

CHAPTER THREE
THE BOOK OF GALATIANS: GENTILES ARE
NOT UNDER THE MOSAIC LAW

Since the Reformation, Paul's view of the law has been a popular theme among theologians. Luther's personal struggle with a guilty conscience, exacerbated by the merit oriented system of indulgence and penance of medieval Roman Catholicism, found relief through the doctrine of "justification by faith" in Paul. His understanding became the established interpretive paradigm for generations of scholars after him. Recently, however, several scholars have pointed out the error of equating Paul's struggle with Luther's, and the reformation pattern of interpretation has found many challengers resulting in different approaches to the book. The movement has been away from the paradigm which (1) emphasized the justification of the individual as the center of Pauline theology and (2) identified his opponents as merit-oriented Judaizers.¹ Replacing the orientation of the individual who agonized over his relationship with God has been a new appreciation for the historical and corporate questions concerning the relationship of two peoples, Gentiles and Jews.² And the old assumption that Judaism was a pedantic system of works righteousness has come under severe criticism as E. P. Sanders has argued that first century Judaism clearly recognized the primary importance of God's grace in the election of Israel.³ This "paradigm shift"⁴ has revitalized discussions of Paul, bringing fresh breezes to studies which were stale

¹Douglas Moo, "Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40 (1987): 287.

²"Paul's doctrine of justification by faith should not be understood primarily as an exposition of the individual's relation to God, but primarily in the context of Paul the Jew wrestling with the question of how Jews and Gentiles stand in relation to each other within the covenant purpose of God now reached its climax in Jesus Christ," James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 65 (1982-83): 121.

³Ibid. The seminal study in this field has been provided by E. P. Sanders whose first monograph was *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

⁴The term used by Moo, "Paul and the Law," 287, and borrowed from Robert Jewett, "The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans," *Interpretation* 39 (1985): 341-56.

with sixteenth century air. Thus, several new approaches to Pauline theology and the book of Galatians in particular, have recently developed.

Recent Approaches to the Book

At the center of each of these new attempts to interpret the book of Galatians is the antithesis between “works” and “faith.” From 2:16 to 4:11 in particular, Paul contrasts ἔργα νόμου and πίστις as mutually exclusive categories. In 2:16 the contrast is first stated in these terms when Paul says “knowing that a man is not justified ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but through πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ and not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, because ἐξ ἔργων νόμου shall no flesh be justified.” Throughout chapters two through four Paul speaks of two categories: one involves Christ, faith, Spirit, righteousness and blessing while the other involves law, works, flesh, sin and cursing. Each school of thought can be described by how it handles these two categories and particularly the terms ἔργα νόμου and πίστις.

Human Effort vs. Human Faith

The View of the Reformer

For Luther the contrast between law and gospel was a clear one. In commenting on Gal 2:16 he defines “the work of the law” as “that which is contrary to grace.”⁵ The “works of the law” were simply a particular form of “good works” in general and were completely insufficient for salvation.⁶ The fundamental distinction for Luther was between law which demanded *doing*, and faith which only involved the *reception* of something from God. The purpose of the law was to bring the individual to the point of despair in his personal attempts to merit God’s favor thus forcing him to faith in Christ.⁷ In all of this the central concern was the justification of the individual along the “*ordo salutis*

⁵Martin Luther, *A Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (Philadelphia: Salmon S. Miles, 1840), 229.

⁶Ibid., 241.

⁷In commenting upon Galatians 3:24 he writes, “But the true use of the law is to teach me that I am brought to the knowledge of my sin, and humbled, that so I may come unto Christ, and may be justified by faith,” Ibid., 422.

axis”⁸ as opposed to the “*historia salutis* axis” involving the incorporation of Gentiles into the people of God.

A more recent defense of this basic position has come from Douglas Moo⁹ who affirms in the context of Galatians 3 that Paul criticizes “works of the law” not so much because they are “of the law” but because they are “works.”¹⁰ No one can merit salvation because no one has the ability to “do” the law.¹¹ Moo reasons that Paul’s assertion, “as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse” (Gal 3:10) is based upon the unexpressed premise of the verse that no one who “relies on the works of the law” can possibly obey its commandments “in sufficient degree and number so as to gain merit before God.”¹²

An Evaluation

Many recent scholars have begun to question the traditional wisdom of this paradigm, however from several perspectives. First, as even Luther noted, the curse of Deuteronomy is not upon those who “do the law” but upon those who fail to “do” it.¹³ The near context of Deuteronomy involves severe curses for the deliberate transgressor, but the Law of Moses was full of grace and made ample provision of forgiveness for the penitent. As Hübner has pointed out, the meaning of Deuteron-

⁸“*Ordo salutis* is used here to refer to the subjective application of redemption in the life history of the individual sinner in contrast to *historia salutis*, the objective acts of God in salvation history to accomplish humanity’s redemption.” The helpful term and definition are from A. B. Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross: Works of the Law and Faith in Galatians 3:1-14,” Ph.D. Dissertation (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1991), 13, n. 5.

⁹Douglas J. Moo, “‘Law,’ ‘Works of the Law,’ and Legalism in Paul,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 73-100.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹*Ibid.* Schlier also notes, “Fast is ἐμμένειν πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις . . . τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά ein Begriff, dessen Schwergewicht auf dem ποιῆσαι ruht,” Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 132.

¹²*Ibid.*, 98. Moo also states, “In arguing for this meaning of the phrase, we basically support the use made of this phrase among the Reformers. They were most anxious to refute current Roman Catholic notions of meritorious works”

¹³Referring to Paul’s assertion and proof from Deuteronomy in Gal 3:10, Luther says “Now these two sentences of Paul and Moses seem clean contrary. Paul saith, whosoever shall do the works of the law, is accursed. Moses saith, whosoever shall not do the works of the law are accursed. How shall these two sayings be reconciled together? Or else (which is more) how shall the one be proved by the other?” Luther, *Galatians*, 336.

omy 27:26 is not a “tongue in cheek” challenge to perfection in all points but a summons to basic covenant loyalty.¹⁴ The levitical system of sacrifices provided a gracious means whereby a man, when he sinned, could attain forgiveness. In fact, observance of the law implied (Lev 4–5; 16–17) the offering of sacrifices for the atonement of sin, and the temple in Jerusalem “stood as a monument to the belief that Yahweh was a forgiving God who pardoned his people when they sinned.”¹⁵ Put simply, if Paul is using the quotation from Moses with its original sense it does not support the traditional interpretation as espoused by Luther or Moo.¹⁶

E. P. Sander’s criticism is identical to Hübner’s in this regard except that it comes from the perspective of Judaism rather than the Law *per se*. His first monograph, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, rightly called a “watershed in pauline studies,”¹⁷ argues that first century Judaism took seriously the grace of God in the election of Israel and did not understand Torah as a mass of regulations which, when kept perfectly, merited favor with God.¹⁸ That is, if Luther was correct and Paul was speaking of the Jewish people as those who were “of the works of the law” then he either misunderstood Judaism and/or Old Testament theology.

¹⁴Cf. Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul’s Thought*, trans. James C. Greig (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 19, where he states: “Of course in using Deut 27.26 (LXX) Paul is expressing something wholly different from what the Hebrew text intended. . . . the requirements of this dodecalogue are thought of as being altogether capable of achievement. Furthermore it is expected of everyone in Israel that he will act accordingly. If he does not Yahweh’s curse will overtake him! . . . Thus neither is it astonishing that we nowhere so far as I know find the view based on Deut 27.26 that someone who transgresses the Torah even just in a single point is accursed.”

¹⁵George Howard, *Paul: Crisis Galatia: a Study in Early Christian Theology*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 53.

¹⁶Schlier agrees that Paul does not reason according to the original sense of Deuteronomy, “Das mach darauf aufmerksam, daß die Schriftstelle im Sinn des Paulus nicht die Ursache angeben soll, um deretwillen über denen, die aus den Gesetzeswerken leben, der Fluch liegt, wobei als der entscheidende Gedanke ergänzt werden müßte: es erfüllt niemand das Gesetz bzw. es kann niemand es erfüllen,” Schlier, *Galater*, 132-33.

¹⁷Douglas Moo, “Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40 (1987): 287.

¹⁸E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977), 180, “The overall pattern of Rabbinic religion as it applied to Israelites . . . is this: God has chosen Israel and Israel has accepted the election . . . As long as he (the Israelite) maintains his desire to stay in the covenant, he has a share in God’s covenantal promises, including life in the world to come. The intention and effort to be obedient constitutes the condition for remaining in the covenant, but they do not earn it.”

Another weakness of this view is its relationship to the introductory chapters of the book. If in fact Paul's argument involves the inadequacy of human effort as opposed to human faith, then chapters 1 and 2 have only a tangential correlation. The account of Paul's testimony in chapter 1 is not presented so much as a *conversion* from human effort to human faith as it is a *call* to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.¹⁹ And Peter's withdrawal from Gentile believers in Antioch is hardly a threat to the message of justification by faith. Surely Peter was not limiting himself to a Jewish group which thought justification was merited by *perfect* observance of the law. On the other hand, Peter's actions would threaten a gospel which included Gentiles if his behavior compelled Gentiles to become Jews before he would fellowship with them.²⁰ Certainly Stendahl's emphasis upon the historical situation of the first century (rather than the sixteenth century) is helpful in making sense of the entire epistle and Barclay is headed in the right direction when he says:

the proper context for understanding Paul's arguments about works of the law is not on the generalized level of working for one's salvation (as opposed to trusting), but in the specific area of the necessary requirements of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. . . . Paul is less concerned about theological issues of the sixteenth century (whether the individual is saved by faith alone or by the co-operation of faith and works) and more concerned with the theological battles of the first (whether Gentile believers in Christ need to live like Jews in doing the works of the law.)²¹

A Reformed View and Variation

Some have sought to soften the sharp antithesis which the traditional Lutheran view constructs between Law and Gospel for various reasons. Paul's attitude toward the law in Galatians is considered particularly harsh when it is understood that Mosaic Law represents more than commandments and regulations but also the revealed will of God in the Old Testament. Thus, in order to vindicate Paul from charges of Marcionism, some have taught that Paul did not speak against the law *per se*, but against some aspect of it or some misunderstanding of it. Burton, for example, states that

¹⁹Although Stendahl writes concerning the accounts of Paul's Damascus road experience in the book of Acts the same can be said concerning Galatians 1: "The emphasis in the accounts is always on this assignment, not on the conversion. Rather than being 'converted,' Paul was called to the specific task—made clear to him by his experience of the risen Lord—apostleship to the Gentiles, one hand-picked through Jesus Christ on behalf of the one God of Jews and Gentiles," Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays*, 7. This is not to deny that this was the point of conversion of the apostle, but simply that as the account is presented the emphasis is upon his call and task rather than his conversion. Cf. also, T. David Gordon, "The Problem at Galatia," *Interpretation* 41 (1987): 35.

²⁰Gordon, "The Problem at Galatia," 34.

²¹John M. G. Barclay, "Paul and the Law: Observations On Some Recent Debates," *Themelios* 12 (1986): 11.

νόμου as used in Galatians 2:16 refers to “divine law as the legalist defined it.”²² And further, “By ἔργα νόμου Paul means deeds of obedience to formal statutes done in the legalistic spirit, with the expectation of thereby meriting and securing divine approval and award, such obedience, in other words, as the legalists rendered to the law of the O. T. as expanded and interpreted by them.”²³ More recently Cranfield has attempted to defend this position from a lexical standpoint, cautioning that

the Greek language used by Paul had no word-group to denote ‘legalism’, ‘legalist’, and ‘legalistic’ In view of this, we should, I think, be ready to reckon with the possibility that sometimes, when he appears to be disparaging the law, what he really has in mind may be not the law itself but the misunderstanding and misuse of it for which *we* have a convenient term.²⁴

Fuller similarly argues that “law” in Galatians 3 refers to “the sinful way men understood the law” which significantly reduces the antithesis between “true” law of the Old Testament and the gospel.²⁵

An Evaluation

This understanding does allow a more positive view of the law as one which encouraged faith and was based on God’s grace and yet it is subject to several of the criticisms of the previous view. In reality it is even less viable than the traditional Lutheran understanding because of the way it trivializes the cross. According to Galatians 3 the cross work of Christ was necessary to redeem men from the problem of the works of the law. If the problem was a misuse of the law, then all they really required was better teaching not substitutionary atonement.²⁶ If the cross is the solution then the problem must have been more than incorrect knowledge.

Jewish Exclusivism vs. Human Faith

²²E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, in the International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 120.

²³Ibid.

²⁴C. E. B. Cranfield, “St. Paul and the Law,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 17 (March 1964): 55.

²⁵Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 99. Fuller argues that understanding “law” in this way “would remove all need for making a contrast between gospel and faith on the one hand, and the *revelatory* law of Moses on the other,” Ibid. He says in the forward to his book, “I realized that if the law is, indeed, a law of faith, enjoining only the obedience of faith and the works that proceed therefrom . . . then there could no longer be any antithesis in biblical theology between the law and the gospel. I then had to accept the very drastic conclusion that the antithesis between law and gospel established by Luther, Calvin, and the covenant theologians could no longer stand up under the scrutiny of biblical theology,” Ibid., xi.

²⁶Moo, “‘Law,’ ‘Works of the Law,’ and Legalism in Paul,” 100.

Since the work of Sanders has seriously questioned the existence or at least the influence of a legalistic Judaism²⁷ a “new perspective on Paul”²⁸ had to be found. That is, if “works of law” was not shorthand for the sinful effort of man to merit favor with God, what was it and why did Paul oppose it? Sanders himself moved the discussion away from the personal struggle of the individual to the corporate relationships of history by focusing upon the dispensational change brought about by Christ. What is wrong with the law is neither that it requires petty obedience and “minimization of important matters” nor is merit-based but “*that it is not worth anything in comparison with being in Christ.*”²⁹ Arguing from solution to plight he reasons that if salvation is *in Christ*, it simply cannot be *in the law*, so that Pauline Christianity and Judaism are “*by definition*”³⁰ opposed to each other. He concludes, “*this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity.*”³¹

Although like many others Dunn has accepted and affirmed the work of Sanders’ analysis of Palestinian Judaism, he has criticized him for failing to more closely apply the results of his work to the theology of Paul.³² He builds on Sanders identification of “works of law” as “covenantal nomism,”³³ further defining it as the “*particular observances of the law like circumcision and the food*

²⁷“Our analysis of Rabbinic and other Palestinian Jewish literature did not reveal the kind of religion best characterized as legalistic works-righteousness. But more important for the present point is the observation that in any case that charge is not the heart of Paul’s critique,” Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 550. Sanders maintains that Torah obedience in Judaism was not so much a matter of “getting in” as “staying in.” That is one’s position as a part of God’s people was a result of God’s electing grace so that keeping the law, which involved repentance upon transgression, was simply the proper maintenance, not the meriting, of one’s righteous status. This is the essence of Sanders’ “covenantal nomism,” *Ibid.*, 419-26, esp. 422. Sanders’ true feelings on the matter of the “Lutheran view” may be summarized: “The question of legalism should be banished from the realm of Pauline studies and returned to the reformation period where it actually surfaced,” E. P. Sanders, “Paul’s Attitude Toward the Jewish People,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 33 (1978): 184.

²⁸The phrase belongs to, and is well characterized by, James Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 95-122.

²⁹Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 550. “Paul was not trying to represent Judaism on its own terms, nor need we suppose that he was ignorant on essential points. He simply saw the old dispensation as worthless in comparison with the new.” *Ibid.*, 551.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 484.

³¹*Ibid.*, 552.

³²“The Lutheran Paul has been replaced by an idiosyncratic Paul who in arbitrary and irrational manner turns his face against the glory and greatness of Judaism’s covenant theology and abandons Judaism simply because it is not Christianity,” Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 100.

³³Cf. note number 27 on page 154.

laws.”³⁴ He rightly notes that these observances were distinctly Jewish and served a significant sociological function to “identify their practitioners as Jewish” in the eyes of contemporary society.³⁵ They thus served as “badges of covenant membership.”³⁶ Concentrating on the phrase “works of law” in Galatians 2:16 as a test case he asserts that the phrase simply means “*covenant* works—those regulations prescribed by the law which any good Jew would simply take for granted to describe what a good Jew did.”³⁷ Paul’s argument against “works of the law” according to Dunn is founded in the epochal change brought about in Christ. Since the dawn of the new age in Christ, He, and not Torah, has become the “badge” of membership in God’s people. Therefore, Gentiles who have faith in Christ must not be excluded from membership in God’s people by their failure to become “covenantal nomists.” Thus, Paul’s statement in 2:16 may be understood not as a rejection of Judaism (“not by the works of the Law”) necessarily but as an affirmation of Messiah (“but by faith in Christ”). “Works of the law” were never evil and are not even now necessarily inappropriate for the Jewish believer, but they are no longer *the* identifying mark of God’s people, particularly for the Gentile who is saved by his direct participation with Christ.³⁸ Thus, Paul’s objection to “works of the law” is not to the law *per se*, but to an understanding of the law which excludes Gentiles from participation in Israel’s blessings, “as a Jewish prerogative and national monopoly.”³⁹ Dunn then says that the “curse of the law” (3:13)

falls on all who restrict the grace and promise of God in nationalistic terms, who treat the law as a boundary to mark the people of God off from the Gentiles, who give a false priority to ritual markers. The curse of the law here has to do primarily with that attitude which confines the covenantal promise to Jews as Jews: it falls on those who live within the law in such a way as to exclude the Gentile as Gentile from the promise.⁴⁰

³⁴Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 107.

³⁵James D. G. Dunn, “Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10-14),” *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 524-26.

³⁶Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” 108.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 111. “In short, once again Paul seems much less a man of 16th century Europe and much more firmly in touch with the reality of first-century Judaism than many have thought,” *Ibid.*

³⁸*Ibid.*, 111-13.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 118. “The law as fixing a particular social identity, as encouraging a sense of national superiority and presumption of divine favor by virtue of membership of a particular people—that is what Paul is attacking . . .” Dunn, “Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law,” 531.

