant interpretation. However, given the flow of Paul's argument, it is essential to understand that this distinction is *eschatological* in nature – the moral age to which the covenant stipulations specific to Sinai merely anticipated as a whole has dawned in the advent of the Messiah and the Spirit-enabled embodiment of his law by his people, rendering those anticipatory stipulations obsolete (cf Mark 7:19 and Paul's application of this point to the law in Rom 14:1-15:13). For a defense of this ceremonial/moral distinction within the law, see Thomas R. Schreiner, "The Abolition and Fulfillment of the Law in Paul," *JSNT* 35 (1989) 47-74, especially 59-65. Schreiner sums up the distinction as between those ceremonial laws that separated Israel from the nations (laws now abolished by virtue of the new age) and those moral laws by which sin is defined (which continually abide by virtue of our rescue from sin) (58).

²⁹⁴ Kok, *Truth*, 258-59.

law on the heart through the indwelling Spirit-presence of the law-keeper *par excellence*! As such, God's people are no longer under the curse of the law (3:10, 19-25), since, in light of the Messiah's advent, the fundamental difference between the old covenant and the inaugurated new is that the stipulations of faithfulness to God's ethical requirements are now able to be obeyed precisely because God supplies what he commands (5:22-25).²⁹⁵ Thus, to be outside the Sinai Age and its anticipatory stipulations specific to that age does not entail lawlessness that results in the Deuteronomic curse of persecution (2:17; 3:10); quite the contrary! Paul's apostolic ministry, like the ministry of Jeremiah, of "building up and tearing down" embodies the very law-obedient Spirit through which the plight of disobedience to the law is resolved, resulting in the Deuteronomic blessing (cf 2:16 with 19 and 3:14; Deut 30:1-10).

S. The Conclusion of 2:21

Since Paul's rhetorical flourish has yet to end, the first-person singular ἀθροῶ in 2:21a should perhaps be read as a continuation of Paul's apostolic defense of the gospel he embodies. Thus, the "grace of God" (χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ) which Paul does not "nullify" (ἀθροῶ) should be read in light of the "grace" by which God made him sufficient to be an apostle in the Christophonic encounter on the Damascus Road (1:15; cf Rom 1:5), being the same grace Paul is called to mediate to the Gentiles (1:6b-9; 2:7-9); namely, God's very presence!²⁹⁶ In light of the eschatological significance of the law/faith contrast, Paul

²⁹⁵ For a development of the law in relation to the new covenant in terms of the so-called "Zion Torah" thesis, see Gese, "Der Dekalog"; Stuhlmacher, "Paul's View of the Law"; cf Osten-Sacken, "Befreiung." For an explanation and critique of the "Zion Torah" hypothesis of Stuhlmacher and Gese, see Räisänen *Jesus*, 225-251. For a development of the one covenant structure throughout the Bible where divine indicatives *always* precede divine imperatives, with the necessary entailment of faith, hope, and love within the law's call to obedience, see Fuller, *Gospel and Law*, 105-117.

²⁹⁶ See Dunn, *Galatians*, 147, for the Damascus Road calling *only*; cf Kok, *Truth*, 265f.

can say that the apostolic disruption of mixed table-fellowship at Antioch represented by Peter's (passive) imposition of Sinai-specific stipulations is equivalent to "rendering ineffective"²⁹⁷ the grace of God shown to Paul at his calling on the Damascus Road, since (γὰρ) such an imposition would in effect attribute to the old covenant that righteousness which alone comes from the messianic new covenant Paul has been called to embody (2:21a,b; cf 2:16). Such an attribution results from the failure to understand the function of the old covenant given apart from the Spirit as God's particular application of consigning all things ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν (3:19, 22), now lived out in the contemporary experience of the judgment of exile (3:10).²⁹⁸ With regard to the one who understands the function of the old covenant in the light of the advent of the Messiah, for such a one to insist on the ongoing mandatory validity of stipulations specific to Sinai even for the Jew is in effect a denial of the sufficiency of the cross to usher in the messianic age (and thus nullifies the grace of God; cf 1:4; 3:13-14; 4:3-7; 6:14-15). Either way, it is Paul's opponents, not Paul, that risk coming under the judgment curse of God. By insisting on the abiding validity of stipulations specific to an age absent of the Spirit, these Judaizers have thus severed themselves from life in the Spirit (cf 3:3; 4:21-31; 5:17). By severing themselves from this pneumatic life, they have severed themselves from Christ (5:2, 4).

