

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

*THE PRIVILEGE OF ISRAEL: CHRISTOLOGY AND THE  
JEWS IN PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS*

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the thesis is to establish if there is any anti-Judaic content in Paul's thinking. Part 1 (chapters 1 to 3) consists of a study of Paul's attitude to Israel in the letter to the Romans. The results obtained are then compared with those gained from an examination of the Christological content of the letter (Part 2: chapters 4 to 7). The conclusion is that while it is the apostle's understanding that nothing in his thought is denigrating to Israel and that he upholds her traditions and place as the chosen people, his belief in the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation, and that Israel is wrong to have rejected him, may be seen as implicitly anti-Judaic. Part 3 sets the study in the context of modern Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Chapter 1 sets out the problem and notes the current spectrum of opinion on the question of continuity and discontinuity between the church and Israel. The relevance of Christological study is explained, as is the choice of Romans as the focus of the thesis. Chapter 2 examines Romans 14:1-15:6 and argues that Paul adopts a favourable attitude towards Israel: Jewish practices are not obsolete in the new era. This conclusion is supported in chapter 3 which considers Rom 1:16-3:31 and chapters 9 to 11. While Paul may criticise Israel's lack of belief, he thinks the gospel as an entirely Jewish phenomenon and does not polemicise against unbelieving Jews.

Chapter 4 examines the idea of Messiahship in Romans and again concludes that Paul cannot be said to be hostile to Israel. Here, however, we detect an implied supersessionist tendency in his thought. Chapter 5 contends that Christ's faithfulness to God's plan means that the promises to Israel may be fulfilled (3:21ff). Chapter 6 investigates the Christological content of Romans 5 to 8: here we find that the "apocalyptic" divide between the old and new eras is emphasised and consequently, the profound difference between the church and Israel; exclusivist and supersessionist elements are found in Paul's thinking. Chapter 7 considers the statement of 10:4 that Christ is the  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  of the Law, and argues that Christology itself requires both continuity and discontinuity between the church and Israel. The second part of this chapter returns to Romans 14:1-15:6 to examine its Christological content. The tendency to emphasise the difference between believers and the outside world is again observed but, it is contended, Paul deliberately underlines the similarities between the church and Israel for the sake of his argument.

Chapter 8 (part three) draws the results of the study together, and considers how they may be employed in contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. A survey of modern Jewish writers on Paul confirms that exclusivism and supersessionism can be offensive from the perspective of the unbelieving Jew.

## **Author's Declaration**

I affirm that this thesis is entirely my own work and that all significant quotations have been acknowledged in the footnotes. No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for consideration for any degree.

Marion L.S. Carson

April 1998

## Notes

The Greek NT text used throughout the thesis is the Nestle-Aland 26th ed. Biblical translations are taken from the RSV. In the footnotes, the Harvard referencing system is used, citing only the author's surname, date of publication and page number. In the case of commentaries on Romans, only the author's surname and page number are cited.

The LXX text referred to is edited by A. Rahlfs, Stuttgart 1935. Texts and translations of Greek and Latin authors are from the Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann).

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations employed in the text, footnotes and bibliography of works cited, may be found in "Instructions for Contributors" *JBL* 107 (1988), 579-96, with the exception of the following:

ZPE    *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

SH    *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* Sanday, W. & Headlam, A.C. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Paul, Christology and Israel.

#### 1. Christology and anti-Semitism: blood relations? Rosemary Ruether vs Lloyd Gaston.

1.1. Should the apostle Paul be held responsible for centuries of Christian anti-Semitism? According to Rosemary Ruether, Paul's theology (along with that of other New Testament and patristic writers) forms the basis of and "constantly takes social expression in" anti-Semitism, even up to the present day.<sup>1</sup> His position, she declares, is "undoubtedly that of anti-Judaism".<sup>2</sup>

Ruether writes,

"The Mosaic covenant is seen as belonging to a people who were apostate from the beginning. Its essential nature is that of carnality, unbelief and hardness of heart. It belongs to the sphere of the old Adam. The covenant of the promise was given *before* the Mosaic covenant and *apart* from it, and its destiny is fulfilled with the coming of Christ. Only those who believe in Christ, whether from among the Jews or the Gentiles, belong to this spiritual community of the promise. Those who imagine that the Mosaic covenant itself provides an ongoing relation to God will be cast out as sons of the aeon of enslavement" (104).

A platonist who thinks in terms of a sharp dualism between the spiritual and the material, Paul sees the coming of the Messiah as having introduced a spiritual world in which all things material are superseded. The rejection of Christ by the Jews means that they cannot enter that new spiritual world and must be relegated to that which is old and carnal, rejected as the slave woman and her children who are cast out (Gal 4:21-31) "so that they may not inherit together with the children of the free woman" (cf. Gal 4:30).<sup>3</sup> True spirituality and salvation cannot be found in the old

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<sup>1</sup> Ruether 1974, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ruether 1974, 104.



fleshly age, and Israel cannot boast in its history or Law; the true children of Abraham are to be found in the church (Gal 3 and Rom 4), as is the true understanding of Israel's Torah (2 Cor 3:7ff). Judaism must be rejected (although Jews are not excluded from the possibility of entering the new community), because it does not believe in Christ. Thus Paul "demonises" Judaism. Even his belief that the Jews will be converted at the end time (Rom 11:25f) is anti-Jewish because it renders Judaism essentially invalid as a salvific system. Judaism is, in effect, made obsolete and is superseded entirely by the church. As long as Jews refuse to accept Jesus, and as long as Christians see that refusal as wrong, the situation cannot change. Thus Ruether makes her famous and still disturbing statement that anti-Semitism is the "left hand" of Christology. Aware that this leads to something of an impasse in Jewish-Christian relations, she is compelled to ask,

"[I]s it possible for Christianity to accept the truth of this refusal without at the same time rejecting totally its own messianic experience in Jesus? Is it possible to purge Christianity of anti-Judaism without at the same time pulling up Christian faith? Is it possible to say 'Jesus is Messiah' without, implicitly or explicitly, saying at the same time 'and the Jews be damned'?"<sup>4</sup>

Her own view is rather pessimistic. "Possibly," she concludes, "anti-Judaism is too deeply embedded in the foundations of Christianity to be rooted out entirely without destroying the whole structure."<sup>5</sup>

1.2. Ruether's book, with its gloomy conclusion and shocking indictment of Paul, provoked Lloyd Gaston to look at the apostle's letters afresh and try to exonerate him of the charge of anti-Judaism which she levels against him. He writes,

"A Christian church with an antisemitic New Testament is abominable, but a Christian church without a New Testament is inconceivable. Many would add

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<sup>3</sup> Ruether 1974, 103.

<sup>4</sup> Ruether 1974, 246.

<sup>5</sup> Ruether 1974, 228.

that a New Testament without the Christ-event as its material centre and the Pauline corpus as its formal centre would not be the New Testament at all."<sup>6</sup>

According to Gaston, the Holocaust has shown up the necessity for the Christian church to declare itself opposed to any form of social anti-Semitism within its ranks and in society as a whole. However, Paul appears to be theologically anti-Jewish, and thus to be legitimating social anti-Semitism. The question, therefore, is this: can the church retain Paul or must he be rejected as having views incompatible with the Christian faith?

Gaston's engagement with this question led him to a thorough reappraisal of Paul's teaching on the Law. The abrogation of Torah, he asserts, is what "most disturbs Jewish interpreters and those who know something of the concept of the Torah in Jewish writers".<sup>7</sup> Traditional exegesis, he argues, has been wrong to see Paul as criticising Israel and the Torah. Everything the apostle says about the Law must be seen in the context of his mission to the Gentiles. Jesus has come for the Gentiles only, providing a means of salvation for them, as the Scriptures teach. The only criticism that he has of the Jews is that they have failed to recognise this and therefore failed to support the mission to the Gentiles. "For Paul," he writes,

"Jesus is neither a new Moses nor the Messiah, he is not the climax of the history of God's dealing with Israel, but he is the fulfilment of God's promises concerning the Gentiles, and this is what he accused the Jews of not recognising. Paul never accuses Jews of lacking zeal for Torah, and certainly not of legalism, but rather of disobedience to the new revelation given to him. Thus the reproaches in Rom 2:17-24 have to do with Israel's relative failure to become 'a light to the Gentiles.' Israel is said to have stumbled (Rom 9:32; 11:11) because most other Jews did not join Paul in proclaiming his gospel of the righteousness of God to the Gentiles."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gaston 1987, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Gaston 1987, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Gaston 1987, 33.

Gaston's argument dismisses Ruether's contention that it is Paul's Christology which necessarily makes him "anti-Jewish". Paul does not say that the Jews have rejected Christ. Paul's criticism of Judaism has nothing to do with Christology, because apart from the scriptural teaching of the inclusion of the Gentiles, Christology has nothing to do with Judaism. His teaching, therefore, cannot be said to be "anti-Jewish" and he can be exonerated from the accusation of contributing to "social anti-Semitism".

1.3. Gaston's attempt to declare Paul clear of all criticism of Judaism has not generally been accepted. For most scholars, Paul does think that the Jews have rejected their Messiah, and that they are wrong to do so. But if this is what the apostle thinks, how can he escape the charge of "anti-Judaism" which Ruether levels against him? In this thesis I propose to consider Ruether's claim that Paul's Christology leads him inevitably into "theological anti-Judaism".<sup>9</sup> What exactly is Paul's attitude to Judaism? Is Gaston right to exonerate him of the charges or must Paul, simply by dint of believing in Christ, be seen to be launching an attack on his own people and declaring their faith and traditions obsolete? Is it indeed true to say that anti-Judaism is the "left hand" of Paul's Christology?

## **2. Paul's Attitude to Israel in Recent Literature**

2.1. Traditionally, scholars have assessed Paul's attitude to Israel by means of his view of the Law. Unfortunately, however, the history of modern Pauline studies has shown that the question of "Paul and the Law" is not as straightforward as we might wish. At the beginning of this century, the Jewish writer Claude Montefiore found it impossible to reconcile Paul's Judaism with his polemic against the Law.<sup>10</sup> He decided that the Judaism Paul knows must be an inferior kind which is to be found in the Diaspora, a pale reflection of that which the Rabbis record 500 years later. This

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<sup>9</sup> Ruether's book itself has been the subject of much discussion. Scholars have questioned her view of anti-Judaism as rooted in messianic Christology and the influence of pre-Christian paganism on Christian thought. See the collection of essays in A. Davies 1979 and the summary of responses to Ruether in Gager 1983, 24-34.

<sup>10</sup> Montefiore 1914, 17-18. For further discussion of Montefiore, see chapter 8 below.

inferior type of Judaism has a generally pessimistic view of the Law, believing it to be unfulfillable. It is this tendency which we detect in Paul's letters.

In reaction to Montefiore, W.D. Davies agreed that Paul is a rabbi, but one who believes that the Law has been modified following the introduction of the eschatological age. Jesus is the New Torah which must be applied, expounded and transmitted.<sup>11</sup> Taking a view similar to that of Albert Schweitzer, Davies thought that "righteousness by faith" is not the centre of Paul's thought, but the fact that Christ has changed all things in the inauguration of the new age.<sup>12</sup>

Davies' Paul remained a rabbi even after he believed in Jesus as the New Torah; that is to say, he continued to think of himself as a Jew and to work within Jewish categories: the Law (and therefore Judaism) is not obsolete, it has rather been transformed through the work of Jesus. Others, however, see Paul's view of the Law in a quite different light. For Rudolph Bultmann, Paul insists that salvation is only to be found in Christ, and Judaism and its legalism must be characterised as a "striving for righteousness by fulfilling the works of the Law".<sup>13</sup> For Ulrich Wilckens, the advent of Christ has not cancelled the Law, but Israel's legal system and cult have been shown to be inadequate to deal with the problem of human sin.<sup>14</sup> However, even though Wilckens' Paul is rather more benign in his attitude to the Law, he still has to come to the conclusion that Christ and the Law are mutually exclusive. The result of his view is the same as Bultmann's despite important variations: Judaism is an inferior belief system whose soteriological function has been invalidated by the coming of Christ. This kind of attitude is summed up in the words of Andrea van Dülmen, for whom the Law of Christ dissolves the Mosaic Law as an expression of the divine will in the life of the believer. "The Mosaic Law", she writes, "as Law for Israel, as a demand for works which cannot be satisfied by man, comes to an end

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<sup>11</sup> W.D. Davies 1948, 145.

<sup>12</sup> W.D. Davies 1948, 222; Schweitzer 1931, 205-26. The view of Joachim Schoeps is similar, with the difference that he thinks Paul is mistaken in his view of the Law, having neglected the covenant faithfulness of God as it is expressed in the Torah: Schoeps 1961, 214, and see below, chapter 8.

<sup>13</sup> Bultmann 1952, 187.

<sup>14</sup> See the collection of essays in Wilckens 1974.

with Christ: its intention, its totally binding character, its absolute claim and its content are taken up into the Law of Christ".<sup>15</sup>

The authors of these studies tend to think that the nature of first century Judaism can be discerned from Paul's letters. For example, Bulmann's work suggests that if Paul attacks legalism, then Judaism must have been legalistic. The flawed nature of this thinking was already hinted at in the work of the Jewish writers, Montefiore and Schoeps, who could not recognise the Judaism Paul is supposed to be criticising, and was brought to light by E.P. Sanders in his book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Sanders undertook an exhaustive study of the literature of first century Judaism and argued that it was not characterised by "works-righteousness" as Pauline scholarship had thought, but by "covenantal nomism". This he defines as "the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant, and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression."<sup>16</sup>

Since the publication of this book, whose picture of Judaism at the time of Paul has been generally accepted, scholarly attempts to reconstruct first century Judaism on the basis of Paul's letters have been abandoned, and the focus has shifted on to what belief in Christ really means for Paul. For Sanders, it means "participation in Christ" as well as "righteousness by faith", and reliance on the Law is no longer necessary. As Sanders explained in a later essay, this is not to say that Paul is attacking legalism (because Judaism is not a legalistic religion), but it is saying that Judaism has no soteriological function, now that Christ has come.<sup>17</sup>

As far as Paul's attitude to Judaism is concerned, not a great deal has changed. Even though Paul is no longer thought to be attacking its supposed errors, we still have a "supersessionist" view of Israel and Judaism. Judaism is still seen as inadequate, and the beliefs of the church are therefore superior. This aspect of the so-called "new perspective" on Paul has been softened somewhat in James Dunn's view that "works

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<sup>15</sup> Van Dülmen 1968, 220.

<sup>16</sup> Sanders 1977, 75.

<sup>17</sup> Sanders 1983, 138ff, 143.

of the Law" refers not to the Torah in general, but to the observance of Sabbath, food laws and circumcision, the so-called "boundary markers" which set Judaism apart from the rest of the world. Rejection of "works of the Law", therefore, becomes rejection not of Judaism *in toto*, but of a too narrowly nationalistic and racial conception of the covenant.<sup>18</sup> On this view Paul's critique of Judaism consists of an objection to an exclusivist nationalism, which contains no room for Gentiles: it has, in effect, lost sight of the true meaning of the covenant with Abraham.

The "new perspective on Paul", for all its modification of the traditional view, still contains an inherent criticism of the Law, and Judaism's attitude to it. We have seen throughout that it retains the tendency to have a "supersessionist" view of Israel. This does not go far enough for Lloyd Gaston, who, as we saw above, argues that Paul has been misunderstood by generations of scholars. Paul, when he speaks of the Law, is not concerned with criticising Judaism, but with declaring "the positive justification of the status of the Gentiles". To spread the word about Jesus is to point to the fulfilment of God's promises concerning the Gentiles: the Gospel is not intended for the Jews. Paul therefore has nothing against Torah and Israel - he "simply bypasses them as irrelevant to his gospel" (33).<sup>19</sup> A similar view is taken by John Gager. Paul's gospel does not entail a repudiation of the legitimacy of Israel or the Torah. He is concerned only with the salvation of the Gentiles, who have a different way of righteousness from that of the Jews.<sup>20</sup>

2.2. As we can see, there is little scholarly consensus as to Paul's attitude to the Law and Israel. Indeed, the "new perspective" on Paul has produced such a state of flux in Pauline studies on this question, that there is now little agreement as to the meaning of the word νόμος, let alone Paul's attitude to it.<sup>21</sup> However, even if agreement were

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<sup>18</sup> See Dunn 1983a.

<sup>19</sup> Gaston 1987, 15-34, especially pages 32ff.

<sup>20</sup> Gager 1983, 197-264.

<sup>21</sup> For surveys of the recent debate about the Law, see Barclay 1986; Westerholm 1988, 15-86; Thielman 1989, 14-47; Moo 1987, 287-307. The question of Paul and the Law will be considered further below, in chapter 7. Recent discussion of the issues involved, together with bibliography of writings on Paul and the Law since 1980, can be found in Dunn 1996.

to be achieved, an understanding of Paul's view of the Law would not be enough for us to determine the place of Judaism in his thinking. As the argument of Romans 9-11 shows, Paul has had to wrestle with the question of whether or not God remains faithful to Israel, given that most Jews have rejected Christ. Paul's answer is, of course, that God has remained faithful to Israel: he has not cut Israel out of his plan of salvation, he has not reneged on his promises (9:4-6; 11:1f). Indeed, Paul seems even to say that salvation is still assured for them at the end time (11:26).

2.3. In large part, as Ruether discerns, the problem of Paul's attitude to Israel seems to rest on what he thinks Christ's role and purpose is. Does Christ's coming negate the Law, or not? Does Christ's coming mean that salvation for the Jews is only available through him, or not? It is crucial to determine the significance of Christology for Paul's view of Israel.

N. T. Wright has focussed on the significance of Jesus as Messiah in Paul's letters. Taking a similar line to that of Dunn, Wright suggests that Paul's complaint against Judaism is that it has "nationalistic" tendencies. Israel has missed her vocation and is guilty, not of "works righteousness" but of "national righteousness" - "the belief that fleshly Jewish descent guarantees membership of God's true covenant people" (e.g. Rom 2:17-29; 9:30-10:13).<sup>22</sup> Israel is therefore blameworthy of having abused her privileged status. Now, however, the Messiah has come, who (according to Wright), embodies Israel in himself, and has set about the task of saving Jews and Gentiles alike according to God's original plan. In other words, he has done what Israel was supposed to do, and there is now a new Israel and a new age. All this keeps Paul firmly within the framework of Judaism. However, the crucifixion is foreign to all that Jews might believe about the work of the Messiah. Thus Paul has had to rethink the nature of God's plan for his people:

"Jesus, although clearly the Messiah because of his resurrection, had not driven the Romans out of Palestine. He had died a penal death at their hands. The resurrection had forced Paul to regard that death as an act of grace, and hence not as a denial of Israel's role in God's purposes but as the fulfilment

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<sup>22</sup> Wright 1978 (a), 65.

of that role and those purposes; which meant that God's plan, Israel's saving role, had to be re-evaluated."<sup>23</sup>

Wright's Paul has had to redefine his theology in the light of his Christology, but he remains firmly within the Judaism of his heritage. The coming of Christ has brought about a crucial change, but the essential continuity of history remains: church and synagogue are in a continuous line. To put this another way, Paul continues to operate within a particular "narrative sequence" which is the story of Israel and her God: and Jesus, his death and resurrection, are seen to be as much a part of that sequence as the story of creation and the covenant with Abraham.<sup>24</sup>

Wright's view of the significance of Christology in the story of Israel is similar to that of Richard Hays. Hays argues that, for Paul, Jesus the Messiah has been faithful and obedient in carrying out all that God had intended for his people. By submitting to suffering and death he has also carried out the obedience of faith on behalf of all humanity, and made salvation possible for Jew and Gentile alike.<sup>25</sup> That Paul views his thought as continuous and fully compatible with his Jewish background is to be seen in his use of Scripture throughout his letters, in the exposition of the implications of the gospel for his churches.<sup>26</sup> Hays does not follow Wright in every aspect of his thesis. He is suspicious, for example, of a tendency to impose an artificial unity on what Wright calls a Jewish "world-view". However, his general view of the place of Christology in Paul's idea of Israel is much the same, if placing rather less emphasis on the change in history which Christ's coming has brought about.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Wright 1991, 40.

<sup>24</sup> Wright 1995, 67; 1992, 403-9.

<sup>25</sup> Hays 1983. Hays' "faith of Jesus Christ" argument will be discussed in chapter 4, below.

<sup>26</sup> Hays 1989. For another example of this "narrative criticism" approach to Paul, see Witherington 1994.

<sup>27</sup> For this and other criticisms of Wright's views, see Hays 1995, 68-86.



L.W. Hurtado has approached the question of Christology and Israel from another angle. How was it, he asks, that the earliest Christians could venerate Jesus and reconcile this with their Jewish monotheism? He suggests that for unbelieving Jews, "the practice of according to Jesus a place in the cultic activities of early Christian groups, together with the underlying conviction that he held a heavenly and divine status," must have been problematic. He goes on to ask how it is that these earliest Christians could remain "convinced that they were truly serving the God of the Old Testament?"<sup>28</sup>

After pointing out the flaws in the methodology and presuppositions of Bousset and the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, who contended that the earliest Christological ideas were influenced by Hellenistic (Gnostic and pagan) religious practices and thought, Hurtado argues that the apostle's Christological ideas are to be placed in the Jewish context within which the first believing communities appeared. Judaism itself provided the categories in which such a view of Christ could be understood and developed. These were the traditions of "divine agents" (for example, personified divine attributes such as Wisdom and Logos, and the exalted patriarchs Moses and Enoch), who occupied glorified positions alongside God. Devotion to Christ can be seen as a direct growth from and variation of these traditions. Hurtado calls this a "mutation" in monotheistic devotion, fully compatible with the Jewish tradition which, although unprecedented, was enough to calm the fears of the earliest Christians who did not think that they had left Judaism.<sup>29</sup>

It will be evident that Hurtado's results are essentially along the same lines as those of Wright and Hays. The earliest beliefs about Jesus, including those of Paul, again constitute a "modification" of traditional Jewish belief. Paul would be well able to justify his worship of Christ as Lord on the basis of Jewish ideas.<sup>30</sup> If these views are

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<sup>28</sup> Hurtado 1988, 13f.

<sup>29</sup> See also Stuckenbruck 1995. Cf. also Newman 1992 which examines Paul's "glory" Christology within a Jewish matrix.

<sup>30</sup> For a recent survey of the use of the κύριος title in Paul's Christology see Capes 1992, 43-89. Older treatments include that of Hahn 1969, 68-135 and Fuller 1965 who tried to identify the background to and sources for Christological thought,

at all accurate in their depiction of Paul's Christology, it seems hardly likely that we can accuse Paul of harbouring any anti-Jewish sentiment. Surely, if we realise that Paul never thought of himself as having left Judaism, we are fully justified in taking the view that any "polemic" against Judaism which we may detect within his letters is in fact simply an "in-house" argument, a dispute within a family which may take a vicious turn from time to time but which ultimately cannot dissolve the family ties.<sup>31</sup>

There is no doubt that these views, while they do not go as far as those of Gager, make it easier for Christian scholars to maintain that Paul's thought is not hostile to unbelieving Israel. Christology, on this line of thinking, is entirely compatible and continuous with the Jewish tradition. Yet there remains a nagging doubt. Is this all that the coming of Christ signifies? Some scholars have argued very forcibly that it is not. It is not enough, they say, to speak of Christ's coming as having modified the history of Israel: in fact, the coming of Christ has brought about a completely new beginning - the old has passed away and the new has come.

2.4. In his important book, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, J. Christaan Beker has argued that the Christ-event is at the centre of Paul's thinking. In order to interpret the meaning and symbolism of this event, according to Beker, Paul uses the "symbolic structure" with which he is most conversant - the "apocalyptic language of Judaism". The fusion of these two elements - Christ and apocalyptic symbolism - results in the "modification" of Paul's traditional apocalyptic language. In other words, Paul the Jew, who had been brought up to believe that God

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following the example of Bousset 1913. Most scholars are now generally agreed that Bousset was wrong to attribute the origins of κύριος to the Hellenistic believing community and conclude that Palestine is the place of origin: see Cullmann 1963, 195-215; Fitzmyer 1979. Marshall 1990, 97-110 sees a mixture of influences on the church's usage. Among British scholars the focus has shifted from environmental and geographical questions to an examination of the experience of the early church itself for an understanding of Christ as Lord. See Bruce 1968; Moule 1977, 41. Also R.N. Longenecker (1970, 131ff). For an overview of the history of the debate, see Capes 1992, 9-33.

<sup>31</sup> See the essay by Hagner in Evans & Hagner 1993, 128-50, and the similar argument of L.T. Johnson 1989.

would reveal his final glory at the end time (i.e. the end of the history of Israel), has now had to modify that belief in the light of the advent of Christ.

"For unlike a Greek dualistic apprehension of divine reality, in which time will be swallowed up by eternity, Paul views God as the coming one who has already come to his creation in Christ. In other words, God is the contingent-historical intervener in a process that - in hidden and contrary ways -already manifests the imminence of his final glory. Only at the time of his final glory and triumph will his living presence in Christ and in the Spirit - now only visible to the eyes of faith - climax in his public presence to 'sight' (2 Cor 5:7)." <sup>32</sup>

According to Beker, God, through the Christ-event, has acted in history. He has brought about a proleptic manifestation of his own glory, a glory which had always been part of Israel's heritage. Clearly, his view is similar to that of N.T. Wright.<sup>33</sup> However, Beker places much more emphasis on the "apocalyptic" aspect of Paul's thought, the cosmic difference which God's intervention in Christ has brought about. God is still working in Israel's history, but in a quite different way.

J.L. Martyn thinks Beker is right to see Paul's thought as thoroughly apocalyptic in character, but he also considers that Beker does not go far enough, complaining that he "plays down the disjunctive dualism of the ages".<sup>34</sup> In other words, he does not make enough of the cosmic change inherent in the idea of the coming of Christ, which, according to Martyn, should be seen not so much in terms of the fulfilment and continuation of what has gone before, but of the inauguration of a new creation, and the catastrophic demise of the old order. There is now a completely new age in force in which men and women look forward to the end time; all that has gone before is now obsolete.

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<sup>32</sup> Beker 1980, 19.

<sup>33</sup> Wright himself acknowledges the similarities of their views 1991, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Martyn 1982, 196. A collection of Martyn's essays has recently been printed: Martyn 1997.

Martyn has expounded this view of an "apocalyptic Paul" in his essay "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians". He argues that in Galatians Paul speaks of the old age, which was characterised by "pairs of opposites" (e.g. Jew-Greek, slave-freeman, male-female), as having been replaced by a new age in which Christ has brought about "anthropological unity". Now there are no divisions, and all are one in Christ Jesus (3:28). Instead of the pairs of opposites which characterised the old age, there are "apocalyptic antinomies". For example, whereas in the old age flesh and Law constituted a "pair of opposites", now the flesh is no longer opposed to the Law, but is set in opposition to the Spirit of God's Son. The entire order of things has changed since the advent of Christ and his Spirit. This leads Martyn to ask,

"What time is it? It is the time after the apocalypse of the faith of Christ, the time therefore of rectification by that faith, the time of the presence of the Spirit, and thus the time of the war of liberation commenced by the Spirit."<sup>35</sup>

Martyn consigns the "Jew-Gentile" pair of opposites to the old age. For Paul, there is no such opposition in the new age: all are one in Christ Jesus. Now, the Jew-Gentile opposition has been re-aligned into an antinomy of the old and new covenants: the antinomy between Hagar the slave and Sarah the free woman. The trouble Paul is having with the Judaisers at Galatia shows that a battle is still being fought in the New Creation in the province of the lives of believers; and as far as the Gentiles in the church are concerned, Paul knows which side should win. Those who are adhering to the present Jerusalem are "bearing children into slavery". Paul is certain: the true Jerusalem is "above", a spiritual rather than a material entity (Gal 4:26). Martyn is insistent, however, that Paul's polemic in Galatians is not focussed on Judaism itself.<sup>36</sup> Paul is concerned with a problem of certain believers who are trying to live as Jews in the new age; it is therefore a problem which is occurring within the confines of the church itself, not a problem of the relationship between the church and unbelieving Israel.

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<sup>35</sup> Martyn 1985, 418. Martyn 1991, 179: Christ's cross and Spirit constitute a "warlike and liberating invasion of the cosmos". See also Martyn 1967.

<sup>36</sup> Martyn 1985, 420.

The question is, however, what does this "apocalyptic" Paul think of the religion of Israel? There is no doubt that Martyn's work, which builds on that of Albert Schweitzer and Ernst Käsemann, provides an important counter-balance to that of Dunn, Wright and Hays.<sup>37</sup> It certainly raises the question of whether these scholars have underestimated the impact of the advent of Christ in Paul's view of history. But we are left wondering if we might be back where we started. If Paul thinks that the division between the old and new ages is as drastic as Martyn maintains, then we are left with the distinct possibility that Paul relegates Judaism to the old age, thus rendering it obsolete and of no concern to the church. If Paul's thinking has been so radically changed by his realisation of what Christ has done, then his view of Israel is bound to have changed too.

### **3. The Significance of Christology.**

3.1. The crucial question is, precisely what difference does Christ's coming make? Has Christ rendered Israel's soteriological system invalid or is there, in fact, no critique of Judaism in Paul's thought at all? Is it enough to speak of Paul's "modification" of his theology and national identity, or is his thinking rather more radically new than the advocates of this view would allow? Apart from the significance of Christ as Messiah, there are many other aspects of Paul's Christology to be considered. As far as the Law is concerned, we have seen that it is a moot point whether or not Jesus' coming means that the Law still has validity in the new age. When Paul says "Christ is the *τέλος* of the Law" in Romans 10:4, does he mean that Jesus is the end of the Law or its fulfilment? Does he think that the salvation of the Jews at the end time will entail accepting Jesus or not? How far does his belief in Christ's Messiahship "modify" his theology and his view of the place of Israel? Can the worship of Jesus in the cult be reconciled with the Jewish identity of the early believers?

The bulk of the thesis will address the question of the impact which Christ's coming has made on Paul's view of Israel, her traditions, beliefs and people. In other words,

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<sup>37</sup> See especially Käsemann 1969, 108-37 "On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic", and Schweitzer 1931. For a study of the "apocalyptic" view of Paul this century, see Matlock 1996.

we will assess the significance of Paul's Christology for his understanding of the place of Israel in God's plan. By doing this, I believe, we will be in a better position to determine whether Paul's thinking does indeed contain elements which could be construed as disparaging or hostile to Israel. We will thus be able to test Ruether's thesis that simply by virtue of believing in Jesus, Paul becomes "anti-Jewish". But how can we conduct such a study?

3.2. For much of this century, Christological study has been dominated by the questions and methods of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, whose primary aim was to determine which historical environmental factors influenced the development of ideas about Christ in the early church. The most important of these studies was Bousset's work, *Kyrios Christos*, in which he argued that the early church used Jewish and Hellenistic ideas to express her understanding of Christ in cultic worship. The designation of Jesus as "Son of Man", for example, may be traced to a Palestinian Jewish background, while the idea of Christ as Lord was taken from pagan mystery religions and Gnostic redeemer myths.<sup>38</sup>

The approach and findings of Bousset and the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* remained influential for much of the century. Increasingly, however, they have been questioned by scholars to the extent that many of the underlying assumptions have now been discarded by mainstream scholarship. In the first place, it is now generally accepted, following the work of Martin Hengel, that it is not legitimate for Bousset and his colleagues to posit a sharp geographical division between Palestinian and Hellenistic elements in Jewish thought.<sup>39</sup> Scholars have also questioned Bousset's use of second century gnostic and mystery religion sources for the reconstruction of first century Christianity.<sup>40</sup> The result is that there has been a general change in outlook,

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<sup>38</sup> Bousset 1913.

<sup>39</sup> Hengel 1974.

<sup>40</sup> For the arguments against Bousset see Perrin 1970-1. The "rationalist" approach which characterised the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* and its bias against accommodating any supernatural element in the study of religions is now also felt by many to be too one-sided an approach to earliest Christology. The earliest Christians believed themselves to be responding to the intervention of God in Christ. See Moule 1977; Thrall 1970. See however, the work of Casey 1991 and Theissen 1978 who continue to stress the extraneous environmental influences on the earliest believers'

which examines early Christology in relation to Jewish rather than pagan ideas. We have seen this to be the case in the important studies of Hurtado and Wright mentioned above.

However, one aspect of Bousset's work proved more resistant to change - his tendency to think of Christology in terms of the titles which the early church gave to Jesus, such as Lord, Son of God and Messiah. Several studies have emerged which have followed this pattern.<sup>41</sup> However, there is now a growing recognition that this method has had the result of imposing a 'straightjacket' on Christological study and that it has tended to produce very limited results. As Hurtado has noted, concentration on Christological titles runs the risk of compartmentalising Christology and has "resulted in a debatable impression being given that each title may have represented a somewhat distinct 'christology'". Not only that, focussing on titles has produced a highly selective inquiry, missing important aspects of Christology such as the liturgical practices of the early church and the social implications of Christological belief, i.e. how Christology was actually perceived within the earliest communities and integrated into its liturgical and social life.<sup>42</sup>

Recognition of the limiting tendencies in the traditional approach has led some scholars to call for a renewed and much broader approach to New Testament Christology.<sup>43</sup> In his essay "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology", Leander Keck complains of what he calls the "tyranny of titles" and protests that Christological study has become arid. Reacting against this, Keck has turned his attention to the problem of how the significance of Christology might be assessed. "Significance," he reminds us,

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views about Jesus.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Fuller 1965, Cullmann 1959, Hahn 1969. See also Kramer 1966 and Pokorny 1987. Cerfaux 1959 examines the eschatological significance of Christology for much of his book, but finds titles as the key to understanding the person and work of Christ (pages 439-528). See the overview in Marshall 1990, 11-31.

<sup>42</sup> Hurtado 1984, 23. See also Keck 1986.

<sup>43</sup> See the collection of essays in Semeia 30, 1984.

"is intelligible only in relation to something or someone. Accordingly, the subject-matter of Christology is really the syntax of relationships or correlations. In developed Christology this structure of signification is expressed in relation to God (the *theological* correlation proper), the created order (the *cosmological* correlation), and humanity (the *anthropological* correlation); each of these impinges on the others whether or not this impingement is made explicit. Consequently, from statements about God or world or humanity one can infer the appropriate Christological correlates and vice versa."<sup>44</sup>

Keck has given us valuable suggestions as to how our study might be carried out. We can ask how Paul's Christology has impacted on his view of God: is his Jewish monotheism compromised in any way? Is Christ divine or not? On the cosmological level, we can ask whether Martyn's view of the catastrophic demise of the old order is an accurate assessment of Paul's position. Has time been disrupted to such a drastic extent? As to the "anthropological" correlation, Keck defines this as the significance of soteriology for believers - "the human condition and the salvific alternative brought (or brought about) by (or through) Jesus."<sup>45</sup> We can thus enquire what impact belief in Christ has on the lives of believers. How does this inform their relationship to God, and to other people?

This last correlation, the "anthropological correlation", can be extended to include a "social" dimension. Paul's letters are addressed to congregations, and the limited evidence we have of his thought shows him thinking in terms of communities of believers. These communities exist because they believe the gospel about Jesus Christ: they believe that Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead, and they now worship him as Lord. Thus, the very identity of that group, as it meets to worship Jesus, is inextricably bound up with Christology. The more we know of what these earliest Christians believed, the more we will know of their own self-understanding.

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<sup>44</sup> Keck 1986, 363.

<sup>45</sup> Keck 1986, 363.



But Christology does not simply define the identity of the community in isolation, it also informs the community's beliefs about itself in relation to the outside world. That is to say, it defines what the group is not, as well as what it is. Christology sets the boundaries between the group which does believe in Jesus, and the outside world which does not.<sup>46</sup> This correlation is of great importance for our question of Paul's attitude to Israel. For the apostle's theological thought, in so far as it has come down to us in the form of letters, is always closely bound up with its social implications. The question of Israel in Paul's thinking is also a question of social history, of the relation between two groups in history - the church and unbelieving Jews. Thus we will be concerned to ask - what impact does Christology have on the relationship between the church and Israel?

#### **4. Christology in the Letter to the Romans**

4.1. To answer the questions set out above, I have chosen to consider Paul's Christology in his letter to the Romans. There are several reasons for this choice. Firstly, it is now generally accepted that in the letter to the Romans Paul is concerned with the place of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of salvation.<sup>47</sup> Here we find him tackling the questions of why the Gospel was needed in the first place (1:18-2:16), what God's plan for Israel and all mankind was and is (2:17-4:25), why most Jews have rejected the Gospel, and whether or not God has remained faithful to Israel (9-11). Thus, Romans contains a great deal of evidence as to Paul's views on the place of Israel in God's plan and its relationship to the believing community. Here, if anywhere, we can determine the apostle's attitude to Israel, and assess the significance of Christology within that context.

Conducting a study of Romans is particularly appropriate because at present there is considerable diversity of opinion as to Paul's view of Judaism in the letter.

Traditionally, Romans has been used to show that while Paul retains a great sympathy for Israel, there is much in his argument which seems to criticise her. For

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<sup>46</sup> On the relation between Christology and ecclesiology, see Kee 1984.