⁴⁰Dunn, “Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law,” 536.

Dunn's elucidation and application of "covenantal nomism" is helpful and his emphasis upon the sociological function of the law as a divider between Israel and the nations is surely accurate. Recognizing that the law had this effect is useful in understanding the meaning of Peter's withdrawal from Gentiles in Galatians 2. His assertion that Paul's problem with the law is more chronological than ontological also rings true. But Dunn's understanding strains the meaning of Deuteronomy 27:26. How could a curse upon "an attitude of Jewish exclusivism toward Gentiles after the coming of the Messiah" have been either discerned from Deuteronomy or relevant to the wilderness generation of Moses time? Once again, surely Christ's redemption was from a problem much more significant than a wrong attitude, which could have been corrected with better teaching. At this point Räisänen's criticism is both familiar and correct when he says, "Dunn thus presents a new version of an old thesis: what Paul attacks is not the law *as such* or *as a whole*, but just the law as viewed in some particular perspective, a particular *attitude* to the law, or some specific (mis-)understanding of it."⁴¹

Human Activity vs. Divine Activity

Two works in particular, George Howard's *Crisis in Galatia* and Richard Hays' *The Faith of Jesus Christ*,⁴² have broken new ground in studies of Galatians by offering new meaning and emphasizing the other side of the antithesis, πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. They agree that the phrase refers more likely to a Divine activity rather than the human activity of believing.⁴³ They do differ on certain finer points of interpretation, however, and will be discussed under separate headings.

Exclusivism of the Law vs. Divine Faith-Act

Howard's position, in regard to the first phrase of the antithesis "works of the law," is similar to Dunn's with the emphasis upon the exclusive nature of the law which divides Jew from

⁴¹Heikki Räisänen, "Galatians 2:16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 544. He adds "What entered the stage of Heilsgeschichte 430 years after Abraham was the law, the whole law and nothing but the law It was not any 'attitude' that entered the world" Ibid., 548.

⁴²Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 56 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983).

⁴³The category of "Divine Activity vs. Human Activity," belongs to Caneday, "The Curse of the Law and the Cross," 42-46.

Gentile.⁴⁴ They differ in that Howard sees the divisive nature of the law not as an incorrect attitude on the part of some individuals but as an inherent consequence of the law itself. Howard does not understand “works of the law” or the phrase “under the law” to mean “subject to the specific demands of the law” but rather in a much broader sense which includes Gentiles as well.⁴⁵ To be “under” the law means to be “suppressed under the law” so that Christ redeemed the world from “the discriminating suppression of the law.”⁴⁶

Howard is more convincing and contributes more significantly to the discussion, however, when he speaks to the other side of the antithesis, namely faith.⁴⁷ He understands πίστις and its various constructions (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, 2:16; 3:22) to refer not to human faith which is placed in Christ, but as the faithfulness of Christ or the “divine faith-act”⁴⁸ of Calvary by which God faithfully kept his promise to redeem the world. “It is not that the Gentiles would be justified if *they* had faith, but rather that *God* would justify them by faith, that is, by his faith-act toward the promise that all the Gentiles would be blessed in Abraham.”⁴⁹ Galatians 2:16 would then read “man is not justified by the works of the law, but through the faith of Jesus Christ (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and we believed (ἐπιστεῦσαμεν) on Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by the faith of Christ (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ) and not by the works of the law.”

⁴⁴Cf. Howard, *Crisis in Galatia*, 55-65.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 61. “In Christ’s redemptive act the law lost its divisive power and uncircumcised Gentiles were ushered into God’s kingdom on equal terms with the Jews,” *Ibid.*, 62. Howard seems forced to soften the traditional understanding of Paul’s attitude toward the law in order to find harmony with the practice of Jewish Christianity as found in the book of Acts. He writes, “Often it is thought that the Jews were redeemed from the law in that the law was done away, brought to an end and literally rescinded . . . But if Jewish Christianity continued to observe the law, it is necessary to seek for another explanation . . .” *Ibid.*, 61. We would sympathize with Howard’s sensitivity to harmony within the canon but no expositor can find alleged theological harmony at the expense of exegesis. Howard’s view of “works of the law” is subject to the same criticisms as Dunn’s; cf. Räisänen’s comments above on page 157, n. 41.

⁴⁷Cf. also his works, G. Howard, “Notes and Observations on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *Harvard Theological Review* 60 (1967): 459-65, and “Romans 3:21-31 and the Inclusion of the Gentiles,” *Harvard Theological Review* 63 (1970): 223-33.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

Howard's thesis is attractively stated, making good sense grammatically and theologically, but the reader is disappointed when looking for specific exegetical demonstration in Howard from the book of Galatians. His work is important, however, because it moves the discussion of "faith" into a significantly different arena: from human activity to divine activity.

Human Activity vs. Faithfulness of Jesus Christ

Hays slightly refines Howard's understanding of the "divine faith-act" to the more specific "the faith of Jesus Christ" so that the phrase πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ refers not just to the faithfulness of God keeping his promises but to "the faithfulness of 'the one man Jesus Christ' whose act of obedient self-giving on the cross became the means by which 'the promise' of God was fulfilled."⁵⁰ Throughout the epistle, but particularly in the center (3:1–4:11) "the argument of Galatians . . . finds its coherence in the story of the Messiah who lives by faith."⁵¹ Thus, people are justified by *participating* in the "faithfulness of Christ," as Paul says elsewhere, Christians are blessed "in Christ" (Eph 1:9, 12; 2:6).⁵² This phrase does not preclude the necessity or the doctrine of the human act of believing; rather, it accentuates the object of the Christian's faith and not the action of faith. Galatians 2:16 would still preserve the foundational truth of the reformation but with a slightly different emphasis, "even we have believed (human act of believing) in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by *participating in* the faithful life and death of Christ (the object of faith)." In this understanding Paul's antithesis of "works" and "faith" takes on a new meaning. According to Hays, "Paul's primary intention is not at all to juxtapose one type of human activity ('works') to another ('believing-hearing') but rather to juxtapose human activity to God's activity, as revealed in the 'proclamation'" of the gospel.⁵³

Hays' work represents an advancement over the work of Howard because his work is more specific, but more importantly because he provides the necessary exegetical support for his

⁵⁰Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 175. In the same place Hays offers an important caution: "This interpretation should not be understood to abolish or preclude human faith directed towards Christ, which is also an important component of Paul's thought."

⁵¹Ibid., 235.

⁵²Jesus' faithful life and death were the cause for the Father's acceptance of his sacrifice as sufficient payment for sin and the reason for his resurrection to life. Thus righteousness and life are gifts of grace given to those, who by faith, participate in the πίστις of Christ, "and that πίστις is consequently the distinguishing mark of the life given to those who live 'in' him," Ibid., 235.

⁵³Ibid., 147.

thesis.⁵⁴ The weakness of both of these works, however, is their handling of the antithetical phrase “works of law.” Although Howard is surely correct to emphasize the divisive nature of the law, his equation of the “curse” of the law with the “divisive nature” of the law pushes this meaning too far.⁵⁵ Although in fairness to Hays (his subject did concern the other side of the antithesis, faith), he simply assumes that “works of the law” refers to “human activity” with little support for his conclusion.⁵⁶

An Evaluation

Although the traditional “Lutheran approach” to Galatians has been rightly criticized by recent scholars, and although enlightening historical and exegetical insights have been offered, a singular satisfying approach to Galatians is still lacking. One senses the feeling that many of the pieces of the puzzle are on the table but have yet to be arranged into a focused picture of the book. It is also clear that in order to establish a coherent meaning for the epistle as a whole, the antithesis between “works” and “faith” which is so integral to the argument, must be articulated. In addition, proper emphasis must be given to the historical-redemptive nature of the cross. Jesus did not have to die to put an end to a misunderstanding of the law and neither did he have to die to free the world from an “enslaving” dispensation. Finally, any solution must explain how Paul’s answer of Galatians addresses the historical question of the Gentiles’ relationship to the Law since Messiah.

A Proposed Type of Meaning

An Explanation of the View

An alternative meaning of Galatians which we propose would first of all view the antithesis between “works” and “faith” as: an “identity with Moses” *versus* an “identity with Messiah.”⁵⁷ That is, Paul’s concern is not with the difference between individual human works or

⁵⁴When Lloyd Gaston, who is no stranger to discussions of Paul and the Law, writes “The correctness of the translation of *pistis Iēsou Christou* as ‘the faith or faithfulness of Jesus Christ’ has by now been too well established to need any further support,” he references the work of Hays as his primary support, Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 12.

⁵⁵A. J. M. Wedderburn, “Review Article of Paul: Crisis Galatia: a Study in Early Christian Theology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33 (1980): 380-82.

⁵⁶Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 147.

⁵⁷I am indebted to the work of A. B. Caneday, *The Curse of the Law and the Cross: Works of the Law and Faith in Galatians 3:1-14*, for this fundamental category. He has carefully demonstrated his thesis concerning Paul’s argument in Galatians 3:1-14. I have developed his basic argument differently

human faith but with much broader historical categories which have been defined by the coming of Christ. The argument of the book can much more easily be traced according to *historia salutis*, “the objective acts of God in salvation history to accomplish humanity’s redemption” rather than the *ordo salutis* “the subjective application of redemption in the life history of the individual sinner.”⁵⁸ The historical question posed by the crisis in Galatia may be stated, “Must the Galatians identify with Moses or with Messiah in order to receive the blessing of Abraham?” That is, “Must Gentiles become Jewish?” As Gordon has noted, the Galatian problem is not a matter first of soteriology but rather of eschatology and ecclesiology.⁵⁹ What Paul is battling is not the problem of whether a human can merit favor with God, but how the epochal shift brought about by the Cross has affected the purposes and parameters of the divine program. The essence of his thought is that since Messiah has come, Gentiles who are seeking to participate in Israel’s blessings must no longer seek such status by identification with Moses, but rather with Messiah. Gentiles are blessed not by the circuitous route of “through Moses to Abraham,” but by direct participation “in Messiah.” In short, Gentiles do not need to become Jewish in order to participate in the blessings of Abraham.

Support for the View

Support for this view will be drawn from the book of Galatians and will be discussed under the headings of historical and exegetical factors.

Historical Factors

As Stendahl first pointed out, the historical situation of the book can not be ignored if we are to understand Paul. Even with his warnings the book is often read as a theology of Judaism or as a Christian critique of Moses. But as Howard has affirmed by the title of his monograph, “Crisis in

however, for although he has developed a coherent meaning for Paul’s antithesis of “works” and “faith,” and carefully explained the historical-redemptive lines of Paul’s argument, he has not given sufficient weight to the place of Gentiles in the argument of the book. Caneday says “Paul does not critique Judaism *per se*, but the syncretism of Judaism and Christian faith. What he says concerning the law he could only say from a Christian [post-Cross] perspective,” 62. I would add that this letter of Paul is not only written from a Christian perspective, but also specifically for the benefit of Gentile believers.

⁵⁸Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 13, n. 5.

⁵⁹Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” 40. Sanders is right when he says “. . . but the argument which produced the phrase ‘righteoused by faith’ was the basis of Gentile membership in the people of God,” *Paul*, 51.

Galatia,” good theology can only come from due consideration of the historical factors of the book. At least two factors need to be emphasized at this point: the identity of the audience to whom Paul wrote and the uniqueness of Paul’s gospel.

The audience of Galatians

If Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13–14) reflects the founding of the Galatian churches to which Paul writes, then the membership was probably a mix of Jews, proselytes, “god-fearers” and perhaps “pagan” Gentiles. Unfortunately Paul does not directly identify his readership as either Jew or Gentile in the book. In 2:15 he certainly uses the first person plural to refer to Jews but the antecedent is more likely the Jewish believers in Antioch or in general than a portion of the group at Galatia. If Paul refers to Jews at other times in the first person plural (e.g., 3:13; 4:5) then it would make best sense that his contrasting use of the second person plural (3:14; 4:6) would refer to Gentiles, implying, of course, that his argument is directed to them.⁶⁰ More definitive are Paul’s references to the readership who “*want to be under law*” and his warnings to them not to be circumcised (4:21; 5:2). Those who “*want to be under law*” are most likely not Jews, but Gentiles who were considering becoming Jewish, and clearly those who were contemplating circumcision were Gentiles. Finally, although Paul makes a comparison between the Galatians’ pre-conversion bondage and the bondage they would incur by taking on the law (4:8-9), his reference to their previous worship of “those which by nature are no gods,” best fits Gentile idolatry.⁶¹ Thus, although the churches of Galatia probably included both Jews and Gentiles, the evidence which can be gleaned from the way in which Paul address his readership implies that he is speaking for the benefit of Gentiles. That is, his concern is with Gentiles who are contemplating becoming Jewish, not Jewish believers who are continuing in Moses. The outside of the envelope may be addressed to the entire family but the message inside is focused on certain members.

⁶⁰Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 148, and T. L. Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14,” *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 94-112, esp. 95-99.

⁶¹“Das ‘Halten von Tagen, Monaten, Zeiten und Jahren,’ in dem sich dieses Dienen ausdrückt, ist, wie wir gesehen haben, vermutlich im Blick auf die heidnische Vergangenheit so formuliert und paßte wohl auch in eine Situation, wie sie damals unter dem Einfluß des mittleren Platonismus und Pythagoreismus offenbar verbreitet war. . . . Anders als Kol 2 spricht ja Gal 4:3, 8 von ihrer früheren, heidnischen Zeit!” Eduard Schweizer, “Altes und Neues zu den ‘Elementen der Welt in Kol 2:30; Gal 4:3, 9,’” in *Wissenschaft und Kirche, Festschrift für Eduard Lohse*, eds., Kurt Aland and Siegfried Meurer (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1989), 117.

The uniqueness of Paul's gospel

Although Paul does not use the phrase “my gospel” (τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου) in Galatians as he does in Romans or 2 Timothy, he does frequently refer to “the gospel which I preach” (1:8, 11; 2:2, 7, 14; 3:8), contrasting it with the “different” gospel (1:6-9) of his opponents. According to the traditional interpretation of the book “Paul’s gospel” is synonymous with the doctrine of justification by faith as opposed to the gospel of “works.” This is particularly problematic, however, when Paul presents his gospel to the “pillars” in Jerusalem (2:1-10). Surely the doctrine of “justification by faith” was not new to Peter and James. As Gordon says, “Justification by faith is affirmed in Galatians, but not as a new, distinctly Christian doctrine Rather, it is affirmed as a doctrine which is as old as Abraham.”⁶² Although Paul’s gospel is rooted in faith it is not distinguished *thereby* from the gospel preached by Peter, Jesus or Abraham.

As Paul describes the origin of his gospel in Galatians 1 a certain type of vocabulary is conspicuously absent—the *justification* terminology.⁶³ Räisänen finds this particularly curious when, in his view, Paul attacks Judaism in the central part of the letter by elaborating his message about justification by faith.⁶⁴ He concludes based on this evidence that the “gospel” to which Paul refers in Galatians 1:11-17 should be understood in “a more limited sense” as simply “the gospel that does not require *circumcision* of Gentile converts (nor, by implication, observance of the ‘ritual’ Torah, such as the food laws).”⁶⁵ He theorizes that “Paul’s understanding of the ‘gospel’ evolved from the ‘limited

⁶²Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” 41.

⁶³Heikki Räisänen, “Paul’s Conversion and the Development of His View of the Law,” *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987): 406-7. We have already noted Stendahl’s comments that although the Damascus road was not doubt Paul’s salvation experience, as it is presented in the text it is better described as a *call* rather than *conversion*. Cf. note number 19 on page 151.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 407.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, Howard concurs when he says “Paul is not saying that he received nothing at all about the gospel from any man, for that would place him in conflict with his subsequent statement about being a persecutor of the church. He rather means that *the particular form of the gospel preached by him* was not given to him by other men. As he proceeds, it becomes clear that the particular form of the gospel which he has in mind is that form which distinguished his preaching from all others, that is, the non-circumcision gospel to the Gentiles. As to the rest of the gospel which was shared in common by all apostles and evangelists Paul has no reference at all,” Howard, *Crisis in Galatia*, 34.

sense' to the fuller sense of justification by faith later in his experience."⁶⁶ Although Räsänen's theory is possible, another explanation exists which would contribute to the literary harmony and coherence of Paul's argument, namely, that the gospel for which Paul argues in the heart of the epistle (Gal 3–4) is the same gospel which he describes in the introduction (Gal 1). That is, though Paul's gospel included justification by faith, what distinguished it, and what he argues for in the epistle, is that Gentiles are saved as Gentiles without becoming Jewish.⁶⁷

A survey of Paul's use of the term "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) affirms this understanding.⁶⁸ Paul claims that this gospel was not given to him by man but "through a revelation of Jesus Christ (ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)" (1:12). Four verses later when Paul describes the Christophany of the Damascus road he says that God "revealed (ἀποκαλύψει) his Son in me" with the singular purpose that "I might preach Him among the Gentiles" (1:16). Thus, as Paul speaks of the "gospel" he refers to his unique call to preach the Messiah to Gentiles.⁶⁹ Again, when Paul submits his message to the "pillars" in Antioch he describes it as "the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles" (2:2) and contrasts "the gospel to the uncircumcised" (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας) with Peter's gospel to "the circumcised" (τῆς περιτομῆς) (2:7-8). Certainly the distinction was not between Paul's gospel of faith and Peter's gospel of works but between two gospels of faith with one directed toward Gentiles and the other Jews. Finally, when Paul speaks of the Old Testament prophecy concerning the justification of Gentiles (3:8-9) he refers to the "gospel" which was preached to Abraham, quoting

⁶⁶"The fact that he introduces this [justification] terminology, not in the account of his call but in his description of the Antiochian incident (2. 16 f.), may contain a historical hint. Perhaps it was in Antioch around AD 50 that Paul emerged as a preacher of justification by faith, rather than on the Damascus road in the thirties," Ibid.