²⁹⁷ Following Dunn, *Galatians*, 147.

²⁹⁸ Contra Dunn, who, though recognizing that Paul does recognize a positive role of the law for the Christian (cf 5:14), argues that Paul has in mind here in 2:21 "the Law understood as preventing Gentiles' full and free participation in the grace of God as Gentiles" (*Galatians*, 148-49). The issue for Paul, however, does not appear *ecclesiological* (i.e. ethnic concerns), but *eschatological*. In other words, Paul is addressing the issue of the significance of the law's role in the messianic age now that such an *age* has dawned. For Paul, the most important acknowledgement for both Jew and Gentile is the understanding that the Sinai law itself (apart from the Spirit) did not save anyone, but functioned as God's gracious provision towards a world order marked by the dominion of sin (cf 3:22). Since sin no longer has dominion (though its *effects* continue) by virtue of the cross and resurrection reign of Christ and the inauguration of the new covenant, insisting on the mandatory observance of stipulations specific to a sin-dominated age (represented by "the law" for the Jew and "the elements of the world" for the Gentile) is in effect "nullify" the grace of God in Christ by attributing to the old covenant what alone comes from the new covenant, and thus either fail to understand the historical function of the old covenant in relation to the new or deny the sufficiency of the cross to inaugurate the messianic age.

By severing themselves from Christ, they have severed themselves from the ability to keep the whole law (cf 5:3, 14; 6:13), and so remain under its curse (3:10; 5:19-21).

Paul's argument may thus be interpreted:

15: We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles,

16a: [*nevertheless*] knowing that a man is not justified from (ἐξ) the works of the law except through (διὰ) faith in/of Christ Jesus,

16b: [*the result is*] even we have believed in Christ Jesus,

16c: in order that (ὅνα) we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by/from the works of the law,

16d: because (ὅτι) by the works of the law no flesh will be justified.

17a: But (δὲ) if, while seeking to be justified in Christ,

17b: [*the result is*] we ourselves have also been found sinners,

17c: [*then*] is Christ then a minister of sin?

17d: [*The answer to that is*] May it never be!

18a: [*The reason for this is because*] (γὰρ) if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed,

18b: [*then*] I prove myself to be a transgressor.

19a: For (γὰρ) through the law I died to the law, in order that (ὅνα) I might live to God.

19b: [*This means that*] I have been crucified with Christ,

20a: and (δὲ) it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

20b: and (δὲ) [*this means that*] the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in/of the Son of God,

20c: [*that is the one*] who loved me, and delivered himself up for me.

21a: [*In conclusion*] I do not nullify the grace of God,

21b: for (γὰρ) if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died needlessly.

IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to explore an eschatological reading of Gal 2:15-21, a passage that appears significantly in the historical debate over Paul's view of the Mosaic law. In the modern era of interpretation, the debate has centered on comparing Paul's view of the law with the OT law itself situated within its own context. Among the various proposals, the eschatological nature of the law in Pauline thought presents a consistent account of Paul's theology of the law as it is shaped around the Christological fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes for humanity and creation as promised in the OT.

The epistolary occasion presented in this paper posited that the Judaizers most likely exploited Paul's sufferings as testimony to divine disapproval over his view of the law. That such sufferings were coming upon the Galatians was indicative of their progressive sharing in Paul's fate. The solution offered by the Judaizers to the Galatians was the necessity of their observing (to some extent) the Mosaic law, since to live like a Gentile even as a Christ-believer was to be outside the Sinai-defined covenant people of God, a status by definition rendering one a "sinner."