<sup>47</sup> That Paul is not writing a treatise on personal salvation, but is tackling problems of Jews and Gentiles in relation to the gospel is generally accepted since the work of Stendahl 1976.

example, in 9:31ff he declares that Israel has not attained a Law of righteousness even though she has pursued it, and censures her for not having faith. At 10:2, he admits that the Jews are zealous for God, but asserts that their zeal is based on ignorance. Moreover, it would appear that Paul objects to a feeling of moral superiority among the Jews. Commenting on Romans 1:18-3:20, Dunn writes that Paul is criticising the "Jewish self assurance that the typically Jewish indictment of gentile sin (1:18-32) is not applicable to the covenant people themselves (2:1-3:20)."<sup>48</sup>

Writing before the "new perspective", Ernst Käsemann states with reference to Romans 10:2-4 that "the apostle's real adversary is the devout Jew, not only as the mirror-image of his own past - though that, too - but as the reality of the religious man".<sup>49</sup> Judaism for Paul, according to Käsemann, stands for all human religiosity and piety which serve only to drive a wedge between God and humankind, since human achievement is made the means for personal salvation and righteousness. In Romans, Paul speaks out against such misguided ideas. There is now a new covenant in which human striving has no place, and Paul must set out to "destroy those claims of Israel which are grounded in its own history in exactly the same way as those of the individual religious man or woman."<sup>50</sup> Käsemann's Paul therefore has a basically negative view of Israel which is now to be seen as obsolete in the new age, the heavenly Jerusalem having replaced the earthly, the new covenant having replaced the old.

Recent Romans scholarship has attempted to redress the balance and take more notice of the apparent ambivalence of Paul towards his people in the letter. After all, Paul does not merely speak out against Israel, he also laments the fact that his kindred have not accepted the gospel (10:1f), declares that the Law is holy, just and good (Rom 7:12), and insists that God has not broken his word to Israel (9:6). W.S Campbell, for example, who takes a line similar to that of Beker and Wright in his approach to this epistle, argues that Paul sees the "Christ-event as modifying the

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<sup>48</sup> Dunn 51.

<sup>49</sup> Käsemann 1969, 184.

<sup>50</sup> Käsemann 1969, 186

Jewish understanding of election, covenant and Law" rather than terminating it. In Romans,

"Paul sets forth his gospel as the revelation of the righteousness of God in the Christ-event which he depicts as being simultaneously (a) the confirmation of the covenant promise to Israel and (b) the opening up of its blessings to Gentiles also".<sup>51</sup>

Campbell's interpretation of Romans reveals a Paul rather less hostile towards Israel than the traditional view. The coming of Christ has not rendered her faith obsolete but has rather opened up Israel's promises from God to the Gentiles, Christ fulfilling all that was intended for Israel and all other peoples. However, this kind of approach still maintains that those Jews who have not accepted Christ are mistaken and have rejected the merciful salvation of God. Most unbelieving Jews, therefore, are at fault in having rejected the gospel, and there remains an inherent criticism of Israel's position even if this does not become hostile in nature. For some recent scholars of Romans such a softening of the criticism of Judaism does not go far enough. Under the influence of Gaston and Gager, S.K. Stowers, for example, has argued that in Romans Paul does not think that the Jews have strayed from God. The gospel is intended only for the Gentiles, and the only criticism against the Jews in Romans is that they have failed to see that God is reconciling the Gentiles to himself.<sup>52</sup>

There is, therefore, a good deal of diversity in scholarly opinion of Paul's view of Israel in Romans. In the course of our study, these varying views of Romans will have to be taken into account, and our own view of Paul's attitude towards Israel set out.

4.2. Secondly, I have chosen Romans because it can help us to determine Paul's attitude to Israel, not only on an abstract theological level, but also on the social-historical level. This assertion needs some support. The general view of Romans used to be that it is an abstract theological treatise. Bornkamm, for example,

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<sup>51</sup> W.S. Campbell 1992,173.

<sup>52</sup> Stowers 1994, 202-06; 285-316. For similar readings see Nanos 1996; Elliott 1990.

argued that the letter is Paul's "last will and testament" containing the apostle's mature theological reflections, the setting down of which has been precipitated by events in his own life and ministry.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Johannes Munck maintained that Romans is "a manifesto presenting Paul's deepest convictions" about the relation between Judaism and Christianity, the Law and the Gospel, ideas with which he has already been preoccupied in Galatians, Philippians 3 and 2 Corinthians 3-6, and which form the substance of his controversy with the Jewish believers in Jerusalem.<sup>54</sup>

Recently, however, there has been a growing realisation amongst scholars that Romans, like Paul's other letters, presupposes a real situation to which Paul is addressing himself. Although it is true that Paul has never been to Rome (1:13), it can be argued that he knows a good number of people there (see the greetings in chapter 16), and that he is writing to the church with a specific problem in mind. What the situation is, it is held, can be discerned from 14:1-15:13. There, Paul addresses the question of a difference of opinion between two groups whom he labels the "weak" and the "strong". The precise problem which these two groups are encountering has been a matter of some debate, but several scholars believe that it is one of Jewish food laws and Sabbath observance. The issue being raised is, whether or not these should be a part of the life of the believing community.<sup>55</sup>

The case for this interpretation of 14:1-15:13 will be made in chapter 2. For the moment we need to note that our interpretation of Paul's advice in this practical matter of legal observance will be crucial for the understanding of his attitude to Israel. Here we will be able to determine what place, if any, he thinks Israel and her customs have in the congregation, and, by implication, what he thinks the

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<sup>53</sup> Bornkamm in Donfried 1991, 16-28. A similar view is taken by Karris in Donfried 1991, 65-84.

<sup>54</sup> Munck 1967, 7; 1959, 196-209. See further below pp 30-32.

<sup>55</sup> Dunn 794-834; Wiefel in Donfried 1991, 85-101; Watson 1986; Minear 1971; Donfried in Donfried 1991, 102-124; Wedderburn 1991; Walters 1993; Barclay 1996 (a). Those who think Paul is writing for his own purposes, for example, with his impending visit to Jerusalem in mind include Jervell in Donfried 1991, 53-64; Bruce in Donfried 1991, 175-94; Drane 1980; Dahl 1977, 70-94. Others think Paul is writing to defend himself against criticism from his opponents e.g. Schmithals in Donfried 1991, 231-42; Stuhlmacher 1994.

relationship between the church and Israel is and should be. Moreover, we can ask how this matches up with the general argument about Jews and Gentiles, the discussion of which was probably precipitated by the situation in the Roman church.

4.3. The third and last reason for choosing Romans is its Christological content. This might seem odd, given that in Romans Paul is undoubtedly concerned with *God's* plans and actions in history.<sup>56</sup> However, despite the fact that theology rather than Christology forms the main focus of Paul's exposition, there are some crucial Christological statements which occur at important points throughout the argument. For example, Paul begins the letter by declaring that his life work is dedicated to spreading the message about Christ (1:3-4). His exposition of the sinfulness of man and the need for salvation culminates in the statement that God's plan has been enacted through Christ (3:21ff). In chapter 5, Paul explores the idea that Adam is the type of Christ, explaining *a fortiori* that Christ has done much more than Adam. At the centre of his argument about the place of Israel in that plan comes the statement that Christ is the *τέλος* of the Law (10:4). Paul ends his parenthesis of chapter 12-15 by showing that scripture itself has spoken of Jesus' exaltation (15:7ff).

But there is much more to the Christology of Romans than this. A close reading of the letter shows that the entire argument of Romans is underpinned by the fact that Jesus has come, has died and is risen. Moreover, Paul assumes that these ideas are common currency, that his readers will take the fact of Jesus' coming and Lordship as a "given", just as he does. Belief in Christ is simply not at issue.<sup>57</sup> Despite the fact that he does not choose to expound Christology as such (except perhaps in 3:26ff), the letter is permeated with Christological language and ideas, *particularly* when he speaks to the community of believers about themselves - their new identity and their behaviour. For example, Paul proceeds on the assumption that they all recognise Christ as Lord (10:9). From this he can state that they should serve the Lord in what they do (14:6f), and that the believer lives and dies "to the Lord"; no matter what happens, they are "the Lord's" (14:8). Thus, although there is no great statement about the Lordship of Christ in Romans as there is in the Philippian hymn, there is

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<sup>56</sup> Moxnes 1980, 15.

<sup>57</sup> Dunn in Hawthorne & Martin 1993, 843.

much that can be trawled to help us assess the significance of this aspect of Christology (Christ's Lordship) for the identity and life both of individual believers and of the community as a whole, and indeed of its relationship with the outside world.

The same is true of the Christological language and symbols which pervade Paul's discourse in chapters 5 to 8. Besides exploring the Adam Christology mentioned above, we can also enquire as to the meaning of his statements that they live "in Christ" following their baptism and that they are freed from sin (6:1-14). It will be important here to ask what this kind of statement implies as to the identity of those outside the community who do not believe in Christ. The same questions will apply to Paul's insistence that believers, like Christ, are sons of God (8:14).

## **5. Paul and Jewish-Christian Dialogue**

5.1. The background against which this investigation of Paul is set is the Christian scholarly debate as to the continuity or discontinuity between church and Israel. The outcome of that debate has profound implications for the wider dialogue between Jews and Christians. As we have seen, the prevailing trend is moving away from the traditional view that Paul has the "pious Jew" as his sparring partner. This is good news for Jewish-Christian dialogue. The more "friendly" Paul is found to be towards Israel, the less excuse Christianity has for tolerating anti-Jewish ideas within its ranks. Furthermore, if Christian scholars can convince their Jewish partners that there are no theological grounds for "anti-Judaic" ideas (to use Ruether's phrase) in Christianity, then surely these partners will be less suspicious and more inclined to allow a closer relationship.

There is, of course, a good deal of truth in this. But it is also rather naive. It is naive insofar as it begs the question of who has the right to declare what is "anti-Judaic". It is one thing for a Christian scholar to proclaim Paul free of inflammatory talk, but what does a Jewish reader think? Indeed, has the Christian reader of Paul any right to decide what is offensive to Jews and what is not? It seems to me that it is right and proper for Christian scholarship to find Paul guilty on such counts if it finds evidence

in the texts - but it needs to check its results with the Jewish community itself. It needs to hear from Jews what is offensive to them and what is not. Christian scholarship must not take the initiative on that score: it must bow to the superior knowledge of the Jewish community itself. A genuine dialogue between faiths cannot consist of one side telling the other what they should object to and what they should not.

With this in mind, the last chapter of the thesis will ask what modern Jewish views of Paul have been. We will first conduct a brief survey of modern Jewish writers on Paul, and then go on to consider the views of four prominent twentieth century writers who have considered Paul in greater depth. We will ask what, if anything, these writers find offensive in Paul, and why it offends them. It will be of interest to note how far their impressions of Paul match up with those of Christian scholars. But more to the point, what can Christian scholars learn from another "perspective on Paul"?

## **6. Outline of the Study**

6.1. Having thus set out the questions and presuppositions of the study, we are now in a position to give an outline of the thesis. Our first task will be to determine Paul's view of Israel in the argument of the letter. Working on the premise outlined above - that Paul is dealing with a real problem of the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome - we will first consider the situation and advice given in 14:1-15:13 regarding the observance of Jewish Law in the believing community. In chapter 3 we will go on to describe the general theological argument regarding the place of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan which forms the background and rationale for Paul's advice (1:18ff-3:26; 9-11). Having thus set the scene, we will then proceed (in part two) to examine the Christological content of Romans, adhering as much as possible to the literary order of the letter as we have it. Chapter 4 will discuss the Messiahship motif, focussing on 1:3-4, 9:5 and 15:7ff. We will argue that Paul does think Jesus is the Messiah of Jewish expectation (contrary to the opinion of many) and go on to investigate the significance of such a claim for both Paul's theology and his view of the believing community's relationship to Israel. In Chapter 5 we will

consider the Christological statement in 3:21ff in which Paul demonstrates Jesus' role in God's plan for Jews and Gentiles.

Chapter 6 will reflect on the place of Christological language, symbols and motifs in chapters 5 to 8 of the letter. That is to say, we will consider the significance of "Adam Christology", what it means for believers to be "in Christ" following baptism, and the motif of Christ's Sonship in Romans 8. In Chapter 7 of the thesis we will assess the significance of Paul's Christology for his view of the Law, first of all in the statement that Christ is the *τέλος* of the Law in 10:4, and then by returning to the passage with which we began (14:1-15:13), this time focussing on Paul's Christological language and motifs as they are used in his discussion of the practicalities of the place of the Law in the community.

In chapter 8 (part three), we will gather the results of our exegesis together and answer our question - does Paul's Christology render him "anti-Jewish"? We will then compare our results with the views of modern Jewish writers on Paul - focussing particularly on Martin Buber, Leo Baeck, Hans Joachim Schoeps and Daniel Boyarin. We will conclude by drawing out the implications of our study for the question of Paul and Israel, and for contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue.

## 7. A Note on Terminology.

The bulk of this thesis will consist of an exegetical study of the Pauline text. When discussing Paul's attitude to the Jewish people as a whole, its theology and religious traditions, we will use the noun "Israel" and the adjective "Jewish". We will thus, I hope, avoid the pitfalls of using the term "Judaism" which wrongly implies that there was a uniformity of Jewish religious identity in the first century.<sup>58</sup>

In the course of our investigation, we will have reason to identify elements of Paul's thought which will be described as implicitly or explicitly "anti-Jewish". It is important to define what we mean by this term. Ideas will be termed "anti-Jewish" which can be seen to undermine the identity and integrity of Israel's theological

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<sup>58</sup>Neusner 1987.



system. That is to say, any aspect of Paul's thinking will be termed "anti-Jewish" which implies or states that the religious beliefs and traditions of Israel are obsolete or ineffective.<sup>59</sup>

Use of the term "anti-Semitic" with respect to Paul is inappropriate and anachronistic. It is widely misused in modern writing, and has racial overtones.<sup>60</sup> But Paul's questions about Israel are religious, not racial.<sup>61</sup> He himself is proud of his genealogical heritage (Phil 3:5; Rom 9:1-5), although he does think that his new faith is more important than his genealogy (Phil 3:8). We are therefore concerned only with his teaching on the church's response to the religious system of Israel as a whole.

When, however, we are considering how the Pauline text and modern Jewish interpretations of it might be applied to contemporary Jewish-Christian relations, the terms "Judaism" and "Christianity" will be adopted as recognised designations for two major world religions. In our discussion of modern Jewish-Christian relations, when we are speaking of the hostility of some towards Jews *because of their Jewishness*, we will, following Rosemary Ruether's lead, refer to social "anti-Semitism" as a generally accepted term.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> For a helpful outline of "anti-Jewish" attitudes on the part of Christian writers, see Klein 1978, 7. D.R.A. Hare gives a useful breakdown of Christian "anti-Judaism": (a) prophetic anti-Judaism (an intra-Jewish phenomenon e.g. Jesus' critique of Jewish leadership); (b) Jewish Christian anti-Judaism in which salvation is only to be found through Jesus Christ and (c) Gentilising anti-Judaism which emphasises God's rejection of the "old" Israel (in A. Davies 1979, 28-32). It is certainly not enough to define anti-Jewish thought as simply "theological disagreement with Judaism" as Hagner would have it in Evans & Hagner 1993, 128. The element of undermining Jewish traditions and sense of identity is crucial. For Gaston, ideas become anti-Jewish if the three pillars of Judaism - God, Torah and Israel - come under attack (Gaston 1987, 17).

<sup>60</sup> The New Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia (Roth and Wigoder 1970), 119 defines "anti-Semitism" as "the organised movement or other manifestations against the Jews: more loosely, hatred of the Jews generally" and describes it as a modern theory, based on a distinction between Aryan and Semitic language groups, which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and gave rise to the unsound theory of Aryan and Semitic "races".

<sup>61</sup> See the discussion of Sandmel 1978, xvii who nonetheless proceeds to refer to anti-Semitism throughout his study of Paul.

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. the discussion of Keith 1997, 2-6.

## Chapter 2

### The Church and Israel in Romans 14:1-15:6.

#### 1. Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing consensus among scholars that in 14:1-15:6 Paul is addressing a real situation at Rome, in which a disagreement is building up over the observance of Jewish Law. If this passage is not merely part of a paraenetic addendum to a theological treatise, and if this is a correct interpretation of it, then clearly we have an important resource for answering our question of Paul's attitude to Israel.<sup>63</sup> How Paul deals with practical issues of Law observance will be indicative of his attitude to the Jewish Law and therefore to Israel as a whole.

In his book *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, Francis Watson contends that in Romans 14:1-15:13 Paul argues against the continued observance of the Law in the Roman congregation. His interpretation of the passage is part of his "sociological" approach to Paul's letters, which is intended to identify the historical social situation behind the apostle's theological reflections. It supports his thesis that the social reality behind Paul's discussion of Jews and Gentiles in relation to the gospel is "his creation of Gentile Christian communities in sharp separation from the Jewish community. His theological reflection legitimates the separation of church from synagogue."<sup>64</sup>

Watson maintains that in order to make the gospel more attractive to Gentiles, Paul had not required full submission to the Law among his Gentile congregations. However, this had brought about opposition from the Jews, with the result that the church, which had started out as a "reform movement" within the synagogue, became detached from its roots. Consequently, Paul has to develop a rationale for the separation from the Jewish community, and explain the place of the Law in the life of the church. Thus, according to Watson, although Paul himself may still have very deep feelings for Israel, his Gentile mission forces him into a situation in which he must argue that Judaism and the church are incompatible and that the new

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<sup>63</sup> See above chapter, 1 section 4.2.

<sup>64</sup> Watson 1986, 19.

community must separate completely from its parent group, the synagogue. This social situation within his ministry is the reason for Paul's statements against the Law in his letters, and his insistence that nothing Jewish must be a part of the life of the church.

In this chapter we will support the view of Watson and others that chapter 14 addresses a real situation regarding the place of the Law in the life of the church. We will follow the advice of Donfried that since every other Pauline letter addresses a concrete situation, we should assume this to be the case in Romans until this assumption has been proved false.<sup>65</sup> We will also defend the view that the problems at Rome have to do with Jewish Law observance. We will, however, find good reason to question certain aspects of Watson's understanding of the situation discernible at Rome, in particular his view that two opposing congregations are to be found there. The second task will be to examine Paul's response to the problems and argue (against Watson) that, far from discouraging legal observance and thus driving a wedge between the church and Israel, it is the apostle's desire that the close relationship between them be recognised, and that traditional practices be acknowledged as having a legitimate place in the life of the new community. The excursus at the end of the chapter will challenge some assumptions made by Watson and others about the historical situation behind the letter to the Romans.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Donfried in Donfried 1991, 103f.

<sup>66</sup> Watson's theory is that Paul (in Galatians and Philippians as well as Romans) is advocating a sharp separation between church and synagogue. However, this view cannot be supported from the Pauline corpus. The letters do not tell us whether or not the new communities were still part of the Roman "synagogue" (i.e. a group of Jews who gathered together to pray and worship). Evidently, Paul thought he was still a part of the Jewish religious community, as his submission to synagogal authority and discipline shows (2 Cor 11:24; see Harvey 1985; Sanders 1983, 192; *contra* Hultgren 1976, 101 note 8 who thinks that this does not refer to submission to synagogal discipline but to persecution by the Jews; cf. J.T. Sanders 1993, 6. For an attempt to account for Paul's punishment on the basis of rabbinic sources see Gallas 1990). As far as Romans is concerned, the most we can say is that Paul's favourable attitude towards practising *kashrut*, sabbath and feast day observance suggests that the apostle himself feels that membership of the new community and membership of a synagogue community are not incompatible.

## 2. The Situation in the Roman Church.

2.1. When Paul writes to the Romans in the mid-fifties CE he has several things on his mind. He says that he has long intended to visit the Roman believers, but has been prevented from doing so (1:13) because of his evangelistic efforts in the northern arc of the Mediterranean (15:18-24). However, he has now finished that part of his missionary campaign (15:23), having reached the main centres all the way from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum (15:19), and plans to go to Spain, which has not yet been evangelised (15:20,24).<sup>67</sup> On the way, he intends to visit the Roman church community, hoping to benefit from their hospitality, and to contribute to the "mutual encouragement" by preaching the gospel there (1:12,15).<sup>68</sup>

Before he can go to Rome, however, he has to travel to Jerusalem to deliver the collection (δικακονία) which has been given by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia (15:25ff; cf. 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12-13). However, he is apprehensive about this trip, there being some doubt in his mind as to whether the collection, the offering of Gentile converts, will be acceptable to its intended Jewish Christian recipients (15:31). Not only that, he seems to be worried that Jewish unbelievers might attack him when he arrives in Jerusalem, presumably because of his missionary activity (15:31).<sup>69</sup>

For those scholars who regard Paul's own circumstances as the key factor in determining Paul's purpose in writing Romans, the visit to Jerusalem is of primary importance. According to Johannes Munck, for example, Paul and the delegation of Gentiles are taking the money so that "so that stubborn Israel may be shown the obedience of faith as it is to be found among the Gentile believers"<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> See Knox 1964.

<sup>68</sup> There is no need to see a discrepancy between 1:15 and 15:20; see Dunn 33: "Preach the gospel (εὐαγγελίσασθαι) does not necessarily equate with evangelise"; cf. Stuhlmacher in Donfried 1991, 237.

<sup>69</sup> Such hostility towards Paul on the part of the Jews is recorded in Acts e.g. 9:28f; 13:45; 18:12-17; 21:27ff. See Cranfield 778.

<sup>70</sup> Munck 1967, 13.

Paul considers that the delivery of the collection to Jerusalem may actually be the time at which the Jews will be provoked to jealousy (10:19), the delegation being "a representation of the fullness of the Gentiles", signalling that the last days are at hand.<sup>71</sup> Conscious of the fact that he may encounter opposition in Jerusalem, he wants the churches to understand the reasons for his Gentile mission. He also wants to gain support for the future missionary journey to Spain. Taking up Manson's theory that chapter 16 is addressed to people in Ephesus, Munck argues that the main body of the letter is intended for Rome, that Paul has also added the greetings in chapter 16 and sent a copy of the letter to Ephesus. In this way, Paul can inform all his churches (he has already discussed the issues with the Galatians, the Corinthians [2 Cor 3-6 as well as orally] and in Philippians 3) of his position in the controversy with his opponents on the place of the Law.

More recently, Jacob Jervell has argued that in Romans Paul is primarily considering "the defence which Paul plans to give before the church in Jerusalem" as to why they should support the mission to the Gentiles. According to Jervell, in "Romans Paul sets forth and explains what he, as the bearer of the collection given by the Gentiles for the mother congregation in Jerusalem, intends to say so that he as well as the gift will not be rejected."<sup>72</sup>

There is no doubt that the journey to Jerusalem is in Paul's mind as he writes. Paul has put immense effort into the collection which, at the very least, may be seen as a good will gesture on the part of his Gentile churches towards the Jerusalem

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<sup>71</sup> Munck 1967, 121. Munck further defends his position by noting that Paul has added an ἐκεῖ to the quotation from Hos 2:1 in 9:26 and declares this to be a "natural designation for Palestine" (1967, 12). In Jerusalem, the Gentiles will be called "sons of the living God" and the jealousy on the part of the Jews which opens the way to salvation will be raised. Given the overall argument of chapters 9-11 it is, as Wilckens II: 206 n 926 (cf. also Dunn 572) suggests, more likely that Paul is intending to make a theological rather than a geographical point, strengthening the import of ἐν τῷ τόπῳ: he is stating that "even (there) where" the Gentiles were not declared sons of God, they now may be said to be so in this age of the manifestation of God's universal plan for humankind.

<sup>72</sup> Jervell in Donfried 1991, 56.

community. In this way, suspicions about Paul's Gentile mission may be allayed, the Gentiles' spiritual debt to the Jewish people acknowledged (Rom 15:27) and the other apostles' charge that Paul remember the poor (Gal 2:10), be carried out.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, it makes good sense to see Romans as a document in which Paul is working out and setting down what he thinks about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, not merely on an abstract basis, but in the light of his own personal theological struggles as apostle to the Gentiles and as a Jew who has believed the Messiah has come (e.g. 1:16f; 9:1-5).

In recent years, however, many scholars have been realising that it may be mistaken to see the circumstances of Paul's own life and ministry as the only reason for the writing of Romans.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, as Donfried has pointed out, there are good reasons why we should assume that Romans is addressing a real situation in the church at Rome.

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<sup>73</sup> The collection is clearly very important to Paul (Rom 11:26f; 1 Cor 16: 1-4; 2 Cor 8:1-4;9:13), but Munck's insistence that the deliverance of the collection is always present in Paul's thinking while writing the letter is overstating the matter, and is part of his belief that Paul thinks of himself as "a figure in New Testament Heilsgeschichte" (1967, 29) who, like Moses, wishes to suffer for his people (Rom 9:1f cf. Ex 32:31-32), thus bringing about their salvation. In fact, for Munck, Paul regards himself as even more important for the history of Israel than Moses. For example, he argues that in 2 Cor 3:7-18 Paul is compared with Moses and Moses is found wanting (1959, 61). Paul's significance in redemptive history in the age of the Messiah far outweighs even that of Moses. However, it should be noted that in this passage Paul is comparing the old and new dispensations (that is, the old dispensation in which Christ had not yet made an appearance and the new in which the Law, in the light of Christ's coming, may now be seen to have pointed to Christ all along), not Moses and Paul himself. On the significance of the collection in Paul's mind, see Nickle 1966. The suggestion of Holl 1921 that εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων in 15:26 does not simply refer to the poor believers in Jerusalem but to the whole church there has rightly been refuted by Keck 1965.

<sup>74</sup> In the introduction to the 1991 edition of "The Romans Debate", Donfried writes, "Without question a consensus has been reached that Romans is addressed to the Christian community in Rome which finds itself in a particular historical situation (page lxix). Those who take the view that the reasons for Romans are to be found solely in the life and mission of Paul himself rather than in the Roman community, now tend to be in the minority. See, however, Karris in Donfried 1991, 65-84; Bornkamm in Donfried 1991, 16-28; Jervell in Donfried 1991, 53-64; Drane 1980; Dahl 1977, 70-94; Kümmel 1975, 311ff. For an overview of the issues involved in this continuing debate see Donfried's introduction to *The Romans Debate* 1991, xlix-lxxii and Wedderburn 1991, 1-21.

First, all other extant Pauline documents known to us are addressed to the specific situations of the churches or persons involved. Second, since it cannot be proven that the greetings in chapter 16 are not part of the original letter to Rome, there is no good reason for thinking that the whole of the letter is not intended for the congregation in the capital city<sup>75</sup> It is quite possible that some of those mentioned in chapter 16 are personally known to Paul, that he has heard of others, and that through these contact he will know something of what is going on in the Roman congregation.

That Paul knows about the Roman community, even though he has never been there and had no part in the founding of its church, is evident from the letter itself. The faith of the Roman community, he says in 1:8, is well known, talked about "in all the world". He also seems to be aware of a mixture of Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome (e.g. 11:13 and the mixture of Semitic and Gentile names in chapter 16). Evidently, Paul is concerned that the Gentiles in the Roman congregation will not adopt a haughty attitude over the Jewish believers or perhaps the Jewish community as a whole. However, the most compelling evidence for Paul's knowledge of what is going on in the Roman congregation is to be found in 14:1-15:6 in which he addresses certain problems which are causing friction in the community, in particular, disagreement between Jewish and Gentile believers who are trying to live and worship together. We will now consider this evidence and argue that these chapters reveal that Paul knows of this friction and sets out to deal with it as best he can before his visit.

2.2. At 14:1, Paul gives a direct instruction to welcome those whom he calls the "weak in faith" (τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῆ πίστει). He qualifies this by saying that this should be done with the right motives, and not for the purpose of engaging in disputes (μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν). Evidently, there are differences of opinion about matters of behaviour which threaten the well-being of the community as a whole. Some seem to believe that they are free to eat anything they wish, while

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<sup>75</sup> The argument of Manson in Donfried 1991, 3-15, and others (e.g. Goodspeed 1951, Jewett 1971, 41; Marxsen 1968, 108) that chapter 16 was originally intended for Ephesus rather than Rome, is now discounted by most scholars following the important arguments of Gamble 1977; see also Donfried 1991, 44-52, 102-25 and Kaye 1976.



others think that they should avoid eating meat (14:2). The "weak in faith" are those who are adopting vegetarianism (14:1; 15:1), while those who are more liberal in their outlook are called "the strong" (15:1). 14:21 suggests that the weak are also refraining from drinking wine, and at 14:5 they appear to be holding certain days, most likely days of special religious observance, as more important than others. The strong hold no such beliefs, and consider all days to be of the same importance.

The view that the weak are believers who wish to observe Mosaic Law is now generally accepted.<sup>76</sup> Against this, it used to be protested that "vegetarianism" and abstinence from wine are not prescribed in Mosaic Law and therefore are uncharacteristic of Jewish religious scruple. This has led some to suggest that the practices of which Paul speaks here are pagan or gnostic in nature.<sup>77</sup> There are, however, good reasons for discounting this view.<sup>78</sup>

First, as Watson and others have pointed out, there is biblical precedent for such practices amongst Jews who find themselves in a Gentile environment, and wish to protect themselves against a possible breach of the purity laws. For example, Daniel and Judith are both recorded as refusing to eat the food and wine provided by Gentiles in order to avoid possible defilement (Dan 1:8-16; Judith 12:1-4).<sup>79</sup> It could well have been that the Roman Jewish Christians, finding themselves to be the

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<sup>76</sup> See e.g. Dunn 797; Wilckens III: 83ff; Stuhlmacher 220; Cranfield 697; Jewett 1971, 45. See also the argument of Walters 1993 and cf. Nanos 1996, 118 who argues that the weak are unbelieving Jews.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. Käsemann 368; Rauer 1923, 164-69; Barrett 257 thinks the weak are attracted by a fusion of Jewish and Gnostic ideas.

<sup>78</sup> Those who dispute that Paul has a real situation in mind argue that these groups have no particular identity and that Paul is speaking in generalised terms, probably building on his experience in Corinth. e.g. Lindars 1988, Furnish 1973, 115; Meeks 1987; Karris in Donfried 1991, 65-84; Bornkamm 1991, 16-28; SH 401. Recently, Sampley 1995 has argued that Paul is dealing with issues of Sabbath laws and *kashrut* in Rome but that he diplomatically shifts on to the "neutral" and generalised ground of vegetarianism to tackle the problems of division at Rome.

<sup>79</sup> See Dunn 800 and Barclay 1996. Other references cited in support of this are Additions to Esther 4:17; Josephus *Vita* 13-14; Tobit 1:10-12.

minority in the new community as well as in the city as a whole, are also practising this kind of abstinence in order to avoid impurity.<sup>80</sup>

Second, Paul's language strongly suggests that he has Jewish Law observation in mind. At verse 14, he declares that he knows and is persuaded "in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself". Here, Paul probably alludes to the teaching of Jesus about clean and unclean foods recorded in Mark 7:15-23 as an authoritative teaching on which to base his practice.<sup>81</sup> This and the fact that he uses the word κοινός in this context, a word associated with Jewish food ritual (cf. Acts 10:9-15) and meaning simply "common" in non-Jewish Greek, makes it likely that he has Jewish food laws in mind.<sup>82</sup>

We should also note the moderate tone adopted by Paul throughout this section. There is no polemic against the practices of the weak as we might expect if these are of a pagan nature. In fact he clearly states that those who observe special days and refrain from certain foods do so in honour of the Lord (κυρίῳ 14:6-8), just as much as those who do not. Indeed both groups, no matter what they do or do not eat or drink, give thanks to God (14:6). It seems most unlikely that Paul would say this if the weak are following pagan practices.

Lastly, that Paul should have Jewish practices in mind fits well with the larger context of the letter and its concern with the place of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of salvation. The exposition of this theme is appropriate, not only as an introduction of his thought about missions in order to gain support from the Romans, as Stendahl has recently maintained, but also if Paul is responding to friction between these two groups in the new community of God.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Paul gives some hints that Jewish believers are in the minority at Rome, e.g. 1:5-6,13; 15:15f. From an analysis of the list of names in Romans 16, Lampe 1989, 53-63 deduces that fifteen percent of the Roman believers are Jewish.

<sup>81</sup> See Allison 1982; Thompson 1991, 161-73. (Cf. also 12:14,17,21.13:7;14:10,13).

<sup>82</sup> Dunn 818f; Barclay 1996 (a). It is most unlikely that Paul's use of the word κοινός here reflects associations with idol worship as Bacchiocchi 1977, 365 note 78 suggests.

<sup>83</sup> Stendahl 1995, ix.

2.3. We can see that it makes good sense to think of the situation at Rome as concerning Jewish practices.<sup>84</sup> But what exactly is going on? Is Paul speaking here only of a potential threat to the community, or is the congregation already divided by the difficulties? According to Watson, a split has already taken place. He contends that there are two groups or congregations at Rome which are "separated by mutual hostility and suspicion over the question of the Law, which he wishes to bring together into one congregation". For Watson, the injunction of 15:7 to welcome one another puts this interpretation beyond doubt.

"Thus, Rom 14:1-15:13 addresses itself not to tensions between Jewish and gentile Christians within a single congregation (the usual view), but to the problem of two separate congregations who regard each other with suspicion and who hold no common worship. 15:7-13 seems to put this interpretation beyond doubt: why should Paul exhort Jewish and Gentile Christians to worship together if they are already doing so?"<sup>85</sup>

According to Watson, Paul's aim in this passage is to create one single congregation in which these weak believers can worship together with the strong, and in order to bring this about he makes demands on both groups. The strong are asked not to regard Jewish Law observance as incompatible with belief in Christ, and not to insist that the weak give these practices up. The weak group is required

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<sup>84</sup> It is too simplistic, as Watson 1986, 95 observes, to identify the weak simply as Jewish believers and the strong as Gentiles, as Paul's identification with the strong shows (15:1). He himself is a Jewish believer who believes that Law observance is unnecessary in the new faith, and there may well be others of this mind at Rome, too. Similarly, the weak group may include Gentiles who are attracted to Jewish practices, either before or after joining the believing community. There is no evidence, however, for the view (e.g. Wedderburn 1991, 140f; cf. also Stuhlmacher 220) that the Roman church is marked by conflicting attitudes towards "Paulinism" in particular.

<sup>85</sup> Watson 1986, 97.

"to abandon the idea that the law is the authoritative, binding law of God, to which all must submit, and to regard it instead as purely optional, a matter of individual choice and of private piety" (96).

Clearly, these instructions to the strong betray an attitude which is not "anti-Law." Paul is concerned with the principle of freedom from the Law rather than the practice (98), and has no theological objections to Law observance other than that it is not necessary for believers in Christ. However, Watson sees that for the community to regard the Law as "purely optional" is, in effect, to abandon the Law altogether as a binding force on their lives, and in this sense, the "Paulinist" community may be said to be "Law free."

Watson's interpretation of this passage thus supports his central thesis. Such a "Law free" community is essentially incompatible with life within the synagogue, and by encouraging this attitude towards the Law, Paul is contributing to the eventual complete separation of the two groups. The church is well able to function without the Law as its binding force. We have to ask, however, whether Watson's exegesis of 14:1-15:7 gives an accurate picture of Paul's view of the relationship between the church and Israel. There is, for example, nothing to support Watson's theory that there are two quite distinct congregations at Rome who are not worshipping together. The injunction of 15:7 may simply point to the presence of two groups within a single congregation who are sparring with one another; it does not follow that there are two distinct groups. The fact that Paul addresses himself to both groups (14:3, 10, 13), and not merely to the strong, suggests that the church is still a single congregation but that its unity is threatened by emergent differences in attitude to the Law among its members.<sup>86</sup> The principal problem, however, is whether or not Paul does in fact insist that the believing community should be "Law free", as Watson suggests. Does "Paulinism" necessarily imply a "sharp separation" from Israel, as he thinks?

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<sup>86</sup> Minear's 1971 thesis that there are five distinguishable groups at Rome each with a discernible attitude towards Jewish food laws also goes well beyond the evidence.

### 3. Table Fellowship and the Unity of the Church

3.1. As we have seen, the divergence in opinion with regard to Law observance seems to have surfaced in particular with regard to eating and drinking.<sup>87</sup> Paul's attention is largely taken up with the question of food and drink, and although Sabbath observance is also an issue, it appears to take second place in the overall argument. His principal injunctions are made in relation to attitudes to food. For example, he warns that if a brother is hurt because of beliefs about food this reveals a lack of love (14:15) and that the destruction of "one for whom Christ died" should not be brought about because of matters of food (14:15, 20). He declares that the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, joy and peace (14:17). And it is in matters of food, rather than Sabbath observance, that the strong are urged to change their behaviour, as we shall see (14:15, 21).

The weak seem to be insisting that they should not eat or drink certain things on the basis that they might be κοινός and thus contrary to Jewish Law (cf. 14:14). They may also be concerned that the meat and wine have been previously offered to idols.<sup>88</sup> Whatever the precise reason for their caution, the weak in faith seem to think that by avoiding these things they are being faithful to Jewish Law. This attitude is evidently causing some irritation among the strong.