⁶⁷Though we would not agree with Schlier's ultimate conclusions about Paul's gospel, his method for understanding it is correct when he says, "Die Erkenntnis, von der Paulus v.16 spricht, richtet sich für allem auf die Tatsache, daß die Rechtfertigung sich nicht aus den ἔργα νόμου herleitet, sondern die πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ zur Vermittlung hat. Es ist die entscheidende Erkenntnis der paulinischen Botschaft. *Aber gerade unser Zusammenhang zeigt, daß sie polemisch orientiert ist an der Überzeugung der Ἰουδαῖοι.* Daher ist der Begriff ἔργα νόμου von dieser aus zu verstehen," Schlier, *Galater*, 91 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁸The first mentions of the term (1:6, 7, 8, 9) are not definitive but do contrast Paul's gospel with that of his opponents who encouraged the Galatians to take on the law.

⁶⁹Tarazi, "The Addressees and the Purpose of Galatians," 166-67.

Genesis 12:3 “All the nations shall be blessed in you.” Clearly his definition of “gospel” involves the inclusion of Gentiles.

In addition to the way Paul uses the term, the narrative incidents which introduce the theological portion of the book also help sharpen the focus of Paul’s meaning of “gospel.” In the story of Paul’s visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10) Titus is presented as the test case of Paul’s gospel. Significantly, the issue does not concern the general validity of the law for that would have required a decision concerning an eight day old Jewish infant. Rather, Titus, as a believing, adult Gentile is a defining component of the “gospel” and the “truth of the gospel.” Paul summarizes that he was not “compelled to be circumcised . . . so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you” (2:3-6).

In the same way, the incident at Antioch can hardly be construed as a stand off between a gospel of faith and a gospel of works. The scene of two apostles opposed to each other with one threatening the other with perverting “the truth of the gospel” (2:14) must have been riveting. Was Peter teaching that a man was saved by works? The only way this could be implied was if Peter withdrew to a Jewish group who held that a pedantic keeping of the law merited salvation with God. Although Peter’s actions were in error it strains the imagination to think that Peter could be confused over such a basic issue. Surely Peter did not temporarily revert to a works-oriented salvation but more likely communicated by his withdrawal from table fellowship that Gentiles were still “outsiders” to the community of faith.⁷⁰ How would this threaten the truth of the gospel? It does not if the essence of Paul’s gospel as discussed in Galatians is justification by faith, but it surely does threaten his “gospel to the Gentiles.” By excluding himself from table fellowship with “unclean” Gentiles Peter “compelled Gentiles to live like Jews” (2:14) and thus threatened the “truth of a gospel which *includes* the Gentiles.”⁷¹

In summary, what makes Paul’s gospel unique in Galatians is not the doctrine of faith. Although his good news includes this teaching, this is not the component of the message which is in danger and for which in turn he so powerfully argues. Paul is not attacking Judaism or the law *per se*, or primarily defending the truth of justification by faith. His unique calling is to promote the gospel that Gentiles are saved in Messiah without becoming Jews.

⁷⁰Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” 35-36.

⁷¹Ibid.

Exegetical Factors

Central to the discussion of Galatians, and critical to the support of this view is a careful definition of the antithesis between “works” and “faith.” It is important to note first of all that Paul does not merely discuss “works” and “faith” in the abstract but most often qualifies them with “law” and “Christ” respectively.⁷² Of course Paul does not use identical vocabulary for his contrast every time but his two basic categories remain consistent.⁷³ In Galatians 2:16 he affirms that justification comes not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but διὰ / ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In 3:2, 5 when querying his audience about the basis for their reception of the Spirit, Paul once again uses ἐξ ἔργων νόμου but contrasts it this time with ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως. In 3:23 Paul apparently uses a shorthand version of the antithesis speaking simply of being ὑπὸ νόμον before the coming of τὴν πίστιν. Because these phrases are antithetical expressions in Paul, an accurate understanding of their meaning can only be attained in relationship to each other. Therefore, after each phrase is preliminarily investigated we will seek to refine any nuance of meaning by a final comparison of the two together. We will consider first the phrase which has received most discussion, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.

ἐξ ἔργων νόμου

Paul first uses the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in Galatians 2:16, but isolated within the verse itself it stands as an enigmatic phrase without definition. This is understandable, however, because as Betz has noted, Paul only *summarily* articulates his subject in his “*propositio*” of 2:15-21.⁷⁴ For further definition of the phrase one must move in two directions: backward, carefully noting how the *narratio* (1:12–2:14) illustrates the statement and forward into the argumentation and elaboration of the

⁷²Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” 36.

⁷³Campbell speaks of the linguistic principle of “paradigmatic relations.” “This simply refers to the phenomenon of substitutability, when words and phrases that are different at the level of the signifier—that is, in their appearance or sound—actually function the same way in terms of meaning. . . . Thus, statements appear to be different, but the meaning remains the same,” D. A. Campbell, “The Meaning of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΝΟΜΟΣ in Paul: A Linguistic and Structural Perspective,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 92.

⁷⁴“The *propositio* is extremely concise and consists largely of dogmatic abbreviations, i.e., very short formulaic summaries of doctrines. . . . These abbreviations are difficult to translate.” Betz, *Galatians*, 14-25.

“*probatio*” of 3:1–4:31.⁷⁵ We will move first to the more definitive propositional portion of the letter (chapters 3–4) and then test this understanding with the narrative introduction.

Theological Definition. The basic grammatical possibilities of “ἔργων νόμου” seem to be: (1) “works which the law performs” (subjective genitive), (2) “works performed in obedience to the law” (objective genitive), and (3) “works which the law prescribes” (genitive of source).⁷⁶ The first meaning is rejected on logical grounds since the Law does not *perform* any works at all. The distinction between the second and third options is that meaning two would involve human effort done in response to the law’s demands without regard to the worth or success of the effort while meaning three emphasizes only the demands which the law makes regardless of any human response. In Lohmeyer’s seminal work he concluded that “Gesetzeswerke sind eben Werke, die das Gesetz fordert,”⁷⁷ designating a system of service to God, or life under the law. We would agree with his conclusions concerning grammar:

So bleibt die Art dieses Genetives grammatisch unklar; aber diese Unklarheit ist auch nur ein Widerschein der sachlichen Unklarheit, die den Begriff des Gesetzes und des Dienstes bedrückt. An nichts wird dieser Sachverhalt vielleicht klarer als an dem paulinischen Gegenbegriff zu diesem “Gesetzesdienst”: πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.⁷⁸

In chapter 3 Paul uses the fuller phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου three times (3:2, 5, 10). The first two occurrences are juxtaposed with the phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, with little further to define them. The third use in 3:10, however, begins a discussion of the plight of those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, giving context and definition to the phrase, providing a basis for choosing between the possible grammatical options.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Schlier outlines the problem: “Aus der Formulierung ἔργα νόμου selbst ist der Sinn des Begriffes nicht ohne weiteres zu erkennen. Sind es Werke, die das Gesetz erfüllen, oder Werke, die das Gesetz fordert, oder endlich Werke, die das Gesetz bewirkt?” Schlier, *Galater*, 91. The term which Lohmeyer uses is “Ursprunges.” He asks the question “Welches ist die Art der grammatischen Verbindung zwischen ἔργα νόμου? Wenn die Wendung mit ‘Dienst des Gesetzes’ zutreffend übersetzt werden muß, ist alsdann der Genetiv ein Genetiv der Zugehörigkeit bzw. des Ursprunges?” Ernst Lohmeyer, “Probleme paulinischer Theologie: II. ‘Gesetzeswerke,’” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 28 (1929): 206.

⁷⁷Ibid., 177.

⁷⁸Ibid., 207.

The traditional interpretation of 3:10 even caused Luther some confusion as he admitted that Paul's prooftext from Deuteronomy 27 ("Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them") actually proved the opposite of his (Paul's) statement ("For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse"): the law pronounced a curse on those who *failed* to do it, not on those who *do* it.⁷⁹ Other questions present themselves upon closer inspection as well such as who is cursed, Jew alone or Gentile alone or both together?⁸⁰ Likewise, who is redeemed from this curse (3:13) and what is the nature of the curse? Is the law itself the curse, that is, does Paul speak of "the cursed law"⁸¹ or is the "curse of the law" to be found in the obligation to legal minutiae? The first place to begin the search for the answer to these questions and a more satisfying meaning to Paul's thought is in the source of his proof, the text of Deuteronomy 27.⁸²

⁷⁹Cf. note number 13 on page 149.

⁸⁰Mußner asks, and answers the question, "Denkt er bei den Nomosmenschen nur an Juden und evtl. noch an gesetzestreue Judenchristen oder an alle (unerlösten) Menschen, also auch an die Heiden? Wie aus dem auch die Heidenchristen miteinschließenden ἡμῶς in v. 13 hervorgeht, denkt der Apostel nicht nur an Israel (vgl. auch Röm 2:12-16: den Heiden sind die Forderungen des Gesetzes in ihr Herz geschrieben!) Nach seiner Überzeugung steht vielmehr die ganze Menschheit wegen ihrer Übertretungen des Willens Gottes 'unter einem Fluch' (vgl. auch Röm 3:19; πᾶς ὁ κόσμος)," Franz Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 224. Gaston considers the curse of the law to fall only on Gentiles who keep the law, Gaston, "Paul and the Law in Galatians 2-3," 45.

⁸¹Schlier comes close to this when he says "Der Fluch des Gesetzes ist der Fluch, den das Gesetz bringt und in diesem Sinne dann auch selbst ist," Schlier, *Galater*, 136.

⁸²*Contra* Sanders who argues that Paul chose Deuteronomy 27:26 for his proof text not because of its original meaning but because it was the only Old Testament reference which combined the words "curse" and "law." "Those who know something of modern fundamentalism will understand Paul's technique. He was not concerned with the meaning of biblical passages in their own ancient context. He had in Scripture a vast store of words, and if he could find passages which had the right combination of words, and stick them together, he scored his point," Sanders, *Paul*, 56.

Paul’s quotation of Deuteronomy more closely follows the LXX text which inserts the word πᾶσιν (*all* the commands), which according to Tyson emphasizes the necessity to keep the law perfectly.⁸³ Paul’s words can be compared with the possible sources of quotation in the table below.

MT, Deut 27:26	LXX, Deut 27:26	Gal 3:10
אָרֹר אֶשֶׁר לְאִי־קִיִּם אֶת־דְּבָרַי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָם	Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου ποιῆσαι αὐτούς.	Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.

It is unlikely however that this change of a word would signal a change in theology which is foreign to the context, which simply calls for covenant faithfulness not perfection. A closer look at Paul’s other modifications to the verse clue the reader to his point. He also includes the “formulaic expression” τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου which punctuates the whole of the cursing and blessing section of Deuteronomy (Deut 28: 58, 61; 29:19, 20, 26; 30:10).⁸⁴ In addition the MT uses the word “all” to describe the necessary loyalty to the totality of the covenant frequently throughout the context (28:58; 29:29b; 32:46).⁸⁵ Finally, the verse which Paul utilizes is actually the final and most comprehensive⁸⁶ of the curses in Deuteronomy 27 which calls the nation not to perfection but to

⁸³Tyson, “Works of the Law,” 428.

⁸⁴“the formulaic expression γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τούτου which Paul cites in Gal. 3.10 runs through Deuteronomy 27–32 like a leitmotif (cf. Deut 28. 58, 61; 29.19, 20, 26; 20.10),” James M. Scott, “‘For as Many as are of Works of the Law are under a Curse’ (Gal 3:10),” *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, n. d.), 194-95.

⁸⁵Indeed, the covenant cursing and blessing section is demarcated with calls for loyalty to “all” the words of the law. The first verse (27:1) and the final verses of the section (32:46-47) (and numerous times in between), God reminds the people to keep *all* the words of the law. Deuteronomy 27:1 states, “Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying, ‘Keep all the commandments (כָּל־הַמִּצְוֹת) which I command you today.” Likewise, the emphasis is obvious in 32:46-47, “‘Take to your heart all the words (כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים) with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) . . . and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land.” “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words (כָּל־דְּבָרָה) of this law,” (Deut 29:29). Other references not already cited are 27:3, 8; 28:1, 15; 30:2, 8; 31:5, 12; 32:46.

⁸⁶Scott states that “The twelfth and final curse, which Paul cites in Gal. 3.10, is the most comprehensive, especially in the Septuagintal wording which amplifies it with a twofold πᾶς and thus makes the curse apply to ‘everyone’ who does not keep ‘all things’ that are written in the book of the law,” Scott, “Galatians 3:10,” 195.

covenant fidelity.⁸⁷ It seems best then to understand Paul's unique quotation as a conflation of texts summarizing the responsibility of the nation and the consequences which would come to Israel in the event of corporate apostasy.

The covenant allows for various degrees of unfaithfulness and promises commensurate discipline in the form of curses, but the ultimate curse is exile—corporate disenfranchisement from the land (Cf. 28:32, 36, 37, 41, 48, 63, 64, 68). Deuteronomy 30:1-10 assumes that the nation will be cursed and exiled from the land but also gives hope for restoration based upon repentance. The same cycle of Sin-Exile-Return can be seen in Moses' final words to the nation in chapters 31–32.⁸⁸ Thus the perspective of the six chapters (27–32) involving covenant sanctions is predominantly corporate, predicting the punishment of the nation as a whole if gross national apostasy occurs while holding out the hope of future restoration.

As the history of Israel unfolded the ultimate curse of exile was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and deportation of the people to Babylon. Daniel 9:1-10 records the reflections of Daniel on the seventy year exile of his people which lead him to prayer. As he anticipated the end of the exile his prayer of repentance is understandable since the covenant offers restoration from the exile based upon repentance (Deut 30:1-10). His thoughts in 9:11 summarize the theology of the exile in clear Deuteronomic fashion, "Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law . . . so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses." Daniel describes the exile of the nation as "the curse" which God poured out on Israel, according to the covenant of Moses. What is more, in the ensuing verses (9:11-15) he implies that the nation still stands under the curse of the law and prays for God to end it.⁸⁹ It is in this context that God informs Daniel that in reality "seventy weeks have been decreed for your people . . . to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make

⁸⁷As Schlier notes, "Endlich is noch festzuhalten, daß die έργα νόμου nach jüdischer Überzeugung zwar grundsätzlich getan werden können, aber praktisch überwiegen nur bei den "Gerechten" das Gesetzeswerk מצוה und das Verdienst זכות . . ." Schlier, *Galater*, 92.

⁸⁸The pattern of Sin, Exile and Return is labeled "S.E.R." by Michael Knibb, "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period," *Heythrop Journal* 17 (1976): 266.

⁸⁹Scott, "Galatians 3:10," 199.

atonement for iniquity.” Rather than a mere exile of seventy years, the nation is now informed that another period of seventy “weeks” is necessary.⁹⁰ Ackroyd summarizes the revelation to Daniel:

It is in effect an exile lasting 490 years, and with this we reach an understanding of exile and restoration which takes us well beyond the consideration of the sixth century. Here the exile is no longer an historic event to be dated in one period; it is much nearer to being a condition from which only the final age will bring release. . . . The understanding of the exile is clearly enlarged far beyond the temporal considerations of seventy years and the precise period covered by Babylonian captivity in the stricter sense.⁹¹

Daniel 9 sees the curse which God has poured out on Israel as lasting for a much longer time than seventy years. The exile is in reality a state of judgment from which the nation will not be released until God intervenes in history with the “inauguration of the eschatological era.”⁹²

This view of the continuing nature of the exile is confirmed by the postexilic writings of Ezra and Nehemiah. Their prayers reflect the feeling that in spite of the return to the land they are under the continuing judgment of God. Ezra writes “Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder and to open shame, *as it is this day.*” (Ezra 9:7). Nehemiah recounts the theological history of the nation including her sin and exile (9:5-35), concluding:

Behold we are slaves today, and as to the land which Thou didst give to our fathers to eat of its fruit and its bounty, Behold, we are slaves on it. And its abundant produce is for the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins; They also rule over our bodies and over our cattle as they please, so we are in great distress” (Nehemiah 9:36-37).

A survey of intertestamental literature yields the same recognition that the curse of Deuteronomy 27–32 had come upon the people in 586 B.C. for violating the covenant and that the

⁹⁰This may have been anticipated in Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24 and 28 which promise a seven-fold chastening if the nation is willfully disobedient.

⁹¹Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 242-43.

⁹²Scott, “Galatians 3.10,” 201. Even before Scott, Knibb had concluded from his survey of intertestamental literature, (specifically Tobit 14:4b-7 in this example) that “there could hardly be a more explicit statement of the view, known to us already from Dan 9, that the return from the exile in the sixth century had only a provisional character, and that the post-exilic cultus was defective. The decisive change in Israel’s condition of exile was only to come when ‘the times of the age’ were completed,” Knibb, “The Exile in Intertestamental Literature,” 268. Goldingay also refers to the 490 years as a “period during which God’s judgment is exacted in full measure. It lasts much longer than was originally envisaged, but it is not interminable and not out of God’s control,” J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, Word Biblical Themes (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 75.

condition of desolation would continue until God brought about the restoration promised in Deuteronomy 30.⁹³ For example, the lamentation from Baruch reads:

And you shall say: The LORD our God is in the right, but there is open shame on us today, on the people of Judah, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, . . . because we have sinned before the LORD. . . . So to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse that the LORD declared through his servant Moses (Baruch 1:15-20, NRSV).⁹⁴

Speaking of the exile in Jewish apocalyptic literature Gowan concludes that a general conviction exists that the return to the land was not the fulfillment of God's intentions for Israel, so that "the problem of the exile still remained unsolved."⁹⁵ Knibb concludes his study of intertestamental literature on a similar note: "Despite many differences in presentation, the writings that we have been considering seem to share the view that Israel remains in a state of exile long after the sixth century, and that the exile would only be brought to an end when God intervened in this world order to establish his rule."⁹⁶

So then if our understanding of the biblical and extra-biblical literature is correct, Paul's reference to "the curse" of the law in Galatians 3:10, 13 is not shorthand for "the cursed law"⁹⁷ nor is it a curse from God which falls on every man for a lack of moral perfection, but rather the specific Deuteronomic curse which fell on the nation as a whole in 586 B.C. and continued in some sense throughout the intertestamental period. That curse according to Daniel would only find its solution in the coming of Messiah.