Paul responded to the Galatians with a defense of his apostolic ministry and its pneumatic effects upon the communities in Galatia as testimony of the dawning of the messianic age. This age is the realization of the hope expressed particularly in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that Israel's exile from the presence of God would end with the gift of God's Spirit effectively renewing the hearts of God's people, enabling them to offer the trust and obedience the law always required. This hope, subsequently developed messianically through the tradition-history, has dawned in the world through the advent of faith in/of Christ to which the law pointed all along. Now that Christ has come, God's people are

called back into his presence through faith in/of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's new covenant promises, not by the observation of the "works of the law" (the old covenant response to God's saving righteousness), since all those under the old covenant were saved proleptically by faith in/of Christ.

With the end of the Sinai-defined age, such trust in Christ by no means renders all God's people "sinners" or "lawless," since the whole point of the new covenant is to bring about the very obedience the law required. Thus, the pattern of Paul's thinking in 2:15-21 moved from "justification" in 2:16 to the necessity of "sanctification" in 2:18-21, a pattern he applied directly to the Galatian communities in 3:1-5. This pattern therefore maintained a juridical understanding of justification that necessarily manifested itself in the very obedience the law required pneumatically provided by God and as promised by the prophets. In contrast, for Paul to insist on the mandatory observance of the "works of the law" would in effect make him a "transgressor," since the law was God's gracious provision given "on account of transgression" during a period of time when "all things were consigned under sin." Now that the fallen world order has been overcome by faith in/of Christ, his advent means that trusting in him will not evidence itself in the old covenant response to God's saving righteousness (keeping the "works of the law"), but rather by exemplifying the cross of Christ in our lives (putting to death sinful inclinations) together with his resurrection and law-keeping life within us (which enables God's servants to endure suffering with joy as lived-out testimonies of God's grace exemplified on the cross). However, were Paul to insist on the mandatory observance of the law now that the messianic age has dawned, his insistence would in effect "nullify" the grace of God shown to him in his apostolic calling, since such an insistence was a

denial of the sufficiency of the cross to inaugurate the messianic age and its inherent righteousness. For if righteousness was provided by the old covenant itself then the cross was not necessary. Thus, as defined by the law and the prophets, it was Paul and his pneumatically-defined churches in the midst of their cross-interpreted sufferings, not the Judaizers, who kept the law.

In determining the significance of ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ, we observed the importance of situating the terms within the constellation of opposites that ran throughout the letter, entailing the eschatological significance of an old creation/new creation contrast (1:4; 6:15). This situatedness accounted for the relationship of 2:15-21 to both the Antioch situation preceding it (the interpretive grid for the new perspective) and the subsequent argument developed from the terms and concepts introduced within it (the interpretive grid of traditional Protestantism). Thus, the eschatological paradigm was able to account for the sociological concerns in 2:11-14 (in that the messianic era brings about the repentance of the nations), the role of the Spirit in the new age (3:1-5), the redemptive historical function of the law/faith contrast within the old and new covenants (3:6-5:12), and the *paraenetic* fulfillment of the law-obedient life in the Spirit (5:13-6:10).

The apologetic significance of the eschatological paradigm for Paul was that he could rhetorically demonstrate that because his sufferings were in fact symbolic of the sufferings of the Messiah, who is the law-keeper *par excellence*, it was Paul who was indeed the law-keeper and not his opponents. By avoiding persecution, they demonstrated that they were not identified with the messianic age of the Spirit and thus, by the history of the law's own testimony, are not participants in the pneumatically effected obedience

inherent within that age. It was Paul's opponents who remained under the "curse of the law." In contrast, Paul called "those who once received him like an angel" over whom he "labored as children" back to the gospel, the messianically inaugurated age of faith where the blessings of Abraham have come to the Gentiles. It is in this sphere, this new covenant, where the Galatians will find the end of the curse of the law, the blessing of newness of life; indeed, the very presence of God himself.

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