3.2. All this suggests that difficulties are arising when Jews and Gentiles meet together for communal meals.<sup>89</sup> On these occasions, in theory at least, the church community, made up of people who come from different cultural and religious

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<sup>87</sup> Despite the fact that the issue of drinking wine is not mentioned until 14:21, there is no good reason to think that this is included solely as a hypothetical example following the formula of 14:17 (*Contra* Cranfield 725).

<sup>88</sup> However, the matter should not be confined to this issue as Ziesler, 25 attempts to do.

<sup>89</sup> The problem does not seem to be an outright refusal on the part of the "Judaisers" to eat with the Gentile Christians on the grounds that Gentiles are unclean. Cf. the view of Esler (1987, 73-86 and 1994, 6ff; *contra* Dunn 1983b) that as a general rule Jews refrained from eating with Gentiles because they were considered to be ritually impure.

backgrounds, ought to be united by a common belief in Jesus Christ.<sup>90</sup> However, instead of being drawn together by table fellowship with all its symbolism of unity and solidarity, the Roman believers are being driven apart by different opinions.

Paul is well aware from his own experience that the communal meal is also a point at which the church is very vulnerable. Here, if anywhere, differences in tradition, practice and opinion seem to show themselves, and underlying tensions tend to come to the surface. In Corinth, he had had to deal with a situation in which believers who had been converted from paganism were worried that the food they were eating might have been previously offered to idols (1 Cor 8; 10:14-33). It is was when eating with unbelievers that the new but profound differences between believers and non-believers became evident. Far more seriously, however, over-indulgence at the Lord's Supper by some had pointed up the fact that there were still differences within the community itself, namely differences between rich and poor (1 Cor 11:17-33).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> As in many another group in antiquity, the very act of eating together was understood to symbolise their unity and their solidarity in common opinions and beliefs, and contributed to internal cohesion and building up group identity. The religious significance of commensality for the early church is seen particularly at the Lord's Supper, when the death of Christ was remembered, using language exclusive to that tradition, and recalling events which could only be of significance to them as a group. At the Supper, believers asserted their religious identity, strengthening the bond between themselves and the object of their faith, and coming to a deeper understanding of their new beliefs; see Willis 1985, 165-222; M.Y. McDonald 1988, 69-71. The traditional language of the Supper is absent from this passage (cf 1 Cor 11:20ff where he explicitly refers to κυριακὸν δεῖπνον and reminds the Corinthians of the traditions relating to it). However, Banks 1980, 83-8 notes that the Supper (δεῖπνος 1 Cor 11:20) retained its character of an ordinary meal, the meaning of which was heightened by the significance given to it, and Fee 1987, 541 observes that in 1 Cor 11:21 the implication is that the Supper was eaten in conjunction with a communal meal. Scholars have suggested that believers followed the Jewish custom of blessing the bread and wine (see Countryman 1988, 101; Rowland 1985, 241; Leitzmann 1979, 185; cf. the efforts of Smith 1981 to find parallels in Graeco-Roman meal culture). It may well be, then, that in Romans Paul assumes that the Supper was part of the common meal at Rome, although the question must remain open. He certainly invests their eating together with religious significance when he says that each group eats or refrains κυρίῳ and gives thanks to God (Rom 14:6). On the meal as a social "boundary marker", see Barton 1986, and Meeks 1983a, 157-62.

<sup>91</sup> On the whole issue of class difference at Corinth, see the influential essay by Theissen 1982, 145-74.

Paul also had bitter personal experience of strife over Jewish food laws within the church. When Peter, on the arrival of Jewish Christian leaders from Jerusalem, had stopped eating with Gentile believers at Antioch, Paul had not only viewed this as hypocrisy on Peter's part, but as tantamount to imposing Jewish Law on the whole community (Gal 2:11ff). The ensuing argument led to a serious breach between the two men.

Now, in Rome, in observing Jewish purity laws at the communal meal, the weak believers are drawing attention to themselves as different from the Gentile believers and could be seen as maintaining differences which are characteristic of the outside world.<sup>92</sup> While they may be sympathetic to the fear of eating meat which has been offered to idols (cf. 1 Cor 8), the refusal to eat meat in general as well as drink wine means that they are maintaining practices which are undermining the unity of the group.<sup>93</sup>

There may be a further difficulty. If some members of the community are providing meat for general consumption, the refusal of some to eat it could be seen as a serious

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<sup>92</sup> Attempts to bring Jews and Gentiles together for table-fellowship would no doubt have been particularly problematic. The general populace seems to have distrusted the Jews, whose separatist practices (i.e. abstention from pagan cults, Sabbath observance, food laws, circumcision) made them the object of some contempt. Sevenster 1975, 89 has pointed out that anti-Semitism in the ancient world had difference in practice as its basis rather than racial factors. The Jews' insistence on their distinctive religious practices marked them out as separate and reluctant to be part of everyday paganism. No doubt the general dislike was exacerbated rather than helped by the state's sympathetic treatment of the Jews e.g. special permission for the temple tax to be paid. See also Barclay 1996b, 428-44; Daniel 1979.

<sup>93</sup> The perplexity and ridicule which the Jews' abstention from pork caused is recorded, for example, by Josephus *Contra Apion* 2.13. 137; Philo *Legatio ad Gaium* 361. It is the object of some ridicule and disdain on the part of Juvenal *Satires* 6.160; 14.97-9. The reasons for their abstention seem to have exercised Tacitus, who attributes the practice to having been infected by scabies through eating pork (*Historiae* 5.4.7-9) and Plutarch, who thinks that they were "particularly disgusted by white scales and leprous diseases and think that such diseases ravage men by contact" (*Quaestiones Convivales* 4.4.4-5.3). Tacitus also refers to the fact that Jews sat apart from Gentiles at meals (*Historiae* 5.5.2.) as an illustration of the Jews' practice of separatism, and Juvenal (*Satires* 14: 96-99) notes that Gentiles sympathetic to Judaism also abstained from pork. On the pagan reaction to Jewish separatism at meals in the Diaspora, see Barclay 1996b, 434-37.

breach of hospitality in the eyes of the strong group.<sup>94</sup> Further, from a religious point of view, Jewish believers in particular could be perceived as clinging on to a belief that theirs is the true way of obedience and declaring that they are part of Israel which maintained a special place as the holy people of God (see Leviticus 11:44f; 20:24ff), with the implied corollary that those who do not do so do not share this privilege.<sup>95</sup>

Paul's letter, then, suggests that the unity of the church is under serious threat. If the weak want only to observe Sabbath and other feast days, the problem might be containable. The desire of some to maintain Sabbath and feast day observance, while evidently a part of the problem in Rome, does not seem to pose an immediate threat, and does not require Paul's decisive intervention to modify practice.<sup>96</sup> If the Judaisers want to celebrate the Sabbath, they can easily do so on their own without causing offence to their Gentile brothers and sisters, although they may run the risk of being

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<sup>94</sup> The Roman Christian community appears to have been made up of people from all walks of life. Prisca and Aquila, for example, though artisans and therefore of low social status, would have had independent means, while Phoebe, given her ability to travel about, seems to have been relatively wealthy. See Meeks 1983, 59f. On the composition of the Roman congregation see Lampe 1989. If, as Garnsey 1991 suggests, meat was a luxury food in Rome and provided in the community by the richer members, the self imposed "vegetarianism" of some may have seemed even more puzzling. See, however, Meggitt 1994, who argues that meat was readily available in the ancient world.

<sup>95</sup> On the religious significance of Jewish purity laws, see Houston 1993, 258.

<sup>96</sup> The same would no doubt have applied to other purity laws which the Jewish believers might have wanted to observe e.g. corpse impurity and childbirth rituals. These could be attended to within the confines of private family life without necessarily encroaching on the life of the fellowship. How far everyday purity observance might have impinged on daily life in the Diaspora cannot be said on the current evidence - see Sanders 1992, 236f. On Jewish purity law observance in general at this period, see Sanders 1990a, 255-283. There is no evidence to support D.R. de Lacey's 1982 suggestion that the problem of the observance of days had arisen before at Rome and had already been resolved.

Circumcision does not seem to have constituted a problem in Rome. Wedderburn 1991, 60f suggests that the absence of mention of circumcision is due to a more moderate "Judaising" in Rome than in Galatia. The situations, however, are quite different. In Galatia, the issue is the imposition of Jewish law on *Gentile* Christians by Jewish believers. In Rome the question is one of Gentile believers attempting to coerce Judaisers into non-Jewish practices.



considered lazy or work-shy.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, if they still have contacts with the parent Jewish community, they may well want to join with the synagogue on these days in the company of family and friends, without neglecting to take part in the worship of the church.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4. Paul's Solution

4.1. If Paul is well aware of the potential problems, he is equally convinced that such matters should not be the cause of strife in the church. The community in which the Holy Spirit dwells is (or should be) characterised by righteousness, peace and joy, and not by preoccupation with matters of food and drink (14:17). He is also sure that to resolve such tensions is not only pleasing to God but that a united and strife-free community will commend itself to the outside world (14:18). Serving Christ should not entail quarrelling, but the pursuit of peace and "building" each other up (14:19). How does he think trouble might be averted?

There is no doubt that Paul himself agrees with the point of view of the majority group; he clearly thinks that the weak in faith have failed to grasp the idea of freedom in Christ (15:1). The principle by which he lives, and of which he was utterly convinced, is that "nothing is unclean of itself" (14:14, 20). However, his advice is motivated throughout by an overriding desire for the unity of the congregation. He does not try to enforce this principle on the weak, or insist that they should forego their scruples, knowing that some may be equally convinced that certain things are unclean and should be avoided (14:14). To such people, says Paul, these items are indeed unclean, and if they eat them with some doubts in their minds, they are to be condemned (14:23), because they are acting on the basis of their own uncertainty

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<sup>97</sup> See, for example, the accusations of Juvenal (*Satires* 14:105-6) and Tacitus (*Historiae* 5:4:3).

<sup>98</sup> Sabbath activity seems to have been varied, there being no fixed code of practice. See Goldenberg 1979, 414-429; Rowland 1982; Levine 1987. In the Diaspora, the natural development was for people to meet together on the Sabbath for prayer and interpretation of scripture (see Moore 1927, 38). Given the lack of archaeological evidence for formal synagogue buildings in Rome at this time, it has been suggested that meetings may have taken place in private houses (see Leon 1995, 139; White 1990, 62ff).

rather than on the basis of their faith in God. For this reason, Paul does not ask that the weak forego their practices. It is as important that the weak abstain because they believe it is right as it is for the strong to maintain their conviction of freedom.<sup>99</sup>

What Paul does require of the weak is that they should not pass judgement on the strong and see them as in some way irreligious (14:3,10, 13). They must be prepared to see that others may have a different view to themselves. In other words, they have to be prepared to admit that Law observance is not a necessary part of the life of the believer.

4.2. When it comes to practical steps which need to be taken, Paul's attention turns to the strong. When they meet together for the common meal, the strong should give up eating meat or drinking wine if that is causing offence to a weak brother (14:21). The motivation of the strong should not be to prove points, but the understanding that if the faith of a weak brother or sister is damaged, his or her salvation is in danger of being lost. It is the responsibility of the strong to ensure that this does not happen as a result of their behaviour (14:15).<sup>100</sup> In other words, the principle, "It is wrong to cause your brother to stumble by what you eat" (14:20) overrides that of "everything is clean" when it comes to ensuring that a brother will not lose his faith and salvation.

The strong should not, therefore, insist on eating meat and drinking wine simply to make the point that life can now be lived apart from the Law. For Paul, it is not important that they be vindicated in the eyes of the weak, or even in the eyes of the outside world (14:16,18).<sup>101</sup> The aim of all should be to walk in love, and not to cause grief to others. In other words, while the strong know that they live in freedom, they should not try to impose this principle on the whole group if there is a risk that some

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<sup>99</sup> The warnings in 16:17-20 are not aimed at these problems; it is quite clear from chapter 14 that Paul considers the weak to be serving Christ, and it is therefore wrong to take Paul's polemic against those who serve their own appetites (τῆ ἑαυτῶν κοιλίᾳ 16:18) as referring to a preoccupation with food laws, as Barrett does (1957, 285). Rom 16:17-20 has nothing to do with the problems addressed in chapter 14 but concerns the possibility of a threat which Paul fears could break up the community from the outside (see Wilckens III:140).

<sup>100</sup> ἀπόλλυε refers to eschatological ruin here; see Dunn 821.

<sup>101</sup> Stuhlmacher 227 refers to 2:24 to support the view that Paul has the outside world in mind in 14:16.

might fall away, or the peace of the community be destroyed (14:19). Rather, they should maintain their faith quietly and in private before God (14:22). Moreover, Paul says that they should "carry" (βαστάζειν) the weaknesses of the weak and not please themselves (15:1). They should take on the burdens of their weaker brothers and sisters, understand the special difficulties which their need for Law observance gives them, and make it easier for them to serve God in the way that is best for them.<sup>102</sup> Following the example of Christ, they must realise that the "edification" of another member of the community is far more important than maintaining the principle of freedom from the Law (15:2,3).

## 5. Conclusion

It is remarkable that Paul does not condemn or polemicise against the weak for their point of view. He does not think they should give up their practices and adopt the attitude of the strong. It is true that by identifying himself with the strong he does imply that this would be the ideal course of action to take, but he is quite insistent that the weak are not wrong in what they are doing. Indeed, he says that both those who abstain from meat and wine and observe Sabbath and those who do not, do so in honour of the Lord (14:5,6), who rules over all aspects of life and death. When they meet at table, both groups give thanks to God for what they have (14:7). There can therefore be no doubt as to the motivation behind the behaviour of both the weak and the strong, and no doubt as to the place of each group within the community. The important thing, says Paul, is that each individual knows the reasons for the decision he or she takes regarding Torah observance and is convinced that this is the right thing to do. This, together with his instruction to the strong to carry the weak, suggests that Paul thinks Law observance, if it is necessary for the well-being of the community, does have a legitimate place in the life of the church.

Paul's attitude to the Law and Israel in this passage, despite his implicit support for the strong view, is certainly not antipathetic.<sup>103</sup> The apostle's approach is much more carefully nuanced than that. Law observance honours the Lord just as much as

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<sup>102</sup> The RSV's translation of βαστάζειν as "bear with" misses this crucial point. See Käsemann 381.

non-Law observance, and the "Law-free" principle (which Paul himself espouses) does not imply a negative attitude towards Torah or unbelieving Israel as a whole, but can and ought to accommodate the inclusion of Jewish practice and tradition in the life of the church. This community is one in which Jew and Gentile should not only be able to live together peaceably, but in which Jewish practice is seen as having a legitimate place. The "Law free" principle is an important hallmark, but may be sacrificed, in practice, for the sake of unity.

Our first examination of Paul's attitude to the practical application of the Law in Romans, then, does not suggest that the apostle thinks in anti-Judaic terms. Rather than urging his Jewish brothers and sisters to distance themselves from their traditions and backgrounds, he thinks that they should be able to continue with Jewish practice if they wish to do so. True, he expects that they should recognise that Law observance is no longer *necessary* for them in the new age (surely a big enough demand to place upon them), but as we shall see below, for the apostle, such an idea is not incompatible with his Jewish beliefs and does not constitute a departure from a Jewish framework of thought.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, his instructions to the strong are hardly the words of one who is hostile to or wishing to denigrate things Jewish.

We will, as part of our study of the Christology of Romans, have to return to this passage later and consider the Christological ideas which permeate it. It will be interesting to see if we have to alter our interpretation in any way. Before we can go on to consider the Christological content of the letter, however, we must ask (in chapter 3) if this interpretation of Paul's attitude to Israel in 14:1-15:6 is supported by the argument of the letter as a whole.

### **Excursus I: Jewish History and the Church at Rome.**

1. In recent years, several scholars have felt that a knowledge of the history of Roman Jewry, within which the church in Rome probably had its beginnings, can help us to build up a picture of the community to which Paul writes and go some way

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<sup>103</sup> For a similar view of Watson's thesis, see W.S. Campbell 1989.

<sup>104</sup> See below, chapter 7.

toward explaining the troubles which he addresses.<sup>105</sup> Greatly influential in this trend has been an essay by Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity". There, Wiefel argues that when Paul writes to Rome he is trying to enable Jewish and Gentile believers to live together without the appearance of "anti-Semitism" within the congregation.<sup>106</sup> It is the purpose of this short excursus to examine Wiefel's essay and assess how far contemporary historical evidence can be useful for the study of Romans.

Wiefel notes first of all that the earliest missions took place in synagogues (Acts 13:42ff; 14:1-6; 17:1-5; 18:4; 19:8f). He then goes on to argue that inscriptional evidence found in the Roman catacombs gives no evidence of any central supervisory authority over the Jewish community in Rome. This suggests to him that it was made up of individual synagogue communities whose loose structure would provide the right conditions in which the Christian mission could flourish without restriction. He also suggests that the presence of Jewish converts to Christianity within the Jewish community "may have led to increased factions and even to tumultuous disputes."<sup>107</sup> Evidence of such disputes is to be found, according to Wiefel, in a quotation from Suetonius' history of the emperor Claudius' reign:

"Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome..."<sup>108</sup>

According to Wiefel, this statement refers to an expulsion of the Jewish population from Rome in 49 CE, in response to continuous unrest within the Jewish community caused by the presence of Christians. The name Chrestus refers not to a Jewish agitator, as we might expect, but is in fact a "careless spelling of the name

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<sup>105</sup> For example, Marxsen 1968, 95-109; Brown & Meier 1983, 97-103; Dunn 1988; Watson 1986; Wedderburn 1991, 54-59; Stuhlmacher in Donfried 1991, 235; Donfried in Donfried 1991, 104ff; Walters 1993; Barclay 1996 (a).

<sup>106</sup> Wiefel in Donfried 1991, 85-101.

<sup>107</sup> Wiefel in Donfried 1991, 92.

<sup>108</sup> Suetonius *Claudius* 25:4: *Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.*

Christus".<sup>109</sup> Despite the fact that Suetonius appears to have been mistaken in believing that Christus (i.e. Christ) was present in Rome at the time, the quotation provides valuable evidence for unrest caused by Christians within the Jewish community, who were causing disputes about the Messiahship of Jesus. That Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome is corroborated by a statement in Acts 18:2 which speaks of the Jew Aquila and his wife Prisca, who met Paul in Corinth, and had had to leave Rome when Claudius expelled the Jews.

By the time Paul writes to the church at Rome the Jewish Christians have returned from exile. However, while they were away, the Gentile converts had, of necessity, developed their church outwith the auspices of the synagogue, and without recourse to Jewish Law and custom. Discord may well have arisen within the church when the Jewish believers returned to the city, as they tried to learn to live and worship together as one group. It is precisely this kind of friction which can be detected in Romans 14:1-15:13 and it is Paul's aim, in writing to the Roman church, to help these two groups learn to live with each other peacefully. In particular, he is concerned that the tendency to "anti-Semitism", which Wiefel maintains had always been evident in Rome, should not show itself in the church; he aims to help the Gentile majority to be more tolerant of the Jewish minority who have more to adjust to following their return from exile.

2. Wiefel's article is fascinating and provocative. On the face of it, he has produced valuable evidence for the historical situation against which Paul's letter to Rome can be better understood. The Claudian edict would certainly provide a plausible background to Paul's letter, and to posit friction between Gentile and Jewish believers after a recent return from exile does seem very reasonable. Unfortunately, however, the evidence adduced by Wiefel and those who follow his view is seldom as straightforward as we might like. We will turn to the use of the Suetonius quotation shortly, but first we must consider two other important aspects of Wiefel's argument.

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<sup>109</sup> Wiefel in Donfried 1991, 92.

The first is his appeal to the evidence from the catacombs in Rome. If it is indeed true that there was little or no centralised authority over the long-established Jewish community in Rome, then it is quite likely, as Wiefel suggests, that the Christians would be much more free to propagate the gospel within it.<sup>110</sup> However, the use of inscriptions from catacombs to provide evidence of the nature of the Jewish community in the mid-first century is anachronistic. Most of them date from the third and fourth centuries CE, and cannot be held to provide information about the Jewish community in the early to mid-first century.<sup>111</sup> Further, the fact that no evidence of an overarching authority over the Roman individual synagogues can be found does not mean that we can say with certainty that there was no such governing body.<sup>112</sup>

A second important element in Wiefel's thesis is the contention that there had long been an inclination in Roman society towards "anti-Semitism". To support his argument Wiefel gives a brief history of "anti-Semitic" tendencies in Rome, for example, the scorn of the satirist Juvenal for Jews and their practices (e.g. *Satires* 6.159-60; 541-544), Horace's derision of Jewish custom and beliefs (e.g. *Sermones* 1.9.67-72; 1.5.100), and Cicero's description of Judaism as a *superstitio barbara* during his defence of the praetor Flaccus (*Pro Flacco* 28:66-69). On the political front, he notes the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 19 CE (Tacitus *Annals* 2.85; Suetonius *Tiberius* 36).

The evidence cited by Wiefel does point to a tendency to be scornful of Jewish traditions and beliefs, at least among some intellectuals.<sup>113</sup> But this needs also to be balanced with evidence that many people, from all walks of life, were deeply attracted to Judaism.<sup>114</sup> We know, for example, that the noblewoman Fulvia, wife of a

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<sup>110</sup> The view that there was no central organisation in the Roman Jewish community is put forward by Leon 1995, 167-194; Applebaum 1974.

<sup>111</sup> On the problem of dating the evidence see Williams 1994 (a). For a recent analysis of the evidence see Rutgers 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Barclay 1996 (b), 316; cf. M.H. Williams 1994 (b).

<sup>113</sup> We should, however, note the comment of Barclay (1996 [b], 288) that Cicero's remarks are made as part of his rhetoric and the tone is "scornful but not venomous", and that Horace's remarks are in a tone of amusement rather than hostility (297).

<sup>114</sup> The view that there were Jewish adherents known as "godfearers" has been

senator in Tiberius' time, adopted Jewish practices, only to have a donation intended for the temple in Jerusalem stolen by fraudsters (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18: 81-84). We know too that Nero's wife, Poppaea Sabina, seems to have been sympathetic towards things Jewish (Josephus, *Vita* 16). And both Tacitus and Juvenal, in their invective against Judaism, suggest that conversion to and imitation of the Jewish way of life was not uncommon.<sup>115</sup>

Moreover, there is evidence that the Roman Jews were treated fairly by the authorities at least in the time prior to the expulsion by Tiberius.<sup>116</sup> They were allowed by Caesar, for example, to observe Sabbath and send taxes to Jerusalem, at a time when other *collegia* were banned (Josephus *Antiquities* 14:213-16; 127-39; Suetonius *Iulius* 84.5). This favourable attitude was continued by Augustus, who not only allowed Jewish citizens to receive the corn dole on the day following the Sabbath (Philo *Legatio* 158), but seems to have sent donations to the Jerusalem temple himself (Philo *Legatio* 157, 317).<sup>117</sup>

3. All this bids caution in accepting Wiefel's reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the church at Rome. Scant evidence should not be used over-confidently. At most we can say that the Jewish community in Rome may not have had a governing body, and that there seems to have been ambivalence towards Judaism in general, and at all levels of society. We simply cannot say, with Wiefel, that "the

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questioned by Kraabel 1981. He argues that there is no archaeological evidence of such a group, which is attested only in Acts. For refutations of Kraabel's argument see Finn 1985 and Overman 1988.

<sup>115</sup> E.g. Tacitus *Histories* 5.5.1-2; Juvenal *Satires* 14: 96-106.

<sup>116</sup> Philo *Legatio* 184ff. The 19CE expulsion was probably in response to over-enthusiastic proselytism by the Jews see Smallwood 1981, 208; Barclay 1996 (b), 299. See however, Williams 1989 who argues that the expulsion was due to riots arising from the deficiency of corn supplies in Rome.

<sup>117</sup> Barclay 1996 (b), 291-94. He notes that the favourable attitude of Julius Ceasar and Augustus towards the Jews in general was no doubt due in some part to the allegiance of Judaeans rulers, Hyracanus II and Antipater in the case of Caesar (Josephus *Antiquities* 14:127-39), and Herod, in the case of Augustus (Josephus *Antiquities* 15:342-43; 16:86-87; 17:52-53).



Christian congregation in Rome is surrounded by a society marked by its aversion and rejection of everything Jewish".<sup>118</sup>

As far as the Suetonius quotation is concerned, we have seen that Wiefel makes much of it as evidence for a recent expulsion from and return of Jewish believers to Rome. On this basis, Wiefel suggests that there may have been friction between the Jewish returnees and the gentile believers who had remained in the city. This is certainly plausible, but it must be said that we simply do not know what happened to the church immediately prior to Paul's letter. The only concrete evidence we have is that Paul seems to think Prisca and Aquila are in Rome when he writes to the church. Other evidence, however, is simply not available. Despite this, however, scholars seem to be unable to resist the temptation to speculate on what happened after the return of the expelled Jews to Rome. For example, in his commentary on Romans, Dunn notes that in 16:5 Prisca and Aquila have their own housegroup and suggests that "there may have been some difficulty for returned Jewish Christians in regaining leadership roles they may have previously been accorded within the house churches, now predominantly Gentile."<sup>119</sup> This is an interesting suggestion, but it cannot be proved from the textual evidence which we have.

Francis Watson is more thoroughgoing in his speculation. He suggests that the friction which had clearly been present within the Jewish community because of the presence of Christians had been exacerbated by the expulsion, with non-believing Jews blaming the believers for what had happened. According to Watson, this historical reconstruction can account for the insistence of some believers in Rome that they should abstain from meat and wine: they had not returned to a kosher area of the city following the expulsion, and rather than incur any impurity, elected to refrain from these things altogether. It is this insistence which is causing strife in the believing community in Rome.

Watson writes,

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<sup>118</sup> Wiefel in Donfried 1991, 100. For a similar view to Wiefel's, see Daniel 1979, who argues that anti-Semitism, expressed as distrust and contempt rather than violence, was the norm in the Hellenistic period.

<sup>119</sup> Dunn liii.

"Non-Christian Jews would blame the Christians for what had happened, and the ill feeling might well have been sufficient to prevent the Christians resettling in the Jewish quarter when the return to Rome took place. They would therefore be forced to live in another part of Rome, where they would be unable to obtain the ceremonially pure meat and wine which was available only in the Jewish quarter."<sup>120</sup>

This is an attractive theory. Unfortunately, however, it is only that. The truth is that we do not know what happened when the Jews returned to Rome and it is risky in the extreme to try to build up a picture of the situation in Rome on this basis. Unfortunately, this is precisely what Watson proceeds to do, arguing that there are two congregations in Rome, the one Jewish in nature, the other Gentile.

3.1. If scholars have been over-enthusiastic in their use of such scant evidence, there are other serious problems which should warn against the over confident use of the Suetonius quotation. The first difficulty concerns identifying the incident mentioned by Suetonius. It seems that most historians take it to refer to an expulsion of the Jews by Claudius in 49 CE. Although Suetonius himself does not supply a date, there is some evidence which might support the idea of an expulsion in that year. First of all, it does seem to be corroborated by Orosius (*Adversus Paganos* 7.6.15-16) who says that Josephus records the expulsion by Claudius to have taken place in the 9th year of his reign, that is 49 CE. Also, Acts 18:2 speaks of Paul's meeting a Jew named Aquila, and his wife Prisca, who had "recently" come from Italy to Corinth, because Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. Given that Paul was in Corinth before and during Gallio's time as pro-Consul (from 51 CE), the likelihood of this passage alluding to an expulsion in 49 CE is increased.

However, the evidence is by no means straightforward, and it is not easy to reconstruct precisely what actions Claudius took against the Jews in Rome. Firstly, the passage in Josephus to which the notoriously unreliable Orosius refers, does not exist and may have been invented by Orosius himself. Secondly, an expulsion of Jews from Rome in 49 CE is not mentioned by the historian Tacitus. Thirdly, there is

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<sup>120</sup> Watson 1986, 95.

a passage in Cassius Dio (*Historia Romana* 60.6.6) which says that in 41 CE Claudius did not expel the Jews from Rome, but only denied them the right of assembly.

The evidence seems to be very unclear, even contradictory. The majority view is that Claudius denied the Jews' right of assembly in 41CE, and then expelled them in 49CE.<sup>121</sup> It is assumed that Claudius' actions in 41CE did not solve the problem of Jewish unrest in the city, and that some years later many Jews were expelled. But there are those who believe that all these accounts refer to the same incident, the precise nature of which we cannot discern. Among others, Stern has argued that all this evidence points to the same event, speculating that Claudius intended to expel the Jews in 41CE, but under pressure from Agrippa I, changed his decision to one of denial of right of assembly.<sup>122</sup>

3.2. There is a second difficulty in the evidence of Suetonius. Even granted that there was an expulsion in 49 CE (or 41 CE), it is by no means certain that it was caused by Christian agitators. That is to say, it is not clear that "Chresto" should be taken to be a reference to Christ.<sup>123</sup> As we saw, Wiefel argues that Suetonius mistakenly understands the leader of a cult group to be present in Rome at the time. He assumes that Chrestus was a "careless spelling" of Christus, and that the two names were often used interchangeably. Further to support these assertions, Wiefel notes that Tacitus speaks of a group known as "Chrestianos" (*Annals* 15.44.2) and knows that their name comes from the word "Christus" (*Annals* 15.44.4). Watson takes the same view as Wiefel, asserting that "there can be little doubt that 'Chrestus' is to be identified with 'Christ'".<sup>124</sup> He adds the evidence of Tertullian (*Apol* 3.5) in which he complains that "Christian" is often mispronounced "Chrestianus", and a similar complaint of Lactantius that (*Inst.* 4.7.5) the ignorant call Christ "Chrestus".

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<sup>121</sup> Momigliano 1961, 31-38; Bruce 1977, 275-87; Smallwood 1981, 210-16; Slingerland 1988-89; Barclay 1996 (b), 303-06.

<sup>122</sup> Stern 1980, 116. Also Schürer 1973, 3:77; Scramuzza 1940, 151; Penna 1982, 331.

<sup>123</sup> Although this is the majority view, following Momigliano 1961, 32-33. See, for example, Bruce 1961-62, 309-26; Brown & Meier 1983, 97-103.

<sup>124</sup> Watson 1986, 91.

However, all this is not so cut and dried as we might think, as Stephen Benko has pointed out. There is evidence that Suetonius himself was aware of who the Christians were and even spells their name correctly: "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians (*Christiani*), a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition" (*Nero* 6:16:2). Besides this, Benko shows that Chrestus was a common name and that there is no suggestion in the text that Suetonius was using a name of which he was unsure. Benko also notes that unless Chrestus is a misspelling of Christ, there is nothing to suggest the involvement of Christians in the trouble leading up to the expulsion, and that there were several disturbances involving the Jews throughout the empire in the years leading up to 66 CE which had nothing to do with Christianity.<sup>125</sup>

4. It seems that Wiefel's reconstruction of the events immediately affecting the Roman believing congregation prior to Paul's letter is built on rather shaky foundations. His assertion of widespread anti-Semitism in the Roman world needs to be balanced with an acknowledgement of evidence of widespread sympathy for the Jews, and his use of catacomb evidence is anachronistic.

However, the main problem with Wiefel's work is his use of the Suetonius' quotation to provide the background for Romans 14:1-15:6. The evidence on which he builds his reconstruction is precarious to say the least. We cannot tell with surety to which incident it refers, and it is far from certain whether or not this text refers to Christian agitation within the Jewish community in Rome. Yet, as we have noted, Wiefel is not the only scholar to embrace this patchy information as the key to the situation Paul is addressing. Increasingly, scholars are taking the theory of Christian responsibility for the troubles leading up to the Claudian expulsion as a "given" in Roman scholarship. But the nebulous nature of the evidence makes this enthusiasm rather surprising. We might expect more scholars to point out, with Bornkamm, that the text itself contains no mention of an expulsion or return from exile by Jewish believers.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Benko 1969. Benko's own suggestion is that Chrestus was probably an extremist "zealot" leader in the Jewish community at Rome.

<sup>126</sup> Bornkamm in Donfried 1991, 19.

We cannot, on the current state of the evidence, know for certain what the situation in the church at Rome was, let alone what its immediate history was. Mirror reading can only go so far, and in the case of Romans, discerning the situation is made doubly difficult not only because of Paul's rather oblique writing, but also because he himself is not (yet) directly involved in the church there. If we want to add historical evidence to our already scant resources, we must admit that the most we can say is that in the recent history of Rome there had been some friction within the Jewish community, possibly caused by the presence of believers in Jesus, as well as a general ambivalence towards the Jewish community on the part of wider Roman society. Even if we strongly suspect that the Suetonius quotation does refer to an expulsion caused directly by Christian agitation, there must remain some doubt. And this means that any scholars who propose to use it in their reconstruction of the church in Rome must do so very gingerly indeed, and ought to make it very clear that they are aware of the difficulties in the evidence.

This is not to say that the use of historical evidence should be jettisoned altogether. It is quite legitimate to *suggest* that certain events *might* have had repercussions in the believing community which were still being felt at the time Paul wrote to them. But when it comes to textual exegesis, this is as far as we can go: it is not legitimate to speculate about what else might have happened prior to Paul writing the letter, assume that this speculation amounts to certain historical evidence and proceed to build this into our exegesis.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Stowers 1994, 23 voices a similar concern

## Chapter 3

### Israel in Paul's Theology

#### 1. Introduction

In the last chapter we argued, on the basis of Paul's advice to the Romans in 14:1-15:13, that the apostle's view of Israel is favourable rather than hostile. His instruction to the strong believers to allow Torah observance within the community shows that he does not think the Law to be obsolete, or that the traditions of Israel should be shunned. However, it is not enough to determine Paul's attitude to Israel in Romans from this one section of the letter alone. This interpretation of 14:1-15:6 must be shown to tie in with those passages which deal with the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation, namely 1:18-3:31 and chapters 9-11. In the first of these, as part of the defence of his gospel and his message to the Roman church, Paul explains why all of humanity (Jew and Gentile alike) needs the gospel, and outlines the implications for its relationship with God. In the second, Paul takes up the question of the relationship between God and the Jews in particular, certain aspects having been left incomplete in 1:18-3:31. An examination of both sections will give us a general view of Paul's attitude to the Jews and Israel in the light of the gospel.

#### 2. Wrath and Redemption for All: Rom 1:18-3:31

2.1. Having introduced himself to the Roman believers, and announced his intention to visit (1:10), Paul says that he would like to preach the gospel to them (1:15).<sup>128</sup> He preaches to all Gentiles regardless of origin because he believes that the gospel is the means of salvation for everyone who believes (1:16 *δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι*). Nevertheless, the fact that the Gentiles are the recipients of this gospel seems to be something of a privilege, for it is intended, in the first place, for the Jewish people (*Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι*).<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> See above chapter 2, note 68.

<sup>129</sup> The absence of *πρῶτον* from some MSS of 1:17 is probably due to the influence of Marcion; see Cranfield 90f. On the formula *τε πρῶτον καὶ* see Porter 1992, 16 who sees it as connecting two items of unequal significance; cf. Levinsohn 1987, 121-36.

Gentiles, it appears, are being included in something which God is doing for Israel: they too can benefit from the revelation of God's righteousness (1:17).<sup>130</sup> But why is such a message needed for *all* humanity, and the Jews in particular? Why is a revelation of God's righteousness necessary at all? Why do people need salvation, and from what, exactly, are they to be rescued?

Paul supplies the answer in 1:18-2:16. Salvation is necessary because men and women in their wickedness are suppressing the truth about God, who has revealed himself (his eternal power and deity, his invisible nature) in the created world. Men and women, however, are guilty of honouring the creature rather than the Creator (1:18-23). In other words, they are committing idolatry, even to the extent of manufacturing images of human beings, birds, animals and reptiles, and worshipping these instead of God himself. There is, according to Paul, no excuse for this conscious failure to glorify and give thanks to God, and God's punishment for this behaviour has been to allow the natural consequences of idolatry to occur. He has "handed them over" (παρέδωκεν 1:24) to their own devices, allowing them to continue in their "downward spiral" as Ziesler puts it, so that they are now unable to distinguish between right and wrong.<sup>131</sup> The result is that the proper focus of their lives has been lost, their thinking has become futile and their minds darkened. They have lost their standards and are heading towards self destruction.<sup>132</sup> The prime

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<sup>130</sup> For a discussion of the meaning of 1:17, see chapter 5 section 4.2, below.

<sup>131</sup> Ziesler 74; Käsemann 38 points out that immorality is the punishment, not the guilt.