One final defining component of the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3:10 is found in 3:13. The mention of the curse in 3:10 finds its solution in Christ's redemption from the curse of the law discussed in 3:13. Once again Paul buttresses and explains his statement by quoting a verse from Deuteronomy, 21:23. Our interest in this verse is that the solution to the plight helps define the plight which, in turn, helps further define the subjects (those "of the works of the law") of that plight.

⁹³Scott, "Galatians 3.10," 205-6.

⁹⁴Other similar references are: 2 Maccabees 1:10-2:18; 7:18; 1 Enoch 85-90; Testament of Levi, 16:1-2, 5.

⁹⁵D. E. Gowan, "The Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic" in *Scripture in History and Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, eds. A. L. Merrill and T. W. Overholt (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1977), 219-20.

⁹⁶Knibb, "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period," 271-72.

⁹⁷As Betz, *Galatians*, 149, though he also offers other definitions for the phrase.

Paul changes the wording of the LXX slightly, from κεκατηραμένος (Deut 21:23) to ἐπικατάρατος (“Cursed is everyone,” Gal 3:13), most likely to match the wording of Galatians 3:10 (ἐπικατάρατος) and thus connect the two texts of Deuteronomy. That is, Paul is eager to show that Calvary is the solution to the curse of the law and Paul reads the law as a cohesive unit.

Paul’s use of the Old Testament in Galatians 3:13 is sometimes used as an example of his *ad hoc* use of proof texts because his interest in Deuteronomy 21:23 seems to revolve around the common theme of curse and “tree” which is understood as a reference to Calvary. Certainly Deuteronomy 21:23 was not a prediction of the crucifixion and if that was Paul’s reason for citing it he clearly assigned a different meaning to the verse. In the context of Deuteronomy 21, hanging upon the tree was *not* the method of execution (as the cross *was* for Christ) and neither was it the cause for the cursing. Rather, when one was put to death because of a heinous crime and thereby incurred the judgment and wrath of God he could be hung on a tree as a graphic illustration of God’s curse upon that individual.

Two passages in particular demonstrate the practice of hanging corpses upon the tree in the case of capital crimes, Numbers 25, and 2 Samuel 21. The first instance involves the harlotry of Israel at Baal Peor. The solution offered by God for the problem was to publicly display the executed victims in order to propitiate God’s wrath: “and the LORD said to Moses, ‘Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them in the sun before the LORD, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel’” (Num 25:4, RSV). Thus, the execution of the guilty parties and the public display of the curse of God upon them was the means by which God’s wrath was removed from the nation.

The situation in 2 Samuel 21 was precipitated by a famine in the land, the result predicted in Deuteronomy for sin. God revealed to David that the cause of the famine was Saul’s execution of certain Gibeonites in violation of the covenant made with them in the days of Joshua. The solution demanded by the Gibeonites was the death and public display of seven descendants of Saul, “let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul” (2 Sam 21:6). David complied with their request and the seven were “hanged . . . in the mountain before the LORD” (21:9) so that “after that God was moved by entreaty for the land” (21:14). Once again, the death of a guilty party which was cursed by God and publicly displayed bore the wrath that fell upon the rest of the nation. This seems to be the sense in which Paul understands the quotation from

Deuteronomy 21:23 as he uses it in Galatians 3. Christ has redeemed those under the curse of the law by “becoming a curse for us” (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα). As a substitute who bore the wrath of God he could remove the curse which rested on the people.

The most likely explanation for why Paul considered “those who were of the works of the law” to be under a curse was because the Deuteronomic curse for gross national infidelity had come upon the nation. Like Daniel, Paul saw the curse continuing until the time of the Messiah who finished the transgression and redeemed the nation from it. Thus, if Paul intended that his quotations from Deuteronomy reflect their original meaning then it is most likely that his discussion in 3:10, 13 concerns primarily the nation of Israel. Though Paul is quick to point out that the atonement of Messiah had universal implications (3:14), it seems that his interest in these two verses (3:10, 13) is to explain the relationship between *Calvary* and the *curse of the law* which fell upon the covenant people.⁹⁸ This brings us back then to the definition of the phrase ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. It would appear that the context defines the phrase in the simplest of terms as identifying the members of the Jewish nation. These are people who identify themselves as the covenant people by their allegiance to Moses. It is a simple identification of the Jewish people without pejorative or soteriological overtones. Thus, there is no basis for the RSV’s translation those who “*rely on* the works of the law” as though these people sought to merit salvation⁹⁹ and even less basis for the translation of “legalist.”¹⁰⁰ And while it is true that some Jews and even Peter himself, at times, may have emphasized the exclusive nature of “covenantal nomism” (*pace* Dunn, Howard), once again the phrase hardly refers to a *misuse* or

⁹⁸Betz agrees that only Jews are referred to here not Gentiles because only Jews were “under the Torah.” He rebuffs others who “systematize Paul by interpreting Rom 1:18ff; 2:12ff; 3:23; 5:12ff into Gal. However, the universal reign of law and sin over both the Jew and the Gentile is stated clearly only in Rom, not in Gal,” Betz, *Galatians*, 148. For a good example of this see Mußner’s comments in note number 80 on page 170.

⁹⁹This is not to deny that some in the nation may well have sought to win favor with God by observing Moses, but the point here is that the phrase as Paul uses it does not refer one’s motives for allegiance to the covenant.

¹⁰⁰As Fuller, Cranfield and Longenecker understand the phrase. While Longenecker acknowledges the work of Sanders and others in identifying “works of the law” as “covenantal nomism” he slips back into the traditional mode when he argues that when covenantal nomism is foisted upon Gentiles it results in simple legalism. Thus in his view ἔργων νόμου refers not just to the badges of Jewish covenantal nomism “but as a catch phrase to signal the whole legalistic complex of ideas having to do with winning God’s favor by a merit-amassing observance of Torah,” Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, in *Word Biblical Commentary* 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 86.

misunderstanding of the law. In short, ἔργων νόμου should be understood as a genitive of source with the sense “deeds commanded by the law” and the phrase ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου would then refer to those who find their identity in the law, referring to the Jewish people.¹⁰¹

This would also explain why Paul can move so easily from the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου to the simple νόμος.¹⁰² The “deeds of the law” are not a moral perversion of the law or a twisted use of it but simply the proper response to its demands. Doing the deeds of the law or obeying the law was how one demonstrated his allegiance to the law. The task left at this point is to see if this understanding harmonizes with the introduction of the letter and makes good sense as Paul uses it in 2:16 in his response to Peter at Antioch.¹⁰³

Narrative Definition. Paul’s first story in chapter two utilizes the Gentile believer, Titus, as a test case and concerns the agreement between the “pillars” and Paul. The recognition which Paul received in Jerusalem was not simply a recognition of his person but more importantly of his unique call and ministry. Peter, James and John recognized that Paul’s ministry was unique in that he preached to the uncircumcised in distinction to the Peter who preached to the circumcised. The nature of the difference was not one between “legalist” and “believer” but rather between “Jew” and “Gentile.” Likewise the text reads much more naturally if the concern for Titus was not that as a believer he would have to become a “legalist” who trusted in his deeds for salvation but that as a Gentile he would have to become Jewish.

The incident in Antioch is even clearer. Peter’s withdrawal from table relationships with Gentiles “compelled Gentiles to live like Jews” (2:14). It is unlikely that in his withdrawal to the company of Jews alone (2:12) Peter changed his theology from grace to “being saved by perfect obedience to the law” and that by implication he was forcing Gentiles to obey the law perfectly for their salvation as well. Peter’s actions could hardly have been interpreted as a test case for the distinction between faith and merit but they certainly did draw the line between Jew (those who found

¹⁰¹Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” 38.

¹⁰²For example, 2:16 to 2:19 and also 3:10 to 3:11, 12. From 3:10 on he only refers to the simple “law.”

¹⁰³Although it is difficult to tell where Paul’s actual words to Peter end and his answer to the Galatians or *propositio* begins, it is clear that literarily at least, 2:16 answers the Antioch situation.

their identity in Moses) and Gentile.¹⁰⁴ Thus, Peter did not force Gentiles to be legalists but he did “compel” them to “live like Jews” (2:14) in obedience to Moses. This is why Paul’s reference to “works of law” in 2:16 fits so naturally with the context and the historical situation. The question raised by Peter’s actions (2:11-14) was whether one had to be Jewish to be saved and the designation of those who are “of the works of the law” (3: 10, 13) is that of a Jew. Paul does not argue against Peter’s Jewishness *per se*, but simply that being Jewish is not enough. He claims that even Jews (by definition, those who keep the law, 2: 15) recognize that being Jewish will not save one (“a man is not justified by the works of the Law,” 2: 16) which is precisely why every Jew must put his faith in Messiah (“even we have believed in Christ Jesus,” 2: 16).

In summary, then, although our definition of “works of the law” must be preliminary at this point until the full antithesis between “works” and “faith” has been explored, we have at this point defined “works of the law” as a genitive of source, meaning “deeds required by the Law” and “those who are of” (ὅσοι ἐξ) these works are simply those who observe the law, otherwise referred to as “Jews by nature” (φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι, 2: 15).

ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ

The second side of the “works—faith” antithesis as Paul first states it in 2: 16 is ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Although Paul referred to the first part of the contrast in a fairly consistent manner as either “works of the law” or simply “law,” his references involving “faith” are not so consistent, requiring more analysis. Below is a sampling of the ways in which Paul utilizes the word πίστις in Galatians 2–3.

2:16	a man is justified διὰ / ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ
2:20	Paul lives ἐν πίστει τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ
3:2, 5	reception of the Spirit comes ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως
3:7	the sons of Abraham are οἱ ἐκ πίστεως
3:12	the law is not ἐκ πίστεως
3:22	the promise is given ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
3:23	before the coming of τὴν πίστιν

¹⁰⁴Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” 35. “How does this threaten the truth of the gospel? It does not, if the essence of Paul’s gospel is justification by faith. It does threaten a ‘gospel to the Gentiles,’ a ‘gospel to the uncircumcised’ (2:2, 7).”

The fullest expression which Paul uses involves the “διὰ / ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ” (2:16, 20; 3:22-26)¹⁰⁵ which we will investigate first, followed by the “ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως” (3:2, 5), and “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως” (3:6-9).

πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 2:16-20; 3:22-26. The traditional understanding of this phrase has been “human faith in Christ.”¹⁰⁶ Burton considered this meaning “too clear to be questioned”¹⁰⁷ and Cranfield calls suggestions to the contrary to be “altogether unconvincing.”¹⁰⁸ In reality, however, the basic syntactical options of this phrase are two: the objective genitive (human faith placed in Christ) and the subjective genitive (the faith or faithfulness of Christ himself). More recently the choice of the subjective genitive has gained a number of adherents who likewise boldly defend it.¹⁰⁹ Gaston asserts that the correctness of this phrase as “the faith or faithfulness of Jesus Christ’ has by now been too well established to need any further support.”¹¹⁰ Unfortunately the issue is not as easily decided as either side would make it out to be.

Excluding the phrases under discussion which refer to Christ, Howard has analyzed twenty-four instances of the genitive with twenty-one referring to the faith of Christians, two to the faith of Abraham (Rom 4:12, 16), and one to the faithfulness of God (Rom 3:3).¹¹¹ He concludes that in

¹⁰⁵Dabei soll kein sachlicher Unterschied mit dem Wechsel der Präpositionen betont werden, sondern διὰ bezeichnet den Glauben als das Mittel der Rechtfertigung, während ἐκ, das wohl nur antithetisch zu ἐξ ἔργων νόμου gebildet ist, sein Geschehen als das Woher des Gerechtwerdens nennt,” Schlier, *Galater*, 92.

¹⁰⁶Many recent translations have followed this interpretive choice, for example “faith in Christ” is found in NASB, RSV, and NIV. The KJV, however, retains the subjective genitive interpretation with the translation of “the faith of Christ.”

¹⁰⁷Burton, *Galatians*, 121.

¹⁰⁸C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* in *The International Critical Commentary*, ed. J. A. Emerton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:203, n. 2.

¹⁰⁹Cf. George Howard, “Notes and Observations on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *Harvard Theological Review* 60 (1967): 459-65; Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 139-77; Richard Longenecker, “The Obedience of Christ,” *Reconciliation and Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 142-52; Morna D. Hooker, “πιστις Χριστου,” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 321-42; Gaston, “Paul and the Law in Galatians 2-3,” 40.

¹¹⁰Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 12.

¹¹¹George Howard, “Notes and Observations on the ‘Faith of Christ,’” 459.

every instance where πίστις is followed by a proper noun or pronoun in the genitive that it is always subjective.¹¹² While not conclusive this argument does suggest the subjective genitive option.

A more telling piece of evidence from a grammatical standpoint is the similarity between the usages in Galatians and those concerning Abraham in Romans. In Romans 4:12 Paul discusses not “faith placed in Abraham” (objective genitive) but “the faith of Abraham” (subjective genitive, τῆς πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ) which is a model for believers. Four verses later Paul speaks of those who have the faith of Abraham with the phrase, ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (those who are “of the faith of Abraham”) which is identical to the phrase in question in Galatians 2:16 and 3:22, ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (that we may be justified “by the faith of Christ”). Thus precedent can be found in Pauline literature for understanding the phrase and combinations of the phrase as a subjective genitive.

One possible reason why some are reluctant to understand the phrase as a subjective genitive is because it seems to threaten the reformation truth of justification by the act of believing in Christ. It is also taught that the more ambiguous phrase in 2:16, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (in order that we may be justified by “the faith of Christ” / “our faith in Christ”) should be interpreted by the clear phrase ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν (we have believed in Christ).¹¹³ In this way, however, Paul’s statement in both 2:16 and in 3:22 becomes tautological, “we have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by believing in Christ” (2:16) and “that the promise by believing in Christ might be given to those who believe” (3:22).¹¹⁴ If however the subjective genitive reading is adopted no “reformation truth” is lost since in both verses Paul clearly emphasizes the place of the human act of believing, with the aorist ἐπιστεύσαμεν followed by the object εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν in 2:16, and the same can be said in 3:22 of the substantival participle τοῖς πιστεύουσιν (without the object specified). More importantly, what is gained is a balanced

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Der Gen. Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ is gen. obj., was im Zusammenhang durch das ἐπιστεύσαμεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν in v.16b und sonst durch Mk 11:22, Col 2:18, 2 Thess 2:13 sichergestellt wird,” Schlier, *Galater*, 92-93. Cf. also Ronald K. Y. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians in The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 114-15.

¹¹⁴This argument is suggestive though not definitive because as Hooker points out, “Paul is perfectly capable of using redundant phrases,” Hooker, “πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 329.

emphasis upon not only the human act of believing but also upon the object of that belief, the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁵ Longenecker argues:

Paul uses πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in his writings to signal the basis for the Christian gospel: that its objective basis is the perfect response of obedience that Jesus rendered to God the Father, both actively in his life and passively in his death. Thus in three places by the use of πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Paul balances out nicely the objective basis for Christian faith ('the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ') and mankind's necessary subjective response ('by faith'): Rom 3:22 . . . Gal 3:22 . . . Phil 3:9.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵Hooker states "But to take πίστις Χριστοῦ as a reference to Christ's own faith/faithfulness is in fact in no way to neglect the faith of the believer; and to take it of the believer's faith in Christ may emphasize that faith at the expense of stating what *Christ* has done," Ibid., 322.

¹¹⁶Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 87. Cf. also his article "The Obedience of Christ," *Reconciliation and Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 142-52, in which he discusses the theology of the obedience and faithfulness of Jesus. Arguing that the Hebrew *'emunah* meant both "faithfulness" and "faith" he says that "it is therefore likely that in certain instances in his letters the phrase πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be understood as 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ', the God-man. And if this be true, it means that Paul thought of the believer's justification, righteousness and access before God as based upon Christ's perfect obedience during his earthly life . . . as well as his sacrifice on the cross," Ibid., 146.

Cf. also Hays who argues "It is in fact arguable that Paul's entire discussion makes much better sense if he is interpreted as presupposing that Jesus Christ, like Abraham, is justified ἐκ πίστεως and that we, as a consequence, are justified *in* him (cf. Gal 2:17, δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ), as a result of his faith(fullness).

This kind of representative-christology is clearly present elsewhere in the NT, especially in Hebrews, which depicts Jesus as τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν (Heb 12:2). Likewise, Eph 3:11-12 (a very interesting text for our present purposes speaks of 'Christ Jesus our Lord, ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ προσαγωγὴν ἐν πεποιθήσει διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ.' The *RSV* translates διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ as 'through our faith in him.' Surely, however, this is a very strained translation; the more natural rendering would be 'through his faith(fullness), and the meaning would be that we who are 'in' Christ Jesus have access to God as a result of Christ's faithful execution of God's eternal purpose (πρόθεσις). Christ is here, as in Hebrews, portrayed as the ἀρχηγός, the representative figure in whom the drama of salvation is enacted, in whose destiny the destiny of all is carried." Hays, "The Faith of Jesus Christ," 165-66.

And also "If Paul can speak so compellingly in Rom 5:19 of the soteriological consequences of Christ's ὑπακοή, there is no a priori reason to deny that Paul could intend the expression πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ to refer to Christ's soteriologically efficacious faith(fullness)," Ibid., 167.

Thus it may be that the “faithfulness of Christ” (πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 2:16; 3:22) is a specific example of the “faithfulness of God” (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Rom 3:3)¹¹⁷ and that by it Paul points repeatedly to Calvary as the faithful fulfillment of the promise of redemption.