<sup>132</sup> Stuhlmacher 37. Morna Hooker has held that there is an implicit reference to the Fall narrative in 1:23, 25 & 28. She argues that there is a parallel here with Gen 1:23 and that Paul has deliberately stated his case in terms of Adam's fall: idolatry leads to sexual license and wickedness in general. If this is true, it supports our case that Paul has the whole of humankind in view here. The narrative speaks of the fall of all humanity, before the distinction between Jew and Gentile was introduced. Hooker 1959-60 and 1966; cf. Hyldahl 1955-56. It is equally likely that there is an allusion to Psalm 106:20 in verse 23. Although it is true that in Jewish eyes, the Gentile nations are idolaters, it is also true that Israel itself has been guilty of idolatry as this allusion to the golden calf incident shows. For criticism of Hooker, see Wedderburn 1980, 414 who notes that in the Genesis narrative Adam turns away from God after sinning, and that in Romans humanity falls into idolatry and sin after turning away from God. (Cf. Scroggs 1966, 75 note 3 who thinks that the glory referred to in 1:23 is divine rather than the glory lost by man at the fall. A reference to Adam here, he says, is

example of the resultant impurity is homosexual activity on the part of both men and women (1:26ff).<sup>133</sup> As a Jew, Paul considers this to be unnatural and shameful.<sup>134</sup> Another example is the tendency of people to judge one another's behaviour and to set themselves up as morally superior (2:1f). Those who do not indulge in homosexual practices, for example, may consider themselves superior to those who do. The list of vices in 1:29ff is designed to preclude any such idea, as the juxtaposition of "lesser" sins such as envy and slander alongside murder shows. Paul insists that those who judge the behaviour of others and deem themselves to be above reproach are in reality condemning themselves, since there is no one who does not fall into envy and deceit at some time or another. Such "judging" is the proper work of God, and it is idolatrous for men and women to take this role upon themselves (2:2). The self-degradation of men and women, and the broken relationship between the Creator and his creatures is evidence that the just wrath of God is being revealed.<sup>135</sup> The moral fall has followed a theological fall in which humanity has rejected God for idolatry.<sup>136</sup>

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"possible but not probable"; also Bassler 1982, 195-97). However, it is unlikely that we should limit the allusion to one or the other story. As Wedderburn himself points out, the ideas of Genesis 3 (the serpent and the knowledge of good and evil) also seem to have played a part in Paul's thinking here. It suits Paul's purpose to turn the tables on any propensity towards pride among Jewish believers by using their own traditions to support his case. He is saying nothing with which they might not agree, but is preparing to make the point that there can be no boasting in their own virtue on the part of the Jews. Cf. Jervell 1960, 318.

<sup>133</sup> *Contra* Miller 1995, who argues that female homosexuality is not referred to in 1:26; and Scroggs 1983.

<sup>134</sup> See e.g. Gen 19:1-28; Lev 18:22; 20:13; Dunn 65 and Cranfield 127.

<sup>135</sup> The fact that divine wrath is being revealed is evident in the depraved behaviour of men and women (Dunn 54). There is no difficulty in the idea of the simultaneous revelation of both the gospel and the wrath of God, as E.P. Sanders (1983, 123-35) thinks. The behaviour of men and women shows that they are not living the life that God intended for them or enjoying his sovereignty as they should, and thus the wrath of God is revealed. God's righteousness is not to be set antithetically against his wrath (against e.g. Mattern 1966, 71; Stuhlmacher 1966, 80). It is also too simplistic to say that divine wrath is being revealed in the gospel alongside God's righteousness (*contra* Cranfield 76; Barrett 34; Wilckens I:102; Herold 1973, 261; Bockmuehl 1990, 140ff). The function of the gospel is to draw attention to the human situation and to provide a new remedy for it in Christ. The revelation of wrath, however, should not be seen as belonging strictly to this eschatological age, as Bornkamm ("The Revelation of God's Wrath: Romans 1-3" 1969, 47-70) and Hanson 1957,



Paul also reminds his readers that everyone will be subject to the judgement of God at the end time (2:3ff). God is kind and patient, but does not ignore sin, particularly that of people who criticise others while sinning themselves. Divine forbearance is intended to lead people to repentance and change, not to exonerate those who think themselves superior to others. As scripture says, "each man will be dealt with according to the works he has done" (2:6; Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12). Those who do good works will be rewarded with the eternal life and the glory, honour and immortality which they have sought, while those who cause divisions by their judgements on the behaviour of others and are disobedient to the truth will be met with wrath and fury at the end time (2:7f).

This, then, is why the gospel is needed: humanity as a whole is heading for destruction, and as a Jew, Paul sees this truth as applying to the Jews in the first place, and then to the Gentiles. The result of evil-doing will be tribulation and distress, in the same way, glory, honour and peace will reward good works, for Gentiles as well as Jews. Similarly, the consequences of good and evil will be visited

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84-88 think. As Paul's allusions to Old Testament stories of idolatry show, he clearly thinks in terms of God's wrath having been revealed, and continuing to be revealed throughout history (See O'Rourke 1961; cf. Aletti 1988; Eckstein 1987).

<sup>136</sup>Barrett 1962, 19ff; M. Barth 1955, 290; Ridderbos 1975, 112. Throughout the exegesis of this passage (1:18-2:16), I maintain that Paul has both Jews and Gentiles in mind. Several scholars, however, would take a different stance. Some maintain that 1:18-1:32 has only Gentiles in mind, and that Paul does not accuse Jews of these sins at all. J.G.D. Dunn, for example, describes 1:18-32 as a "typically Jewish indictment of Gentile sin" (Dunn 51; also Käsemann 53; SH 49). Others think that Paul addresses Gentiles in 1:18-32 and Jews in 2:1-16. (e.g. C.L.Porter 1994; cf. Stuhlmacher 33 for whom 1:18ff is about Gentile sin, and 2:1ff implicitly addresses Jews, becoming explicit in 2:17f). T.H. Tobin (1993, 312) maintains that Paul has a Gentile interlocutor in mind in 2:1-16, and that in 2:17-24 he addresses a Jewish interlocutor who dishonours God by not obeying the Law. It is well recognised that in 1:1-32 Paul uses traditional Jewish material normally used to indict the Gentiles. SH 51f give a list of parallels with Wisdom of Solomon (e.g. the indictment of idolatry in Wisd Sol 13:1ff, 10ff, the failure to see God in creation 13:8f and idolatry leading to lawlessness in 14:22ff). See also Dunn 61. However, it does not follow from this that the passage refers only to Gentile sin. Cf. Easton 1932, 3 who notes that in the list of vices in 1:29-31 sins of thought rather than action predominate, and suggests that Paul has chosen moral defects recognised as common to all humankind. For the view that Paul has both Gentiles and Jews in mind here see also M. Barth 1955, 293; Cranfield 105; G.N. Davies 1990, 49.

upon Gentiles as well as Jews ( Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι 2:9,10). Thus, although Israel is the covenant people, God may be said to be impartial as he deals with the sin of all humanity in exactly the same way (2:11).<sup>137</sup>

God's impartiality, however, should not be taken to suggest that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles (2:12ff). At the end time, Jews will be judged under the terms of Torah and how much they have abided by its principles and commandments. Those who sinned without the Law, i.e. the Gentiles, will be judged in terms of their God-given integrity and conscience, in terms of the "law" under which they have been living. They may not be fully clear in their minds as to what is right and wrong because they have not had the clarity which the Torah has given to the Jews (μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων 2:15 ), but they can be sure that they will be dealt with justly by the God who knows what is hidden in their hearts (2:16).

2.3. In 2:17 Paul turns to address an imaginary Jewish interlocutor who might take exception to his warnings against any ideas of Jewish superiority. Given their particular knowledge, are the Jews not supposed to be guides to the blind, lights to those who are in darkness and teachers of children (2:19f)? Since they have been given the Torah ("the embodiment of knowledge and truth") are they not morally superior? Paul, will not permit any such inference. He urges them to examine themselves and implies that they will find the very sins of which he has been speaking. For example, Jews know that theft is wrong, but Paul knows that there are Jews who steal. The same goes for committing adultery, idolatry and breaking the Law in other ways (2:22f).<sup>138</sup> Israel cannot declare herself sinless, because there are those in her number who commit the very offences proscribed by the Law. Indeed

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<sup>137</sup> On the importance of the motif of divine impartiality both in Jewish tradition and in Paul's view of God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles in Romans 2, see Bassler 1982.

<sup>138</sup> There is no need to think that Paul is speaking figuratively of Israel's apostasy here, as Barrett 56 contends. See Ziesler 90 and Käsemann 69: Paul is simply choosing examples of behaviour common to both Jews and Gentiles. There is certainly no justification in the text for K. Barth's view (37) that theft, adultery and sacrilege refer to what the Jewish people have done to Jesus Christ and are now doing to his followers.

scripture itself shows that it is possible for the Gentiles to despise the name of God because the behaviour of the Jews is not always consonant with their claim to be the chosen people of God (2:24; Isa 52:5). Israel as a whole cannot maintain that she is morally superior to the Gentiles.

At this point Paul's imaginary interlocutor reminds him that Jews have circumcision, the sign of the covenant with God (2:25). Does this not indicate that the Jews have a special place in God's sight? Will this not be of some advantage to them at the last day? Yes, it will, Paul replies, but only if they keep the Law in its entirety. By the same token, if a Gentile were to keep all the precepts of Torah, he would be regarded as circumcised - as having a special covenant relationship with God - and would have the right to feel morally superior to those Jews who so patently failed to keep the Law (2:26). However, to speak of keeping Torah in its entirety is to speak hypothetically: Jews do not, and neither do Gentiles.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, to speak in this way is to miss the point of circumcision entirely. It is essentially the sign of a relationship with God, which does not consist of literal obedience to the Law, but is a matter of the heart (2:29).<sup>140</sup> What really counts is whether the Jew remains loyal to God in his inner being; merely obeying the laws of *kashrut*, circumcision and Sabbath is not enough, and pleasing God is far more important than gaining the approval of others through assiduous Law observance.

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<sup>139</sup> Van Dülmen 1968, 77; 82. Note, however (*contra* Van Dülmen 76f), that Paul does not say the Law *cannot* be kept in its entirety; he simply states that no one *does* keep it .

<sup>140</sup> Käsemann 73 is wrong to think that the "true Jew" is one whose spiritual circumcision has been worked by the Holy Spirit. Rom 1:18-3:20 is best seen as a description of life in the old age, before the coming of Christ; Paul is leading up to the "but now" of 3:21. Here Paul is speaking hypothetically - Jews and Gentiles alike have not kept the Law, but if a Gentile did, he or she would be considered circumcised in the spiritual sense of the word. See Deidun 1981, 162-67. Similarly, 2:14 does not refer to Gentile believers as Cranfield 156 thinks, but to non-believers (see Ziesler 86). Wright 1996, 149 also reads too much into the text when he interprets the uncircumcised Law keepers of 2:26f as referring to Gentile believers who "are now in the strange position of 'doing the Law' since the Spirit has written the work of Torah in their hearts". (See also Barrett 58; Cranfield 173).

The simple fact of being circumcised, then, does not render the Jews morally superior. They still have to take responsibility for their actions, and at the final judgement the crucial factor will be how each individual has behaved.<sup>141</sup> What matters is what you do in this life, and Jews cannot claim moral superiority simply by virtue of their covenant status and possession of the Law, contrary to what they might be tempted to think.<sup>142</sup>

2.4. Paul is well aware that it could be inferred from his argument thus far that the Jews, the covenant people of God, have no advantage over the Gentiles at all. In 3:1 he sets out to dispel this notion and begins to outline the particular privileges given to them by God. The first of these is the fact that the Jews are in possession of the oracles of God (i.e. the whole of Scripture with all its commandments and promises<sup>143</sup>) and have been entrusted with their safekeeping and propagation. Even if some (τινες) Jews have been unfaithful in carrying out that task (3:3), and have failed to keep the Law and pass its statutes on in each generation, God himself will not be unfaithful to them.<sup>144</sup> In fact, even if every one on earth were unfaithful, God

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<sup>141</sup> E.P. Sanders 1983, 123-35 thinks 1:18-2:29 is a synagogue sermon which has been taken over by Paul, the sentiment of which cannot be reconciled with the emphasis on faith elsewhere in his thinking. Räisänen 1980, 310 also thinks that Paul's thought is fundamentally contradictory, the idea that everyone is under the power of sin being at odds with the statement that some Gentiles fulfil the Law. N.M. Watson 1983 suggests that the words of warning are addressed to those who have lapsed into false security, while the words of justification are addressed to the penitent faithful. For Ziesler 83, Rom 2:6 refers strictly to the situation apart from Christ i.e. apart from justification by faith (so also Wilckens I:144-45; Schlatter 99). There is, however, no reason to see this declaration of judgement by works as contradicting the doctrine of justification by faith. Paul clearly thinks that the gospel includes the idea that humanity will be judged at the end time (2:16); see SH 57; Stuhlmacher 45-47. As far as believers are concerned, he warns elsewhere that it is possible to lose one's salvation and be subject to the wrath of God at the end time (1 Cor 6:9f). Justification does not preclude ethical responsibility or cancel out the last judgement for believers. As Sanders himself says, certain behaviour is required for "staying in" as a believer (Sanders 1977, 515-18. See also Snodgrass 1986; Travis 1986; Donfried 1976; cf. Gundry Volf 1990 who argues *contra* Sanders that Paul does not think it is possible to lose one's salvation after it has been promised).

<sup>142</sup> B.W. Longenecker 1991, 187-91 sees this tendency, which he calls "ethnocentric covenantalism", in Jewish literature of the time, e.g. 4 Ezra 3:28-36; 6:38-59.

<sup>143</sup> Barrett 62; Wilckens II: 164.

would still remain faithful to his people, and to himself, as scripture itself says (3:4; Ps 50:6).

Rather than continue to enumerate the advantages, however, Paul breaks off to guard against a potential flaw in his argument. If it is indeed the case that all people sin but that God remains faithful, could it not be said that wrong-doing actually serves to throw God's justice into relief? And if this is the case, could it not be said that God would be unjust to inflict his wrath on the wrong-doer, since it ultimately has good outcome? Paul says that this is certainly not to be inferred: God is Judge of the world, and he must deal with wrong-doing or his justice would be compromised (3:6). It makes no sense to maintain that any individual is a sinner if his or her falsehood (i.e. a lack of faithfulness to God) serves to make God's glory abound all the more (3:7). If this were so, it would indeed be right to do evil so that good might come from it, and those critics who say that this is what happens in the P churches are quite wrong, and must be condemned.<sup>145</sup>

At this point, Paul unexpectedly returns to the question of whether the Jews are in any way morally superior to the Gentiles (προεχόμεθα 3:9).<sup>146</sup> He repeats his assertion that Jews and Gentiles alike are under the power of sin, and goes on to support it with several quotations from scripture which indicate that Jews themselves

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<sup>144</sup> It is not necessary to see *τινες* in 3:3 as referring to unbelief in the gospel (as SH 71 think), or to follow the view of Dunn 131 and Cranfield 180 that the Jews have failed to recognise the meaning of what has been entrusted to them. Paul's point is that throughout Israel's history there have been some Jews who have been unfaithful to God. G.N. Davies 1990, 75 points out that Paul is careful not to generalise by claiming that all Israel was unfaithful. Although judgement will fall on those who have been unfaithful, this does not mean that God will be unfaithful to Israel as a whole, as indeed the message of the gospel shows. See also Räisänen 1986, 185-205 and Cosgrove 1987.

<sup>145</sup> Canales 1985 may well be right that Paul has Christian Judaisers who have denounced him to the Roman church in mind here. Cf. W.S. Campbell 1992, 25-42 who thinks that they are Christian Gentile anti-nomians.

<sup>146</sup> Barrett 1962, 68: "do we Jews excel?"; *contra* Dunn 146 who follows Dahl's 1982 interpretation, "what do we plead as a defence?" As Ziesler 192 notes, Dahl's explanation requires the elimination of *οὐ πάντως*, which is omitted in certain MSS. D\*, G and other MSS replace this phrase with *περισσόν* and *προεχόμεθα* with the unambiguous *προκατέχομεν*. See Metzger 1975, 507f.

have been guilty of unrighteousness and lack of the fear of God. God has always been for the righteous and against the wicked, even within the Jewish community itself. He begins with Psalm 14:1-3: no one is righteous, and no one does good on the earth. Psalms 5:10 and 10:7 describe the kind of behaviour which God abhors, and which has been found among the Jews themselves: spreading poison with the mouth (Psalm 140:3 MT, Prov 1:16; cf. also Isa 9:7) being quick to do evil, cursing and bitterness (Ps 10:3) and shedding blood (Prov 1:16; cf. also Isa 9:7).<sup>147</sup> Compared with those who are righteous, people who do such things can have no peace before God (Ps 36:1 MT). They have only ruin and misery because they have no fear of the Lord.

The Torah itself speaks thus to its own people, part of whose duty in guarding the oracles of God is to make them known to the whole world, so that all the mouths which utter wickedness will be made silent and brought under the authority of God once more. Paul then rounds off his argument with a summary statement which probably alludes to Psalm 143:2: no man living is righteous before God. But Paul makes another jibe at any propensity to pride among the Jews by stating that no living being (πᾶσα σὰρξ) is justified before God by means of works of the Law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου). Most likely this phrase is intended to refer to Torah, and Paul is merely summarising what he has been saying all along. Men and women cannot be made righteous before God simply by doing what the Law requires.<sup>148</sup> The very presence of the Law reveals that there is sin in the world. God is not looking for perfection in Law-keeping but for the Jews to have a true spiritually circumcised relationship with him.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Moyise 1994-95 argues that this catena is probably non-Pauline; *contra* Dunn 1988, 150; cf. Keck 1977.

<sup>148</sup> G.N. Davies 1990, 119 translates "good works which the law requires". See also Tyson 1973. There is no need to think the phrase is used pejoratively (Cranfield 197f, *contra* Dunn 100).

<sup>149</sup> Paul may also have in mind those Gentiles who instinctively know what the Law requires and do not obey it, thus stirring their consciences. See Jewett 1971, 444: conscience is separate from knowing the Law. Wilckens I:13f notes that conscience is one of the participants in the discussion of conflicting thoughts.

Having thus established that all human beings are sinners heading inexorably towards God's wrath and fury at the end time, Paul now proceeds to show how God, in the gospel, has acted to ameliorate the situation and bring about salvation for all men and women through the work of Jesus Christ (3:21-26).<sup>150</sup> In the earlier age, God's righteous saving power had been revealed in Torah, but now, in the new age, it has been revealed in the gospel and Gentiles as well as Jews have the opportunity to respond. The idea that anyone one might boast in their obedience to the Law, if not shown to be false by Paul's argument, is certainly ruled out now. Paul has shown to his own satisfaction that Torah is not a matter of works but must be understood in terms of faith (3:27).<sup>151</sup> True Judaism is, and always has been, a matter of spiritual circumcision, a faithful relationship with God. Now that Christ has come, faith has been given a new focus which takes over from all other forms.<sup>152</sup> And as God is one, so also must his dealings with his people be impartial; now Gentiles as well as Jews will be justified on the basis of faith - in Jesus Christ. As Dahl notes, the assurance is found throughout Jewish literature that God is God of all humanity:

"The oneness of God, the sovereign creator of all, is demonstrated by the impartiality of his judgement and his grace towards Jew and Gentile without distinction".<sup>153</sup>

But this, Paul hastens to add, does not imply that Torah is now obsolete. On the contrary, as he will show from the Torah itself, using the example of Abraham the patriarch (4:1 ff), Paul's view upholds the Torah, and builds on its principles.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Detailed discussion of 3:21-26 is provided below in chapter 5.

<sup>151</sup> E.P. Sanders 1983, 34 thinks νόμος here means principle. For Räisänen 1983, 51 it refers to order. However, it is more likely that Paul is referring to Torah here. Paul has been showing that Torah has pointed to Christ and the centrality of faith (3:21f) and he returns to this theme in 3:27 after his exposition of God's work in Christ. For the view that νόμος in 3:27 refers to Torah rather than to principle see also Friedrich 1954; Hübner 1984(b), 114ff; Osten-Sacken 1975, 245; Wilckens I: 245.

<sup>152</sup> Barrett 1986 - boasting can now only be the result of the word of the cross. See also R.W. Thompson 1986.

<sup>153</sup> Dahl 1977, 178-191; quoting from 191.

<sup>154</sup> Bornkamm 1971, 111 argues that 3:31 should be interpreted in the light of 3:19-20: the Law is established in that it is allowed to "stop" all mouths. See also

Paul's opening argument thus establishes that the gospel, the manifestation of God's righteousness in the new age, is intended for Jews in the first instance and then for Gentiles. The priority of Israel, the assurance of her privileged place in God's sight, is part and parcel of that gospel. Jews and Gentiles are equally sinful, and Jews must not be tempted to think that their privilege exempts them from the charge of having turned away from God; they, like all other members of the human race, have sinned. But now God has made provision for his people, and in accordance with his own plan of salvation is including the Gentiles in his merciful provision. Having shown why the gospel has been necessary, Paul will proceed, in chapters 5 to 8 of the letter, to speak of what it means to be part of the new community of those who are justified by faith in Christ. As we shall see below (chapter 5), believers live in a new age and have a new identity in Christ. In chapters 9 to 11 Paul returns to consider the place of Israel once more in the light of the painful fact that most Jews have rejected the gospel which was intended for their benefit.

### **3. Romans 9-11.**

3.1. Paul's great joy in the experience of the new life which Christ brings leads him, at the end of chapter 8, to sing a hymn of praise rejoicing in the fact that nothing can separate God's people from his love. He is filled with gratitude for God's work through Christ, who now sits at the right hand of God. However, this is tempered by deep sadness (9:1). For the fact remains that although the gospel is intended primarily for the Jews, most of them have not believed and have not responded to the gift that God has given them. Such is the great grief and unceasing pain in his heart (9:2), that he would be willing to sacrifice his own salvation if he thought that it might secure theirs (9:3).<sup>155</sup> He has great pride in his own people; they have been given special privileges by God, the greatest of which is that the Messiah himself is of Jewish physical descent.<sup>156</sup>

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Zeller 99 and cf. Räisänen 1983, 69. However, many now take 3:31 as leading into the next chapter rather than rounding off chapter 3. Friedrich 1954, 416, Osten-Sacken 1975, 247ff; S.K. Williams 1980, 280; Rhyne 1981, 26-32.

<sup>155</sup> According to Gaston 1987, 92, Israel's unbelief is not mentioned as the source of Paul's grief. However, given his desire that they be saved (10:1) this interpretation seems unlikely.



The reality of the situation is unpleasant to Paul, not simply because of the grief he feels, but also because it raises some uncomfortable questions. It may be true that what he has said about sin and redemption through Jesus is "according to the scriptures" (e.g. 3:21), but there is still a nagging question which cannot be ignored - why have most Jews not believed in Jesus? If the Law and the prophets have spoken of Jesus as the means of salvation for Jews, but most have not in fact been saved through him, is it not logical to infer that God's word has failed?

Paul probably has a Jewish reader in mind, as he asks this question, and as a Jew himself, he must assert that God's word cannot fail.<sup>157</sup> But neither is his argument faulty, so he refutes the potential objection at 9:6 (οὐχ οἶον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ), and proceeds to show why his thought is consistent, supporting his argument from scripture. He describes God's plan for the Jewish nation, God's past and present dealings with them, and how their relationship to the church must be seen, and does this under four headings - historical election of and within Israel (9:6-26), the idea of the remnant in scripture (9:27-29;11:1-6), the picture of the olive plant (11:13-24) and his beliefs about the final conversion of the Jews (11:25-27).

3.2. Paul starts his argument by describing the situation of Israel in the eschatological age (9:6f). He states that not all who come out of Israel are Israel (οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ 9:6). To put it another way, not all who are children of Abraham (i.e. his racial and physical descendants) should be designated Abraham's σπέρμα. The scriptural support for this assertion comes from Genesis 21:12 - ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται ἡ σπέρμα. Who are Abraham's σπέρμα? They are τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (9:8), the children of the promise that Sarah would conceive and that Abraham would be the father of many nations

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<sup>156</sup> Detailed exegesis of 9:1-5 is given in chapter 4 below.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Räisänen 1988, 181: "He has to face the worries of Jewish Christians about the implications of his gospel. Roman gentile Christians would not have cared, at least not if they had to be warned against a boasting attitude toward Jews (11:18,20). Paul addresses those who felt the plight of Israel to be a calamity rather than a matter of course."

(9:9; cf. 4:17), the promise which Abraham believed despite the fact of his old age. The children of God are not those who are the physical descendants of Abraham, τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκός, but those who have believed in Jesus and have become heirs of God (cf. 8:16f). God has effectively split physical Israel into two sections - those who believe and those who do not. He has chosen some and, apparently, rejected others, and God's children, it is implied, are those who believe in Jesus.

Next, in verse 10, Paul shows that there is precedent for this kind of election within Israel in Scripture itself. In the story of Jacob and Esau, the younger twin is chosen by God to lead, the older brother to serve. The prophet Malachi describes it as God having hated Esau and loved Jacob (9:13; Malachi 1:2f). As the two children were too young to have done either good or evil works, the choice had nothing to do with merit. It was done solely with the intention that the process of God's purpose for Israel as a whole might continue (9.11).

This apparently arbitrary choice of Jacob over Esau could be taken to suggest that God deals unjustly with his people (9:14). Paul is at pains to show that this inference is false. Once again, he wants to show that his interpretation of events, past and present, is entirely in line with what the Jewish people know of God - in other words, that it is good Jewish theology. So, he cites Exodus 33:19 in which God tells Moses how he will deal with his people Israel: "I will have mercy on whom I shall have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I shall have compassion". God has the right to deal with his people in any way he chooses. What he does in the history of his people has nothing to do with the effort (τρέχοντος) or will of individuals, but everything to do with divine mercy (9:16).<sup>158</sup> Moreover, God can use whom or what he chooses for his purposes. An example of this is Pharaoh, whose heart God hardened, in order that his power might be seen and his name known throughout the earth (Exodus 9:16). Paul concludes: in order to fulfil his plan, God can do what he wants, harden hearts or show mercy (9:18).

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<sup>158</sup> Pfitzner 1967 argues that τρέχοντος suggests intention on a set course of behaviour. However, most think it suggests exertion or effort see e.g. Derrett 1985 and Noack 1970.

At 9:19 the apostle counters another possible objection to his argument. If God is as much in control of events as Paul is saying, why is it that men and women are still deemed accountable for their actions? This could also be taken to suggest that God is unjust in his dealings with humanity. But this idea is given short shrift: certain questions should not be asked.<sup>159</sup> As Isaiah points out, the clay does not argue with the potter and ask, "why have you made me thus?" (9:20 cf. Isaiah 29:16; Jer 18:6-10; Wisd Sol 15:7-8). It is the potter's prerogative to use the clay as he wishes. He can make pots for menial or aesthetic use according to what he needs and wants. So too, it is God's prerogative to have "vessels of wrath" which are worthy only for destruction, whose behaviour he will endure with great patience for the sake of making his power known.<sup>160</sup> Equally, it is his right to make vessels which are destined for glorious use and to show his mercy if he so wishes.<sup>161</sup> It is not for men and women to question God's grand scheme of things (9:23).

Even those whom he has called (and Paul considers that he and his Roman readers may think of themselves as such: ἡμᾶς), whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction,

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<sup>159</sup> *Contra* Räisänen 1988, 182 the question of the morality of God's action is extraneous to Paul's argument and should not be brought up here. See Piper 1983, 70-79, esp p. 73; Dunn 1988, 551.

<sup>160</sup> This takes θέλων in verse 22 as causal (with Cranfield 493; Dunn 558; Barrett 189-90), and recognises that there is an anacolouthon *contra* Siegert 1985 who takes verse 24 as the apodosis corresponding to the protasis of verse 22.

<sup>161</sup> The tendency to see references to individual predestination in these verses (e.g. Käsemann 265) has given way to more cautious exegesis in recent times; see e.g. Cranfield, 488; Dunn 545. Dunn 539 rightly notes that the second Israel in 9:6 does not signify the church and that Paul's argument concerns the character and mode rather than the fact of election. Similar caution should be exercised over reading correspondences or typology into 9:6-26 (Dunn 544; Wilckens II:195; *contra* Käsemann 1973, 264). There is no need, for example, to think that "vessels of wrath" and "vessels made for destruction" refer to unbelieving Jews and "vessels of mercy" refer to believers, as Hanson 1981 suggests. As E.E. Johnson points out (1989, 149), it is a methodological error to understand vessels of wrath as unbelieving Israel, as this necessitates knowledge of 11:17-24 prior to 9:22. *Contra* Hübner 1984, 45, Pharaoh does not stand for the Jews of Paul's time, but is simply an example of God's hardening of individuals and nations in his plan for Israel. Similarly, *contra* Räisänen 1988, 182 Paul is not saying that most of Israel has never been elected, or that what applied in the old age now applies in the new, but that there is scriptural precedent for what God is doing now.

may not question God's purposes (9:24).<sup>162</sup> It may seem strange to many Jews that Gentiles at present form the majority of the children of promise, Abraham's σπέρμα; it may seem incomprehensible that God should use his own people, hardening their hearts in such a way, but the present state of affairs has been foretold by Hosea. It should come as no surprise that God now calls Gentiles "my people" and "sons of the living God" (9:25f cf. Rom 8 and Hosea 2:23, 1:10).

This first part of Paul's explanation of the current difficult situation consists of the argument that God has always used men and women for his own purposes and to make his power known, even to the extent of distinguishing between groups within Israel itself. In the present age, God is doing this through the unbelief of the Jews, whose hearts he has hardened. Thus, God's word can be shown not to have failed because the unbelief of Israel should be seen as part of the merciful working of God.<sup>163</sup> Paul knows that this could be taken to suggest that God is capricious and even rather cruel. Thus, the next step in his argument must be to show that God's motive is entirely merciful, and that he has the ultimate salvation of Israel in mind. Hardening of hearts does not necessarily mean rejection by God,<sup>164</sup> and in order to illustrate this, he uses another idea from Scripture - the remnant, the sign of hope that God will not destroy his people.

3.3. Paul cites Isaiah 10:22 (LXX), in which God threatens to destroy Israel because of their apostasy and for the sake of righteousness. Thousands will die, but a remnant will be left alive: God has promised that the entire people of Israel will not be destroyed. Another quote from Isa 1:9 expresses this differently, but again shows the positive side of the divine action: if God did not show his mercy and leave a remnant of σπέρμα, Israel, like Sodom and Gomorrah, would be completely destroyed. For Paul, Isaiah's remnant is a message of hope: God could have allowed all his people to be destroyed, but has ensured that some have survived to allow the flourishing of future generations.<sup>165</sup> Believing Jews, now joined by converted Gentiles, are the

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<sup>162</sup> The punctuation of this verse is disputed, see Cranfield 498 for a survey of views.

<sup>163</sup> Cranfield 474.

<sup>164</sup> Barrett 187.

σπέρμα which God has left in order to preserve his people Israel (9:29; Isa 1:9). Most Jews, however, have failed to believe and have "stumbled over the stumbling stone which God has placed in Zion" (9:33), and the Gentiles have attained the righteousness which Israel herself has always pursued.

At this point Paul breaks off the argument to consider why this should be so and to explore further the significance of Jesus' coming for Israel. He concludes by insisting that the essence of belief in the new age, and the means of salvation for Jew and Gentile alike, is the confession that Jesus is Lord (10:9-13).<sup>166</sup> In order that Jews and Gentiles may know about Jesus, however, the gospel must be preached. Paul is excited at the thought of this task and its consequences (10:15f), but he has to remind himself sharply in 10:16 of the reality, incomprehensible though it may be, that not all Jews have believed the word of Christ, and that this too has been foretold in scripture. As far as the Gentiles are concerned, as Psalm 19:4 (10:18) shows, the voice (of the heavens) has reached every part of the world, and Israel has had the gospel revealed to her in her own Scripture (10:19f). Nevertheless, Israel is not thereby absolved of all responsibility for her failure. She is still being disobedient and contrary in rejecting the gift of a patient and long-suffering God (10:21).

On this basis, Paul can assert that God has not rejected his people (11:1), and cites two examples to back up his claim. Now in the eschatological age, there is again a remnant of the Jews, chosen not because of anything they have done, but purely on the basis of God's grace (11:5,6).<sup>167</sup> Paul himself, whom God has specially called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, is σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ, one of the children of the promise which Abraham received. He is living proof that a remnant remains. Nor is he alone. As in the story of Elijah, who thought that he alone had been left to serve the Lord, but learned that there remained a remnant of seven thousand Jews who

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<sup>165</sup> Hays 1989, 68.

<sup>166</sup> 9:30-10:14 will be discussed below in chapter 7.

<sup>167</sup> The phrase (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) shows that Paul is speaking of a remnant in the present age; against Refoulé 1984 who thinks that the remnant consists of pious Jews who would be the remnant (the elect) before the announcement of the Gospel.

would not bow to Baal, there are many others who believe in Jesus. Because of God's great mercy, Israel's apostasy will not lead to her annihilation.<sup>168</sup>

It can be shown that God has acted in complete consistency with his own character as it is revealed in the Scriptures. Israel has apostasised, she has disobeyed the gospel, but paradoxically this is in accordance with God's plan. Her blindness and deafness (11:10) are God-given, and the Jews' mistaken clinging to their own beliefs and their rejection of Christ have meant that they have become ensnared, trapped in their own traditions as the Psalmist predicted, unable to break free (11:9f).<sup>169</sup> And yet their stumbling has not led to their complete downfall. Not only that, their current failure to believe in Christ has actually had a very positive effect - their disobedience has brought about the possibility of salvation for the Gentiles. Furthermore, the salvation of the Gentiles has a purpose - to make the Jews themselves jealous of what the Gentiles have found (11:11f). Indeed, the ultimate reason for the mission to the Gentiles is to bring salvation to the Jews themselves, resulting in untold riches for the whole world (11:12).<sup>170</sup>

3.4. Having thus established Israel's place in God's plan of salvation for the world as special and privileged, Paul turns to address the Gentiles in the congregation in Rome, and starts to tackle the problem of their reported haughty attitude towards Israel and the synagogue. He tells them that he glorifies his ministry to the Gentiles, not simply because of the impact it may have on the Gentiles, but because he may also be able, indirectly, to save some of his own people if they become jealous of the Gentiles' salvation.<sup>171</sup> Gentiles should not be deceived into thinking that their

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<sup>168</sup> Stuhlmacher 163 notes that the Essenes saw the remnant as "damning all those who transgress the commandment (1QS 5:7)", whereas Paul sees it as a sign of hope for all Israel. The emphasis on God's grace and mercy is noted by Clements 1980, 119. On the remnant motif in the Old Testament see Hasel 1972, especially pp 159-73 on the Elijah cycle. Gaston's view (1987, 148) that the remnant refers to Paul and his co-missionaries has not been generally accepted by scholars.

<sup>169</sup> RSV translates *διὰ παντός* in 11:10 as "for ever". Cranfield 1985 translates it as "continually" and rightly thinks that Paul is thinking of a temporary exclusion of the majority of Jews which gives the gentiles their chance.

<sup>170</sup> See Bell 1994 for a study of the jealousy motif in these chapters.

<sup>171</sup> Stendahl 1984, 243 reads too much into the text at 11:13 when he says that Paul is

salvation is more important than that of the Jews, whose acceptance of the gospel will bring about nothing less than the resumption of the resurrection from the dead (11:15), leading to the restoration of Israel.<sup>172</sup> For although only a small number of Jews have believed, the few who have are like the offering of a piece of dough as the first-fruit sacrifice to God. The fact that this acceptable offering is broken off from a larger lump means that the whole of the lump is acceptable and therefore holy. Physical Israel remains the chosen people of God.

Paul then changes the metaphor and discusses the relationship of the Gentile believers with this holy people. Israel is now likened to the root of a cultivated olive plant.<sup>173</sup> It goes without saying that this root is holy, and so the branches of the plant must be too. Experimenting with this metaphor for a while, Paul describes unbelieving Jews as branches which have been cut off from the main plant (11:17). Other branches (believing Gentiles) have been grafted into the plant to share in the goodness of the root of Israel as a whole. A warning is thus issued to the Gentile believers: they must not boast over the natural branches, whether the latter have been cut off or remain on the plant as believing Jews. If they do presume to boast, they must remember that even though their ingrafting has "rejuvenated the tree" and helped in the salvation of Israel,<sup>174</sup> they do not support the root, but are supported by it (11: 18). In other words, they would not be able to survive without the nourishment provided by Israel.

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here telling the Gentile Christians that their haughty attitude means that they have no business trying to convert Jews.

<sup>172</sup> Zeller 1973, 242-43. The question of whether this verse contradicts 11:2 is irrelevant if the latter is understood to refer to the rejection of the gospel rather than God's rejection of his people.

<sup>173</sup> Although  $\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\alpha$  refers to Christ in 15:12 and is messianically interpreted in Rev 5:5; 22:16, it is unlikely that it should be so understood here, as Hanson 1974 maintains. Christology or the idea of a pre-existent Christ is not at the forefront of Paul's mind here, but rather the destinies of the Jewish and Gentile races as a whole. In Jewish literature, the root of Israel is Abraham from whom the people of God grow (e.g. T.Jud 24:5; Jub 16:26). The olive plant itself represents Israel. See e.g. Käsemann 299-300; Stuhlmacher 166; Wilckens II: 247.