Having said all this, the case in 3:22-26 carries more definitive contextual clues about the phrase. Twice in 3:23 Paul uses πίστις, both times with the article. He first speaks of the time “before the coming of (the) faith (τὴν πίστιν)” and then of “being shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed (τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι).” The article objectifies faith in both phrases pointing the reader to the “faith” just mentioned in 3:22 which is ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.¹¹⁸ That is, Paul’s grammar indicates that his references to “faith” (τὴν πίστιν) and to “the faith to be revealed” (3:23) are shorthand for the fuller expression in the context of “ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ” (3:22).¹¹⁹ It would be unusual to speak of faith as “an individual act of believing” as either “coming” or “being revealed,” for Paul has already argued that faith is as old as Abraham,¹²⁰ but both would be appropriate if Paul were speaking of the “faithfulness of Jesus Christ.” World history can be easily and appropriately divided by speaking of the time before the coming of Christ and the time afterwards.

¹¹⁷In Romans 3:21-22 Paul states that the “righteousness of God apart from the law” has now been manifested διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας. Although the phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is often taken as the objective genitive, two factors here argue for the subjective genitive reading. First, if the phrase is understood as “through human faith in Christ” then the sentence becomes tautological because of the last phrase “for all who believe.” More importantly, however, the controlling verb (and idea) in the sentence of 3:21-22 is “manifested” (πεφανερωται), i.e., how God’s righteousness is now demonstrated apart from the law. The demonstration of God’s righteousness can hardly be seen in “human faith” (objective genitive), but it is clearly seen in the “faithfulness of Christ” on Calvary (subjective genitive). The idea of Jesus’ faithfulness on Calvary as the demonstration of God’s righteousness is an emphasis, if not the main point, of the context as seen in 3:26. Once again, this is not to deny the necessity and the place of human faith in Christ, which is mentioned in the context (e.g., 3:22). It is simply to warn that “human faith in Christ” is often overemphasized to the detriment of the concept of the “faithfulness of Christ.”

¹¹⁸“The faith in question, referred to three times in vv. 23 and 25 as ‘the faith’ (articular), is the faith . . . just spoken of in v. 22,” Fung, *Galatians*, 168.

¹¹⁹“Paulus spricht vom ‘Kommen’ des Glaubens, wie er in v. 19 vom ‘Kommen’ des Nachkommens Abrahams = Jesus Christus gesprochen hat. ‘Es handelt sich um dasselbe Ereignis’ (bonnard), dennoch ist in v. 23 nicht auf die Person gesehen (Christus), sondern es wird die heilbringende Zeit des Messias als Zeit ‘des Glaubens’ qualifiziert, die auf die Zeit des Gesetzes folgt, ja einen Gegensatz zu dieser darstellt (vgl. δέ). Man darf jedoch das artikulierte πίστις nicht gleich als ‘Christentum’ . . . sondern mit τὴν πίστιν wird das vorhergehende ἐκ πίστεως (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) anaphorisch wiederaufgenommen . . .” Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 254.

¹²⁰Fung notes “That Abraham was justified by faith shows conclusively that Paul cannot mean that prior to the ‘coming’ of faith no one had exercised saving faith,” *Galatians*, 168, n. 6.

Likewise, the faithfulness of Christ was preeminently *revealed* at Calvary. Similarly, in 3:23 Paul argues that before *faith* came we were kept under the *law*, so that the reader expects him to say in the next verse that the *law* leads us to *faith*. Instead, of *faith* however, Paul substitutes *Christ* because in the context he has defined τὴν πίστιν more completely as the “faith of Christ.” In 3:25 he smoothly switches back again from *Christ* to *faith*: “now that *faith* has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” It appears then, that Paul’s subject in this section is not human belief but the historical category or dispensation which has been ushered in by the appearance of the Messiah.

Certainly Jesus’ “coming” which includes his death caused an epochal change in history. Many scholars agree that the “faith” of 3:23 does not refer to human believing but to a more objective historical event. Betz argues that πίστις in 3:23 “describes the occurrence of a historical phenomenon, not the act of believing of an individual.”¹²¹ The question is in what sense does Paul use the term “faith” here. Is he thinking in the category of the individual believer’s experience or in the category of redemption history? Bornkamm insists that Paul’s thought in chapters 3–6 is fundamentally *heilsgeschichtlich* and apocalyptic. When speaking of the “revelation” in 3:23 he says:

It means . . . as it does already in Jewish apocalypticism, a freshly commencing, aeon-changing, eschatological act of God, in the sense of an objective event not brought about by men. The word πίστις requires to be understood in this way in our passage — not as a human attitude or a concern of the individual, but as the ‘principle of salvation’ (H. Schlier) opposed to the νόμος, made possible and set in force by God and announced to the world as a whole.¹²²

Martyn also notes the major epochal contrasts of Galatians and contends that they are fundamental to Paul’s thinking throughout the book. He says that “the crucial issue of the entire letter [is]: What time is it? . . . It is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ”¹²³ In chapters three and four in

¹²¹Betz, *Galatians*, 176, n. 120. W. D. Davies sought to warn against this kind of reading of Paul when he wrote, “Thus the opposition of the Law to grace which has marked so much of Protestantism, grounded as it is in individualism, that is, in the emphasis on the sinner standing alone before the awful demands of God, is a distortion of Paul,” W. D. Davies, “Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation,” *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, eds., Morna D. Hooker and Stephen G. Wilson, (n.p.: SPCK, 1982), 5.

¹²²Günther Bornkamm, “The Revelation of Christ to Paul on the Damascus Road and Paul’s Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: A Study in Galatians 1,” *Reconciliation and Hope*, ed. Robert Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 95-97.

¹²³J. Louis Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 418.

particular Paul contrasts two major periods of history. This emphasis may be seen in a series of temporal and telic clauses:¹²⁴

3:19	ὁ νόμος . . . προσετέθη	ἄχρις οὗ ἔλθη τὸ σπέρμα ὃ ἐπήγγελται
3:22	συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή	ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ
3:23	ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα	Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἔλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν
3:23	συγκλειόμενοι	εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι
3:24	ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν	εἰς Χριστόν
3:25	οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν	ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως
4:2	ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους	ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς.
4:3	ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι	ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ

The law characterized one fundamental time category and Christ characterizes another. Paul peppers his sentences with time indicators which emphasize the shift from one aeon to another: “The law was given *until* the coming of the seed;” “we were held under the law *before* the coming of faith;” “we are *no longer* under a pedagogue;” “under guardians and managers *until* the time set;” and “*while* we were children.” Thus it can be seen that the fundamental categories of Paul’s thought in these two chapters is upon the epochal time shift which has occurred with the coming of Christ. In Paul’s recital of redemption history the role of the Law was clearly temporary until the time of Messiah. And Burton is correct when he says in reference to verse 24 that “the reference [is not] to the individual experience under law as bringing men individually to faith in Christ. For the context makes it clear that the apostle is speaking, rather, of the historic succession of one period of revelation upon another and the displacement of the law by Christ.”¹²⁵ Thus, in Paul’s writing in this chapter he defines πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as “the faithfulness of Christ (abbreviating his reference to it as merely τὴν πίστιν) in accomplishing redemption and the new age which it has introduced.” As Bornkamm says:

. . . the train of thought in Gal. 3–6 . . . is concerned with salvation-history and eschatology: God has made an end of the old aeon, in which all men were held captive under the law and the world powers in which all men were held captive under the law and the world powers (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) and has led us, by the sending of his Son, to the promised freedom of the sons of God.¹²⁶

Paul’s final reference to faith in chapter three comes in verse twenty-six where he begins to draw this phase of his argument to a close. He states: “Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς

¹²⁴This tabulation is adapted from Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 194.

¹²⁵Burton, *Galatians*, 200.

¹²⁶Günther Bornkamm, “The Revelation of Christ to Paul on the Damascus Road,” 95.

πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,” which the NIV translates, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” This reading would emphasize human faith in Christ as the means of sonship, which is a viable option. Another option is grammatically possible, however, which also has broader contextual support. That option is to understand διὰ τῆς πίστεως, and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as two separate phrases which modify of the main sentence “You are all sons of God.”¹²⁷ The NRSV accordingly translates the verse “for *in Christ Jesus* you are all children of God *through faith*.” Several contextual clues support this separation of the phrases. First, precedent can be found in Pauline literature for separating the two phrases. In Romans 3:25 where a very similar construction occurs, διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι,¹²⁸ the phrase “through faith” is almost certainly to be separated from “in his blood,” thus avoiding the “awkwardness of a second modal clause.”¹²⁹ Second, the articular reference to faith as τῆς πίστεως is not unfamiliar in the context and can stand alone as an independent phrase, as Paul has used the same construction in 3:23 and 3:25 to refer back to “the faith of Christ” in 3:22.¹³⁰ More

¹²⁷Schlier notes, “Das ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ gehört nicht zu διὰ τῆς πίστεως. Paulus redet auch sonst nie von einer πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ im Sinne eines Glaubens an Christus Jesus, sondern von πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ . . .” Schlier, *Galater*, 171. Betz states “It is Christ as the ‘Son of God’ who makes adoption as ‘sons’ available through the gift of the Spirit. *Two* formulae state the conditions for this adoption: ‘through the faith’ (διὰ τῆς πίστεως) and through incorporation in the ‘body of Christ,’ i.e., ‘in Christ Jesus,” Betz, *Galatians*, 186 (emphasis mine). He also says in reference to 3:26 that “The statement is very concise and includes a number of theological formulae which must be recognized and then related to their respective contexts.” *Ibid.*, 185.

¹²⁸Manuscripts B, C³, D^c, K, P, Ψ, 33, 81 and several others include the article in the phrase, διὰ τῆς πίστεως, which would only serve to objectify the phrase further, giving more support for interpreting it as a separate phrase. It would also make an even closer parallel to Galatians 3:26.

¹²⁹Fung, *Galatians*, 171.

¹³⁰Schlier understands the construction with sensitivity to both the the preceding and succeeding context, “Auf ihr liegt im Zusammenhang kein besonderer Ton, wie Hofmann meint, sondern διὰ τῆς πίστεως nimmt nur das ἐλθούσης τῆς πίστεως von 3:25 auf (Siefert). Deshalb is nicht der Glaubensvollzug gemeint, sondern der eben erwähnte Glaube, der gekommen ist. Nur dieses Verständnis entspricht auch dem Zusammenhang, der etwa so zu verdeutlichen ist: ‘Nachdem aber der Glaube gekommen ist, stehen wir nicht mehr unter dem Paidagogos. Denn ihr alle seid Söhne Gottes. Das hat der eben erwähnte Glaube vermittelt. Ihr seid es aber in Christus Jesus,’” Schlier, *Galater*, 171. Campbell asserts that in these verses (3:22, 24, and 26) “the phrase ἐκ πίστεως alternates initially with the substantive τὴν πίστιν. But in v. 26, after five of these previous references to πίστις (two with ἐκ—and also one participle construction using πιστεύω), Paul continues: πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς . . . This genitive διὰ phrase must evoke the previous string of πίστις expressions, to which it stands as the linguistic equivalent of a capstone. To argue otherwise simply asks too much of Paul’s readership,” Campbell, “The Meaning of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΝΟΜΟΣ in Paul,” 95.

Burton also argues for the separation of the two phrases from a grammatical standpoint, “That ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ does not limit πίστεως is evident because Paul rarely employs ἐν after πίστις . . . and in this letter always uses the genitive (2¹⁶, 20 3²²) . . .” He then argues that τῆς πίστεως stands

importantly, Paul's discussion in the succeeding verses (3:27-28) uses the phrase "in Christ" to emphasize the sphere of the believer's existence rather than the object of the believer's faith.¹³¹ In 3:27 he states that "all of you were baptized *into Christ*" (εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε) and in 3:28 "you are all one *in Christ Jesus*" (ὅμοις εἶς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). This phrase "in Christ" is typical Pauline theology by which he emphasizes the believer's sphere of existence.¹³² The Christian is saved because he participates in the saving work of Christ which is best described as being "in Him."¹³³ So Paul's point may be better summarized that Christians are "all one" because they are first of all "in Christ," and thus being "in Christ" they participate in "the faithfulness of Christ," sharing the promise of righteousness.

This understanding gives consistency to Paul's thought in the section of 3:22-28. The "faithfulness of Jesus Christ" (3:22) expressed at Calvary has "come" (3:23) and "been revealed" (3:23). The Law was a tutor until Christ came (3:24) but now that this "faithfulness" (3:24) has come we are no longer under the law (3:25). Thus, all believers are sons of God because they are "in Christ" (3:26) and participate in the "faithfulness of Christ" (3:26).

ἀκοῆς πίστεως 3:2, 5. Paul contrasts the familiar and more static phrase ἔργων νόμου twice with ἀκοῆς πίστεως, which is simply another way in which Paul expresses "the leading

"without limitation" and should most likely be taken as a "reference to the faith of the Galatians meaning 'your faith'; cf. 2 Cor. 1²⁴." He fails to note, however that the reference in 2 Corinthians also includes the possessive pronoun ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως, whereas Galatians 3:26 does not. Thus, it would seem that the simplest understanding of τῆς πίστεως would be a reference to the faith of which Paul has been speaking in the previous four verses.

¹³¹As Burton argues, "unless Paul shifts his thought of the meaning of ἐν after he has used it before Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, it has here its metaphorical spatial sense, marking Christ as one in whom the believers live, with whom they are in fellowship, Burton, *Galatians*, 202-3. Lightfoot agrees that ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "must be separated from" διὰ τῆς πίστεως. The words ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "are thrown to the end of the sentence so as to form in a manner a distinct proposition, on which the Apostle enlarges in the following verses: 'You are sons by your union with, your existence in Christ Jesus,'" J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 149.

¹³²Albrecht Oepke, "ἐν," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 2:542, or as Burton notes, "to have his standing; in this context to become objects of the divine favour, sons of God, as he is the Son of God," Burton, *Galatians*, 203.

¹³³"The phrase 'in Christ' (and its cognates) is a favorite with Paul to signal the personal, local, and dynamic relation of the believer to Christ. . . . The 'in Christ' phraseology in its various forms appears a total of 164 times in the Pauline writings apart from the Pastorals," Longenecker, *Galatians*, 152. Hooker argues that "in Galatians, Paul's concern is to show that the blessing came to the Gentiles by their incorporation in Christ," Hooker, "πιστις Χριστου," 327.

antithesis of the whole epistle.”¹³⁴ Although, this is probably true, the question remains, what is Paul’s nuance as expressed in this unique construction, ἀκοῆς πίστεως? The grammatical possibilities are at least four depending upon whether each word is taken in an active or passive sense.¹³⁵ Ἀκοή in the active sense would mean “sense” or “organ of hearing” and in the passive sense would mean “‘report’ which is heard.”¹³⁶ Πίστις could mean “believing” in the active sense, or in the passive sense “what is believed” or “message, proclamation” or in this case “the gospel.”¹³⁷ According to traditional models, Tyson argues that it should be understood as the “believing act of hearing.”¹³⁸ Longenecker and Fung interpret ἀκοή passively and πίστις actively yielding “believing what was heard.”¹³⁹ Hays and Betz prefer the passive sense of both words with the resulting “proclamation of the faith”¹⁴⁰ or “report of the gospel message.”¹⁴¹ One notable distinction between these various options is that the last one (both senses being passive) “unavoidably shifts the emphasis from the hearing to the preaching of the message.”¹⁴² That is, the emphasis would be not so much the *act of hearing* as *what is heard*.

Since none of these possibilities enjoy a grammatical advantage, context must make the choice. Clearly, whatever Paul means by ἀκοῆς πίστεως, he contrasts it with “works of law.” If our conclusions of the latter phrase are correct then Paul’s antithesis is not between “working” and “believing” but between “identifying with Moses” versus something different. It would seem that the best understanding of ἀκοῆς πίστεως as an antithetical counterpart to ἔργων νόμου would be the passive sense of both words as “the gospel message” or “the proclamation of the faith.” In this way

¹³⁴Burton, *Galatians*, 147.

¹³⁵Fung lists eight possible permutations of the various meanings of the two words, Fung, *Galatians*, 130-32.

¹³⁶G. Kittel, “ἀκούω,” *TDNT*, 1:221.

¹³⁷Πίστις has other meanings, such as “reliability, proof, pledge” but none of these seem to make sense in the context of Galatians 3:2, 5. Cf. BAG, s. v. “Πίστις.”

¹³⁸Tyson, “Works of Law,” 427.

¹³⁹Fung, *Galatians*, 130 and Longenecker, *Galatians*, 103.

¹⁴⁰Betz, *Galatians*, 128.

¹⁴¹Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 143-49.

¹⁴²Betz, *Galatians*, 128, n. 3.

Paul's contrast would be "Did God grant the Spirit through identification with Moses or through preaching of the gospel?" As Hays cautions "This would not, of course, preclude a concern for human receptivity to the message; it would simply mean that the point of the contrast would be located differently" ¹⁴³ That is the contrast would be not between working and believing but between Moses and Messiah. This would also harmonize well with Paul's statement in 3:1 concerning the public portrayal of the crucifixion of Christ in which Paul stresses the content of the gospel message without an emphasis upon the human act of faith. While this understanding of the phrase ἀκοῆς πίστεως does not discount the other interpretive options, it is a viable grammatical possibility and is compatible with the context.

οἱ ἐκ πίστεως 3:6-9. One final facet of Paul's antithesis is the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, used only twice by Paul in Galatians (3:7, 9). While the corresponding phrase ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου does not occur in 3:6-9 it is clear that Paul's discussion in 3:10ff. about those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, once again provides the contrast to this phrase which concerns πίστις.