<sup>174</sup> Baxter and Ziesler 1985. Contrast W.D. Davies 1984, 153-63, 356-60 (especially page 160) who suggests that the wild olive could have nothing to contribute to the main plant.

Gentile believers are not entitled to infer that they are superior to those who have been cut off (11:19). Rather they should stand in awe at the fact that they are justified simply by means of faith and God's kindness, and through no effort of their own. Not only can God cut them off from the plant (11:21), he can also graft the branches which have already been cut off back into the parent plant. Those Jews who become believers can be brought back into the parent group (11:24).

Thus, Paul conveys the message that there is no reason for the Gentile believers at Rome to adopt a haughty attitude towards Jewish believers or the Jewish people. Their own salvation serves to take the "way of Israel" to the ends of the earth, with the ultimate aim of saving Israel as a whole. However, they are also indebted to Israel, her traditions and teachings and they cannot exist without her.<sup>175</sup> They misunderstand the situation if they think that Israel has been allowed to join the church; rather they should realise that they, the Gentile believers, have been introduced into Israel, and only because of the kindness of God.<sup>176</sup>

3.5. Before Paul can conclude his argument, he has one more question to deal with, a question which could be voiced by either or both sections of the community but whose answer he addresses to the Gentiles: what will happen to the branches (i.e. the unbelieving Jews) which have been cut off? Does this not again suggest that God has rejected his people? Has he used them for a specific purpose and then, having no further use for them, cast them off? In order to answer this, Paul says that he is telling these Gentile believers about the mystery (*μυστήριον*), previously hidden but now made known, of the hardening of part of Israel in order to stop them being "wise in their own conceits" (11:25).<sup>177</sup> As we have seen throughout chapters 9-11, exegesis

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<sup>175</sup> B.W. Longenecker 1991, 264.

<sup>176</sup> Bell 1994, 181 makes the point that the privileges of Israel have not been transferred from Israel to the church but have been *extended* to the Gentiles. This is partly why Paul hopes that they will be provoked to jealousy.

<sup>177</sup> There is some disagreement among scholars as to the nature of the "mystery" to which Paul refers. For the view that the mystery is the hardening and salvation of all of Israel see M. Barth 1983. For Beker (1980, 334), the mystery is the interdependence of God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles. According to Munck 1967, 132 the main content of the mystery is that the partial hardening of Israel is limited both in time and extent, lasting until the *πλήρωμα* of the Gentiles begins. In



of Scripture in the light of Christ's coming leads Paul to realise that the salvation of the Gentiles will be used to bring Jews to Christ. The fact that part of Israel has been hardened can be seen as part of God's plan, indicated in Scripture, as is the fact that the success of the Gentile mission is ultimately intended to bring about the salvation of the Jews. Moreover, that part of Israel has been hardened and some branches have been cut off does not jeopardise the salvation of Israel as a whole.<sup>178</sup> The hardening is only temporary: when the full number (πλήρωμα) of Gentile converts required by God come in, the salvation of Israel as a whole will be effected (καὶ οὕτως 11:26). The prophecy of Isaiah will have been fulfilled: Christ the redeemer will come from Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. The new covenant of Jeremiah's prophecy will be established and all of Israel's sins will be taken from them (11:27). Just as the full number of the Gentiles is required, so too is there a full number (πλήρωμα) of Israel, a number of Jewish believers required by God. When this comes about, there will be riches for the whole world (11:12).<sup>179</sup> But how will the salvation of Israel be brought about?

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a recent study, Bockmeuhl speaks of the mystery as referring collectively to the saving purposes of God (226). In similar vein, Brown (1968, 50) speaks of the divine economy of redemption.

The origin of this mystery is also a matter of contention - is this something which has been revealed to Paul through some sort of charismatic revelation, experienced while Paul dictates this part of the letter (as according to Noack 1965)? Most scholars now hold that this passage (11:25f) is an example of prophetic or charismatic exegesis of the OT, in line with Semitic tradition (in contrast to the Graeco-Roman religions in which the mystery may only be revealed to the initiate). See Brown 1968; Aune 1983, 252; Bockmuehl 1990, 225ff; Bell 1994, 126f.

<sup>178</sup> *Contra* Dunn 679 who speaks of a hardening which "in part has come over Israel" (cf. Cranfield 574).

<sup>179</sup> Wilckens II:243: πλήρωμα corresponds to πᾶς Ἰσραήλ which refers to Israel as a whole. The translation "full number" in both 11:12 and 11:25 is preferred by Stuhlmacher 166,172; Barrett on 11:12 has "full complement"(213) and "full number" on 11:25 (225); SH 322, 335. While it is true that Paul does not explain these terms and does not predict in detail what the future may hold ( Batey 1966, 226), "full number" is better than the vague term "fullness" which is preferred by Munck (1967, 135). In his view πλήρωμα refers "to the salvation of the group in question" (134), i.e."the fullness of the Gentiles" must signify the goal that the totality of the Gentile world - admittedly in representative form- should have the gospel preached to them and that they should believe. Dunn translates "fullness" in 11:12 and "full number" in 11:25, but rightly suggests (655) that πλήρωμα in 11:12

Two important questions need to be tackled before we can answer this. First, does Israel's salvation have anything to do with the parousia in Paul's mind, and second, does Paul envisage a mass conversion of the Jews? With regard to the first question, not all scholars accept that Paul expects the salvation of the Jews to have anything to do with Jesus Christ at all. Krister Stendahl, for example, has declared it "stunning" that there is no reference to Jesus at all in this passage, and notes that the doxology in 11:33-36 is the only one in the Pauline corpus which has no Christological content.<sup>180</sup> It is not necessary, according to these writers, to understand ὁ ῥυόμενος in verse 26 as referring to Jesus Christ.<sup>181</sup> Rather, as in the original quotation, it refers to Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from her sin. God himself will save Israel and there will be no need for them to believe in Jesus. Franz Mussner, on the other hand suggests that while the salvation of the Jews will be brought about at the time of the parousia, there will be a different way of salvation for the Jews, a *Sonderweg* which will not involve a mass conversion to belief in Christ.<sup>182</sup> Unbelieving Jews will find faith in Christ at the end time, but in a different (undefined) way from that of the Gentiles. N.T. Wright thinks that Israel will be converted to belief in Christ, but declines to see a christological interpretation of 11:26, maintaining that the "deliverer" refers to Yahweh himself. Wright suggests that the salvation of Israel will be effected by the Gentile mission rather than by the return of Jesus Christ. At the completion of that task, the covenantal promises of the Gentile inclusion will be fulfilled.<sup>183</sup>

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should be seen as denoting a contrast between the remnant and Israel as a whole. There is, however, nothing in the text to support Dahl's suggestion (in his essay "The Future of Israel" (1977, 137-59, esp. 153f; see also Käsemann 306; Aus 1979; cf. Munck 1967, 13) that Paul thinks that the full number of Gentiles will come in when the collection is taken to Jerusalem, or that he thinks he is solely responsible for the conversion of all Gentiles. See above, note 71.

<sup>180</sup> Stendahl 1976, 4.

<sup>181</sup> See also Gager 1983, 261f and cf. Gaston 1987, 148f; Rese 1986; C.D. Stanley 1993.

<sup>182</sup> Mussner 1984, 34; cf. also Plag 1969, 49-61.

<sup>183</sup> Wright 1991, 249f. For Wright, however, "all Israel" does not mean every Jew or Israel as a whole, but an "enlarged believing remnant" i.e. all the church.

There are, however, a number of reasons why it is more likely that ὁ ῥυόμενος in verse 26 should be taken to refer to Christ and why it makes sense to maintain that in Paul's view the salvation of the Jews at the end time will be directly related to Christology and conversion. First, as W.S. Campbell points out, Paul's thought is saturated throughout by Christology and it is highly unlikely that Christ would be excluded from the picture now.<sup>184</sup> For Paul Christ is the focus and means of salvation of Jews and Gentiles alike. As D.G. Johnson has noted, given that for Paul the remnant of Israel currently believes in Christ, it is hardly likely that he would think of the salvation of the nation as a whole as having nothing to do with Christ at all.<sup>185</sup> As far as the doxology is concerned, it may be unusual for Pauline doxology to have no christological content, but given the focus on Israel and this remarkable account of her future salvation, it is surely appropriate for Paul to end by praising God and declaring the unsearchable nature of his ways (11:33-36).<sup>186</sup>

As to the second question, Heikki Räisänen notes the insistence of 1:16f and 10:12-3 that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles as regards salvation.<sup>187</sup> For Paul, Christ is the greatest gift of all to his people, but he probably does not have belief on the part of every single Jew in mind, just as he does not bank on the salvation of every single Gentile. Individual Jews do have to have faith in Christ (11:23),<sup>188</sup> but Paul's point is that because some have failed to believe, their failure does not condemn the race as a whole to destruction. Somehow, at the end time, and in some way related to the return of Christ, the Jewish race will be saved from the wrath of God and turn to Jesus.<sup>189</sup> As far as Mussner's view that there will be no conversion is concerned, Räisänen rightly points out that it is difficult to see how an

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<sup>184</sup> Campbell 1980(a); see also Sanders 1984, 194.

<sup>185</sup> Johnson 1984, 102. Others who argue against the idea of a special way include Sanger 1986; B.W. Longenecker 1989; Hvalvik 1990; Hofius 1990.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. W.D. Davies 1977-78, 34.

<sup>187</sup> Räisänen 1988, 189.

<sup>188</sup> So Hahn 1982; cf. also P. Richardson 1969, 136; Poinsot 1982.

<sup>189</sup> Schoeps 1961, 258 speculates that the parousia might see the coming of one "who has been alike the expectation of the synagogue and the church".

act of faith in Jesus by the Jews at the end time differs from a conversion.<sup>190</sup> The most we can say is that Paul does not think the salvation of Israel will result from the Christian mission.<sup>191</sup>

3.6. Having cleared up any potential inconsistency or theological flaw in his argument to his own satisfaction, Paul now draws his discussion to a close.<sup>192</sup> God's word has not failed and he has not rejected his people. The whole of Israel will be saved at the end time, but for the moment they are being used by God - their unbelief is all part of God's plan, which is not only consistent with the divine character, but is also to be found in Scripture.<sup>193</sup> Although their hearts have been hardened, God has not abandoned them, and, as we have seen, they will all be saved, somehow, at the end time. Thus, Paul can make the paradoxical statement to the Gentile believers at Rome that, as far as the gospel is concerned, non-believing Jews can be said to be enemies of God because they are disobeying him; however, they need to know that this is for the sake of the Gentiles as a whole (δι' ὑμῶν). The Jews' election and call can never be revoked. They will always be "beloved" because of the promise made by God to the patriarchs in the early days (11:28), and this will be shown to be true at the end time.<sup>194</sup> The current state of unbelief among the Jews is not inexplicable, although it does cause Paul great pain. The Jewish failure to believe is serving a far greater purpose, the full inclusion of the Gentiles. Paul is proud of his people and their place in salvation history, and of his apostolic role in the task of bringing the Gentiles in.

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<sup>190</sup> Räsänen 1988, 204 note 99.

<sup>191</sup> Beker 1980, 334.

<sup>192</sup> There is no need to see a contradiction between chapters 9 and 11 as e.g. Watson argues (1986, 160-74); see also Beker 1990; Dinkler 1967, 251-52; Grässer 1981, 428; Walter 1984, 176-77; Sanders 1983, 199 speaks of Paul's "conflicting convictions". Watson thinks that chapter 11 is "completely at variance" with chapter 9 (and the rest of the letter) which argues for the separation of church from synagogue. His thesis rests on the false notion that chapter 9 speaks of the election of the church in the time prior to the coming of Christ. Others who argue against inconsistency include Piper 1983, 9-15; Thielman 1994. Räsänen 1988, 192-96, takes the view that Paul is inconsistent and provides a useful overview of the question.

<sup>193</sup> See Hofius 1986 and 1990, 38.

<sup>194</sup> B. Longenecker 1989, 257f.

Paul can construe all this from his premise which he reiterates at 11:29 - that the gifts and call of God are irrevocable. His words of 9:1-5 still hold good: despite their disobedience, the Jews retain their God-given privileges and call. God works through the disobedience of humanity for the ultimate purpose of bringing about his mercy on all humankind (11:20f). Thus, having begun this section with a cry of anguish, Paul can end with a doxology which praises God for his wealth of wisdom and knowledge, and his inscrutable ways which bring about the mystery of the salvation of the human race (11:33-36).<sup>195</sup>

#### **4. Conclusion.**

4.1. Our interpretation of Paul's attitude to Israel confirms our understanding of 14:1-15:13. Paul considers himself to be deeply committed to Israel, and does not think her way of life obsolete. For him, nothing in his new faith is incompatible with his Jewish heritage: he remains a Jew, one of the covenant people of God. Although Paul thinks Israel wrong to have rejected the gospel, this does not mean that he becomes hostile to Israel. He criticises, but he does not condemn. He does not attack their traditions or customs, and hopes that she might come to understand Torah in terms of faith in Christ.<sup>196</sup> He does say that the gospel is intended for them in the first instance, but this does not mean that the Jews are to be seen as more inclined to sin than others (e.g. 2:17ff). On the contrary, Jew and Gentile alike are sinners before God, which is why the gospel has universal application.

The fact that the gospel, and the judgement which it entails (2:9,10), is intended for the Jews in the first place is, for Paul, proof of the continued covenant relationship

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<sup>195</sup> Zeller 1973, 267-68. For the view that 11:33-36 is a wisdom hymn of pre-Pauline origin which Paul has used as relevant to his theme of the wisdom of God and a suitable conclusion to his argument, see E.E. Johnson 1989, 172. Several scholars have noted the Stoic nature of Paul's language here, see Bornkamm 1969, 105-11 and Norden 1913, 240-50.

<sup>196</sup> Stowers 1981, 162-67 and 1984 points out that the diatribe style adopted by Paul does not convey hostility or polemic, but is a pedagogical device in which a dialogue partner is taught and errors are exposed in order to lead that person to the truth. For the view that Paul is not attacking Judaism, but conducting an inner Jewish debate, see Carras 1992.

with God.<sup>197</sup> Although he is the apostle to the gentiles, he harbours a hope that his mission will contribute indirectly to the salvation of his own people. That the Gentiles have been included in God's plan, indicates that the privilege is being extended outwith the covenant people, and is, he claims, entirely in line with Jewish tradition. Moreover, the church has to remember that it has been grafted into the main plant, and not the other way around. The Gentiles are being given a chance to share in the privilege of Israel.<sup>198</sup>

4.2. From our overview of the argument of Romans, and our analysis of 14:1-15:6, we have now established that Paul cannot be said to be anti-Judaic. His retention of Jewish tradition, his insistence on the priority of the Jews as the recipients of God's mercy, and his belief that the Gentiles come second in this plan, all point to a Paul who would not consider himself to be teaching anything which is detrimental to Israel. On the contrary, he thinks that his new beliefs are in line with Jewish tradition and that the gospel he is preaching is God's plan for *Israel*. Even his belief that the Jews will be saved through belief in Christ at the end-time, although "supersessionist" in Ruether's view, provides the ultimate reassurance for himself and other Jewish believers of God's faithfulness to his people.<sup>199</sup>

Thus far, our argument has supported that of Wright and Hays who argue for continuity between the church and Israel. There seems to be nothing in Paul's thought which he would consider would drive a wedge between them. We are forced to ask what difference Christ's coming makes. Is it indeed true that the church is nothing more than a "modification" of Israel? Our task now, in part two of the thesis, is to examine the christological content of the letter in order to ascertain what Paul considers Christ's significance to be, both for the history of Israel and the life of the

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<sup>197</sup> *Contra Gager* 1983, 214-17.

<sup>198</sup> The priority of Israel does not mean, however, that Paul thinks the gospel should be taken to unbelieving Jews first, and then to the Gentiles, as Nanos 1996, 26 contends.

<sup>199</sup> Ruether 1974, 107 writes "The purpose of Paul's 'mystery' is not to concede any ongoing validity to Judaism, but rather to assure the ultimate vindication of the Church. If the Church is the eschatological destiny of Israel, then this truth must finally win out by having the 'Jews' themselves testify to it." See the discussion of Boyarin 1994, below.

church itself. Will we come to the same conclusion, or will we have to alter our interpretation of Paul's view of Israel?

## Chapter 4

### Christ as Messiah.

#### 1. Introduction

So far we have argued that Paul considers his gospel to be entirely consistent with the traditions and beliefs of Israel. Far from being anti-Judaic, he considers the church and Israel to be closely related, is proud of his own Jewish identity and understands the need of some Jewish believers to carry on with Torah observance in the new age. We must now ask whether Paul's beliefs about Jesus are consistent with this conclusion. What exactly does he consider the significance of Jesus to be? The first aspect of the Christology of Romans we shall consider is that with which Paul himself opens the letter - the Messiahship of Jesus. What does Paul's understanding of Jesus as Messiah tell us about his view of the relationship between church and unbelieving Israel?

#### 2. Χριστός - Title or Proper Name?

2.1. The question which we are considering assumes that Paul does think that Jesus is the Messiah. This is in line with the view of N.T. Wright, for example, who has recently argued that, for Paul, Χριστός refers to Jesus as Israel's Messiah "in whom the true people of God are summed up and have their identity". He points to Rom 9:5; 15:3,7; 1 Cor 1:13; 10:4; 12:12 as stating unambiguously that Jesus is Messiah.<sup>200</sup> W.D. Davies has also argued for the importance of the Messiahship of Jesus in Paul: Jesus of Nazareth is given the title Messiah because God has achieved his purposes for Israel through him.<sup>201</sup>

However, not all are convinced that the idea of Χριστός is as important to Paul as these writers suggest. C.K. Barrett, for example, has recently said that Christ as Messiah, as opposed to his exalted status as Lord, is relatively unimportant to Paul, for whom eschatology is more important than history.<sup>202</sup> Indeed, some scholars even

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<sup>200</sup> Wright 1991, 43-46.

<sup>201</sup> Davies 1984, 100f; see Sanders' objection to this point of view in 1977, 496.



go so far as to say that the word Χριστός should not be seen as a title in Paul's writings at all, arguing that it is merely a proper name which does not *necessarily* signify the Messiah concept. The one exception, almost universally acknowledged, is Romans 9:5.<sup>203</sup> There can be little doubt that the absolute use of the name here, along with the definite article, is a reference to the Messiah, who is reckoned to be one of the privileges of Israel.

In his book *Christ, Lord, Son of God* Werner Kramer notes that there are several instances in the letters in which Paul refers to Χριστός, in the nominative and with the definite article, in which titular usage need not necessarily be indicated (e.g. 1 Cor 1:13; 1 Cor 10:4; 1 Cor 11:3), and that there are some sixty cases in which genitive constructions provide adequate reason for the presence of the article. He also observes that Paul can refer to ὁ Ἰησοῦς with no obvious reason for the use of the definite article (e.g. Rom 8:11). Kramer rightly concludes that we must not "confuse the question of the article with the question of titles".<sup>204</sup>

From his analysis of the data, Kramer argues that Χριστός has little or no titular significance for Paul. That is to say, Paul does not claim that Christ is the "Messiah", the anointed one of Israel. By the time the apostle comes to write his letters, the original meaning of the word (from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ meaning "anointed") has faded into the background, and it has assumed the significance merely of a proper name.<sup>205</sup> Kramer argues that the name Χριστός was first linked to Jesus' actions by Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, for whom *masiah* seemed a good indication of the eschatological significance which they perceived in him.<sup>206</sup> However, he thinks that

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<sup>202</sup> Barrett 1994, 104.

<sup>203</sup> See, however, Harris 1992, 155.

<sup>204</sup> Kramer 1966, 203-214, especially 206f. For the view that Χριστός is merely a proper name see also Hengel 1983 ch 4; de Jonge 1986, 321f.

<sup>205</sup> On Χριστός see Grundmann and Hesse in TDNT IX: 493-509.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Harvey 1982, 120-53 who thinks Jesus was given the name χριστός during his ministry by people who recognised that he was endowed by the Spirit and identified him as the anointed prophet of Isa 61:1. Only later was this interpreted by the title ὁ Χριστός. See also Green in ed. Neusner, Green and Frerichs 1987, 4. For

the term would have little or no meaning for Gentile Christians, and by the time Paul himself comes to write, there is at most, according to Kramer, "some latent awareness of the original connection" for which there is only sporadic literary evidence.<sup>207</sup>

This, however, seems unlikely. It is quite possible that the apostle himself was instrumental in the development of Christological language, and it is improbable that the original meaning should have been lost in such a short space of time, or that Paul took it over from a Gentile church unaffected by Jewish ideas.<sup>208</sup> At any rate, that he should be credited only with a "latent awareness" of the meaning of the word seems extraordinary given that he was an educated Jew.

2.2. A similar philological enquiry into the use of Χριστός in the Pauline corpus has been undertaken by Dahl in his essay "The Messiahship of Jesus in Paul".<sup>209</sup> Like Kramer, he knows that the presence or absence of the article can be a red herring in deciding whether Χριστός is used as title or name, but he concedes that the use of the article can, in some cases, point to the possibility that the original meaning of the word has not been lost. He argues that while it is *unnecessary* to see titular significance in Paul's use of Χριστός (except at Romans 9:5), only contextual exegesis will determine "to what degree the notion of Messiahship is found in a particular passage".<sup>210</sup>

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a discussion of why Jesus became the subject of messianic speculation see Strauss 1995, 58ff.

<sup>207</sup> Kramer 1966, 214.

<sup>208</sup> Hengel 1982, 144. Although Hengel is reluctant to understand Χριστός in Paul as a title, he does think that as a proper name it expresses the uniqueness of Jesus as an "eschatological bringer of salvation"; see Hengel 1983, 72 and cf. also de Jonge 1986, 322.

<sup>209</sup> Dahl 1974, 37-47.

<sup>210</sup> Dahl 1974, 39. Dahl's essay is intended as part of the "new quest" for the historical Jesus which was characteristic of biblical scholarship in the 1960s and 70s. It builds on his work in "The Crucified Messiah" (1974, 10-36) which sought to show that for the early church, the Messiahship of Jesus meant simply "the one crucified and resurrected". Jesus had been crucified as a king of the Jews, and the early church seems to have applied the title Χριστός to him, as they realised that through him the

2.3. Dahl's more measured stance may be supported by a study of the use of Χριστός in Romans. In some cases (e.g. 7:4;8:35;15:19;16:16), the presence of the article can be explained as part of a genitive construction. In 9:3, the article could be anaphoric, referring back to the previous use of Χριστός in 9:1.<sup>211</sup> In none of these cases is there an unambiguous reference to Χριστός as a title. The ambiguity is also present in 16:18 in which Paul combines (most unusually) Lord and Christ. Very often Paul does not use the article, but speaks of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (e.g. 1:6;1:8;3:22;5:15,17) or Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς (e.g. 1:1;3:24;8:1f;15:5,16).<sup>212</sup>

It is true that a reader with no knowledge of Christian origins can make good sense of these texts without necessarily seeing a reference to the Messiah within them.<sup>213</sup>

However, it seems unlikely that Χριστός should be robbed of all titular significance in Romans, the very letter in which the one unambiguous instance appears. In particular, the use of the article with the nominative in 15:3,7 requires examination in its own right. Is it used here by force of habit as Kramer thinks, or for emphasis, or is there more to it than this? As we shall see, the Christological formula in 1:3f strongly suggests that the earliest believers understood Jesus in terms of Davidic royalty and Messiahship. Following Dahl's advice, we shall consider these passages, along with 9:5, below. We shall see that Paul does think of Jesus as "the Messiah" and that this motif is an important aspect of the Christology of the letter. Before turning to these passages, however, we must consider what the first century concepts of Messiahship might have been.

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promises of God for a deliverer had been fulfilled. Dahl sees their interpretation of Jesus' death and resurrection as a "radical Christianisation" of the Jewish title as it dawned upon them that God had acted in history.

<sup>211</sup> Cf. S.E. Porter 1994, 106f.

<sup>212</sup> Some have suggested that the inversion of the name recalls an earlier stage in which the Messiahship of Jesus was more to the fore, thus retaining its titular implications. See, for example, SH 3f; Käsemann 5.

<sup>213</sup> See Robertson 1919, 760; Blass-Debrunner 1961, 133; Moulton & Turner 1963, 167.

### 3. The Messiahship of Jesus and Recent Research.

For many years, research into the Messiahship of Jesus was dominated by the assumption that there was a definite, quantifiable and standard Jewish messianic expectation on which the church drew, and that Jesus of Nazareth could be seen as its fulfilment.<sup>214</sup> Of late, however, scholars have seen that at the time of Jesus, there was no such coherent idea, no "consensus" amongst Jews as to the meaning or function of the Messiah.<sup>215</sup>

This finding is confirmed by a brief overview of "messianic" texts in the Old Testament and Jewish Scriptures. The idea that a Davidic king will be the deliverer of Israel is to be found in certain "royal psalms" (e.g. Ps 2:6ff; 21:9-13; 89:19ff; 132:11f). Some passages expect a Davidic king to deliver Israel and bring about peace on earth (Isa 9:5f). Ezekiel speaks of a new "David" who will restore and rule over Israel (Ezek 34:23-34; 37:24-25). Other traditions speak of Yahweh's representative ushering in the last times (Hag 2:20-23; Zech 6:9-15). According to Micah 5:1-3, the Davidic line would be re-established in Israel in order to deliver her from her enemies (cf. also Amos 9:11-12). Isaiah 11:1-9 speaks of an eschatological being, "a shoot from the stump of Jesse", who will rule a united Israel with righteousness and justice, be victorious over her enemies and bring peace (cf. also 9:1-7 and Jer 23:5f).<sup>216</sup>

Evidence contemporary with the first Christian literature suggests that some expected a powerful king (Pss Sol 17:21-33) or warrior (4 Ezra 13:8-10) who would deliver God's people from their enemies. The sectarians at Qumran appear to have expected two Messiahs, one priestly and the other a royal king of Israel.(1QS 9:10-11;1QSa

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<sup>214</sup> See, for example, the studies by Klausner 1956 and Mowinckel 1956 which present a standardised picture. Cf. also Hahn 1969, 147 and Fuller 1965, 30 note 20.

<sup>215</sup> See M. Smith 1959; de Jonge 1966; Duling 1973-74, the collections of essays in ed. Neusner, Green & Frerichs 1987 and Charlesworth 1992; Pomykala 1995 and Strauss 1995, 35-74.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Jer 22:30 which seems to refer to one particular line of the Davidic dynasty (that of Jehoiachim) from which the deliverer will not come. See Fuller 1965, 24.

2:12-21; 4QTestim). The same idea is to be found in the Testament of the 12 Patriarchs (Test. Levi 18 & Test. Judah 24).<sup>217</sup>

The variety of messianic ideas found in these and other passages means that it is wrong to assume that there was a Messianic "mould" into which the earliest believers could fit Jesus. As Charlesworth writes,

"First-century Palestinian Jews held many different, often mutually exclusive, ideas and beliefs regarding the Messiah. There was no development and set messianology ready to be used in christological didache and kerygma."<sup>218</sup>

The most we can say is that there are disparate traditions of which the earliest Christians might have been aware and on which they might have drawn.<sup>219</sup> There seems to have been an early recognition that what they knew of Jesus of Nazareth had already been spoken of in the Jewish Scriptures and that reading them helped them to understand more about him. They found Scriptures which helped them to understand why the person they thought was the Messiah of Israel, who had been

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<sup>217</sup> Hahn 1969, 143. Strauss 1995, 40f notes that in both the Qumran community and that of the Psalms of Solomon, the domination of Palestine by Rome seems to have increased Davidic Messianic hope for one who would defeat Israel's enemies and rule righteously (4QFlor; 4QpIsa(a); 1QSb 5:24-26; 4Q285). Charlesworth, in his essay "From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology: Some Caveats and Perspectives" (in eds Neusner, Green and Frerichs 1987, 225-64) observes that there is no clear development or consistent content in Qumran or pseudepigraphical messianology.

<sup>218</sup> Charlesworth 1992, 248.

<sup>219</sup> Juel 1988, 175. "The confession of Jesus as Messiah is the presupposition for NT Christology, but not its content". Cf. Dahl 1974: Jesus' death as King of the Jews gave the focal point for the christological investigation of the scriptures. Macrae (in eds Neusner, Green and Frerichs 1987, 168-85 "Messiah and Gospel", 172f) thinks that the absence of any effort to prove or demonstrate the messianic identity of Jesus on the part of Paul himself indicates that Messiahship is not central to his gospel. Rather, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of God's eschatological act, and from this Paul could envision Jesus as a messianic figure ushering in the eschatological age. However, against Macrae, the lack of discussion of Messiahship in Paul proves only that for him this was a "given" of his faith and that he expected that it would be so for his readers as well. For attempts to account for the adoption of the Χριστός title and name by the first Christians see Fuller 1965, Cullmann 1963, Hahn 1963. On the non-Pauline origin of 1 Cor 15:1ff, see Jeremias 1966, 101f.

executed as king of the Jews, had turned out not to be a reigning king but had died on the cross and was now raised from the dead.<sup>220</sup> As far as Paul is concerned, we shall see below that he uses scriptural messianic language and ideas when he speaks of Jesus and his role in fulfilling God's plan for Israel and the rest of the world, ideas which are evidently already circulating in the church, and whose significance he expects his readers to understand.

#### 4. The Christological Formula in Romans 1:3f.

4.1. Rom 1:3f is a prime example of the early church's use of scriptural messianic ideas to help in its understanding of Jesus of Nazareth. Most scholars are agreed that here Paul makes use of an existing Christological statement beginning at τοῦ γενομένου in verse 3 and ending with νεκρῶν in verse 4.<sup>221</sup> The statement consists of two parallel relative clauses: τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, and τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγίωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν. Paul understands it to be referring to the Son of God (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ) who is worshipped as Lord (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν).<sup>222</sup> There is uncertainty, however, as to whether the whole statement is non-Pauline in origin or whether some elements were added by the apostle himself. It is generally agreed that the phrases περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ and Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυριοῦ ἡμῶν have been added by Paul himself.

However, some words and ideas are uncharacteristic of Paul. For example, ὀρίζειν is found nowhere else in his letters, and he makes no other reference to Jesus' Davidic descent.<sup>223</sup> A major source of contention is the origin of the phrases κατὰ

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<sup>220</sup> Juel 1988, 29.

<sup>221</sup> The commonly used phrase "pre-Pauline formula" is misleading. What exactly is pre-Pauline? Does it refer to the time before his conversion, or before he started writing? Moreover, we can have no way of knowing if Paul himself influenced the development of a formula. At most we can say that Paul is using statements and ideas which have formulaic appearance and which may have been circulating in the early church.

<sup>222</sup> Dunn 5.

σάρκα and κατὰ πνεῦμα. Some have argued that they have been inserted into an originally Palestinian statement by hellenistic Jews who wished to emphasise the exalted status of Jesus over against his earthly, fleshly life.<sup>224</sup> Others, on the grounds that the flesh and spirit antithesis is typical of his thinking, feel that Paul himself may have added the phrases κατὰ σάρκα and κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης to the original formula.<sup>225</sup> As far as the first view is concerned, exegetes should heed the warning of Martin Hengel and be cautious in making too great a distinction between Palestinian and hellenistic Judaic thought.<sup>226</sup> It is quite possible that these categories were familiar to Palestinian Jews who had been influenced by hellenistic ideas. Against the view that Paul himself was responsible for the insertion of these phrases, it should be noted that while the phrase κατὰ πνεῦμα is common in Paul, the full phrase κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης is not found elsewhere in his letters.<sup>227</sup> Käsemann also notes that the use of κατὰ σάρκα here is untypical of Paul, who usually uses it anthropologically, i.e. to describe humanity and its predicament (eg chs 7-8).<sup>228</sup> On the whole, it seems likely that this is a formula which Paul has taken

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<sup>223</sup> Davidic descent is referred to in 2 Tim 2:8 and Ignatius' Letter to the Smyrnaeans 1:1 See Dunn 5; Cranfield 57; Schweizer 1963, 180.

<sup>224</sup> Schweizer 1963 contends that here σάρξ refers to Jesus' earthly life, whereas normally in Paul the word expresses moral inferiority as opposed to the superior πνεῦμα; cf. Hahn 1969, 247-50; Fuller 1965, 165f; Michel 73; Kramer 1966, 109; Schlier 1972; Beasley-Murray 1980, 149; Jewett 1971, 138. Jewett 1992 thinks that Paul has merely tolerated these hellenistic phrases in the formula for the sake of unity at Rome. He thinks they were added to the formula by hellenists who wished to deprecate the Davidic Messiahship. Paul has not deleted them for the sake of unity at Rome, where, he thinks, there is a libertine Hellenistic group which is quarrelling with the Jewish faction in the church. Besides being largely conjectural as to the history of the formula, Jewett's argument founders because there is no evidence in the letter for such a libertine group at Rome.

<sup>225</sup> See e.g. Bultmann 1952, 49; Dahl 1974, 43; cf. Linnemann 1971, 273ff; Cranfield 57, although with reservations.

<sup>226</sup> Hengel 1974.

<sup>227</sup> Paul uses πνεῦμα ἅγιον. See Schweizer 1963, 180; Hahn 1969, 249; Kramer 1966, 108; P. Beasley-Murray 1980, 149; Schlier 1972, 211; Linnemann 1971, 272-75.

<sup>228</sup> Käsemann, 11.

over as one which best set out his doctrinal "credentials" at the beginning of the letter.<sup>229</sup>

4.2. The formula speaks of Jesus' earthly existence as a human being (κατὰ σάρκα). Σάρξ in Paul frequently denotes some limitation, the weakness of humanity (e.g. Gal 4:13; Rom 6:19 2 Cor 7:5), but he also uses it when he speaks of Judaism and physical, racial ties. He refers to Israel κατὰ σάρκα (1 Cor 10:18), his kinsmen κατὰ σάρκα (Rom 9:3), and Abraham our forefather κατὰ σάρκα (4:1). In 1:3, the phrase is juxtaposed with "of the seed of David": Jesus had an earthly life characterised by human frailty, and he was a Jew of royal blood, a descendent of David<sup>230</sup>.

The reference to the seed of David, coupled with Paul's introductory "Son of God", strongly suggests that Paul is thinking in terms of Χριστός as more than merely a proper name. The ideas of Davidic royalty and divine sonship appear together in 2 Sam 7:12-14 in which Nathan prophesies that after the death of David, God will raise up a king descended from him (καὶ ἀναστήσω τὸ σπέρμα σου μετὰ σέ 2 Sam 7:12 LXX ). This king's throne will be eternal, but most significantly, the Davidic king will be the Son of God (2 Sam 7:14).<sup>231</sup> A similar idea is found in Psalm 2. The king of Israel, who is the Lord's anointed (v2; LXX Χριστός ), can be assured of God's protection against those earthly rulers who plot against him because he has been the Son of God since his enthronement (v7 Κύριος εἶπεν πρὸς με Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἔγω σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε). God has promised him the inheritance - the rule of the whole earth.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> See Dunn, 5f. Bornkamm 1971, 248. Although cf Poythress 1976 who tentatively suggests that Rom 1:3-4 is a "free composition [of Paul's] using a number of traditional expressions and ideas."

<sup>230</sup> On the use of κατὰ σάρκα/ κατὰ πνεῦμα with regard to Christ, and Dunn's 1973 belief that κατὰ σάρκα entails a negative quality, see Excursus II below.

<sup>231</sup> The oracle of Nathan was interpreted messianically by the Qumran sectarians (see 4QFlor), and Psalm 2:7 is well attested as associated with Jesus' baptism (Mt 3:17; Lk 3:22;). On the Jewish background of the title "Son of God" see Hengel 1976, 21-56.



The second half of the formula declares that Jesus is now son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness (τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ). The verb ὀρίζειν has been variously translated as "appointed", "designated" or "declared to be".<sup>233</sup> The trouble is that this language has adoptionist overtones - the suggestion that at some point (i.e. his resurrection) Jesus became something he had not been before.<sup>234</sup> Some have suggested that Paul added the words ἐν δυνάμει with a view to correcting this potential flaw in the formula.<sup>235</sup> However, this hypothesis is unnecessary given that Paul prefaces the whole formula with περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.<sup>236</sup> The title "Son of God" applies not only to Jesus' vindication and exaltation after the resurrection, but also to his fleshly existence. The whole gospel is about the Son of God, and the two phases in Christ's existence are not to be seen as completely separate.<sup>237</sup>

It is therefore unlikely that ἐν δυνάμει should be taken as qualifying ὀρισθέντος, expressing the power of God's action in the appointment of Jesus as son of God.<sup>238</sup> It is much more natural to follow the Greek word order and translate "Son-of-God-in-power" (υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει). In this case, ἐν δυνάμει suggests that there is an additional dimension to Jesus' sonship, which was not

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<sup>232</sup> This suggests that Psalm 2, and possibly also 2 Sam 7:12ff, were influential factors in the early church's attempts to understand Christ. Cf. also Ps 89: 27-28; 110:1,3f; 132:11ff. Allen 1970-71 suggests that ὀρίζω also alludes to the decree of Ps 2:7.

<sup>233</sup> Dunn 13 translates "appointed"; SH 7 and RSV have "designated", BGD 581 has "declared to be".

<sup>234</sup> For the view that Jesus was enthroned as Messiah at the resurrection see J.H. Hayes 1968. According to P. Beasley-Murray 1980,151 Jesus is enthroned as Davidic Son of God at the resurrection

<sup>235</sup> Fuller 1965, 165 and Barrett 1994, 24.

<sup>236</sup> See Marshall 1976, 119f; cf. Marshall 1967, 101f. *Contra* Schweizer in TDNT VIII: 366f; Brown 1977, 135 argues that originally in Christian thought Jesus was understood to have become Son of God at the resurrection and that this adoptionism was gradually corrected.

<sup>237</sup> See Juel 1977, 108ff.

<sup>238</sup> As Boismard 1953 suggests.

present during his earthly life. While on earth, Jesus had to be limited by the weakness of the flesh, and subject to death. If he had not, there could have been no redemptive act, and he could not now be said to be the first to be resurrected from the dead (ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν). The necessary limitations which were imposed upon Christ in the σάρξ category are released: Christ is revealed in the full power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>239</sup>

4.3. Paul begins his letter by asserting the conviction, which he assumes the Roman believers share (ἡμῶν 1:5), that the Jesus whom they worship as Lord is the Messiah of Israel. Jesus' close relationship to God as his son, his Jewish royal blood and the fact that he is now considered to be the Lord sitting at the right hand of God, combine to suggest that the earliest believers, in constructing this formula, had been influenced by Old Testament texts in their thinking about Jesus and that the designation Χριστός was more than simply a name, but had titular significance.

In using this formula, Paul stresses the importance of Israel in God's plan right at the outset of his argument, and indicates his own high regard for his people. As we shall see below, Jesus' Messiahship is Israel's greatest privilege: the fact that the saviour of the world has come from Israel is itself the proof of her priority in God's sight. Both phases of Jesus' existence are of equal importance, both necessary for him to be the now exalted Lord. In the κατὰ σάρκα category, Christ was the descendent of David who will bring peace to Israel, the anointed Son of God who had to be able to die in order to redeem his people. In the κατὰ πνεῦμα category Christ does not cease to be the Messiah, but the limitations of his power which his physical life laid

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<sup>239</sup> *Contra* du Toit 1992 who argues against a reference to the Holy Spirit here. Du Toit is right, however, to object to Schweizer's use of the term "sphere" or "locality" (cf also Michel 73) with regard to Christ's existence, rather than "condition" or "mode" of existence. In his resurrected state he is in a condition of power which he did not have in his earthly life. See SH 9 for the older view that this phrase should be translated "spirit of holiness", referring to a spiritual element within Christ's humanity. According to this view, Christ had a unique capacity for holiness which enabled him to be the Son of God. However, it is now generally recognised that this phrase reflects Semitic usage and is a reference to the Holy Spirit (see the LXX of Ps 51:11; Isa 63:10-11); Dunn 15.

upon him have been released and the Son of God is now worshipped as Lord in the believing community.

## 5. Romans 9:1-5

5.1. Verses 1-5 of chapter 9, whose place in Paul's argument we have already considered above, contain two instances of Χριστός with the definite article. In verse 3, in which Paul expresses his willingness to be cut off from Christ for the sake of his people, ὁ Χριστός is probably anaphoric, that is to say it refers back to verse 1 where Paul says he is "speaking the truth in Christ", appealing to the ultimate guarantor of the truth (ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ).<sup>240</sup> As we have seen, in 9:5 Paul uses ὁ Χριστός as a title. The Messiah is one of the privileges of Israel alongside sonship, glory, the promises and so on. The context of Paul's thinking about his Jewish kindred and their heritage adds to the likelihood that this is also intended in 9:3.

Paul's grief is over his brothers, his kinsmen "according to the flesh." Up to now, Paul has reserved the term ἀδελφοί solely for the Christian community - those with whom he shares sonship through Jesus Christ the Son of God (8:12-17). Here, Paul inserts κατὰ σάρκα to denote that the relationship, though deep, is limited. As we shall see, earthly racial ties cannot have the same meaning as brotherhood within the Christian community. This is exactly what causes him great anguish, for his kinsmen are the very ones with whom he ought to have a relationship κατὰ πνεῦμα. Paul uses the word Ἰσραηλιῆται, a term of honour in the eyes of the Jews themselves, indicating their special place in God's sight.<sup>241</sup>

Paul then proceeds to list the special privileges which have been given to them by God. He appears to have chosen his words carefully, using two groups of three words with the endings -θεσία, -α, or -αι.<sup>242</sup> He then adds οἱ πατέρες, possibly

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<sup>240</sup> Cranfield 451.

<sup>241</sup> Dunn 526.

<sup>242</sup> Cranfield 1979, also Byrne 1979, 81ff. Byrne supports Michel's (228) contention that Paul is using a traditional hellenistic Jewish list here, but disagrees with him that

because the fathers, particularly Abraham, played such an important part earlier in the argument (ch 4). The last item on the list is the Messiah τὸ κατὰ σάρκα. Despite the disruption of οἱ πατέρες, the placement of ὁ Χριστός at the end is surely deliberate, with emphatic and climactic rhetorical effect.<sup>243</sup>

The first member of the list is υἱοθεσία. The children of Israel are the chosen sons and daughters of Yahweh (Ex 4:22f; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1), whom God has protected and disciplined throughout their history (e.g. Deut 1:31; 8:5; Isa 1:2). The word ending -θεσία (from τίθημι, meaning establish) indicates that this sonship is the gift of God himself and not something they have earned.<sup>244</sup> Δόξα refers to the theophanies which Israel had throughout her history, especially in the Exodus (e.g. Ex 16:10; 24:15-17; 40:34-35) and is possibly also an oblique reference to the distinctive monotheism of Israel, the divine glory as opposed to idols.<sup>245</sup> Next, he refers to the covenants. While some important MSS have the singular διαθήκη, it seems that the harder reading should be maintained, despite the fact that the plural is not found in the MT.<sup>246</sup> Paul does refer in his letters to more than one covenant, that with Abraham (Gen 15:17ff; 17:1ff) in Gal 3:17, at Sinai (Ex 19:5, alluded to at Gal 4:24; 2 Cor 3:14) and the eschatological covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 (referred to in Rom 11:27).<sup>247</sup>

The second group of three begins with νομοθεσία. The ending -θεσία (no doubt used here for stylistic reasons<sup>248</sup>) can mean both law giving and law given. Here, the

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Israelites, fathers and Christ should also be included in the list, arguing that these are characteristic of Paul.

<sup>243</sup> BDF 460: 3 notes that the repetition of καί has the effect of denoting "accumulation, plenty and grandeur".

<sup>244</sup> Byrne 1979, 84.

<sup>245</sup> Dunn 526; Barrett 177.

<sup>246</sup> See Metzger 1975, 519.

<sup>247</sup> Dreyfus 1977, 136; Cranfield 462; Barrett 177; cf. SH 230 and Dunn 527; cf. Roetzel 1970 who suggests that αἱ διαθήκαι refers to ordinances or commandments given to Israel by Yahweh.

<sup>248</sup> Dunn 527.

basic meaning is certain: God is the source of the Law, which has been the mainstay of Israel's discipline throughout her history, and one of the distinctive features which marked her out as different from her neighbours.<sup>249</sup> Next is λατρεία, the worship of the temple, the sacrificial cult, the worship of the one God without graven images and pleasing to him. According to Käsemann and Barrett the promises (ἐπαγγελία) are the messianic promises given to Israel, the promise of a deliverer from their enemies (e.g. 2 Sam 7:12,16,28f; Isa 9:6f; Jer 23:5 cf. Rom 15:7-13).<sup>250</sup> In mind also, no doubt, are those promises of God's faithfulness to Israel, closely allied to the covenants mentioned above (e.g. Gen 12:7; 13:14-17 cf. Rom 4:13-22).

We have already mentioned the inclusion of οἱ πατέρες. Most likely Abraham is in Paul's mind here, having already been presented as the prototype of Christian faith in chapter 4. At the end of the list is ὁ Χριστός τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, the human being who is anointed to achieve God's purposes for Israel and who himself is Jewish by race. More than all the rest, the Messiah is the privilege of hope, the promise of deliverance, the assurance of Israel's ultimate salvation from her enemies.<sup>251</sup> For Paul, of course, the difference is that he believes that the Messiah has come. There has actually been a human figure who was the Messiah ὁ Χριστός τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, who came out of the Jewish people themselves. This means that all the promises, the covenants, the glory, and so on, are now, for the first time, seen to be vindicated at a point in history, and the special place of Israel in God's sight has been proved.

The human Messiah of Jewish descent can be included in the list, the fact that he has come from Israel being her greatest privilege. However, in the light of 1:3f, and the use of the κατὰ σάρκα/κατὰ πνεῦμα antithesis elsewhere, it may be that there is an implied κατὰ πνεῦμα category here and that κατὰ σάρκα denotes only the Messiah in his human form. Israel as a whole has not recognised her Messiah and

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<sup>249</sup> Epp 1986 sees a deliberate reduction of Torah to νομοθεσία here; Paul is talking about Jews rather than Gentile believers who have not been given Torah because they have faith. However, this interpretation implies a criticism of Israel's tradition which, as we shall see below (chapter 7), is not in line with Paul's thought.

<sup>250</sup> Barrett 178 and Käsemann 259.

<sup>251</sup> Piper 1983, 27 hears a climactic ring in καὶ ἐξ ὧν.

fails to worship him as the exalted Lord. This suggests that there is a sense in which, although Israel retains her special place in God's sight, she is also limited in Paul's thinking precisely because she is denying herself her Messiah *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. Her failure to believe means that, despite her privileges, she must be designated *κατὰ σάρκα*, remaining in the old age. Only those who believe can enter the *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category along with the risen Christ.

If Israel is limited by her unbelief, this must mean that the effect of the other privileges is limited because of her lack of understanding. Moreover, the implication could be that those who have believed i.e. the church, including those Gentiles who have been "grafted in" are not subject to the same limitation: they occupy the *κατὰ σάρκα* category. For example, as Dreyfus has noted, the sonship of the Jews expresses the election of Israel, but this and their filial relationship to God is, according to Paul, only completely realised in the Christian community among those who recognise the Messiah as the Son of God. (e.g. Rom 8:15ff). Similarly, Dreyfus argues that *δόξα* should be understood in the light of 2 Cor 3:4-4:6 in which Paul shows that the glory which was given to Moses at Sinai was transient in comparison with the permanent glory which has been given to the church in the Holy Spirit. The same applies to the covenants (which, according to Gal 3 and 4, are only fulfilled in Christ), the Law and the promises. All these, in Paul's thought, point to and are fulfilled in Christ (see e.g. Rom 10:4; 4:16-22; 3:21).<sup>252</sup> As far as the cult is concerned, according to Paul, true worship is complete self sacrifice on the part of the believer (12:1), and circumcision of the heart is more important than circumcision of the flesh (3:28f).<sup>253</sup>

Paul's view of Israel is poignantly ambivalent. His intense grief over the unbelief of Israel is balanced by great joy at the fact that Israel remains the possessor of these privileges. He rejoices in his relationship with them as his fleshly brothers and sisters, and in the fact that they remain the covenant people of God, yet at the same time his designation of them as *κατὰ σάρκα*, while not intended to denigrate them,

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<sup>252</sup> On Christ as the fulfilment of the Law see below chapter 7.

<sup>253</sup> Dreyfus 1977. See also Wright 1991, 237f, and Grässer 1985, 17-20.

could suggest that they are limited by their unbelief, and could imply that the church is now enjoying the privileges κατά πνεῦμα which they should be enjoying. As a believer himself, and a Jew, he finds himself caught between two worlds.

5.2. Outweighing all his grief and perplexity, however, is his joy at the coming of the Messiah and so he completes the list with a doxology in which he declares that the one who is over all is blessed for ever: ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. Here, however, a problem arises: who is the one who is over all? The answer to the question depends on punctuation and, over time, a great many variations and solutions have been suggested. The options really boil down to two: is Paul praising God or Christ? <sup>254</sup> If a full stop is placed after σάρκα, there is no doubt that God is the subject of the new sentence - God is the one who is over all and to be blessed for ever. If the full stop is placed after πάντων, as some suggest, Christ is declared as over all, but God remains the subject of the doxology. Many scholars are convinced that a comma should be placed after σάρκα, and a full stop placed only at the end, after ἀμήν. In this case the subject of the doxology is ὁ Χριστός, and Paul is saying that Christ is God who is over all. In other words, Christ is being equated with God.<sup>255</sup>

This last interpretation has been defended on grammatical grounds by Metzger and recently also by Harris.<sup>256</sup> The insertion of a comma rather than a full stop after

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<sup>254</sup> For an exhaustive overview of the textual variations and differences of opinion amongst manuscripts, translators and commentators, see Harris 1992, 150f.

<sup>255</sup> Ziesler 239 is alone amongst recent commentators in accepting (with reservations) Schlichting's suggestion that Paul originally wrote ὢν ὁ rather than ὁ ὢν. Cf. also Bartsch 1969; Lorimar 1966. Details of Schlichting's proposal are found in Cranfield 465 note 2. See also Harris 1992, 147f.

<sup>256</sup> Metzger 1973; Harris 1992, 143-172. Both authors conclude that Jesus is equated with God. Cf. Brown 1967, 20-23 who thinks that at most it is a probability. Others who think Paul here ascribes deity to Christ include Whiteley 1964, 119; Cranfield 464-70; SH 233-38. Commentators who argue against this view include Dunn 528-89; Käsemann 260.

σάρκα avoids an asyndetical construction in which the doxology is abruptly disconnected from the preceding clause. Further, it solves the problem of the position of εὐλογητός which in independent doxologies usually precedes θεός (e.g. Gen 14:20 LXX; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3).<sup>257</sup> On this view, εὐλογητός becomes descriptive rather than ascriptive: Christ is God who is blessed for ever.

Metzger and Harris also take questions of context and consistency in Paul's thought into account. Noting that Paul has spoken of ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, they suggest, like Dreyfus, that an implied κατὰ πνεῦμα category is present, which is expressed in the ascription of praise to Jesus Christ. The acknowledgement of Christ as God becomes the expression of his κατὰ πνεῦμα power.<sup>258</sup> They also note Paul's "high" Christology which speaks of Christ's sharing of the divine nature and name.

Metzger and Harris also argue that a doxology in praise of God is inappropriate here because Paul has been expressing his great sadness at the Jewish rejection of the Messiah. Harris writes,

"If the controlling tone of 9:1-4 is Paul's λύπη and ὀδύνη at the predominant unbelief of his compatriots, it would be wholly appropriate for the apostle to end the paragraph with a reference to the exalted status and nature of the rejected Messiah, but singularly inapposite to conclude with a joyful ascription of praise to God that is introduced without an adversative."

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There can be little doubt that the grammatical arguments outlined above are effective. In particular, as Metzger notes, it is strange that Paul has defied convention and placed εὐλογητός after θεός in his doxology.<sup>260</sup> Nevertheless, there are several good reasons why the doxology should be understood as referring to God rather than

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<sup>257</sup> An exception is Ps 67: 19d-20a LXX.

<sup>258</sup> Harris 1992, 155f.

<sup>259</sup> Harris 1992, 171.

<sup>260</sup> Metzger 1973, 107.



Christ here. The first has to do with the supposed implied antithesis. If there is an implied antithetical *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category here, Paul's usage elsewhere (e.g. Rom 1:3f) suggests that this is to be found in the fact that the *resurrected* Christ brings about the fulfilment of the privilege.<sup>261</sup> Since *κατὰ σάρκα* is applied to Χριστός here to denote fleshly limitation, it seems unlikely that Paul would have felt it appropriate to equate this Christ with God.

Moreover, the equation of Christ with God implies that God himself is one of Israel's privileges. This is hard to understand. How can the giver of the privileges be one of these privileges at the same time? As Osten-Sacken points out, God does not belong to Israel - Israel belongs to him.<sup>262</sup> This is corroborated by the fact that Paul says in 3:29 that God is not simply God of the Jews but also of the Gentiles.<sup>263</sup>

Lastly, our analysis of the passage has shown that Paul has every reason to be thankful to God who has given such great gifts to Israel. He is grief stricken at Israel's lack of faith, but this does not stop him praising God for his faithfulness and the proof of his greatness. Indeed nothing can stop him from praising God for the fact that the Messiah has appeared from Israel itself.<sup>264</sup>

The principal problem with Harris' and Metzger's interpretation, however, is that Paul nowhere else calls Jesus θεός. In the epistle to the Romans itself, Paul is quite consistent in making Christ a mediator (e.g. 5:2,11;21), and the means of salvation (3:21ff; 4:24f). Christ is the one sent by God, and is the Son of God, but he is nowhere explicitly equated with God. God is the author of the plan of salvation, Christ the principal actor.

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<sup>261</sup> Metzger 1973, 105 admits that an implied *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category is at most a probability.

<sup>262</sup> Osten-Sacken 1986, 22; De Boor, 224.

<sup>263</sup> The argument that God cannot be the possession of Israel on the basis of Rom 3:29 is put forward by Stauffer (TDNT III: 105) in his refutation of Schichtling's conjecture.

<sup>264</sup> Dunn 529.

We conclude therefore that the doxology is addressed to God, who is blessed over all, because Paul is expressing joy at his gracious faithfulness towards Israel. Paul praises God because the Messiah has come out of Israel. Christ has come from Israel to reach both Jews and Gentiles and is the evidence of God's faithfulness to Israel. Despite the fact that most Jews have not believed, the appearance of the Messiah is proof for Paul that God has not rejected his people. Indeed, the fact that Christ is now the Messiah *κατὰ πνεῦμα* is further proof that Israel retains these privileges. God cannot retract what he has given or said (11:29) and Christ remains the sign of their election. Having thus given thanks that God has been faithful in sending his Messiah, Paul can now turn, in chapters 9-11, to demonstrate further that God has not rejected his people.

5.3. According to this passage Christ is the Messiah, the anointed one who has come out of Israel to bring salvation to his own people, the Jews. Paul is proud of the fact that the Messiah has come from Israel, and that in him all the promises and prophecies to Israel are fulfilled. However, Paul does not go so far as to say that this Messiah is to be equated with God, and as we have seen, there may be an implication that Israel is limited because of her unbelief.

## 6. Romans 15:1-13.

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν, ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ

6.1. Rom 15:3 forms part of Paul's discussion of the difficulties in the congregation at Rome. As we have seen, he urges the strong believers to assist their Jewish brothers and sisters who wish to observe Jewish Law (15:1). In giving up their own interests, they will be following the example of Christ (ὁ Χριστός) who did not please himself. So great was this selflessness that the words of Psalm 68:10 (LXX) can be appropriately applied to him as an expression of his demeanour during his earthly ministry: οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ. Christ's humility was such that he was willing to give up his own desires, and bear the scorn and reviling which men had previously poured out on God himself.<sup>265</sup> By

learning from scripture about the hope which believers have, and following the Son's example of humility, they will be enabled to worship God the Father in unity, and Paul's prayer that they may live in harmony will be answered (15:5f).

So now (15:7), Paul instructs that they should welcome one another (προσλαμβάνεσθε),<sup>266</sup> and again cites the example of Jesus, who has welcomed Jew and Gentile alike into the community of believers in order that God may be glorified (εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>267</sup> As in 15:1, the onus seems to be on the strong to maintain unity, for Paul describes Christ as being the "servant of the circumcised" (Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς). It is possible, as Williams proposes, that the phrase is a genitive of origin, referring simply to Christ's Jewishness. Christ is a servant to mankind in general.<sup>268</sup> However, it is more likely that Paul sees the genitive as denoting that Christ was a servant *to* the Jews, that his service was for their benefit.<sup>269</sup> As the perfect γεγενῆσθαι in verse 8 denotes,

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<sup>265</sup> That these words are put in the mouth of the Christ here is supported by the fact that another part of the same verse is quoted in John 2:17, to express the loyalty of Christ to true Judaism. However, it is not necessary to understand Paul as hearing the pre-existent Christ speak here, as, for example, Hanson 1974, 81 does.

<sup>266</sup> The presence of προσλαμβάνεσθε, is the only lexical hint that this passage has any link with what immediately precedes (i.e. 14:1-15:6).

<sup>267</sup> This interpretation takes εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ with καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο in the first instance along with SH 397; Käsemann 368; Michel 358; Zeller 218; and against Cranfield 739; Wilckens III:104; but recognising with Barrett (270) and Dunn (846) that the clause could refer to both antecedent phrases. καθὼς is here understood as comparative; against Cranfield and Käsemann who take it to be causative.

<sup>268</sup> S.K. Williams 1980, 286f. Williams' view is that it is unlikely that Paul is here referring to Christ's earthly life, because Paul does not do this anywhere else in Romans. But this surely misreads Paul's Christology in the letter. True, he never goes into details about what he knows about Jesus, and he never quotes from anything Jesus said, but the letter is shot through with allusions to Christ's teaching (in particular in 12-14; see Thompson 1991; Allison 1982) and his faithful obedience during his earthly life (3:22-3; 5:6ff; see below, chapter 5).

<sup>269</sup> Käsemann 1980, 385 rightly challenges the suggestion that διάκονος here may refer implicitly to Mark 10:43-45, on the grounds that there is no reference to sacrifice, and that Christ remains a servant even in his exaltation. See Thompson 1991, 233.

Christ not only *was* the servant of the circumcised in his earthly life, but continues to be so now.<sup>270</sup> As the exalted Lord he still serves Israel by holding the way open for them to be reconciled to God. Paul also expects the strong at Rome to be servants of the circumcised, following Christ's continued example. In order to underline the importance of this instruction, he goes on to explain the motivation for Christ's actions using a series of quotations from scripture which speak to him of the unity of Jews and Gentiles worshipping God together. Not only must the unity of believers be maintained, God's plan for Jews and Gentiles must also be manifest and continued, so far as is humanly possible, by and among the community of believers themselves.

In the first instance, and in accordance with the principle "to the Jews first and also the Gentiles" (1:16), Christ became the servant of the Jews for the sake of the truthfulness of God, i.e. to show that God has not reneged on but confirmed (βεβαιῶσαι) his promises to the patriarchs. For example, the fact that salvation is open to Gentiles as well as Jews fulfils the promise to Abraham that he would be the father of all who believe (4:11) and that his descendants would inherit the world (4:13). Moreover, his actions have had the further effect of giving the Gentiles cause to glorify God for his mercy.<sup>271</sup> In one remarkable statement, Paul maintains a delicate balance between the priority of the Jews and the inclusion of the Gentiles.

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<sup>270</sup> Barrett 271.

<sup>271</sup> This interpretation takes the τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν clause as subordinate to εἰς τὸ rather than λέγω γάρ. The latter option, favoured by Wilckens III: 106 and Cranfield 1975, 742f; Sass 1993 and Zeller 1973, 218-19 requires that Paul is drawing a contrast between the result of Christ's action for Jews and for Gentiles: Christ's servanthood means the fulfillment of the promises first of all and then the praise of the Gentiles follows on. This might be the case, but with the overall argument of the letter in mind, it is more likely that Paul is thinking that the praise of the Gentiles was as much a part of the intention behind the promises as the salvation of the Jews. Paul treats both clauses with equal weight. So SH 398; Barrett 271; Dunn 848; Käsemann 385; Michel 448. The sentence reads, "For I say that Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truthfulness of God in order to confirm the promises to the patriarchs and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." Recently J.R. Wagner 1997 has argued that the subject of the infinitive (δοξάσαι) is not τὰ ἔθνη but τὸν Χριστόν, with τὰ ἔθνη functioning as an accusative of respect. This, too, is a possibility, that Christ has become a

λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας  
θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων, τὰ δὲ ἔθνη  
ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν

The Gentiles praise God because the promises to the Jews have been fulfilled and because their inclusion was a part of these promises. He now proceeds to celebrate this fact, and elaborate on it, with a string of quotations from all parts of scripture whose original contexts, as Richard Hays has shown, contribute considerably to our understanding of their use here.<sup>272</sup>

6.2. The first quotation in verse 9b is from the Septuagint version of Psalm 18:49 (17:50; the same text occurs at 2 Sam 22:50). The original Psalm consists of praise to God by a Davidic king who is grateful that he has been delivered from his enemies.<sup>273</sup> Yahweh's mighty power is described, and the king, who is depicted as having been rewarded for his faithfulness to the Law and his righteousness (v20), can regard himself as the "head of the nations" (κεφαλὴ ἔθνων v 43). Thus, the king declares that he will praise God and make his name known among the Gentiles:

διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν καὶ τῷ ὀνόματί σου ψαλῶ

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servant to the Jews in order to confirm the promises, and also to the Gentiles on behalf of the mercy of God. However, it is quite consistent with Paul's thought that the Gentiles should be the ones to praise God. It is important to remember the fact that Christ has already been called the servant of the circumcised. Given the context of the situation at Rome and the instruction given to the strong, the more usual option will be retained here.

<sup>272</sup>Hays 1989, 70ff. At first sight, the only link between each quotation is the word ἔθνη, and a general theme of Gentiles rejoicing or praising God; SH 289. Hays has applied his principle of intertextuality to this passage and has identified mercy (ἐλεος), truth (ἀληθεία), and Christ's Messiahship as the themes which have governed Paul's choice of quotations. For critiques of Hays, see Evans 1993. The value of Hays' approach has been generally accepted; where issue is taken, it is with the results of his exegesis, not the method. Michel 449, notes that the quotations are carefully drawn from the Law, the prophets, and the writings: Paul sees the whole of scripture as relevant in the new age.

<sup>273</sup>See Eaton 1976,166.

Paul has taken these words out of context, and the referent of the "I" of ἐξομολογήσομαι is unclear. Who is extolling God among the Gentiles? Dunn has argued that Paul intends us to see David as the speaker, and that the text is to be seen as in some sense foreshadowing the position of the Jew in the Diaspora.<sup>274</sup> Others have suggested that the "I" is Paul himself, who praises God as he takes the gospel to the Gentiles.<sup>275</sup> In the opinion of most scholars, however, Paul understands these words as having been put into the mouth of Christ, who, like the Davidic king of the psalm, is described as ὁ Χριστός (v 50), and has caused the name of God to be praised among the nations by bringing the opportunity of reconciliation with God to them.<sup>276</sup>

In verse 10, Paul develops the notion that the Gentiles now have the opportunity to understand what God has done and to join in the praise with the Jews, quoting from the LXX version of Deuteronomy 32:43. The verse is taken from the closing part of the song of Moses in which the speaker describes how God has defeated his enemies. In the Masoretic text, after a bloodthirsty account of God's triumph and vindication of his people against their Gentile enemies, Moses demands that the Gentiles praise the Jewish people, whose superiority has become apparent, and whose favour they must solicit in order (presumably) to keep the peace:

"Praise his people, O you nations; for he avenges the blood of his servants and takes vengeance on his adversaries, and makes expiation for the land of his people" (RSV translation).

It is significant, however, that Paul uses the LXX version of this verse, which is quite different. The heavens are called upon to rejoice with God along with the angels, and the Gentiles are instructed to rejoice with God's people who, as the sons of God, are

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<sup>274</sup> Dunn 849.

<sup>275</sup> Käsemann, 386; Sass 1993, 524

<sup>276</sup> E.g. Cranfield 746; Hays 1993; Keck 1990; SH 395. For Hays (1993, 123), the function of the citations in 15:9b-12 "is to represent Jesus as standing in the midst of an eschatological congregation composed of both Gentiles and Jews (see especially verse 10, quoting Deut 23:43), offering praise to God".

strengthened by him.<sup>277</sup> The same theme is touched on in the quotation from Psalm 117:1 (LXX 116:1) in which the Gentiles are again urged to praise God (v 11). The implied universalism is important for Paul's own mission to the Gentiles, and validates his ministry: all people are required and entitled to praise God. Equally important for Paul's case, however, is the reason given by the Psalmist in verse 2 (not quoted by Paul) as to why the Gentiles should praise the Lord. It is that God has shown mercy (ἔλεος), and truth (ἀλήθεια). Whether ἡμᾶς in the LXX version is intended to refer only to the Jews or includes the Gentiles as the recipients of God's mercy is unclear. The point is that the Psalmist, a Jew, urges the Gentiles to join in the praise of God because of his mercy. How much more, in Paul's mind, can the Gentiles be urged to join in that praise to God now, in the eschatological age, when the full extent of God's faithfulness and mercy has been seen through the work of Jesus Christ.

In verse 12, Paul refers to Isaiah 11:10 (LXX), but omits the words τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ presumably preferring to keep this idea for the eschatological last day.<sup>278</sup> Isa 11:1-10, which was understood messianically by both the Jewish community and the early church, speaks of that eschatological time when a new shoot will grow up out of the stump (the ῥίζα of Jesse), which is all that is left of the once flourishing nation.<sup>279</sup> The Spirit of God will rest upon this ideal ruler, who will be a wise and righteous judge (v 4), and whose rule will be characterised by righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) and truth (ἀλήθεια v5). The essence of his reign will be peace, for as well as ruling over the Jews, he will also rule the Gentiles, who will therefore find their hope (ἐλπίς) in him.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Dunn 849 suggests that the LXX version was amended by the translators because of its less threatening or aggressive nature in the Diaspora setting than the original Massoretic text which speaks of God taking vengeance on his enemies.

<sup>278</sup> Frid 1983.

<sup>279</sup> Isa 11:1-10 is understood messianically in the Targum of Isaiah, especially 11:1,6,10,11,12. See Stenning 1949. See also the allusions to this verse in Matthew 12:21; Rev 5:5.

<sup>280</sup> In Isa 11:1 ῥίζα is used of the origin of the new shoot. On the varying meaning of this term see Maurer in TDNT VI:986ff.

Paul has already spoken of the holy root of Israel in 11:16. Although the unbelieving branches may be cut off, the root of Israel does not die. The ῥίζα, then, is the symbol of God's faithfulness which, in 15:12, has become visible as a shoot in Christ Jesus. In Isaiah, all that is visible of the once flourishing plant is a stump, but from this root can come the ῥάβδος or ἀνατολή, a branch who will rule wisely over Israel and, eventually, the Gentiles too (cf. Jer 23:5;33:15; Zech 3:8;6:12; T.Jud. 24:5). The vision of this Isaiah passage is the eschatological hope of world-wide recognition of God's sovereign rule.<sup>281</sup> The might of the Lord will be seen, and the scattered Jews will be returned (11:11). God will bring a righteous ruler on whom the Spirit will rest.

With this in mind, it seems quite possible that Paul's thinking has been influenced by the whole passage. Its ideas speak to him of Jesus as the righteous ruler who has come out of Israel to rescue his people and bring peace to the world. In Christ, the age of eschatological peace and hope has dawned and God's word has been shown to be true.<sup>282</sup> Christ is the promised Messiah who has come forth from Israel. He has inaugurated the age of peace, making it possible for them to "welcome one another" (v7), and, although the church can as yet be only an imperfect foretaste of what is to come, Paul can pray that they may know joy and peace in the power of the Holy Spirit which has been given to them through Christ (15:13). By his selfless service to the Jews, he has glorified God by proving him merciful and faithful, and has provided an example to be followed. On this basis, Paul can pray that the Roman Christians will be enabled to persevere in the hope they have been given (v 13). The vision of Isaiah 11:1-12 has, if imperfectly, been fulfilled.

6.3. The quotations here support the view that 15:3 refers to the Messiah. He has made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to worship God together, according to

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<sup>281</sup> Kaiser 1983, 262f.

<sup>282</sup> Lindars 1961, 202. Lindars argues that Paul is primarily interested in the reference to the Gentiles, and that he is not using this verse as a messianic testimony. He believes that the Davidic descent only became important in the debate as to whether Nazareth or Bethlehem was the birth place of Christ.



the Scriptures. Now the Roman believers should follow his example and welcome one another, Jew and Gentile alike.

These verses serve as a summary of Paul's deliberations on the significance of Christ as Messiah, as well as providing the broader Christological basis for his dealings with the difficulties in the Roman church.<sup>283</sup> Fundamentally, the unifying factor, both in the church and the eschatological scheme of things, is the worship of God, and to achieve this end, Jesus the Messiah is the instrument of God. In Christ, the age of eschatological peace and hope has dawned, and God's word has been shown to be true.

## **7. Conclusion.**

There can be little doubt that in Romans Paul understands Jesus Christ to be the Messiah of Israel. When he refers to Χριστός he thinks of it as a title as well as simply a proper name. Moreover, he appears to expect his readers to share this understanding of Jesus' significance. According to the formula of 1:3f, Jesus was the Davidic Messiah during his earthly life, even when he was limited by his fleshly existence. He was of royal blood, and even then was the Son of God, as believers can now see with the help of Scripture. Now, following his exaltation he is the Son of God in power; the Messiah of Israel has been exalted to be worshipped as Lord by the community of believers.

The titular significance of χριστός is confirmed by 9:5. The fact that the Messiah has come out of Israel is the greatest of the privileges which have been accorded to Israel by God himself. Yet Paul stops short of equating the Messiah with God, as our analysis of the punctuation problem in 9:5 maintained. The reason for this is found at 15:7-13, in which Paul sums up his argument as a whole. God is still working through his Messiah in the history of Jews and Gentiles and will continue to do so until they worship together in the consummated age. Through Jesus, God's truthfulness and mercy are seen, and the beginnings of eschatological peace should be evident in the community of believers. Christ is the holy root from which the new

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<sup>283</sup> Wilckens III:108; Wright 1991, 235; Sass 1993

plant of the church grows. Above all, Christ as Messiah is the means of unity between Jews and Gentiles both in the larger plan of God's salvation, and within the church itself.

7.2. The Messiah motif supports Paul's argument for the priority of the Jews. God has been faithful to his promises and has not rejected his own people. He has sent his Messiah as the visible sign of this. Christ's life as a Jew is the greatest honour for the Jewish people, and proves their continued priority in God's sight. In this respect, it also serves to show that Paul continues to align himself with the Jewish tradition; he still considers his own people to be the chosen ones of God, despite their lack of belief. Conversely, however, he can also use it to support his own mission to the Gentiles: Christ's Messiahship is part of God's plan for their salvation as well as that of Israel. On a practical level, the Messiahship of Jesus is used as a rebuke to those Gentiles in the Roman church who may be haughty in their attitude to their Jewish brethren. For Jewish believers, dwelling on the fact that it is the Messiah who has come is an encouragement in difficult times as the church develops in its Roman environment. Their new faith is in line with scripture, whose promises are already being fulfilled. God is working out his plans for the whole world through Jesus, and using the Jews themselves as the catalyst for the salvation of the world as he had always promised. Still more, we can see why the apostle thinks belief in Jesus should be the most natural step for Israel to take, and why her failure to do so causes him such profound personal anguish.

The idea of Christ as the Messiah of Israel means that church and Israel maintain the closest possible relationship in Paul's mind. Yet we have also had a hint that Paul's attitude to Israel may be rather more complex than we might have thought from his overall argument in the letter. From Paul's point of view, to designate Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* is not to denigrate her, any more than to say that Christ had an existence *κατὰ σάρκα* is to say something insulting about him - it is not intended in any hostile or derogatory way. What it does mean is that there is some limitation in understanding, which can only be relieved by her acceptance of her Messiah. Even in her limited state, however, having refused her Messiah, she retains the privileges God

has given her, but only those Jews who believe may be said to be Israel *κατὰ πνεῦμα* along with the rest of the church. If there is an implied *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category here, this suggests that there is a supersessionist strain in Paul's thought in which the apostle does consider the church to be the "true" Israel, in which God's promises may be seen to be fulfilled. And this, from unbelieving Israel's perspective, could be taken to mean that Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* is inferior to the church and that the church has usurped Israel's place in God's plan.

Paul, of course, is at pains to dispel any such notion throughout the letter, as we have seen. But if this is a correct analysis of Rom 9:1-5, then we have detected an element of his thinking which sits uneasily with his belief in the continued priority and privilege of Israel. For it is hard to see how he can reconcile this conviction with the idea of the church as the place in which the true meaning of Israel's Scriptures is understood. However, although an implied *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category is a possibility here, it must be borne in mind that the apostle's understanding of Christ as Messiah ensures that he stays within a Jewish framework, and that in this respect he does see the church as continuous with Israel. We must now consider (in chapter 5) if the same may be said of the next major christological statement (Rom 3:21ff), which occurs as part of Paul's explanation of why the gospel is necessary for all men and women, and explains Christ's role in God's plan of salvation.

### **Excursus II: Dunn - "Jesus - Flesh and Spirit"**

1. Throughout this chapter, I have been maintaining that Paul's use of *κατὰ σάρκα* does not imply insult or negativity. Christ and Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* are limited, but the existence of both is a crucial part of God's plan. In his essay "Jesus- Flesh and Spirit", J.D.G. Dunn maintains that the use of the term *κατὰ σάρκα* in Rom 1:3f has pejorative overtones, with implications of inferiority and inadequacy, and that Paul speaks of Jesus' earthly life in a derogatory way.<sup>284</sup> In this short excursus, I wish to show that Dunn's view has implications for Pauline Christology which are out of

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<sup>284</sup>Dunn 1973. Dunn's view is more measured in his commentary (13), but he still wants to see a negative connotation, saying that Christ's racial descent is "not so decisive" for soteriology.

kilter with Paul's view of Christ in the rest of Romans. Secondly, I will argue that Dunn's approach to the formula in 1:3f has caused him to misunderstand its Christological message.