The thought of 3:6-9 is introduced by the comparative καθὼς which links the discussion of 3:1-5 with 3:6-9. The essence of the link is normally considered to be between those who exercise *faith* (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, 3:2, 5) and Abraham who *believed* (ἐπίστευσεν, 3:6) God. ¹⁴⁴ In this understanding Paul argues that the Galatians received the blessing of the Spirit because of their faith in the same way Abraham was justified because of his faith. In this way Abraham serves as the paradigm of faith in whose footsteps Paul's readers should follow. Thus in 3:7, 9 the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως is understood as "those who exercise faith" along with Abraham the believer (3:9). ¹⁴⁵ Several have argued lately however that Galatians 3 has been too much influenced by Romans 4. Donaldson remarks that "What interests Paul about Abraham in Gal 3 is not the paradigmatic structure of his faith, but the

¹⁴³Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 148.

¹⁴⁴Mußner notes, "Der Anschluß an das Vorausgehende ist begrifflich durch das Verbum πιστεῦειν gegeben (v. 5 schloß mit dem Genitiv πίστεως); es verbindet aber auch Sache nach die Galater mit Abraham. . . . Diese Verbindung deutet der Apostel knapp an mit der Vergleichspartikel καθὼς, die hier elliptisch gebraucht wird. Der Gedankengang ist der: Es Verhält sich mit eurer Heilssituation 'wie' bei Abraham: 'er glaubte Gott . . .'" Mußner, *Der Galaterbrief*, 213.

¹⁴⁵Longenecker states in reference to verse eight, "The central phrase of the verse, ἐκ πίστεως, being parallel with ἐκ πίστεως of v 7, certainly refers to the human response of trust and commitment 'by faith,'" Longenecker, *Galatians*, 115.

fact that it is ‘in him’ . . . or ‘in his seed’ . . . that the Gentiles are to be blessed”¹⁴⁶ Hays argues similarly that the route which Paul traces from the Galatians to Abraham does not go through faith but through Christ, i. e., the “participationist soteriology” which is “the presupposition for Paul’s argumentation all along.”¹⁴⁷ These writers see a different argument in 3:6-9 and therefore assign a different nuance to “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως.”

Thus, in order to understand the meaning of the phrase we must investigate Paul’s argumentation in 3:6-9.

Longenecker and others assume that Paul’s comparison between Abraham’s faith (3:6) and the Galatians faith (3:2-5) is based upon the verb in 3:6, ἐπίστευσεν, and the understanding of the phrase in 3:2, 5, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως as “hearing with faith” or an equivalent expression emphasizing the human response of faith. As was argued previously however, those who are ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως are not those who exercise faith as opposed to those who work but those who are identified with “the report of the gospel” or “the faithfulness preached.” While it is true that these have believed, the antithesis set up in 3:1-5 is between those identified with Moses and those identified with the preaching of the gospel. Furthermore, as we hope to demonstrate shortly, Paul does not emphasize the argument of faith in 3:6-9; his argument takes a different route.

If Paul’s comparison of 3:6 does not concern human faith, then what does it concern? The critical question which he asked in 3:1-5, upon which he was willing to rest his entire case (τοῦτο μόνον), was “Did you receive the Spirit by identification with Moses or with the gospel message?” The correct answer of course was that they received the Spirit by identifying with the gospel message. This would imply that Paul’s comparison with Abraham should concern what God granted to him and what he believed rather than his personal response. If this is the case, it may well be that the word which Paul intends to emphasize in 3:6 may be “reckoned” (ἐλογίσθη) rather than “believed”

¹⁴⁶T. L. Donaldson, “The ‘Curse of the Law’ and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14,” *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 101. He continues, “Abraham is not a timeless model of faith that anyone—Jew or Gentile—can emulate; he is a representative figure, who initiates a process of salvation, characterized by faith, that ultimately is fulfilled for a group which Paul designates οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. . . . The key terms in vv. 6-9 are ἐν σοί (v. 8) and οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (vv. 6, 9), [sic] and these depend for their meaning on Paul’s whole argument in 2.15 f.; 3. 16, 22-29.” Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 232. Hays refers to the explicit statements of 3:26-28 and several other “in Christ” references for example in 2:17, 20; 3:8, 14a.

(ἐπίστευσεν).¹⁴⁸ Thus God's reckoning of righteousness to Abraham would correspond to his "providing (ἐπιχορηγῶν) the Spirit and working (ἐνεργῶν) miracles" among the Galatians (3:2, 5).¹⁴⁹ Though exactly what Abraham believed is unexpressed in 3:6, the context of Genesis 15:4-6 clearly involves the promise of an heir. When Abraham received this promise God's gift was given to him. That this promise underlies Paul's thinking is clear because of the reference in the next verse (3:7) to the "sons of Abraham" and his reference to the "seed" of Abraham developed in 3:16ff. More importantly, however, Paul directly clarifies the message which Abraham received in 3:8 as "the gospel preached beforehand" adding force to the suggestion that the focus of the comparison between the Galatians and Abraham is that both (1) received a message of promise ("message of the gospel" and "promise of offspring") and (2) in turn were granted the blessing from God (the Spirit and justification).¹⁵⁰ In this way Paul's emphasis is not so much upon the response of Abraham as it is the promise which he received.

If this point is correct then it would reinforce Hay's point that Paul's route to Abraham is through Christ and not through faith. If the statement in 3:29 summarizes his point (and it would seem that it does) then Paul's strategy is to show that "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring" rather than "if you have faith like Abraham you are his seed." Bruce also notes that Paul's logic in Galatians 3 differs from Romans 4 that Abraham was justified by believing before his circumcision because it would not have effectively answered the crisis in Galatia. He says the Galatians "might well have answered that they were justified by faith while they were uncircumcised, as Abraham was; that they proposed to accept circumcision after being justified by faith, as Abraham did; and that for them, as for Abraham, circumcision would be a seal of the justification by faith which they

¹⁴⁸Once again, this is not to imply that Abraham's faith is not important to Paul for he mentions Abraham the believer in 3:9. It is to affirm, however, that Paul's emphasis is upon the message which Abraham received rather than his response to the message.

¹⁴⁹Caneday, "The Curse of the Law and the Cross," 211.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

had received in their uncircumcised state.”¹⁵¹ This may well be why Paul argues for the superiority (3:1-9) and priority¹⁵² (3:15-18) of “promise” to “law.”

This then leads to Paul’s preliminary conclusion (ἄρα) in 3:7 that “οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσὶν Ἀβραάμ.” Normally the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως is interpreted according to the emphasis in 3:6 upon Abraham’s believing (ἐπίστευσεν) as “those who believe.”¹⁵³ If however Paul does not key his thoughts from Abraham’s response, but rather from the promise he received then perhaps the phrase should be understood differently. In reality the best option to interpret the phrase is to understand it as a shortened version of the phrase Paul has just used in 3:5, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, so that it means “those who are of the faithfulness” or “those who are of the gospel” of Messiah. This is likely because the concept of πίστις was introduced and defined before the reference to Abraham in 3:6. It has already been argued that Paul can use the noun without genitival qualifiers to refer to the fuller expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22-26) because he has already qualified them, not only in 3:2, 5 but also in 2:16.¹⁵⁴ Thus, Paul’s phrase in 3:7, 9 should be understood as a natural extension of his antithesis between those who would identify with Moses or those who would identify with the gospel message. This harmonizes with Paul’s strategy already discussed, in Galatians 3 that “those who are of the faithfulness (i.e., of Christ) are the sons of Abraham (3:7, 29).”¹⁵⁵

This understanding is reinforced by an investigation of Paul’s argument in 3:8, 9. It is difficult to see how the quotation from Genesis 12:3 supports Paul’s argument if his point is the necessity of faith. The passage speaks of Gentiles and their blessing but nowhere does it refer to their justification by faith. If, however, Paul’s point is that Gentiles are justified by their identification with the gospel message rather than their identity with Moses, the quotation fits nicely. First, it more closely

¹⁵¹Bruce, *Galatians*, 154-55.

¹⁵²Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 217.

¹⁵³Burton, *Galatians*, 155.

¹⁵⁴Gordon, “The Crisis at Galatia,” 37. “Paul can abbreviate these expressions, substituting the shorthand of “faith” and “works” in an unqualified manner. This is because he has *already* qualified them. Later, when he speaks of “faith,” he does not speak about the human, existential capacity to trust but about faith in *Christ*. Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 224. Donaldson agrees that “The key terms in vv. 6-9 are ἐν σοί (v. 8) and οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (vv. 6, 9), and these depend for their meaning on Paul’s whole argument in 2. 15 f.; 3. 16, 22-29,” Donaldson, “Galatians 3:13-14,” 101 (emphasis mine).

correlates the message which the Galatians received (the *gospel*) with the message which Abraham received (the *gospel* preached beforehand) and thus clarifies the basic comparison (καθὼς, 3:6) with which Paul began the section.¹⁵⁶ Second, the quotation does not mention Abraham’s faith but does emphasize the promise of blessing which was given to him.

In reality the text of the Paul’s quotation differs slightly from Genesis 12:3. Betz suggests that Paul conflates several texts including Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.¹⁵⁷ The following table compares Paul’s quotation in Galatians 3:8 with the possible sources.¹⁵⁸

- Gal 3:8 Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη
- Gen 12:3 Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς
- Gen 18:18 Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς
- Gen 22:18 Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς
- Gen 26:4 Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς
- Gen 28:14 Ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου.

It appears that Paul does conflate a number of texts of Genesis, but it is clear that they are all very similar and either rephrase or slightly clarify the original promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. Still the correlation between Paul’s statement “that God would justify the Gentiles ἐκ πίστεως” and Paul’s quotation is hard to see if his emphasis is upon Abraham’s faith. The correspondence could be charted as follows:

	Promise	Means
3:7a	God would justify Gentiles	ἐκ πίστεως
3:7b	All nations blessed	in you

While the correlation between the promises of “justification of Gentiles” and “all nations being blessed” is easy to see Burton is confused regarding the relationship between the two designated means “ἐκ πίστεως” and “in you.” He concedes that “the apostle has missed the meaning of the Hebrew He doubtless takes ἐν in its causal, basal sense, meaning ‘on the basis of what he is or has done,’ and interprets it as having reference to his faith.”¹⁵⁹ Burton is forced to this conclusion, of course, because

¹⁵⁶Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 226.

¹⁵⁷Betz, *Galatians*, 142, n. 32.

¹⁵⁸Adapted from Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 228.

¹⁵⁹Burton, *Galatians*, 160-61.

he sees the focus of Paul's argument on Abraham's faith and attempts to understand Paul's statement and quotation from that standpoint.¹⁶⁰ As he admits, however, the idea of Abraham's faith was not a part of the original text of Genesis 12 or those which sprang from it. The promise was *unconditional* regardless of Abraham's response. The tabulation of the texts from the Genesis account point in a different direction. They indicate that God's promise of blessing for the nations was to be found "in you," but more specifically in τῷ σπέρματί σου (Gen 22:18; 26:4). Paul clarifies this point just a few verses later in 3:16 when he says the promises were given to Abraham καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός.¹⁶¹ It would seem then that gospel preached beforehand to Abraham was that *in him*, or more specifically, in his seed which is Christ, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This understanding does not prove Paul's point in 3:8 if his point concerns the human response of faith, but if by οἱ ἐκ πίστεως Paul refers to those who have received the "message of faithfulness" (3:2, 5) and those who have been justified "through the faithfulness of Christ" (2:16), who are therefore "in him" (2:17), then Paul's quotation corresponds in every respect to his point. Thus, it makes good sense if ἐν σοὶ refers not to some "quality 'in Abraham,' but to his descendant, i. e., Christ."¹⁶² Paul's opponents taught that Abrahamic sonship came ἐν νομῷ but he argues that it comes "in Christ" just as he has phrased the argument before (2:16-20), as he summarizes it now (3:9) and will again (3:26-29).

Conclusions. The second side of the "works—faith" antithesis is described by Paul in a variety of ways. His first mention of the concept in 2:16 involves the fullest expression when he says no one is saved through the works of the law but "διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ." He uses the same phrase again in 3:22 with a slight change from διὰ to ἐκ in 2:16b and 3:22 saying we are justified "ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ" and the promise comes "ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ," respectively. It was determined that the phrase is probably best translated as the "faithfulness of Jesus Christ," referring to his faithful fulfillment of God's promise of atonement as the object of human faith. To paraphrase

¹⁶⁰Fung takes ἐν σοὶ "in its instrumental sense, as 'by means of you'" referring to Abraham's "believing response to God's promise," *Galatians*, 139. But this argues against the unconditional nature of the promise which is a major component of meaning in the original context of Genesis 12.

¹⁶¹Hooker is surely right in saying "in Galatians, Paul's concern is to show that the blessing came to the Gentiles by their incorporation in Christ," Hooker, "πιστις Χριστου," 327.

¹⁶²Caneday, "The Curse of the Law and the Cross," 234.

Paul's thought of 2:16, "we have believed (human response) in Christ that we may be justified by the "faithfulness of Jesus Christ (object of faith)." This view was confirmed by Paul's use of the phrase in the section of 3:22-26 in which he begins the discussion with the fuller phrase "ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" and then refers back to it several times with the abbreviation of πίστις with the article in 3:23, 25 and 26. Thus, Paul can refer to the fuller expression of "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" by the simple reference to πίστις because he has defined the term in context (2:16; 3:22). The discussion of 3:22-26 explains the temporary place of the law in the history of redemption as Paul speaks in a broad historical category rather than a category of individual human belief. "We were locked up until the revelation of τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν" (3:23), and "ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως we are no longer under a pedagogue" (3:25). Once again the objective coming and revealing of the "faithfulness of Christ" on Calvary fits the context better than a reference to the individual human response of faith.

The second means of expressing the "faith" side of the antithesis was through the phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, found in 3:2, 5. Since the grammar will allow nearly any combination of the words, two contextual factors were considered decisive: the relationship of the phrase to the antithetical expression ἐξ ἔργων νόμου and the subject of the section as described by Paul in 3:1. Since the phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου is best seen as a description of those who identify with Moses the best contrast would be those who identify with the faithfulness of Christ, with the translation "the proclamation of [the] faith,"¹⁶³ or "faithfulness preached." In this way the phrase is a compact reference to Paul's fuller description of Calvary in 3:1, "Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified." Paul's antithesis here, then would be the same as expressed in 2:16-20, namely, between law and Christ. His question upon which he is willing to hang his whole argument (τοῦτο μόνον, 3:2) is "Did you receive the Spirit through the law or the "message of Christ."

The final description of the "faith" side of the antithesis is found in the even more abbreviated phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, found in 3:7, 9. While no reference to the law is found within 3:6-9, the reference to οἱ ἐκ πίστεως is clearly preparatory for and antithetical to ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 3:10. While the phrase is normally defined in light of the alleged emphasis upon Abraham's faith, it was determined that Paul's focus in the passage was not upon the faith of Abraham but upon the

¹⁶³Betz, *Galatians*, 128.

message he received which Paul describes as “the gospel” (3:8). It was suggested that a more likely contextual clue for the understanding of ἐκ πίστεως was the fuller phrase of ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως found in 3:1-5. In this way Paul is saying that those who are “of the faithfulness” or “of the faithfulness of Christ” are sons of Abraham (3:8, 9, 14, 26-29).

Conclusion

Having explored the meaning of both sides of the antithesis separately it is necessary now to compare those meanings in order to arrive at a carefully refined antithesis between ἔργων νόμου and πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. We concluded that ἔργων νόμου was not a pejorative term referring to a misguided effort at human achievement but rather a simple designation of “deeds commanded by the law.” Thus, those who were “ἐξ the works of the law” were those who found their identity in Moses by obedience to the covenant. In contrast, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ was found to refer not to human faith in Christ but to “the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” in providing the promised atonement for mankind. Those who were “ἐκ this faithfulness” were those who found their identity in Christ and his work on Calvary. Thus, the essence of the contrast between the two terms was not found to reside in human doing versus human believing but between identity with Moses and identity with Christ. So that the contrast between law and gospel was not so much between human effort and faith as it was between two separate economies in God’s program. This emphasis upon the historical sequence of God’s dealings with man was emphasized and confirmed in Paul’s discussion of redemption history in 3:22-26. He speaks of being under the law as a temporary time under a pedagogue which is brought to a close by the faithfulness and now that the faithfulness has come we are no longer under a tutor (3:23-25). Thus, in Paul’s discussion, to be “of the works of the law” is not only to be identified with Moses but to be identified with a distinct period of history which has been superseded by “the faith.” In turn, “the faith” then is not simply “the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” on Calvary but also the new epoch which it has introduced.

Conclusion

We have sought to demonstrate that the theology of law which Paul articulates in Galatians can only be understood as the answer to the specific, historical situation of the Galatian believers. While it is most likely true that the Galatian churches were composed of a Jewish/Gentile mix of

people, Paul's argument is clearly directed toward those Gentiles who have been tempted to secure Abrahamic blessing in the Law. He counters this false notion by demonstrating that Gentiles are blessed with Abraham's blessings not by being "in the law" but by being "in the seed of Abraham." Since that seed has now come, Gentiles are blessed directly in him. God has fulfilled the promises to Abraham by means of Calvary. Simply stated, if Gentiles are in Christ then they are sons of Abraham. Paul's argument against the law, then in this book is not so much ontological as it is chronological.¹⁶⁴ The role of the law in redemption history has been fulfilled and the promised seed has come in which Gentiles are blessed. For Gentiles to seek the blessings of Abraham in law is to deny that the basis of their sonship is in Christ, and thus they "fall from grace" (5:5). This message may be summarized then as:

The inclusion of Gentiles
in the blessings of Abraham
is accomplished by their incorporation
in Christ rather than
in Law.

What remains at this point is to demonstrate this type of meaning in a synthetic overview of the book.