The driving force behind Dunn's essay is the question, "How did the primitive church understand the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit?" The thrust of his argument is that the Spirit provided the early church with the explanation for the continuity between the historical Jesus and the exalted Christ as well as the difference between the two. His sparring partner is Schweizer, to whose view that the *κατὰ σάρκα* - *κατὰ πνεῦμα* categories in Rom 1:3f formula are temporally successive and distinct, he strongly objects.<sup>285</sup> The temporal caesura implied by *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν* (i.e. the radical difference between Jesus' life as a man and his life in the spirit) led Eduard Schweizer to see the two phrases *κατὰ σάρκα* and *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης* as referring to two "spheres" of existence. Jesus was first in the fleshly or earthly sphere, and after the resurrection came into the sphere of the Holy Spirit (the heavenly sphere). Against this, Dunn argues that the two categories overlap and that the Spirit was with Christ in both phases of his existence.

In the course of his argument Dunn contends that the *κατὰ σάρκα* category as applied to Christ here has negative overtones. He (rightly) notes first of all that the term *σάρξ* can have a range of meanings for Paul and that he uses it in different ways according to context.<sup>286</sup> For example, Paul can refer to *σάρξ* as the tissue which is cut in circumcision, while at the other end of the scale he can speak of *σάρξ* as the "area of sin's operations". However, Dunn thinks that *κατὰ σάρκα* must always imply the full range of meaning. That is to say, he thinks that even when its use is essentially neutral, the negative undertones are never fully out of range. Further, *κατὰ σάρκα* is likely always to imply the *κατὰ πνεῦμα* antithesis. The superior *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category will always show up the *κατὰ σάρκα* as

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<sup>285</sup> Schweizer 1963; see also his contribution to TDNT article on *σάρξ* VI:416f.

<sup>286</sup> On the use and interpretation of *σάρξ* in Paul see Jewett 1971, 49-166; Schweizer's article in TDNT VI: 103ff. Barclay 1988, 203 argues that its meaning can only be determined according to context.

inferior. An examination of his evidence leads him to conclude that *κατὰ σάρκα* is used more or less pejoratively by Paul.

"With only one exception [1 Cor 10:18] (out of 18 occurrences, not including Rom 1:3) *κατὰ σάρκα* is always a phrase of contrast and antithesis. The contrast becomes explicit in the open *κατὰ σάρκα/κατὰ πνεῦμα* antithesis, but it is present elsewhere. And in all these cases *κατὰ σάρκα* stands on the negative side of the contrast, denoting inferiority and inadequacy, and usually bearing a distinctly pejorative, somewhat derogatory note as well, sometimes with the added implication of blameworthiness" (49).

On this basis, Dunn asserts that it must be regarded as "highly probable" that the phrase carries its usual pejorative overtones in Romans 1:3f; *κατὰ σάρκα* cannot be seen as neutral.

"On the contrary, as elsewhere in Paul, *κατὰ σάρκα* carries with it overtones from its fuller range of meaning and is intended pejoratively. Paul does not affirm the Davidic sonship of Jesus without qualification. He does not deny it either, but he makes it clear that to describe Jesus as 'born of the seed of David' is a dangerously defective and misleading half-truth" (51).

Dunn's aim is to show that it is not enough to think only of Jesus' earthly life as a Jew, and his argument that the Spirit was present in both periods of Christ's existence is intended to redress the balance. But the statement "to describe Jesus as 'born of the seed of David' is a dangerously defective and misleading half-truth" is unfortunate. It would have been healthier if Dunn had said, "*merely* to describe". The omission of this one word, to my mind, is symptomatic of the weaknesses inherent in Dunn's way of thinking here. His approach runs the risk of undermining the earthly life of Jesus, his Jewishness and his humanity, to an extent which is not consonant with Paul's Christology in the rest of the epistle.

2. Before we consider the implications of Dunn's view, we need to examine the assumptions which have led him to this conclusion. Firstly, it need not necessarily be

the case that κατὰ σάρκα always carries an implied antithesis with κατὰ πνεῦμα. It is true that in Romans 7-8 walking κατὰ σάρκα is contrasted with living κατὰ πνεῦμα. But in Romans 4:1 it could be that Paul is speaking in neutral terms of the fact that is Abraham a human being - forefather not only of Jews but of believers. Similarly, it is possible that in Romans 9:1-5 Paul uses κατὰ σάρκα to denote racial ties without having the antithesis in mind; in 9:5 Judaism is a great source of pride for the apostle. It is also hard to see why Dunn should say that 1 Cor 10:18 is free from depreciatory overtones if Paul does truly always have the full range of meaning in mind when he refers to σάρξ. As Dunn himself notes, Paul is quite capable of using σάρξ neutrally (he cites Rom 9:14; 1 Cor 6:16; 15:39 2 Cor 7:1). It is hazardous to think that we can stipulate what Paul's intentions and "hidden agendas" may or may not have been at any given time.

Secondly, Dunn seems to think that because two things are opposites, the one must be negative and the other positive. His view does not seem to allow for complementarity. It is true that there is an implied contrast between σάρξ and πνεῦμα, but contrast and tension need not imply incompatibility and mutual exclusiveness. Antithetical components are often complementary to each other, the one enabling the other to function, the one less effective or understandable without the other. This is surely the case here: without both categories we would have an incomplete picture of Christ.

3. We must now consider the implications of Dunn's view of Christ κατὰ σάρκα. The first corollary is that Paul sees Jesus' Davidic descent, and therefore also his Jewishness, in negative terms. However, as we have seen, the overall attitude to Judaism in Romans, as Paul wrestles with his own anguish over the repudiation of the gospel, is positive and compassionate. It is unlikely that Paul would regard Christ's Jewishness in negative terms.

Secondly, Dunn's view has implications for the soteriological significance of Christ's earthly life. If it is legitimate to see a reference here not just to his racial ties but also to his life as a human being, Dunn is saying that Paul speaks of Christ's manhood in

pejorative terms. On the face of it, this is a reasonable thing to say. It is true that the limited nature of Christ's life in the flesh, with all its physical frailty, is inferior to his now exalted status which enables him to be addressed as *κύριος* over the cosmos and the church. But it is hardly likely that inferiority in this sense should be seen as negative. Christ's manhood does entail weakness and the corruptibility of the body, but for Paul this element of Christ's life is exactly where the power of God is seen. That Christ was *able* to die a human death is the most important aspect of his earthly life (3:24; 5:8,12ff). To say that Christ's humanity is negative is to miss the point of Paul's soteriology: his theology of the cross depends on seeing physical vulnerability as the place where God was able to effect the beginning of salvation for mankind.

4. Dunn himself recognises that his view entails a dilemma. If the flesh is as frail as he makes out, how could Christ's earthly life be part of God's saving grace (*σάρξ* being the area of sin)? The crucial factor is that for Paul (according to Dunn) Christ's sonship is, in both phases, a function of the Spirit. Sonship and Spirit are so closely linked as to be inseparable, and Jesus' obedience was possible only because he had the Holy Spirit in him from the time of his baptism. Dunn writes,

"In so far as Jesus lived on the level of the flesh, was bound and determined by the weakness and inadequacy of the human condition, allowed worldly considerations to determine his conduct, he was merely the son of David and no more - Messiah indeed, but a disappointing, ineffective, irrelevant Messiah, whether judged in terms of Jewish expectations or in terms of the Christian gentile mission. But in so far as Jesus lived on the level of the Spirit, refused to allow merely human considerations, fleshly suffering, or Jewish expectations to determine his course or deter him from his chosen ministry, he manifested that he was indeed Son of God, and thereby proved his right to be installed as Son of God in power as from the resurrection of the dead" (57).

This would seem to answer our objections. The presence of the Spirit in Jesus' earthly life puts him in proper perspective as the human, but inspired Son of God. But this is just the trouble. Christ's humanity remains almost a by-product in God's plan, the

most convenient mode of entry into the world of men. We still run the risk of underplaying the importance of Christ's faithfulness in suffering and his Jewish origins. How is it that Dunn has arrived at such a strange view of Christ *κατὰ σάρκα*?

The problem has to do with method. In the first place, Dunn knows that men and women can be spoken of as *ἐν σαρκί* or *ἐν πνεύματι*. As Rom 8:1-17 and Gal 5 show, believers are not yet released from the flesh, and must continually decide to walk *κατὰ πνεῦμα* until the parousia. Unfortunately, however, Dunn assumes that "Paul's soteriology in terms of *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα* must have influenced his Christological use of the same terms" (54). In other words, what is true of believers is now seen to be true of Christ, who was the first to be caught between the ages of flesh and Spirit. But is it legitimate to work from soteriology to Christology in this way? It may have been that Paul felt the need to develop his Christology as he discovered more about humanity's predicament. But we cannot make this assumption. As far as soteriology is concerned, Paul's thought is thoroughly Christ-centred. It is because of what he knows about Christ that he thinks as he does about men and women and their salvation, and not the other way around.

There is another problem with Dunn's method. Notwithstanding his argument from Rom 7-8, Dunn also wants to assert that in Paul's view the Christian's experience of flesh and Spirit is patterned on that of Christ. Dunn supports this by citing Phil 2:7 and Rom 8:3, which he interprets as saying that Christ had a human existence, in exactly the same way as all other human beings. Most scholars, however, interpret *ὁμοιώμα* ("form" or "likeness") in these verses as indicating that there was an essential difference between humanity and Christ - his ability not to sin.<sup>287</sup> The inclusion of the qualifier *ἁμαρτίας* in Rom 8:3 bears this out. Further, in Romans 8:8, Paul says that those who are in the flesh are unable to please God (*ἀρέσαι*). In 15:3 however, Christ is said not to have pleased himself (*οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν*) but to have served others and God. Rather than say that Christ is the prototype, it is more

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<sup>287</sup> See especially the argument in Käsemann, 216.



accurate to say that he sets the example, having opened up the possibility of imitation for men and women caught up in the eschatological age.

One last point needs to be made. The starting point for Dunn's essay was the question of the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit. According to Dunn, Christ's Sonship indicates that the Spirit was a part of Jesus' earthly life. However, while it may be true that Sonship and Spirit are closely related in Paul's thinking, we cannot say that this is a theme in Romans 1:3f. The Spirit of holiness is referred to with regard to Christ's exaltation: *the formula* itself does not seem to have Christ's earthly inspiration in view, and so does not support Dunn's argument. It seems that Dunn has been on the wrong track, using the wrong material to answer his question. He is right to say that the two spheres of Christ's existence are not mutually exclusive or temporally divided. However, the overlap and continuity which Dunn rightly sees in the formula are not expressed in terms of Spirit and Sonship, but of the Messiahship and Sonship of Christ.

5. Dunn's essay poses no challenge to our interpretation of the Christological formula of Romans 1:3f. The application of the *κατὰ σάρκα* category to Christ does not denigrate either his Jewishness or his humanity. Doubtless, the imbalance of content in the formula betrays a greater interest in the fact of Christ's current exaltation which draws believers together in worship, but Christ *κατὰ σάρκα* is the necessary preliminary phase. And while it is no longer true to say that Christ has a fleshly existence, the fact is that he has not ceased to be the Son of God and Messiah as he was in his earthly life. He remains the Messiah for the Jewish nation even in his exaltation.

## Chapter 5

### Romans 3:21-26: Christ and the Righteousness of God.

#### 1. Introduction

The second Christological passage to be considered (3:21ff) is part of Paul's argument that God is acting to redeem Jews and Gentiles alike. God's righteousness requires that a right relationship be restored and maintained between the Creator and his creatures.<sup>288</sup> In the past God's righteous nature had been revealed in the gift of the

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<sup>288</sup> Käsemann 1969, 168-82: the gift of righteousness is ultimately "the faithfulness with which the creator persists in his work of creation despite the falling away of his creatures". According to Bultmann (1952, 279-85) the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is a *genitivus auctoris* or genitive of origin, referring firstly to righteousness as an attribute of God which is given to believers, who can then be said to be righteous. In so far as the cognate verb δικαιοῦν is a forensic term referring to the acquittal of men and women in God's court, it denotes the eschatological verdict which sets the believer in a right relationship with God. When this takes place, a believer may be said to have been given the righteousness of God, which is of divine origin. Thereafter, this divine righteousness operates through human beings. Bultmann's pupil Ernst Käsemann retained the idea of righteousness as gift, but added to it, maintaining that the gift is "inseparable from the Giver". When righteousness is given, it does not become detached from the Giver, but the Giver remains with it, because it is a power of God. The corollary of this is that righteousness becomes something pertaining to both God and humanity.

Bultmann's view had been based on the traditional understanding of the Old Testament concept of God's righteousness as a legal norm against which everything else is measured. God had to give his righteousness to men and women because they could not attain it themselves, never being able to live up to this standard. Käsemann's view, however, is grounded in a quite different interpretation, which, since the work of Cremer, had seen  $\text{הַקְּדוּשָׁה}$  in terms of relationships. That which is righteous primarily maintains a right relationship between God and humanity or men and women and their neighbours (Cremer 1900; see also von Rad 1962, Achtemeier 1962, 80-85). Most scholars accept Käsemann's view that the righteousness of God is a relational term, criticism being levelled against his "history of religions" method rather than his findings. This method had led him to argue that Paul was using a "ready made formulation" which he took over from Judaism and used for his own purposes. The danger of this approach is that the flexibility of Paul's usage is obscured, and a particular interpretation is forced into each instance of the phrase. Käsemann himself avoids this danger, recognising that the forensic aspect is to the fore in some cases (as in Rom 3:3) and the relational aspect more prominent in others. Nevertheless, Conzelmann 1968, 180 gave an important warning that each instance should be evaluated in its context. See also Bultmann's 1964 reply to Käsemann's position. Stuhlmacher and Müller, Käsemann's pupils, developed the

Law, which was intended to enable a healthy relationship between God and his people to be maintained (2:12-3:20). Paul has shown, however, that Jews have been as guilty of sin as the rest of humanity, and now, in the eschatological age (νυνὶ δὲ 3:21), God has ordained that his righteousness be revealed independently of the Law (χωρὶς νόμου), through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Now the opportunity of reconciliation can be extended to Gentiles as well as Jews, all of whom have fallen short of the glory of God (3:23). In 3:21ff, Paul shows how this reconciliation has been made possible by describing what God has done through Jesus Christ. Our task here is to examine the Christology of this passage with a view to understanding Paul's view of the place of Christ in God's plan. Having first established the meaning of this complex and difficult passage, and its place within Paul's argument, we will then be in a position to consider what it can tell us about Paul's view of the relationship between the church and Israel.

## 2. Romans 3:21ff

2.1. In 3:21 Paul speaks of the righteousness of God as having been manifested (πεφανερώται). He is referring not so much to the revelation of something which was previously kept hidden, as to a divine action (as the use of the passive voice suggests) which effects a closing of the old age and an opening up of the new.<sup>289</sup> That the righteousness of God should be manifested in such a way is, according to Paul, no aberration from what Israel knows of God because it is attested to by Torah and the prophets.

Paul explains how God has worked by stating that there is a redemption in Christ Jesus (ἀπολύτρωσις) which has made the gift of grace possible. For the Jew, ἀπολύτρωσις may recall thoughts of the Exodus, the liberation of the people from

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idea of God's righteousness as his faithfulness to creation. Stuhlmacher 1986, 68-93; Müller 1964; Kertelge's 1967 view that the creation motif is not as important as Käsemann and his pupils think, has been more widely accepted. For an excellent account of Käsemann's view, see Way 1991, 177-236. On the debate in Germany, see Brauch 1977; see also Hultgren 1985, 13-18.

<sup>289</sup> The verb is more or less synonymous with the ἀποκαλύπτειν of 1:17, and has the same eschatological overtones; Lührmann 1965, 148.

the bondage of slavery. The cognate verb λυτρουᾶσθαι is frequently used in the LXX in reference to the deliverance from Egypt (e.g. Ex 6:6;15:13; Deut 7:8;9:26;13:6).<sup>290</sup> For both Jew and Gentile, the word has associations of liberation from the form of slavery familiar to everyone.<sup>291</sup> The idea is, then, that Christ's death has brought about a liberation for believers from the bond of sin which has previously held them.<sup>292</sup> In verses 25f, Paul uses a traditional Christological statement to explain this.<sup>293</sup> Liberation has been effected, he says, in the work of Christ Jesus

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<sup>290</sup> SH 86; Dunn 169.

<sup>291</sup> D.A. Campbell 1992, 119 following Deissmann 1910, 319-30.

<sup>292</sup> SH, 86 note that "ransom" or payment on release from captivity is present in the use of ἀπολυτρόω in classical Greek. Evidence is also adduced from Mark 10:45 and 1 Tim 2:6 and passages in which Christians are said to have been "bought with a price" e.g. 1 Cor 6:20;7:23. SH themselves note that there is no need to see an allusion to payment. We also have to ask to whom payment would be made? It is hard to see how God would pay himself or indeed why this should be necessary. D.A.Campbell 1992, 119-30 tries to introduce the idea of substitution here. However, at this point his argument becomes rather strained; rejecting on the one hand that ransom payment is part of Paul's thinking in this passage, he nonetheless argues that substitution is included in the payment of money, the money taking the place of the slave.

<sup>293</sup> *Contra* Cranfield 200, note 1 who thinks they are Paul's own words. Cf. Bultmann 1952, 46f who argues that a "traditional statement" is discernible at verses 24-26 for three reasons. First, ἰλαστήριον is found only here in Paul. Secondly, Paul usually speaks of the "cross" rather than αἷμα when he is speaking of Christ's death. Thirdly, "the idea of divine righteousness which demanded expiation for former sins" is otherwise foreign to Paul's thought. Käsemann 1950-51 has developed Bultmann's position: the terms πάρεσιν, προγεγονότων, ἀμαρτημάτων, προέθετο which are not characteristic of Paul, the "overladen style" of genitive constructions and propositional connections support this case. Käsemann also thinks the notion of righteousness here is quite alien to Paul's way of thinking. The two clauses in verse 26 are seen as parallel, the second added by Paul to correct the thought of the first in which (according to Käsemann) δικαιοσύνη is an attribute of God; see also Reumann 1966. Käsemann draws attention to the sharp syntactical break between verses 23 and 24 and the difficulty of relating the participle δικαιοῦμενοι to what has gone before. It is, however, more common to see such a formula only at verses 25-26 on the grounds that the relative pronoun provides a better starting point for the quotation (Lohse 1963; Wengst 1972, 87-91; Stuhlmacher 1986, 94-109). Talbert 1966 suggests that verses 25-26 have been inserted by an editor at some later stage to summarise the previous section. For a summary of the problems see D.A. Campbell 1992, 37-57.

ὄν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

The quotation says, first of all, that God put Christ forward (προέθετο) as an ἱλαστήριον. It used to be thought that this was a reference to Christ as the "mercy seat" (*kapporet*), the golden lid which was placed on the ark of the covenant in Jewish tradition (eg Ex 25; Lev 16 LXX).<sup>294</sup> Recently, however, many scholars have felt that it is incongruous to equate Christ with an item of temple furniture, and strange that Christ, rather than the cross, should be seen as the place where blood is sprinkled.<sup>295</sup> Further, the lack of the definite article (it is usually present in the OT) has been taken to suggest that *the* traditional mercy seat is not in mind here. It is also frequently observed that προέθετο, which is probably to be translated as "set forth publicly", seems odd in conjunction with an allusion to the mercy seat, which was hidden within the holy of holies.<sup>296</sup>

Another problem is whether ἱλαστήριον should be translated as an adjective or a noun. If it is taken as an adjective, we have to understand an implied noun - for example, θάνατος (death) or θῦμα (sacrifice). Fryer has argued that such a usage has little support in the ancient literature, and has noted that while the idea of sacrifice is important in the context, "(T)he sacrificial overtones of the context are not dependent on the adjectival form of the word ἱλαστήριον".<sup>297</sup> It is more likely that the word is to be understood as a noun, and since a masculine substantive

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<sup>294</sup> See for example Lyonnet 1970, 155-66; and (still) Wilckens I:190f.

<sup>295</sup> See especially Morris 1955-56. Morris also argues that in the LXX, ἱλαστήριον need not be seen as referring to the mercy seat.

<sup>296</sup> *Contra* Cranfield 209 who understands προέθετο as "purposed" or "intended" as in Rom 1:3.

<sup>297</sup> Fryer 1987, 102. This article gives a good overview of all the issues involved in the interpretation of ἱλαστήριον.

ἱλαστήριον is unusual, it seems best to understand it as neuter. In this case, the translation becomes "means of atonement". Paul sees the shedding of Jesus' blood as the "means of expiation", the method by which the sins of those who believe are cleansed.<sup>298</sup>

The reason for God's action is given as εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων. Here, again, interpretation is far from straightforward. According to some, who translate πάρεσιν as "passed over" and ἔνδειξιν as "proof", Paul is saying that God has to prove his righteousness because he has ignored or passed over the former sins of men.<sup>299</sup> On this interpretation, atonement becomes necessary because of something which God has done - his righteousness has come into question and he must vindicate himself. The trouble is that it is unclear to whom God would prove his righteousness. Indeed, why should God have to vindicate himself at all (cf. 9:19)?

W. Kümmel has offered an alternative, more satisfactory interpretation. He translates ἔνδειξις as "display" and πάρεσις as "forgiveness", and points out that the idea of God "passing over" former sins is unlikely in view of 2:4 in which God's ἀνοχή consists of punishment which is designed to lead men to repentance.<sup>300</sup> Christ's

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<sup>298</sup> Some argue for a "propitiatory" death: Christ's death is a martyrdom designed to avert God's wrath and a substitute for other people on whom the wrath of God would rightly descend (cf. 4 Macc 17:21f) e.g. Cranfield 216; SH 91f; Morris 1955-56. It is, however, far from clear how God can be understood as having to avert his own wrath: who propitiates whom? (Cf. Thornton 1968-68; Whiteley 1964, 146 on the idea of "substitution" in 4 Macc). Rather than appealing to "martyr theology" as the background to Paul's thought, it is more likely that Yom Kippur is the major influence. As Campbell notes, in Jewish thought Yom Kippur is the supreme measure for the removal of sin and a right relationship with God. Contextually, given Paul's preoccupation with humanity's estrangement from God, this idea is appropriate. Christ's sacrificial death cleanses humanity of its sins (Stuhlmacher 1986, 101ff; Dunn 171). See Campbell and those listed by him 1992, 107ff. Campbell bases his opinion on the arguments of Deissmann 1901 and 1903. That Jesus' death is to be considered sacrificial is confirmed by the reference to his blood (αἷμα; Morris 1955-56, 112-28. See also M. Barth 1961; Dunn 1974). On the meaning of the terms "expiation" and "propitiation" see Hill 1967, 23.

<sup>299</sup> See, for example, Cranfield 211f.

<sup>300</sup> Kümmel 1967.

sacrificial death is to be seen as a display of God's righteousness through the forgiveness of sins for those who believe. This constitutes a manifestation of God's forbearance and restraint (ἀνοχή) towards men and women who have fallen away from the glory which should properly be theirs.

In verse 26 this point is repeated but emphasis is placed on the fact that God's action in Christ has wrought a radical change in circumstances, having opened up the eschatological age - ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ. Finally, Paul notes that all this has happened in order that God might be true to his own righteousness (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον) and that those who believe might be justified.<sup>301</sup>

2.2. In this passage, then, Christ has become the sacrifice through which men and women have been released from the bond of sin, had their own sin removed, and their relationship with God restored.<sup>302</sup> In this way, God's righteousness has been revealed. There is, however, still one important aspect of this passage to be considered. In verse 22 Paul says that God's righteousness has been revealed διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, and in verse 25, Paul says that God put Christ forward as an expiation διὰ τῆς πίστεως. We have to ask whether this phrase refers to the faith of the believer, or to Christ's faith as the crucial medium for the manifestation of God's righteousness?<sup>303</sup> That is to say, is Christ's sacrifice effective because of the fact that men and women have believed in him or because of his own faithfulness to the task given to him by God?

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<sup>301</sup> The purposive εἰς τὸ εἶναι should be given full weight here. For Piper 1980, this supports his thesis that the demonstration of God's righteousness maintains and displays God's glory. Righteousness for Piper is "God's unwavering commitment always to act for his own name's sake" (2).

<sup>302</sup> Dunn 175 rightly notes that this passage does not indicate whether OT cultic law is understood as annulled or not.

<sup>303</sup> The omission of the clause διὰ τῆς πίστεως in 3:25 in manuscript A, rather than being accidental as Metzger suggests (1975, 508), perhaps points more to the difficulty caused by its presence in the verse. There is some confusion in the MSS as to whether the article should be present at all.

Traditionally, the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ in verse 22 has been understood as an objective genitive. It is translated as "faith in Jesus", and is understood to refer to the faith men and women have in Jesus Christ. The response of the believer is the means through which the revelation of the righteousness of God has been made. Similarly, in verse 25, the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως is understood to refer to the believer's faith and at verse 26, the reference is to the man who has faith in Jesus (τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ).<sup>304</sup>

However, this interpretation of verse 22 leads to certain difficulties. In the first place, if διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ means "through faith in Jesus Christ", it becomes unclear why Paul should then go on to add εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας which repeats the idea. Secondly, it is hard to see what it means to say that the righteousness of God is revealed through a *response* of men. As Campbell notes, the εἰς in the following clause (εἰς πάντας) suggests purpose: the righteousness of God is revealed in order that all might believe.<sup>305</sup> An objective interpretation renders human response as both the means and goal of the manifestation of God's righteousness. Why, we have to ask, should the revelation of God's righteousness be limited in this way?

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<sup>304</sup> Many scholars have attempted to treat πίστις Χριστοῦ as a stock phrase whose meaning remains unchanged in Paul's usage. However, the nature of the Greek genitive should warn against such a rigid presupposition. As Robertson 1914, 499 notes, "in itself the genitive is neither subjective nor objective, but lends itself readily to either point of view". Robertson notes with favour Deissmann's contention that Paul's use of the genitive transcends all rules about subjective and objective interpretations. Deissmann 1912, 141f speaks of a "mystic genitive" when referring to God or Christ; see also Moulton and Turner 1963, 211. Notwithstanding their own warnings, however, these grammarians invariably opt for the objective genitive in the case of πίστις Χριστοῦ. BDF 1961, 60 is more circumspect, noting that "in many instances the genitive θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ in Paul is used only to express some relationship not exactly defined." Recently Porter 1992, 95 has allowed for the subjective interpretation.

<sup>305</sup> D.A. Campbell 1992, 63.



These difficulties have led some scholars to consider the possibility that the phrase should be understood as a subjective genitive. In other words, Paul is speaking of the faith of *Christ* rather than the faithful response of believers.<sup>306</sup> This interpretation relieves the verse of the problems noted above, but scholars have long found the idea of Christ's faith problematic. They suspect that faith is something appropriately ascribed only to men and women, who respond to what God does and is. What might it mean to say that Christ has faith?

It is certainly hard to see how faith can be ascribed to the risen Christ as he is worshipped in the church. But as Morna Hooker has pointed out, it is logical to see Christ as having had faith during his life as a human being on earth.<sup>307</sup> It would be very strange if Jesus had not exercised faith in God throughout His earthly life. However, while Paul does insist that Jesus shared all aspects of human life except succumbing to sin (8:3), he does not unambiguously refer to Christ's faith in God. A case for the subjective genitive approach cannot be made on these grounds alone.

The word πίστις can also be understood as "faithfulness". In 3:3, for example, Paul refers to τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ. Clearly, the phrase should be seen as a subjective genitive here; Paul is speaking of an attribute of God which is synonymous with the term ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ in 3:7. The faithfulness and truthfulness of God are set over and against the ἀπιστία of the Jews (3:3). Similarly, the ἀδικία of men and

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<sup>306</sup> Arguments for the subjective interpretation first appeared in the late 19th century and early 20th in the work of J. Haussleiter 1891 and G. Kittel 1906. However, scholarship was not convinced by their efforts (see SH, 83f) and the issue appears to have lain dormant for some forty years (although cf. K. Barth, 104.) In the fifties, G. Hebert and T.F. Torrance addressed the matter and argued for the subjective genitive on the basis (briefly speaking) that it should be seen against the background of the Hebraic understanding of faith (*emunah*) as an attribute of God (Hebert 1955; Torrance 1957). On this argument the faithfulness of Christ becomes the exhibition of God's own faithfulness. In 1961, Barr launched a scathing attack on their work, which denounced their method rather than their results (Barr 1961, 161-205). The blow was enough to ensure that the question again retreated into the background of Pauline studies until the mid-sixties. Since then a steady flow of articles has been produced by scholars working in both Romans and Galatians, whose argument for the subjective interpretation has become increasingly influential.

<sup>307</sup> Hooker 1989.

women is contrasted with the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in verse 5. We might note also that at 4:12 πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ can only be subjective.<sup>308</sup> Paul, then, can use the subjective genitive and understand πίστις to refer to faithfulness elsewhere. The question is, does he think of Christ as 'faithful'?

L.T. Johnson has argued that Christ's faithfulness had its expression in obedience. Without his death the divine plan could not have been carried through.<sup>309</sup> This is the point undergirding Paul's argument in chapter 5, which suggests that Christ was able to make the choice to be obedient. The "righteous act" (δικαίωμα 5:18) of Christ is contrasted with the transgression and disobedience of Adam. In going to death, Christ was faithful to God's plan of salvation. A similar point is made in Phil 2:6-11 in which Christ is depicted as having been consciously obedient to God to the extent of going to death on the cross (2:8). Here, as Hooker notes, it is implied that Christ could not have been the "exemplar of restored mankind" had he not been faithfully obedient.<sup>310</sup>

This line of thinking also helps explain διὰ τῆς πίστεως in 3:25. God put Christ forward as a sacrifice in order that the sins of humanity might be cleansed, and Christ was faithful to this plan in allowing his blood to be shed. As Bruce Longenecker has argued, understanding πίστις here as referring to the faith of the believer breaks apart "the otherwise cohesive unit ἰλαστήριον ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι." Paul is thinking here in theological and christological terms, and the introduction of this anthropological category is both intrusive and confusing. On the other hand, it makes good sense to see πίστις here as referring to Christ's faithfulness in his sacrificial death; the line of thought remains smooth, and Christ again has an active role in God's plan.<sup>311</sup> The subjective genitive also clarifies Paul's meaning in 3:26 in

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<sup>308</sup> Hultgren's contention (1980, 256) that this construction has in mind the "Abrahamic faith" i.e. denoting those who share the faith of Abraham (as in the RSV translation) misses the point that Paul does not primarily have the faith of believers in view in this passage but the faith of the individual Abraham, whose faith is the first example to be followed.

<sup>309</sup> L.T. Johnson 1982; see also M. Barth 1969.

<sup>310</sup> Hooker 1989, 338f.

which Paul explains why the Christ event took place. Not only is God revealed to be righteous, through Christ's death he is able to justify the person who is "of the faith of Jesus" (δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ), that is to say, the one who has responded to and wishes to share in the faithfulness of Christ (cf. 4:16 in which Paul speaks of those who share the faith of Abraham). Those who believe may be said to "share in Christ's faithfulness" (3:26). Each person (circumcision or no circumcision) will be justified by faith rather than by what they have done (3:30).<sup>312</sup>

We can see that it is plausible to understand a subjective genitive at 3:22 on grammatical grounds as well as in terms of the wider context of Paul's thought in Romans. The idea is that God's righteousness has been revealed to all who believe and that this has been made possible because of Christ's faithfulness to the command of God. Although God is the author and initiator of Christ's faithful death, being the one who put him forward as an expiation, Jesus could have chosen not to become a sacrifice and God's purpose would not have been fulfilled. But is this interpretation consonant with Paul's thought elsewhere? Does it fit in with the clear emphasis Paul puts on the necessity of the faith of the believer? In order to test the validity of the subjective genitive interpretation in Rom 3:22, we will now consider Paul's use of the phrase as it appears in Galatians and Philippians. Does Paul speak of Christ's faithfulness elsewhere in his letters?

### 3. Πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians and Philippians.

3.1. In Galatians, the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ appears three times, twice at 2:16 and once at 3:22. In each case, it is grammatically feasible to understand a subjective genitive.<sup>313</sup> Contextually, however, it is much less easy to determine the meaning of the phrase in Galatians, as proponents of the subjective genitive interpretation admit. In contrast to Romans, it does not appear in a neatly packaged Christological

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<sup>311</sup> Longenecker 1993.

<sup>312</sup> Stowers' 1989 distinction between ἐκ πίστεως here (which refers to Jews and Gentiles) and διὰ τῆς πίστεως (Gentiles only) is artificial and based on his faulty view that Christ's atoning death was necessary for Gentiles only.

<sup>313</sup> See Hays 1983, 162-4.

statement from which we can deduce the nature of Christ's faithfulness. The question is, does talk of Christ's faithfulness make better sense of Paul's argument in Galatians than the traditional view? Paul's main concern in Galatians is that Gentile believers should not give in to the pressures of Judaisers who are urging them to be circumcised (5:2ff).<sup>314</sup> He argues that they have a freedom in Christ which overrides any legal considerations upon which the Jewish believers might insist. In fact, says Paul, to introduce such things into their lives would be to introduce things of the flesh, which would ultimately destroy their relationship with Christ (5:3,4).

At the beginning of his argument, Paul remembers an incident at Antioch in which he had criticised Cephas, who had separated himself from the Gentile Christians when the "circumcision party" had come (Gal 2:11-14). Evidently, Cephas had then started to require Gentile Christians to adhere to Jewish law (2:14), because (in Paul's judgement) he was afraid of these Jewish Christians who insisted that Law observance was a necessary part of Christian life. Since this was contrary to Cephas' own beliefs, Paul attacked his hypocrisy in front of the whole group (2:14). Drawing on this experience as an illustration, Paul goes on in 2:15-21 to set out the principles of his doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>315</sup> Cephas should have remembered that his justification had been achieved not on the basis of works of the Law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), but ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (2:16). He should also have known that since he has been crucified with Christ, he has died to the Law, which now has no authority over him (2:19).

On the traditional reading of 2:15-16, which takes πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive, Paul is making the point that Jewish believers (as opposed to those from a Gentile background), who know from passages such as Psalm 143:2 that works of the Law cannot justify, are justified instead by their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>316</sup> According to

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<sup>314</sup> On the nature of the controversy at Galatia see Brinsmead 1982, 9-22; Barclay 1988, 36-74.

<sup>315</sup> Betz 1979, 114 describes this as the beginning of the *propositio* of the letter, as distinct from the *narratio*.

<sup>316</sup> Betz' interpretation of this verse (1979, 118) is understandable but rather harsh - he depicts the Jewish Christians (who in his view had not previously accepted the doctrine of meritorious works) as having made a calculated decision in order to

the view which adopts the subjective genitive, on the other hand, Paul is saying that Jewish believers, by virtue of their knowledge of scripture, know that no man can be justified by works of the Law. They know too, that justification is through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, and that is why they have believed in him.

This reading solves the problem of the redundancy of expression, i.e. the repetition of the idea of the need to believe, noted by so many critics of the objective genitive view (ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν) It also softens the stark contrast between νόμος and πίστις which has led scholars to see this passage as a polemic against Judaism rather than against Jewish Christians who insist on the necessity of Law observance. On this view, if Paul is not speaking of the faith of believers, he is unlikely to be contrasting two modes of religious behaviour i.e. between believing in Jesus and justification by "works". But we are still left with the question of what Paul means when he refers to Christ's faithfulness. Is Paul alluding to his faithful death as in Rom 3? Since Gal 2:16 and its immediate context give no clue as to what Paul might mean by the "faithfulness of Christ", we must turn to the other instance of πίστις Χριστοῦ in the letter.

The third use of πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians is to be found at 3:22. Continuing his argument that Gentile believers need not adhere to the Law, Paul has been contending that their current status depends not on Torah, but on the promise given to Abraham. Their justification has come about because Abraham had received God's promise through believing his words (3:18). The Law, which is inferior to the promise, had been given as a temporary measure until Christ came (ἄχρις οὗ ἐλθῆ τὸ σπέρμα ὃ ἐπήγγελλται 3:19) and "to bring about a knowledge of" transgressions.<sup>317</sup>

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"obtain what they needed" i.e. justification. This sort of interpretation runs the risk of seeing faith as a "work", a deliberate effort to achieve salvation.

<sup>317</sup> R. N. Longenecker 1990, 138.