Synthetic Overview

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the viability of the proposed message statement by means of an overview. Because of the limitations of this study a detailed exegesis of the book is not possible. In addition much of the necessary exegesis has already taken place in the analysis of Paul's major "works—faith" antithesis. The overview will be approached through the means of an analysis which reflects in its major points that of H. Betz. While not subscribing to every dimension of his argument we do recognize and appreciate the validity of his claim to a unified rhetoric.¹⁶⁵

Epistolary Prescript 1:1-5

¹⁶⁴As Gordon says, "No ontological solution will be satisfactory. If the law is good ontologically, then it is not appropriate to disparage its observation, even among the Gentiles. If it is bad ontologically, then it was *never* appropriate to observe it, even among Jews. As long as the question is restricted to whether Paul has a positive or negative view of the Law in the abstract, there is no resolution to the problem he faces. Paul's solution avoids this dilemma because it is historical, indeed redemptive-historical in nature," T. David Gordon, "A Note on $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\alpha\gamma\omega\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ in Galatians 3:24-25," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 151.

¹⁶⁵Betz, *Galatians*, 14-25. Even Betz himself admits that the epistle (especially the latter portions) does not fit perfectly into rhetorical standards. Nevertheless, his outline does indicate a singularity of purpose in Paul's argument with which we agree.

Although this epistle differs from Paul's other writings in that he fails to thank God for his readers, it is similar in the fact that he immediately announces his subject. In 1:4 he first mentions the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary for our sins which is the central point of his argument. Paul recognizes that this present age is still evil, but as he explains himself later, this age is very different from the one which was before Christ. It is significant that early in the introduction Paul mentions the Cross and the age in which he lives but says nothing about the necessity of human faith in the Cross.

The Introduction (*Exordium*) 1:6-11

In this introductory section in which Paul bypasses his normal greeting in order to get to the important issue at hand, he immediately identifies a critical contrast between the gospel of Christ and a different gospel (1:6-9). Paul does not describe the "other" gospel here but warns that those who propose it will be under the curse. Although it is possible that Paul refers to human responses he nowhere in the context gives a clue that he is speaking of a contrast between human faith and works. Rather it appears that he is rather referring to two different messages which can be received. One message is the "good news of Christ" (τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1:7) and the other is a "gospel" which leads to cursing much like the Law (3:10). If Paul's elaboration in the rest of the epistle is an elaboration of this introduction then we would expect him to speak of messages which are received rather than responses which are made.

The Statement of Facts (*Narratio*) 1:12–2:14

True to rhetorical form, Paul next narrates historical facts which are critical to his argument. The purpose of this section is to introduce the subject matter on which he wishes to be judged.¹⁶⁶ Paul, thus retells three stories which support his case: his own personal history and call, the decision about Titus, and the conflict with Peter at Antioch.

Paul's Personal Experience 1:12-24

Paul's basic statement is that his gospel did not come from man but "through a revelation of Jesus Christ," (ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, 1:12). That Jesus was not simply the source but also the subject of the revelation which Paul received is made clear from 1:16 where Paul says God called

¹⁶⁶Betz, *Galatians*, 58-62.

him in order “to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) His Son in me.” Thus, Paul defines the essence of his gospel as the message about Christ. Paul’s gospel is “His son.” But once again 1:16 helps clarify the unique nature of “Paul’s gospel” as one which was from the beginning directed toward Gentiles (ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν).

This important fact (*narratio*) which supports his case (*probatio*, 3:1–4:31) is presented in the literary sense not as a conversion but as a call.¹⁶⁷ Thus, Paul’s own story is used not so much as a paradigm of individual justification (for no justification terminology is used), but as a paradigm of the change in aeons.¹⁶⁸ His encounter with the risen Christ has moved him from a Judaism without Christ (1:14) to “the faith which he once tried to destroy” (1:23). Paul’s gospel is rooted in his recognition of who Jesus is and the necessity to revealing of Him to the Gentiles.

One final emphasis in this section is the relative obscurity which surrounded Paul’s call. The summary statement is that upon the reception of his call he “did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,” (1:16). This is clarified by the shortness of his stay with Peter (only fifteen days) and the purpose of his visit, to learn from him (ἰστορησαί). It is often affirmed that Paul’s point here is to establish his independence from the apostles—a point which is contradicted by Paul’s words that he learned from Peter. Rather, it would seem that Paul is discussing the relative obscurity of his unique call (gospel) to the Gentiles. The direction of information was *from* Peter *to* Paul rather than the other way.¹⁶⁹ The same was true of the churches of Judea which heard “*only* . . . ‘He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy,’” (1:23). Thus, Paul’s gospel and call are legitimate and true, though others may not have been aware of them.¹⁷⁰

The Example of Titus 2:1-10

The example of Titus advances Paul’s argument by giving tangible definition to his heretofore abstract “gospel to the Gentiles.” Titus is the quintessential test case for Paul’s gospel

¹⁶⁷Cf. above the comments by Stendahl on page 151.

¹⁶⁸Bornkamm, “The Revelation of Christ to Paul,” 95-96.

¹⁶⁹Howard, *Crisis in Galatia*, 36.

¹⁷⁰This would also explain why Paul had to go up again to Jerusalem to lay out his gospel before the pillars—because they were unfamiliar with Paul’s call.

because he is an adult, male, believing Gentile. He thus embodies the critical question at hand: must Gentiles become Jews?¹⁷¹ When the decision is made that he should not have to be circumcised Paul rejoices that “the truth of the gospel” might remain with his audience. Nowhere in the story does Paul hint that the real subject was a question between human merit and divine grace; rather, the issue is the historical question of Gentiles taking on the yoke of the law. The final decision which is reached and confirmed by the pillars is that Paul’s apostleship to the Gentiles is legitimate and appropriate (2:8-9).

The Conflict at Antioch 2:11-14

The story at Antioch advances Paul’s introduction to its strategic goal as it provides another test case which further defines the issue, but more importantly, furnishes Paul the opportunity to perfectly articulate the issue. This is in keeping with the pattern of rhetoric which Betz has identified.

The majority rule says that the *narratio* should “end where the issue to be determined begins.” It cannot be accidental that at the end of the *narratio* in Gal 2:14, when Paul formulates the dilemma which Cephas is in, this dilemma is identical with the issue the Galatians themselves have to decide: “why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?”¹⁷²

The *focus* of the problem then lay not with Peter’s hypocritical behavior *per se*, but with the implications which it held for Gentiles.¹⁷³ That is, the problem was that Peter’s behavior forced Gentiles “to live like Jews.” To interpret Paul’s phrase as “to live like legalists” understanding “legalists” as those who sought to merit God’s favor by adherence to ritual is to force far too much from the term “Ἰουδαίζω.” First, the term simply means “to live as a Jew, according to Jewish customs.”¹⁷⁴ Second, the story defines the problem and the term as a simple conflict of Jewish and Gentile identity. Peter originally enjoyed table fellowship with Gentiles implying that they were equals and then afterwards excluded himself from them implying that they would only be equals if they became Jewish through circumcision (2:12). Peter did not force his

¹⁷¹If Paul’s point in the book was the validity of the law itself or the validity of the law for Jews then a better test case would have been an infant Jewish male.

¹⁷²Betz, *Galatians*, 62.

¹⁷³Even grammatically as Paul states the problem his concern is not so much with Peter’s behavior itself as with how it affects others. Peter’s behavior is merely the premise for the question, “Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἔθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαίσειν.”

¹⁷⁴BAG, s.v. “Ἰουδαίζω,” and W. Gutbrod, “Ἰουδαίζω,” *TDNT*, 3:380-82.

fellow Gentile believers to become “merit-oriented legalists” but he did force them to become Jews, and thus denied the truth of Paul’s gospel that Messiah should be preached among Gentiles (not proselytes!) who are fellow heirs (equals) with Jews.¹⁷⁵

The Proposition (*Propositio*) 2:15-21

The purpose of the *propositio* is to sum up the *narratio*’s material content and to set up the arguments to be discussed later in the *probatio* (chapters 3 and 4).¹⁷⁶ This section does just that as it serves one hand to answer the problem in Antioch, setting out Paul’s argument in summary form, and thus prepares the way for his fuller exposition of the argument in 3:1–4:31. Paul articulates the two “gospels” here in summary form which he only mentioned in his introduction.

Paul acknowledges the distinction between Jew and Gentile in 2:15-16; Jews possess and obey the Law while Gentiles do not. This advantage, however, does not lead to acceptance with God. That only comes through the One who is completely acceptable to God, Jesus Christ. Thus, even Jews find justification not in the observance of the Law but by personal faith in the faithfulness of Christ (2:16). Thus, Paul’s and Peter’s acceptance comes “in Christ” (δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ, 2:17). The problem comes when it is realized, however, that they are not alone “in Christ,” for Gentiles find their blessing in the same place, making Jew and Gentile “one in Christ” (3:28). Thus when Peter was properly expressing his acceptance “in Christ” at the table with others who were “in Christ,” certain Jews objected that Christ was causing Peter to sin by exposing himself to Gentile uncleanness (2:17). Paul’s response is that the real transgression in this matter is to rebuild the barrier of the law between Jew and Gentile which are “in Christ” (2:18). Paul has found within the law itself (Genesis 12:3, *et al.*)

¹⁷⁵Far too much is also made of the phrase with which Paul describes Peter as “living like a Gentile” (ὁπαρχῶν ἔθνικῶς). Sanders has forcefully argued that given the context, Paul is referring to Peter’s correct behavior of fellowshipping with Gentiles at the table. This does not imply that Peter ate pork but rather that he accepted Gentiles as equals. This is true both to the context and to the custom of the times. The text explicitly states that it the issue was not the menu at the table but the guests. Paul did not necessarily withdraw to a kosher table from a non-kosher one, but to one which included only Jews from one which included Gentiles. In the Jewish culture of the time one’s companions at meal were just as important as one’s diet. Cf. E. P. Sanders, “Jewish Association with Gentiles and Galatians 2:11-14,” in *Studies in Paul and John: The Conversation Continues: In Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, eds. Robert T. Fortna, and Beverly R. Gaventa (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1990), 170-88.

To put this in *literary* perspective, Paul’s point in the text is not to argue with Peter for his equivocation concerning diet or his personal stance toward the law (for neither are mentioned) but for his ambivalence toward associating with Gentiles and his final stance which “forced” them to become Jews in order to be accepted.

¹⁷⁶Betz, *Galatians*, 114.

divine reason to no longer live with the law as his basis of identity (which excludes Gentiles from acceptance) in order to live to God (2:19). A new basis for Paul's identity has been found in Messiah. A new age has dawned which has superseded the age of Moses and only in identification with the crucifixion of Christ does Paul live. As he participates in Christ's death he is accepted as righteous and this is the source of blessing for all others as well (2:20). Thus, righteousness does not come through the Law but through participation in the substitutionary atonement of Christ's death (2:21). Blessing is found in Christ, not in law.

The Proofs (*Probatio*) 3:1–4:31

The center portion of the epistle is not distinct in subject, only in form. In this section Paul begins to unpack his argument and support his basic thesis which was introduced and articulated in summary form in chapters 1–2.¹⁷⁷

Although Paul's argument may appear convoluted at times, he consistently argues a singular theme. Particularly in chapter 3 Paul argues that his readers have already attained the blessings of Abraham by virtue of being in Christ. In 3:1-5 he refers to the past event of their reception of "the Spirit." The Spirit is further defined as "the promise Spirit" and the "blessing of Abraham" in 3:14 and finally states that his readers are indeed Abraham's offspring because they are in Christ in 3:29.

The Means of Blessing (the Gospel: Argument from Experience) 3: 1-5

Paul's proof here is not to prove that his readership is saved because they believe, but rather to work backwards from the proof to the cause of their salvation. The reception of the Spirit (3:2), is powerful proof of their salvation and Paul is willing to stake his whole argument (τοῦτο μόνον, 3:2) on how they received salvation. He questions "Was the best evidence of salvation (the Spirit) received because of your identification with Moses expressed through obedience to the Law or through acceptance of the message of the gospel?" Obviously, the correct answer was "through the message of the gospel," the faithfulness of Christ expressed in the crucifixion (3: 1).

The Source of Sonship (the Gospel: Argument from Scripture) 3: 6-9

¹⁷⁷"In a speech the *probatio* section is the most decisive of all because in it the 'proofs' are presented. This part determines whether or not the speech as a whole will succeed," Betz, *Galatians*, 128.

Paul now argues the same point (καθὼς) from a different perspective, that of Scripture instead of experience. In the same way that the Galatians received the promise of God through the message of the gospel, so also Abraham received the blessing of God through his reception of the gospel preached beforehand (3:8). Those who are “ἐκ πίστεως” (3:7) that is, who are identified with the gospel message (ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, 3:1, 2, 5) are the sons of Abraham. This is so because God promised that Gentiles would be blessed “in you,” (3:8), that is “in Abraham’s seed,” which is Christ. Thus, those who are “ἐκ πίστεως” are to be identified with those who are “in you/Christ.” Therefore those who are “of the faith(fullness of Christ)” (3:9a) are blessed with Abraham the believer (3:9b).

The Role of the Law (Not Blessing but Curse) 3:10-14

Although the law had many purposes¹⁷⁸ Paul now focuses upon its role in redemption history. The nation of Israel, due to repeated covenant disloyalty suffered the promised curse of Deuteronomy in 586 B.C. Although the immediate exile lasted only seventy years the “curse of the law” remained on the people according to Daniel until the coming of Messiah. Paul agrees that Christ redeemed Israel from the curse of the Law with the result that “in Christ” the blessing of Abraham might come to Gentiles. Thus, the law was not the means of blessing. It’s role was to bring Israel under a curse, highlighting the necessity for redemption. The law, though not a curse itself, did bring Israel under a curse because of her covenant disloyalty from which she was freed by Christ’s atoning death. The fulfillment of the promise of redemption, while having implications first of all for Israel, also spilled over in blessing to Gentiles as well.¹⁷⁹ The law had a role in redemption history but its role was not to bless but to curse.

¹⁷⁸Cf. J. D. Pentecost, “The Purpose of the Law,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 128 (1971): 227-33.

¹⁷⁹Our understanding Paul’s point in 3:11-12 is not quite as clear. Normally, 3:12 is understood as saying that the Law does not deal with believing but rather with doing or meriting favor with God. In Leviticus 18 however, the promise is held out as a positive and realistic goal of enjoying life in the land. Nehemiah also quotes the verse in 9:29 in a discourse about how the “curse of the law” has come upon the nation. Nehemiah seems to understand the verse in its original sense in order to place the blame for the exile on the people, implying that she could have enjoyed life in the land if she had simply obeyed. “You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen,” (9:29, NIV). Understood in this way, Paul’s argument in 3:10-14 concerning the historical-redemptive purpose of the law would be buttressed. In reference to 3:11 Hays understands Paul’s thought to be Messianic based upon the septuagintal emphasis. Hays, “The Faith of Jesus Christ,” 155-57.

The Priority of Promise to Law 3:15-18

Paul's point in this section is to clarify the chronological relationship between promise and law. In order to do this he must clarify that the promise given to Abraham was in reality a promise concerning Messiah. Thus in 3:16 he points out that the promises given concerning Abraham refer ultimately to his "'seed' that is Christ" (3:16). Thus, the promise that Gentiles would be blessed in Christ came long before the law and the law cannot change the prior promise (3:17). This is why inheritance, i.e., Abrahamic blessing is not based "in law," especially for Gentiles (3:18).

The Temporary Nature of Law in Redemption History 3:19-26

In explaining the temporary nature of the law in redemption history Paul more fully unpacks the compact point which he introduced in 3:10-14. The two major points which Paul makes in this section are introduced immediately in 3:19 when he says: (1) the law was given because of transgressions and (2) its role in redemption anticipates and is limited to the coming of the seed.

Paul's references to "transgressions" (3:19) and being "shut up" (3:23) are probably best understood in light of his argument concerning the curse of the law (3:10, 13-14). Because of Israel's transgressions, she was cursed and "shut up" until the coming of Christ. This section in particular is colored with historical terms which clue the reader that Paul is speaking in national and historical, not in individual terms. He is not saying that no one was saved before the coming of Christ, but that Israel in particular (3:23) and the world in general (3:22)¹⁸⁰ lived in the anticipatory stage of history until Christ came.¹⁸¹ The law thus was a tutor to lead Israel until Messiah (3:24). When Messiah came the law was like a sign post whose purpose in *heilsgeschichte* was fulfilled when the final destination had been reached.

¹⁸⁰Paul uses the more general word "Scripture" in 3:22 which he says has "shut up all men under sin" and then becomes particular in 3:23 saying "we . . . were under law." Although it is difficult to be dogmatic it seems that Paul's references to "we" are to the Jewish people (2:15; 3:13, 23; 4:3) while often the second person is reserved for Paul's audience, namely Gentiles (3:1; 4:6). The theological basis for the distinction is simply that God's blessing of his people Israel results in blessings for the world as well. Cf. Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14," 95-99. In redemption history Israel's plight under the law was a microcosm of the world. As Israel was cursed because of her disobedience and longed for redemption, so also the nations who did not have God's law would need redemption as well. Cf. also Donaldson's comments below in note 183.

¹⁸¹Simeon is an example of one who though personally saved, longed for the rescue of his nation from the curse, "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him," (Luke 2:25, NIV). Cf. also Luke 2:38 and the example of Anna who longed for the "redemption of Jerusalem."

The Means and Source of Blessing 3:27-29

In this section Paul's argument begun in 3:1 comes full circle. His point that his readers are "in Christ" and that all who are in Christ are therefore sons of Abraham summarizes his argument. His readers received the promise of the Spirit because of their acceptance of the gospel of Christ. Being in Christ makes them "heirs according to the promise." Thus Abrahamic blessings are found in Christ, not in law.

The Illustration of the Pedagogue 4:1-11

Paul's illustration of the pedagogue does not seem to introduce any new ideas into his argument, rather it forcefully illustrates the temporary nature of the role of the law.¹⁸² The same basic message of 3:10-14 and 3:19-26 is repeated. Israel was held in bondage under the curse of the law but only for a time. Just as a child anticipates his freedom from the "guardians and managers" who are over him (4:1-2) so also Christ came to redeem Israel (4:4-5). This redemption, in turn, provided blessings not only for Israel (4:5) but also for the nations ("you," 4:6-7) as well. Paul's fear is that his readership may be turning back the clock of redemption history by turning from Christ to Law. If they do this they will "turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things," (4:9). Although being "under law" is not to be equated with the paganism (4:8-9) from which the Galatians had been saved, being under the curse of the law was a similar form of slavery.¹⁸³

The Personal Argument 4:12-20

Paul's argument here differs from the preceding chapters in that it becomes very personal. His appeal is emotional and is based upon the past relationship between the apostle and the readers.

¹⁸²"Both the analogy of the παιδαγωγός in 3. 24-25 and the analogy of the heir in 4. 1-7 are constructed by Paul to illustrate this point about the temporally restricted character of Torah, to serve its function between the time that it is given at Sinai and the 'fullness of times' when Messiah arrives." T. David Gordon, "A Note on παιδαγωγός in Galatians 3:24-25," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 152.

¹⁸³"On the one hand, Israel's plight is part of a universal plight. All people are under the sway of the demonic forces of the cosmos (4.3, 9), and hence under sin (3. 22). Israel's possession of the law does not alter this fact (4. 3); in fact, if Gentile Christians joined Israel ὑπὸ νόμον, they would *ipso facto* be returning to existence ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (vv. 8 f.). But on the other hand, Israel's plight is a special form of the universal plight. While Gentiles are under the 'elemental spirits', they are not under law; despite the similarities, a distinction remains between minor sons and slaves. To be ὑπὸ νόμον is a special way of being ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου," Donaldson, "Galatians 3:13-14," 103-4.

The Illustration of the Two Women 4:21-31

This is Paul's concluding proof from scripture. By means of his "allegory" he illustrates and clarifies the decision which the readers must make by citing Abraham's decision. Paul's first point is made in a comparison with Abraham's two sons. Isaac was born by means of a promise as were the Galatians who were also "sons of Abraham" (3:7) because of the promise (3:8). Ishmael, however, was the son of a slave woman as were Paul's opponents. Paul then expands his metaphor by comparing the women to two covenants, the old covenant of the Law, founded on Mt. Sinai and corresponding to the earthly Jerusalem and the new covenant founded by Messiah corresponding to the heavenly Jerusalem. The apostle very clearly casts the story here in terms he has used throughout the epistle: identity with Moses and his covenant versus identity with Messiah and his covenant. He then quotes Isaiah 54:1 which concerns the promise of redemption for the nation of Israel from the captivity and exile. Isaiah's promise speaks of the desperate situation of exiled Israel in terms of a woman who has been divorced (54:4-8). In reality his words in 54:1 are an encouragement that though she will be estranged from her husband, someday he will remember her with a "covenant of peace" (Isaiah 54:9-10) and in that day of renewal and redemption from divorce "the sons of the [once] desolate one [exiled Israel] will be [in the new covenant] more numerous than the sons of the married woman [old covenant, pre-exilic Israel]." In this way, Paul not only identifies his readers as true heirs of Abraham, because they are of the promise, but also calls upon prophetic witness that the Galatians are part of the group of "more children" of the new covenant brought in Christ. At the same time he uses the allegory to clarify that those who are identified with Moses and not Christ are not children of promise but of slavery, thus driving a wedge between the Galatians and Paul's opponents. In a final reference to scripture he appeals then to his readers to "cast out" those who are not of the new covenant.

The Exhortation (*Exhortatio*) 5:1-6:10

Paul concludes this letter in normal fashion with a series of practical exhortations and warnings. He warns once more (5:1-12) that for his readers the choices of Messiah and Moses are mutually exclusive (5:4). Gentiles who submit to circumcision, by definition, deny the work of Christ. Otherwise, since his readers are now recipients of the Spirit they are encouraged to walk in the power provided.

Epistolary Postscript (*Conclusio*) 6:11-18

Paul uses the close of his letter to once again summarize the main argument and to add a final emotional appeal. The opponents are those who would compel his readership to choose law (6:12-13) over the Cross of Christ (6:14-15). Finally in 6:15 Paul says that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything. While one might expect him to say that only circumcision is nothing, he speaks of both as inconsequential in regard to salvation. He does not deny the existence of Jew and Gentile (6:15-16), but wants to focus and boast in the only legitimate badge of covenant membership, the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's final emotional appeal is seen in his reference to the physical marks which his loyalty to Christ has brought him, the legitimate mark corresponding to the illegitimate marks his opponents would impose.

Conclusion

We began this chapter by evaluating recent approaches to the book of Galatians. It was determined that any understanding of the book which claims to unlock its message must deal adequately with the antithesis between "works" and "faith" which is central to Paul's argument. The traditional "Lutheran" approach paraphrased the contrast as human effort versus human faith, a view which has a hoary tradition and the support of many recent interpreters. The view understood "works of the law" as legalistic attempts to merit God's favor. Two problems with this view, however were its non-historical caricature of Judaism as it was intended and practiced and its failure to deal in a historical-grammatical fashion with the text of Deuteronomy.

Recognizing the problems inherent in the "Lutheran" approach, James Dunn and others proposed that Paul's apparent disdain for "works of the Law" stemmed from the exclusive nature of the law which kept Gentiles at an arms length. He acknowledges that while the law served to protect Israel its purpose was not to exclude Gentiles and that in reality the problems in Antioch and Galatia were a human distortion of the Law. Thus, according to Dunn, Paul's argument was not with the Law but with the wrong application of the Law which excluded Gentiles. While his view rightly attempted to grapple with the historical problems of the first century it also failed on at least two counts: (1) specifically, it failed to deal convincingly with Paul's discussion of the "curse of the law" and (2) more generally, Paul's argument is with the Law itself and not a *mis*understanding of it.

A third view is espoused by a growing fellowship of New Testament exegetes who see the antithesis not between two types of human activity but between human activity and divine activity. That is, the essence of πίστις as Paul defines it is the specific faithfulness of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary, so that the choice which Paul lays before his readers is "choose between what *you can do for yourself* or what *God has done for you*." This view, proposed with slight variations by both Howard and Hays is convincing for the second side of the contrast (faith) but again fails in its dealing with the first side (works). Howard follows Dunn's helpful but insufficient view of exclusivism and Hays simply assumes that "works" is a reference to human activity.

The proposal of this chapter was that the essence of the "works—faith" contrast had to be understood in the historical context of the crisis in Galatia and in the scriptural context of the Old Testament. The historical questions grew out of a particular situation and Paul's answer to those questions is very specific. The crisis first of all involved the relationship of Gentiles to the law and the question of how Gentiles were to be included with Jews in the blessings of Abraham. Although the churches of Galatia were most likely composed of a mix of Jew and Gentile, as Paul addresses his letter, he writes to persuade those who are considering becoming Jewish by circumcision not to do so. His aim is focused on a single target. Likewise, Paul's gospel of which he speaks in this letter can not be identified with the generic "justification by faith." Though this is a necessary component of his gospel, what he preached (1:11) to the Galatians was the specific gospel of the Messiah for Gentiles (1:12-16). It is his call to Gentiles and not his understanding of grace which distinguishes him from the other apostles (2:7-9). Thus, when *his* readers are tempted to take on the Law, Paul is particularly astonished that they have so quickly deserted his gospel. This is the historical context.

The scriptural context was most helpful in unlocking Paul's meaning of the "works—faith" antithesis. Paul states that all those who are of the "works of the law" are under a curse. The traditional interpretation sees this as the story of every individual who attempts to earn his salvation. Paul's quotation however does not point to the theology of Romans 1-3, but rather to the national covenant of Israel, Deuteronomy 27. It was determined that those who were of "the works of the Law" were merely members of Jewish society who found their identity in the covenant of Moses by obeying the covenant. The curse of the law was the one promised for the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 27-30 of exile and disenfranchisement from covenant blessing for serious covenant disloyalty. This curse came

upon the nation until “the consolation of Israel, the seed of Abraham” came to redeem Israel from it and inaugurate eschatological blessing in a new covenant. Thus, those of “the works of the Law” are those identified with Moses and the era of the law before Messiah.

The second side of the antithesis, “faith” is first defined by Paul in 2:16 as πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Rather than a reference to individual human faith in Christ it was determined that the phrase probably refers to the “faithfulness of Jesus Christ” expressed in the fulfillment of the promise of redemption on Calvary. Because Paul defines the phrase in 2:16 and in 3:22-26 he often refers to the same concept in an abbreviated way as simply “the faith” (3:23, *et al.*) Paul freely speaks of the time before the coming of the faith and the time afterwards which is characterized by the faith (3:22-26). Paul’s references are not to the coming of individual trust but to the epochal stage in redemption history in which God faithfully keeps his promise of redemption in Messiah. Thus, the second side of the contrast was defined as the “faithfulness of Jesus Christ” and those who were “of this faith” were those who, in contrast to those of the works of the law, found their identity in Messiah’s work on Calvary and the new age which he introduced.

This, the definitive point on the historical-redemptive timeline, has profound implications for both Israel but particularly for the nations. Paul argues that God’s original commitment to Abraham promised that Gentiles would be blessed “in him.” Through the unfolding of the story of Genesis it was clear that “in him,” meant specifically “in Abraham’s seed, which is Christ.” Paul’s point then is that since the seed has come, and believing Gentiles are “in Christ,” they are therefore blessed with Abrahamic sonship and blessing. That is, since the Galatians are “in Christ” they have already qualified as heirs of Abraham. Paul then clarifies the limited role of the law in this blessing. In redemption history the law was by no means the channel of Abrahamic blessing; rather, it brought a curse. It’s role was to bring Israel under a curse in order to lead her to Christ who would redeem Israel from the curse of the Law. Thus, the role of the law in redemptive history was limited to the nation of Israel, limited by time and limited to a purpose of cursing from which only the seed could redeem them. Now that the seed has come and Gentiles find their blessing “in Him,” it is a folly of infinite proportions, not to mention a denial of the source of their blessing, to return to the pre-messianic era by attempting to find Abrahamic blessing in the law. Thus, *the inclusion of Gentiles in the blessings of Abraham is accomplished by their incorporation in Christ rather than in Law.*

If this is an accurate summary of what Paul has said in his epistle, then we are now able to speak to the issue of what Paul has not said. In light of the fact that Paul's argument is addressed to a specific, historical situation we should point out that the book of Galatians should not be understood as Paul's theology of law. His discussion is very focused on the relationship of Gentiles to the law and the role of the law in redemption history. He does not address the relationship of Jewish believers to the law¹⁸⁴ and it is clear that the role of the law in redemption history was not its only role. We are reminded of the error which Barr has described as "illegitimate totality transfer."¹⁸⁵ Although νόμος can refer to several different aspects of God's law for Paul, it is illegitimate to think that every time it appears that Paul refers to every aspect or function of the law.¹⁸⁶ Though a major role of the law (to bring Israel under a curse) was fulfilled at the coming of Christ, Paul simply does not speak to the role of the law as an administrative covenant for the nation of Israel. Whether the role of the Law as Israel's regulatory document did or did not end is not the subject of Paul's letter.¹⁸⁷ But the book of Galatians does not provide Paul's entire theology of law and though we may eagerly speculate about the missing pieces from what we have seen, such speculation has no revelational basis in this letter.

¹⁸⁴Except in 2:16-20 where Paul says (1) the law is insufficient for salvation and he no longer looks to it as his source of blessing and (2) the law does not stand as a barrier between Jew and Gentile who are unified in Christ.

¹⁸⁵James Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: University Press, 1961), 217-22.

¹⁸⁶Gordon, "A note on παιδαγωγός in Galatians 3:24-25," 150.

¹⁸⁷We would argue, of course, that in God's view the Old covenant ended when the New began, on Calvary.

CONCLUSION

Hebrews

We began this exercise with an investigation of the book of Hebrews. It was concluded that the author's concern was not to pit Jesus against angels, or Moses, or Aaron as individuals but as facets of a singular concept, the Old Covenant. His contrast from the beginning to the end of the book is, in reality, between two covenants, the old represented by Moses and the New represented by Jesus. The author clearly states that the New Covenant has come, and was founded at Calvary (chapter 7). This, however, is not new information since explicit revelation concerning the foundation of the New Covenant is at least as old the Last Supper. The author of Hebrews continues to show the mutually exclusive nature of the two covenants which, as well, may not be seen as new information (chapter 8). Paul and others saw the coming of Messiah as the beginning of a distinctive historical era and often contrasted it with the era of the law. What the writer of Hebrews does offer, however, as a unique contribution to the New Testament canon is the incompatibility of the two covenants, particularly in regard to regulation of worship (chapters 9–10). He speaks in detail about the sacrificial system which has been rendered obsolete and then offers several New Covenant replacements such as sacrifices of praise and good works (chapter 13).

Part of the reason that the book of Hebrews is able to make a unique and original contribution to New Testament theology is because it is written to a peculiarly Jewish audience and a major part of its subject is the relative validity of the law as an administrative covenant for Jewish believers. The author's literary design is to encourage Jewish professing believers to continue in Christ and not turn back to Judaism, and one of the bases for his exhortation is simply that Judaism as defined by the Old Covenant no longer exists as a viable option in God's economy. It has been superceded and abrogated by the New Covenant. Thus, regardless of any other New Testament regulation, it would be impossible for a Jewish believer, having been enlightened by the truth of Hebrews to, in good conscience, participate in Old Covenant cultic worship.

Acts

The book of Acts is a theological history from an earlier time period than Hebrews. The book begins with the promise and fulfillment of the gift of the Spirit which Peter interprets as a sign of eschatological blessing promised by the prophet Joel. He and his fellows understand that New Covenant blessing has come. In chapter 8 the gospel begins to spread and by chapters 10 and 15 Gentiles are introduced and welcomed into the growing Church. Though many understand the rejection of Judaism to be a prerequisite to the Gentile mission we have concluded it was not. The Cornelius incident (chapters 10–11) and the Jerusalem Council (chapter 15) do teach the acceptance of Gentiles into the Church but do not imply a corresponding rejection of Israel. Though the majority of the nation had rejected Messiah, Luke sees God still working through believing Messianic Jews who reach out to include Gentiles. These believing Jews see Messiah as the fulfillment of God's promises to them and seek to express their faithfulness to God through obedience to the scriptures as given by Moses. They do not see faith in Jesus as the Messiah as a rejection of Judaism or the founding of a new religion but as an affirmation that "the final expression and intent of Judaism had been born."¹ Even Paul, whose argues so vociferously against the Law in his epistles, is seen demonstrating his obedience to the Law in Acts 21.

Galatians

If Paul wrote the book of Galatians immediately after his first missionary journey then it would be one of the first contributions to the New Testament. Having given careful attention to the historical situation we concluded that Paul did not write to give a comprehensive theology of Law. Rather his aim was to answer the historical and specific question of "should Gentiles become Jewish (by taking on Mosaic obligation) in order to obtain Abrahamic sonship." Paul's answer was basically twofold. First, he affirmed that Gentiles are blessed *in Christ* with Abraham's blessings and second, the temporary role of the law in redemption history was not to bless but to bring Israel under a curse. Thus, for Gentiles to turn from Christ to the Law would be to attempt the impossible of turning back God's eschatological time clock and to deny their only source of blessing of being *in Christ*. No longer is the Mosaic covenant the badge of the "heir of Abraham." Now blessing is only found "in Christ" and specifically in identification with his crucifixion. In the book of Galatians Paul argues that the New

¹Davies, "Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation," 6.

Covenant has come. He sees Gentiles as not obligated to Moses and declares that identification with the Law is completely insufficient for salvation. In short, a new age had dawned which signalled the redemption of Israel and direct blessing for Gentiles in the Seed of Abraham apart from the Law.

Synthesis

The question is how to harmonize the conflicting teachings concerning law in the New Testament.² One guideline which this study may offer is to avoid reading discussions which concern freedom from law for Gentiles (Galatians, Acts 10, 15) as though they were directed toward Jews. A second guideline is to note the progress of revelation in the New Testament. Clearly, the Twelve understood very early and were reminded forcefully at Pentecost, that upon the death of Christ they had begun to enjoy a New Covenant relationship with God. Later, through the revelation given to Peter in Acts 10 and through the special calling of Paul, the Church began to understand the implications which this held for Gentiles. Now that Christ had come, Gentiles were fellow heirs of the promises apart from the Law. They were to be included in the body of the redeemed because both Jew and Gentile experienced unity in Christ. At the same time, however, Jewish believers continued to express their obedience to God through Mosaic regulations of worship, even while recognizing their redemption from the curse of the Law through Christ. Based upon the evidence we would conclude that they apparently did not see a conflict between the Old and New covenants. Later, however, near the practical close of New Testament revelation, near A. D. 64 the book of Hebrews clarified the relationship between the two covenants teaching that they were incompatible and mutually exclusive. No longer would worship along Mosaic lines be acceptable. Thus, the varied teachings concerning the law in the New Testament must be understood in their historical contexts. In this way what we see in the New Testament is not conflict but progress.

In concluding his review of the voluminous literature concerning “Paul and the Law in the last ten years” Douglas Moo has written:

Any genuine understanding of Paul’s diverse teaching on the law must seek for theological frameworks and grids as integrating models. True, exegesis can easily be forced into a framework that distorts it: too often exegetical integrity has been sacrificed on the altar of

²We recognize that any conclusions which are drawn concerning New Testament theology must be considered tentative simply because we have not exhausted all the material. The three books which we have chosen, however are crucial to this discussion so that hopefully we may speak at least accurately if not completely.

doctrinal uniformity. But the exegete has not done his job until he has searched *in the material* for clues to such larger, integrating models. It is when such a model is found that fairly handles the diverse material of the pauline letters that the “problem” of Paul and the law will be solved.³

We do not claim to have provided a final solution to the “problem” of Paul and the law but it is hoped that we have provided a larger, integrating model by which Paul and the theology of Law in the New Testament may be understood.

³Moo, “Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years,” 306-7.