However, although it was given after the promise, the Law does not pose a threat to it (3:21). Of itself the Law is not evil, and Paul concedes that had a law been given which was able to give life, justification by Torah would have been quite possible. However, the Law does not have life-giving properties, and Paul describes the human situation prior to Christ's coming (τὰ πάντα<sup>318</sup>) as being condemned "under sin" by the "scripture" (γραφή) mentioned in 3:10, which describes the state of those who do not obey the Law completely as being under a curse (Deut 27:26).<sup>319</sup> This, however, was not done arbitrarily but so that (ἵνα) the promise might be given to those who believe ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>320</sup>

The key to the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ here and at 2:16, lies in Paul's stress on the ἐπαγγελία in chapter 3. At 3:16 he is quite clear that the covenantal promises (Gen 12:2-3,7; 13:15-16; 15:4-6,18; 17:4,7-8) were given to Abraham and Christ (καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστός). Abraham's response was one of faithfulness to the promises of God, believing that they would be fulfilled. So too, Christ had to be faithful to the promises, or more accurately, to the purpose behind them. As Messiah, his role was not simply to believe them, but to bring about the situation whereby they might be fulfilled. Thus, Christ is faithful to God's plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, and in his faithful death on the cross. He is, as Howard puts it, the "administrator of the divine faith", since through his action God's fidelity to his purpose also becomes apparent.<sup>321</sup>

The likelihood that Paul has been referring to the faithfulness of Christ in 3:22 is increased if πιστίς in verses 23 and 25 refers to the gospel and the believing

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<sup>318</sup> Bruce 1982, 180.

<sup>319</sup> R. N. Longenecker 1990, 144; Howard 1979, 64.

<sup>320</sup> Alternatively, ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ can be seen as qualifying ἡ ἐπαγγελία rather than τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, yielding the translation, "so that the promise that is based on the faithfulness of Christ might be given to those who believed" (as in R.N. Longenecker 1990, 145). Paul's argument allows for both translations.

<sup>321</sup> Howard 1979, 57f takes much the same view as that adopted here.

response to it, as Longenecker suggests.<sup>322</sup> The gospel - Christ's faithful life, death and subsequent resurrection - is the apocalyptic event before which the Law held sway.<sup>323</sup> Legal adherence should not be a part of Gentile Christian life because of Christ's faithful adherence to God's plan that men and women would be justified on the grounds of faith rather than Torah (2:16).

Paul's stress on the promises also helps explain the curious distinction made between Jewish and Gentile believers in 2:15 ( Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοὶ). On the traditional interpretation of 2:16, it is unclear why Paul insists that Cephas' Jewish background (i.e. when he reminds them of Psalm 143:2) should have made him more aware that he would be justified by faith *in Jesus Christ* than those with a Gentile background. However, if πίστις Χριστοῦ in 2:16 contains a reference to the promises which later occupy such an important place in Paul's discourse, it may be that Paul thinks that Jewish believers, with their knowledge of scripture, should now be able to understand that Christ's faithfulness constitutes a fulfilment of the promises that were first given to Abraham. He is reminding Cephas that the inclusion of the Gentiles has always been a part of the Jewish tradition.<sup>324</sup> Jewish believers can now see that Christ is the executor of God's plan in the world, and that this is the reason they have believed in him. Furthermore, he reassures himself, to seek justification through Christ in this way is not sinful, not only because it is in line with Scripture, but because Christ himself, by his very nature, cannot be an agent of sin (2:17). On this basis, Paul can proceed to speak of the great difference between life "in Christ" and life without Christ. Believers have

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<sup>322</sup> E.g. R.N. Longenecker 1990, 149; see also Betz 1979, 178; the reference to πίστις here should not be limited to the faith of Jesus Christ (so Matera 1992, 137) or to faith in Christ (so Bruce 1982, 183).

<sup>323</sup> Taking εἰς in 3:24 as temporal in force.

<sup>324</sup> According to Martyn 1997 (b), 263ff (who takes the subjective genitive view), Paul is here arguing on the basis of a shared Jewish-Christian tradition about justification ("rectification"). However, in Romans 3:19, which makes the same point as Gal 2:16, Paul is clearly drawing on non-Christian *Jewish* sources to support his argument that all humanity, not just the Gentiles, has sinned. In this Galatians passage, Paul is making the same point in the dispute with Peter.

died to the Law and are therefore no longer subject to its authority. Their lives are characterised by their faith in the Son of God who died for them (2:20).<sup>325</sup>

3.2. According to most commentators, in Philippians 3:2-11 Paul is thinking of a situation similar to that of Galatians. That is to say, he is warning the Philippian congregation against those Judaisers who insist on the necessity of Law observance and circumcision (3:2).<sup>326</sup> While making essentially the same point about the Law as in Galatians (that the Law has no hold over believers), Paul's approach is much more personal and impassioned, as he describes the change in his own attitude to the Law since his acceptance of the gospel. Everything that he used to hold dear, namely his Jewish heritage and adherence to Torah, he now counts as loss compared with his knowledge of Jesus Christ (3:8). Now his aim is not to have a righteousness which comes from himself, but one which comes διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, which comes from God and leads to faith on the part of those who hear the message (ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει 3:9).<sup>327</sup>

The similarity between the situation addressed here and that of Galatians, coupled with the fact that the phrase appears nowhere else in the accepted Pauline corpus (other than in Romans), strongly suggests that the subjective genitive should again be understood. Morna Hooker has pointed out that it is logical to see Paul as referring to Christ's faithfulness here because he has already been thinking in terms of his obedient death in 2:6-11. As in Romans, Christ's self-giving attitude is an example

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<sup>325</sup> I.e. this phrase should be understood as an objective genitive. It is perhaps significant that at Galatians 2:20, which speaks of Christ's actions for *humanity* rather than his obedience to God (*contra* Wallis 1995, 116), Paul uses a traditional statement which refers to the Son of God rather than to Χριστός (τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ). The specialised use of the πίστις Χριστοῦ motif suggested here may also explain why Paul does not set up πίστις Χριστοῦ as something to be imitated by the Christian church (as Christ's self giving attitude is in the Philippian hymn). Christ's faithfulness has for Paul such a unique role in God's plan for men that it cannot be imitated. No human being can have this kind of πίστις which brings about the expiation of sins and the gift of righteousness for all men.

<sup>326</sup> For the view that the opponents here are non-believing Jews see Klijn 1965 and Hawthorne 1983.

<sup>327</sup> Hooker 1989, 331-3; O'Brien 1991, 381-417.



for believers to follow.<sup>328</sup> More importantly, however, πίστις Χριστοῦ is again used in close association with the idea of the believer's assurance of God's righteousness (μη ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου). Paul appears to be referring to the ideas which are made explicit in the Romans and Galatians passages which we have been considering.

#### 4. R. B. Hays' *The Faith of Jesus Christ*

4.1. πίστις χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive, then, does seem to be a regular feature of Paul's thought and to be used in a consistent fashion: Paul does speak of the faith of Jesus Christ as the means of righteousness for the believer. This interpretation has been gaining ground amongst scholars of Paul in recent years. It is compatible with the new perspective on Paul, and appeals particularly to those who are keen to see a close relationship between the church and Israel in Paul's thought. For, the less the necessity for faith of men and women in the redemptive process is emphasised, the less the antithesis between faith and works (so characteristic of the Lutheran approach), is stressed. The subjective genitive means that the faith of Christ, rather than the faith of believers, is contrasted with Law observance, and the faith-works antithesis is no longer a major part of Paul's thought. The emphasis on Christ's work also lessens the divide between the church and Israel in Paul's thought. Thus, scholars such as Gaston, Gager and Stowers, who stress the continuity between church and Israel in Paul, have also embraced the subjective genitive because Christ's obedience to God's plan points to the great continuity of God's work in history: Christ has made it possible for the salvation of the Gentiles.<sup>329</sup>

However, the subjective genitive has not been taken up as quickly as might be expected. Scholars seem reluctant to let go of the objective genitive interpretation altogether. For example, J.D.G. Dunn expressed the followings misgivings at the SBL conference in 1991:

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<sup>328</sup> Hooker 1989.

<sup>329</sup> E.g. Gager 1983, Gaston 1987 and Stowers 1994.

"To understand πίστις Χριστοῦ as referring to *Christ's* faithfulness would not only weaken the emphasis on human faith (like that of Abraham) but also confuse and even direct attention from the emphasis on *God's* faithfulness. What Paul is calling for throughout Romans is for (*sic*) faith in God's faithfulness, faith like that of Abraham, faith in the one who now embodies in eschatological fullness that faithfulness, *God's* faithfulness, not Christ's."<sup>330</sup>

4.2. In order to tackle these objections, we must now turn to consider the argument of one of the most influential exponents of the subjective genitive, R.B. Hays, whose book *The Faith of Jesus Christ* examines the use of the πίστις Χριστοῦ motif in Galatians. The crucial factor in Hays' argument is his belief that Paul understands Habakkuk 2:4, which is quoted in Galatians 3:11 and Romans 1:17, to be a messianic text: ὁ δίκαιος probably refers to the Messiah, and ἐκ πίστεως is ambiguous enough to be able to refer either to the faith of the believer (in the Messiah) or the faith of the Messiah (his own faithfulness).<sup>331</sup> Justification and the revelation of God's righteousness are thus closely linked with the word of Christ the Messiah.

As far as Rom 1:17 is concerned, however, Paul is not thinking Christologically at all, but in terms of what God has done in the gospel.<sup>332</sup> As long as the gospel is preached, God's power will work through it (1:17), leading to salvation for men.<sup>333</sup> We cannot rule out the possibility that Paul has the Messiah in mind here, as the Habakkuk text has been interpreted messianically at various times in Jewish history.<sup>334</sup> However, throughout the letter he clearly refers to the believer as the one who is "justified", not Christ (e.g. 3:24,26;4:25;5:9). Given that this is a major theme

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<sup>330</sup> Dunn 1991 (b), 742.

<sup>331</sup> Hays 1983, 156.

<sup>332</sup> Paul's quotation largely follows the LXX version, but he has omitted μου which follows πίστεως. The LXX version itself is slightly different from the MT in which "his righteousness" appears instead of "my faith". This difference is probably due to the accidental replacement of the Hebrew *waw* with *yod*. See Hays 1983, 155.

<sup>333</sup> Nygren, 66. See also Wilckens I:86f.

<sup>334</sup> See Hanson 1974, 42ff who has pointed out that ὁ δίκαιος could be seen as a messianic title e.g. 1 Enoch 38:2; cf. Acts 7:52;22:14; Heb 10:38.

in the letter, it is more likely that the quotation is used in 1:17 because it supports Paul's claim that a believing response to the gospel is necessary for salvation, than to refer to Christ's own faithfulness.<sup>335</sup>

Similarly, in Galatians 3:11, in which exactly the same modification of the Habakkuk text is used, Paul does not appear to be thinking of ὁ δίκαιος as Christ. He has been discussing the faith of men and women, as exemplified and inaugurated by Abraham, and their justification on this basis rather than Law. Christology is only brought into the argument at 3:13 when he speaks of Christ as having become a curse on behalf of believers.

Fortunately, Hays' view of the Habakkuk text is not essential for the argument that Paul speaks of the faithfulness of Christ, which can be supported on other grounds, as we have seen.<sup>336</sup> However, Hays goes on to assert that ἐκ πίστεως is an "exegetical catchphrase that alludes to the Habakkuk text", and that this "peculiar locution", found only in Galatians and Romans, may be seen as containing a reference to the faith of the Messiah wherever it is found. In Gal 3:8ff, for example, which Hays finds

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<sup>335</sup> Achtemeier notes the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν meaning "arising from and leading to" (cf. 2 Cor 2:16) and observes, "It is surely that sense in which Paul means it here: God's righteousness, revealed in the gospel, originates in faith(fulness) and leads to faith(fulness), but a faith(fulness), in this context, open to everyone, whether Jew or Greek. On that basis, I do not think the reference here is to the faith(fulness) of Christ". Achtemeier's (in E.E. Johnson and D.M. Hay 1997, 85) remarks are made in response to both Hays 1991 and Dunn 1991(b) which are now reprinted in the same volume.

<sup>336</sup> Recently the messianic interpretation of Hab 2:4 has been used by Stowers 1994 as the basis for his thesis that Christ's faithfulness to God's plan entailed his deliberate renunciation of his messianic power out of love for the ungodly i.e. the Gentiles (214). His martyr's death thus effectively delayed the judgement which he legitimately could have brought on the Gentiles. In Stowers' scheme, the Jews have always believed in God, and the Messiah has come simply to fulfil the promises about the inclusion of the Gentiles. Stowers sees Hab 2:4 as the "locus classicus" in Jewish literature for the idea that the final age would be prolonged and the final reckoning time delayed, and in Christian literature for the delay of Christ's return (200). He cites 1QpHab in support of this view. Besides the doubt surrounding the messianic interpretation noted above, there is nothing in the letter as a whole to support the view, either that the "ungodly" refers only to the Gentiles, or that Paul thinks Jesus renounced his messianic power. Rather, Jesus' faithfulness is seen as the very act which brought about the joining together of Jews and gentiles.

to be full of Messianic themes (e.g. seed, righteous one and inheritance cf. Isa 53:10:12), οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:10-12 is interpreted as "those who share the faith of the Messiah " (154), and ἐκ πίστεως in verses 11 and 12 is taken as referring to the fact that the Gentiles have been justified in the same way as Christ was justified (his participationist view 207). Justification, and sharing in the blessing of Abraham (3:14), is thus entirely focussed on Christ's faithfulness rather than the faith of the believer. Hays states his thesis as follows:

"Christians are justified/redeemed not by virtue of their own faith but because they participate in Jesus Christ, who enacted the obedience of faith on their behalf. Abraham is understood by Paul not as an exemplar of faith in Christ but as a typological foreshadowing of Christ himself, a representative figure whose faithfulness secures blessing and salvation vicariously for others" (196).<sup>337</sup>

As far as the first part of the thesis is concerned, we might take exception to the undue emphasis on the work of Christ rather than the believer. We have seen that the subjective genitive interpretation should not be allowed to obscure the importance of the faithful response of believers in Paul's thought.<sup>338</sup> The second tenet, however, needs closer examination, for it raises an important question. If it is true that Abraham foreshadows Christ, how does this balance with the eschatological significance of Christ's coming in Paul's thought? If there already has been an example of the kind of faith Jesus had, what exactly is the distinctive contribution of Christ in the divine plan?

In Gal 3:9 Paul affirms that Abraham's faithful response to God's promise is the beginning of faith for all men. Similarly, at Rom 4:16 Paul states that Abraham is the father of all who believe, and in Rom 4:24, Paul insists that the patriarch was not reckoned righteous simply for his own sake, but for the sake of those who would later

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<sup>337</sup> See also Hays 1991 on Romans, and cf. Wallis 1995, 65-127.

<sup>338</sup> It is also questionable whether Paul sees Christ as being "justified" (which is what Hays means by Jesus' enacting the obedience of faith) on our behalf, since it implies that he was somehow out of a relationship with God during his earthly life. For the view that Christ was justified, see also M Barth 1969.

be justified on the grounds of their belief in the gospel story. Hays interprets this to mean that Abraham's faith is a prefiguration of Jesus' own faith. In an earlier article on Romans 4 Hays writes:

"The relevance of Paul's appeal to the story of Abraham would lie in the fact that he finds there a precedent within Scripture for the idea that the faithfulness of a single divinely chosen protagonist can bring God's blessing upon "many" whose destiny is figured forth in that protagonist's action" <sup>339</sup>

There are, however, serious difficulties with his view that Abraham is the typological foreshadowing of Christ. First, it is doubtful that Abraham and Christ should be likened in this way. Instead, as Hooker has noted, there is a fundamental difference between the two: Abraham's role is restricted to *receiving* the promises, while only Christ can *fulfil* them. Believers are said to be Abraham's children because they have inherited the promise he received (3:9), but the fulfilment of the promise, the fact that the blessing has now come to the Gentiles, could only be brought about by Christ (Gal 3:14).<sup>340</sup>

Secondly, Paul's reference to Gen 15:6 in both Romans and Galatians should warn us against seeing these passages as a treatise on the nature of faith, as Hays' approach tends to do. The emphasis is, rather, on the fact that it is God who reckoned Abraham righteous (ἐλογίσθη).<sup>341</sup> The Abraham story is introduced to point to *God's* faithfulness to his promises. It is true that Paul sees both Abraham's faith and Christ's as theocentric, but the fact that Abraham received these promises with faith makes him the forerunner of those believers who receive them anew through Christ, not of Christ himself (Gal 3:7,9,22). As Goppelt has shown, the figure of Abraham is used not to point to Christ's person, but to his significance.<sup>342</sup> Paul works from his present knowledge of the inclusion of the Gentiles and sees that the promise which Abraham received has now been fulfilled in Christ. In Romans, it is made quite clear that there

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<sup>339</sup> Hays 1985, 98.

<sup>340</sup> Hooker 1989, 331.

<sup>341</sup> Guerra 1988.

<sup>342</sup> Goppelt 1982.

is a distinction in Paul's mind between the role of Abraham and Christ (4:24-25). In Galatians, this distinction is less easily discernible because of the density of Paul's argument and the focus on Christ's fulfilment of the promises.<sup>343</sup> Hays' christological interpretation of ἐκ πίστεως threatens to erase the distinction completely.<sup>344</sup>

However, the fact that Abraham's faith forehadows that of believers rather than Christ, seriously undermines the view that ἐκ πίστεως in Gal 3 refers to Christ. When Paul speaks of faith in this passage he is not thinking Christologically but in terms of the faith of Gentile believers whom he is most concerned to warn against the Judaisers' insistence on Law observance. It is crucial for the Gentile believers, like Abraham, to live ἐκ πίστεως. Thus, there is still room to understand Paul to be contrasting "works-righteousness" with faith *in* Jesus Christ. There is still, in other words, room to see Paul contrasting the Judaisers' insistence on circumcision with his own conviction that Gentiles should not take on Jewish practices along with their belief in the gospel.

Hays' extension of the thesis to include the phrase ἐκ πίστεως does seem to carry the implications which are a cause of concern to Dunn.<sup>345</sup> The misgivings expressed

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<sup>343</sup> See Beker 1980, 94-104.

<sup>344</sup> It could be argued in Hays' defence that in Jewish tradition Abraham was honoured as a model of obedience to God (e.g. Gen 17; 22; cf. Gen 26:24; Isa 41:8), and thus that he can be seen as a type of Jesus' exemplary obedience. We should, however, say that Paul is not concerned with that aspect of the Abraham tradition in Gal 3 or Rom 4). He is concerned only with Abraham as the recipient of the divine promise.

<sup>345</sup> See also Hays 1991. This view has recently been developed by D.A. Campbell 1994 who thinks that Hab 2:4 is the "template for Paul's frequent deployment of the isolated phrase, so that the two must really, if it is at all possible, be interpreted in parallel" (278). On the grounds that "it cannot be mere coincidence" that ἐκ πίστεως appears only in those letters which contain the Habakkuk quotation, Campbell asserts that this text should form the basis of an understanding of the phrase (along with διὰ πίστεως and πίστις Χριστοῦ). Having dismissed the idea that ἐκ πίστεως in Rom 1:17 might be anthropocentric, he goes on to argue that the phrase in Rom 4:12 and 16 cannot refer to the faithfulness of God when it is attached to Abraham. Instead, he states, "a christological reading can suggest that Abraham is

here should, I hope, go some way towards relieving exegetes of their anxieties about the implications of the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. On the analysis given here, there should be no need to fear that the Pauline emphasis on God's faithfulness is at risk. On the contrary, πίστις Χριστοῦ has the function of revealing and reflecting the fact that God has remained faithful to his promises. Equally, the necessity of a faithful response to the gospel remains an essential part of Paul's thought, as is shown by the fact that Paul's statements about the revelation of righteousness are punctuated with phrases like ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (Rom 1:17),<sup>346</sup> and εἰς πάντα τοὺς πιστεύοντας (3:22).

The central tenet of Hays' work, that πίστις Χριστοῦ should be seen as a subjective genitive is not in question.<sup>347</sup> However, scholars should beware the temptation to want to see references to Christ's faith in every occurrence of πίστις in the Pauline corpus and should consider each instance of the word in its context. Only then will a healthy balance be maintained in our exegesis with regard to Christ's faithfulness, God's faithfulness, and the faith of believers.

## 5. Conclusion

5.1. In Romans 3:21ff Paul speaks of Christ's obedient role in the manifestation of God's righteousness to Jew and Gentile alike. Humanity may have become estranged from God, but now an opportunity for reconciliation has arisen because of his faithful

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a typological anticipation of Jesus' messianic faithfulness" (280).

<sup>346</sup> Most commentators have understood this to be a reference to the believer's response of faith, an emphatic equivalent of *sola fide*. In other words, the righteousness of God is seen in terms of God's gift to men, and whose results are to be solely in terms of faith rather than any "works righteousness"; see for example, Cranfield, 100; Ziesler 71, Nygren 79, Barrett 31. But we cannot rule out the possibility that ἐκ πίστεως is a reference to God's faithfulness to his covenants and prophecies (cf. 3:3) which is the starting point for the response of belief. God's own faithfulness is that out of which all else has come, and his righteousness has as much to do with his own activity as with humanity's response. K. Barth 41; Hebert 1955, 375. It is less likely that there is here a reference to Christ's faithfulness as Hays and others suggest, since Paul is not speaking in Christological terms at this point.

<sup>347</sup> Hays has now modified certain aspects of his argument in response to the criticisms of colleagues, see Hays 1991.

expiatory death on the cross. God's righteousness has been vindicated, and Paul can now proceed to explain further the importance of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the divine plan of salvation for humanity (3:27-4:25). Salvation and righteousness are activities of God, who must be faithful to his own will and whose desire is to be in a right relationship with humanity. The necessary corollary of this, however, is that men and women have a responsibility to respond in faith.

The revelation, although spoken of in Torah, is independent of the Law. Those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ are declared to be righteous in God's court, cleared of the accusations which could be levelled against them.<sup>348</sup> Christ was to be the expiation for men's sin, to effect their redemption, and inspire faith among them. But the exercise required the co-operation of the human Christ. Without his sacrifice, God's righteousness would remain obscured by humanity's sin. Christ had to be faithful to God's plan of salvation, and obediently sacrifice himself for the sake of God's righteousness and the justification of men and women.

The revelation of God's righteousness is, in itself, no new thing. What is new is that it has been and continues to be revealed through Jesus Christ (νυνὶ δέ 3:21) and in the continued preaching of the gospel (1:16). Never before has the Messiah come to effect the redemption of men, never before has God revealed himself in this way. And for Paul, this has eschatological significance in that it opens up a new age which is the precursor to the end time. Christ's coming, which has inaugurated a new community of faith made up of both Jews and Gentiles, constitutes an eschatological

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<sup>348</sup> Either God is understood as somehow having effected a moral transformation among believers or he is declaring that they are acquitted in his "law-court". Two main objections are often raised to the idea that God transforms men into a state of moral perfection. First, while this idea may be present in some secular classical Greek, a study of the δικαίω word group in Paul has shown that he generally follows the forensic usage in the LXX and Pseudepigrapha. Secondly, the idea of transformation is hard to reconcile with the parenetic sections of Paul's letters in which ethical instructions are considered necessary even for the "justified" within Paul's churches. Quite clearly, men and women are not perfect in this sense. Similarly, in 4:9 there is no question of Abraham's faith being deemed as virtue, rather, he is considered to be righteous in the sense that God has declared him to be so by virtue of his faith. It is thus generally held that δικαίω is a forensic term denoting a judgement of acquittal by God. See Ziesler 1972, 52-146 & Hill 1967, 160.



manifestation of God's oneness and justice, the promise to Abraham having been fulfilled (cf. 15:7ff).<sup>349</sup>

5.2. But in 3:21-26, and at 1:16-17, it is clear from his reference to, and quotation from scripture, that Paul understands this event to be a direct fulfilment of God's word to the Jewish people. Christology is not permitted to usurp the place of theology. Christ's role, in his earthly life and death, was to point to the sovereignty of God, not away from it. More significantly, however, his role is to fulfil the promises and purposes of God to and for the Jewish people, who continue to have priority in God's plan (cf. 1:16 Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι). This is why Paul can call him a servant of the circumcised in 15:8. Christ, in Paul's understanding, points the Jews to the fundamental truth that God is faithful to them.

From this exegesis of Rom 3:21ff, it would appear, once again, that we must agree with Wright and Hays that there is a fundamental continuity between Israel and the church: Christ is the fulfilment of all that Israel hoped for and was promised. Christ does not, in Paul's view, pose a threat to the Law, and the faith of believers is not to be seen as the direct antithesis of works of the Law. In this aspect of his Christological thought, then, Paul again sees the relationship between the church and Israel as very close. Those who accept the gospel believe that God has reached out to men and women through Christ, and are responding primarily to the God of Israel (4:25), whose promises to his people have been fulfilled through Christ's faithful obedience to the divine plan. It would appear that those scholars are right who understand the church to be simply a modification of Israel. Again, we are forced to ask if there is not more to Christ's coming than this? Surely, the *νοῦν δέ* of 3:21 is of more import than our argument so far has allowed?

Up until now, Paul has been considering the significance of the gospel for humanity as a whole, and for Israel in particular. In chapters 5 to 8 of the letter, he turns to explore further the nature of the life of those who have believed in the gospel. As we shall see, following Christ entails a completely new life for the believer. We must

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<sup>349</sup> Giblin 1975.

now turn to these chapters, and consider their Christological language and ideas.  
What is Christ's significance for those who believe in him?

## Chapter 6

### Christology and the Believing Community

#### 1. Introduction

At the end of his discourse on Abraham in chapter 4, Paul states that faith will be reckoned as righteousness for those who believe that God has provided a way of justification in Jesus Christ (4:24f). This point rounds off the argument of chapters 1-4 on the nature of the gospel and the salvation it affords, and shows Paul once more identifying closely with the people to whom he is writing. Paul and the believers in Rome (ἡμῶς) will have their faith reckoned as righteousness, because they all believe the same thing - that God raised Jesus from the dead, who was put to death for their trespasses and raised for their justification (RSV). They are bound together by their shared belief in God, the gospel message, and the Lordship of Jesus Christ (4:24 Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν cf. 1:4 ).

These verses suggest that Paul considers his own identity and that of the believers at Rome to be informed by their relationship to Christ Jesus. When he thinks of the community, he thinks of it as under the Lordship of Christ, and when he thinks of individuals, he thinks of their identity in relation to Christ and the gospel. This becomes increasingly clear in chapters 5-8 as he proceeds to explore the implications of justification by faith in the lives of believers, both as individuals and as members of the church.<sup>350</sup> As he does so, a picture of the believers' corporate and individual identity appears. Christ has brought them into a new era of reconciliation with God and is exalted as Lord of their community. They are said to live ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (6:11) and are fellow heirs of God with Christ (8:16). In other words, he uses Christology to describe the believer's identity and relationship to God.

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<sup>350</sup> For chapter 5 as the natural development of his argument thus far, see Luz 1969; Beker 1980, 66-69.

## 2. Romans 5: The New Era in Christ

2.1. In 5:1-11 Paul begins to consider what it means to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Previously estranged from God, believers now have peace with him (ἔχομεν 5:1), reconciliation having been effected in accordance with the demands of divine righteousness.<sup>351</sup> In addition, believers have a new hope in which they can rejoice; they know that one day they will not only see God's glory revealed in its fulness, but the glory which they themselves lost at the fall, returned (5:2; cf. 3:23).<sup>352</sup> This hope means that they even rejoice in enduring the trials which are part of living in this world, knowing that such experiences produce refinement of character, and yet more certainty as God pours out his love to them through the Spirit (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ 5:5).<sup>353</sup>

Access to this privileged state of grace is possible only through Christ who is exalted as Lord.<sup>354</sup> Reconciliation has been made possible because of his sacrificial act on

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<sup>351</sup> In accordance with the majority of commentators (although cf. SH 120), this interpretation assumes the indicative ἔχομεν at 5:1, despite better MS evidence for the subjunctive. See Metzger 1971, 511. Paul is stating the fact that peace with God (i.e. reconciliation) is the corollary of justification; he is not exhorting the Romans to have peace with God (*contra* Porter 1991, 58; Stowers 1994, 248). For the same reasons, καυχόμεθα in 5:3 is indicative. According to Käsemann 1971 the motif of reconciliation is introduced "to sharpen and point up" the doctrine of justification. Fitzmyer 1981 rightly notes that reconciliation is a different aspect of the Christ-event from justification, and one cannot be said to be more important than the other. Neither are they to be equated; reconciliation denotes the restored relationship with God and participation in Christ, which is the immediate consequence of being set right with God; see R.P. Martin 1981, 127-154, especially 147; also Cranfield 256.

<sup>352</sup> Dunn 249 detects an allusion to the Adam motif here.

<sup>353</sup> There is no evidence for taking θλίψις to mean persecution from society (*contra* Watson 1986, 145; Ziesler 138). Most commentators understand this to refer to the eschatological affliction which is a sign of the last age (so Barrett 104; also Käsemann 134; Dunn 250). Paul could also have in mind the hardships which are part of every day life. Kleinknecht 1984, 348ff observes the "christological orientation" of the Old Testament tradition of the "suffering righteous". It is generally accepted that ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ should be seen as a subjective genitive, i.e. God's love; cf. Deidun 1981, 106-36 who argues for a both a divine work and a human activity. For a history of the interpretation of this verse, see Wilckens I:300ff.

<sup>354</sup> Ziesler 137; Dunn 248, προσαγωγή connotes entry to a monarch's chamber and

their behalf while they were still weak, sinful, and estranged from God. Christ's death points not only to God's remarkable love in choosing to take action while men and women were still sinners, and at odds with his will for them, (5:6 κατὰ καιρόν), but also to Jesus' own extraordinary fidelity to the divine plan of salvation.<sup>355</sup> As Paul points out, Jesus' death on behalf of sinful humanity goes well beyond any virtuous sacrificial death which might be expected of a human being (5:7).<sup>356</sup>

The fact of Christ's death and resurrection also means that they can be saved from the wrath of God at the end time (5:10). In the meantime, through the mediation of their exalted Lord, they can boast in God himself, that they belong to him, and are his special people.<sup>357</sup> Their belief has certainly made this possible, but reconciliation is something they have had to receive (5:11). Christ is the one through whom God's gift has been mediated, but the gift itself comes from God alone.<sup>358</sup>

2.2. Up until now in chapter 5, Paul's purpose has been clear enough. God has used the shedding of Christ's blood to provide the opportunity for reconciliation to his people. In verse 12, however, the subject seems to change abruptly. Sin is said to have come into the world through Adam (δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου). One act of disobedience against God brought in an era in which all men and women are sinners, and in which death, as a consequence, reigned.<sup>359</sup> Death reigned even before the Law

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so special privilege. Alternatively, Käsemann 133 and Barrett 103 see προσαγωγή as a cultic motif - the worshipper approaching God's presence.

<sup>355</sup> For this interpretation of κατὰ καιρόν as at the time of God's choosing, see Cranfield 264, Ziesler 140. Eichholz 1972, 163-169 rightly notes that there is no evidence that verses 6-7 are a gloss, *pace* Keck 1979.

<sup>356</sup> On the interpretation of this verse, see Clarke 1990.

<sup>357</sup> Käsemann 133.

<sup>358</sup> Sanders 1977, 470; Morris 1965, 225-228.

<sup>359</sup> Barrett's words (111) are worth noting here: "That is, all men sin (cf 3:23), and all men die because they sin; but Paul does not add here that they sin, or that they die, because they are physically descended from Adam. Nowhere, even in v 19, does Paul teach the direct seminal identity between Adam and his descendants which seems to be implied in the nearly contemporary 4 Ezra (especially 3:7,8,21,22)."

was introduced to identify and quantify sin (5:13), and even though the rest of humanity's sins were not of the same inaugural significance as Adam's (5:14).

The problem is that, despite the change of subject, the words διὰ τοῦτο in 5:12 indicate that Paul thinks that he is continuing the same argument. It is, however, difficult to find a referent for these words. How can a discourse on the origin of sin be directly connected with one on reconciliation through Christ?<sup>360</sup> The connection becomes much clearer if it is seen that, despite the digression, Paul is dealing with Christology in this passage rather than with anthropology. He has indicated that Adam was responsible for the introduction of the era of sin and death, but he is much more interested in the fact that another human being, Jesus Christ, also opened up a new age characterised by grace. This passage is concerned with Christ rather than with Adam.<sup>361</sup>

Insofar as both men stand at the head of an era, Adam can be said to be the type or model of Jesus Christ, the one who is to come (τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος 5:14).<sup>362</sup> Here, however, the parallel ends. There can be no comparison between Adam's trespass and Christ's act of obedience (5: 15,17); the one leads only to condemnation and death, the other to justification, overflowing grace and eternal life (5:17). In the old age, the Law had been the catalyst for God's grace to be given in the face of Israel's sins (5:20), but now God has used a different means: believers no longer live as sinners under condemnation, but are acquitted in God's law court (vv18-19), and all because of Christ's obedient act. The thought started in verse 12 is completed at

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<sup>360</sup> The problem of the referent of διὰ τοῦτο has been compounded by the vast amount of work on the Augustinian idea of original sin which stemmed from the Latin translation of ἐφ' ᾧ in verse 13 as *in quo* ("in whom") rather than "because". For an outline of the options and history of interpretation, see SH 133; Cranfield 1969. This, and Bultmann's (1962) existential interpretation, drew attention away from the fact that this passage is not concerned with man and his sinfulness, but with the new era of salvation which God has introduced through Christ.

<sup>361</sup> Käsemann 142.

<sup>362</sup> *Pace* Robinson 1951, 35; Scroggs 1966, 81 who think τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος refers to Moses. On the Christ-Adam typology, see Goppelt 1982.

verse 18: one man's trespass led to condemnation and death for all, but another man's righteous act led to justification and life for all.<sup>363</sup>

The διὰ τοῦτο of verse 12 is accounted for; 5:12-21 is essentially a reiteration of all that has been said in the letter up until now.<sup>364</sup> Paul is still speaking of God's gift of reconciliation through Christ the Messiah - the overflowing of divine grace. What is new is the perspective of Christ as cosmic Lord through whom death is defeated and grace reigns (5:21).<sup>365</sup> Not only is it possible for humanity to be reconciled to God, the cosmic powers of sin and death which held sway until Christ's "righteous act" of obedience on the cross (δικαίωμα 5:18), have been vanquished.<sup>366</sup>

2.3. It will be seen that this interpretation of Paul's argument in Romans 5:12-21 emphasises the apocalyptic divide between the old and new ages. Believers are said to be in the new age which has been inaugurated by Christ, reconciled to God, and the recipients of God's grace. However, the implication of the argument here is that there are two groups of people in the world: those under the reign of grace, and those under the reign of death. Those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness have the hope of reigning in life (5:17 cf. 5:21). Those who do not, it is implied, remain in the realm of sin and death. In other words, some are heading for ultimate salvation and some will be "lost".

For a considerable number of scholars, however, the view that some people will be lost is incompatible with the great truth of the overwhelming and all pervasive love

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<sup>363</sup> Wilckens I:326. Dunn 282, the ὡς in 5:18 provides the delayed apodosis to the ὡςπερ of 5:12; *pace* Kirkby 1987 who argues that there is no digression in Paul's thought in 5:13f, καὶ οὕτως of 5:12 providing the apodosis to the ὡςπερ clause of that verse.

<sup>364</sup> Dunn 272; Wilckens I:314f; de Boer 1980, 145; *pace* Cranfield 1969 who thinks the διὰ τοῦτο relates only to 5:1-11.

<sup>365</sup> *Contra* Dunn 1980, 107 who thinks that "when Paul uses Adamic language of Christ he is referring primarily to Christ as risen and exalted". Both aspects of Christ's existence are included in Paul's thinking here.

<sup>366</sup> For δικαίωμα as "righteous act", see BGD 198. Dunn 283 rightly objects to the view that this refers to Christ's whole life on the basis that the contrast with Adam's action is weakened (*contra* Cranfield 289).

of God and the universality of grace which is seen through Christ Jesus.<sup>367</sup>

Proponents of this "universalist" view hold that this passage refers to the cosmic scope of Christ's Lordship and the fact that he has come to save all humanity. For them, the *πάντας* of 5:18 should be given full force. Just as Adam's trespass brought about condemnation for *all* men and women, so too Christ's righteous act will lead to justification and life (*δικαίωσιν ζωῆς*) for every individual, without exception. Thus Karl Barth can write,

"In the light of this act of obedience there is no man who is not in Christ. All are renewed and clothed in righteousness, all are become a new subject, and are therefore set at liberty and placed under the affirmation of God."<sup>368</sup>

Those who advocate this view also point to Rom 11:32 in which Paul appears to speak of God as showing mercy to everyone, again without exception, and to the statement in Rom 8:21ff that the whole of creation will be redeemed at the end time. Similarly, in Philippians 2:10-11, Paul speaks of a time when all men and women will worship Christ, and 1 Cor 15:28 looks forward to the day when everything will be subjected to Christ so that God may be all things to all people (*πάντα ἐν πᾶσι*).

However, the problem with this "universalist" view is that Paul also seems to think that some will *not* be saved at the end time. For example, he can say that there are some people who are perishing or who will be destroyed (e.g. 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; Phil 3:19).<sup>369</sup> In addition, such passages as Gal 5:21 and 1 Cor 6:9 suggest that some believers who indulge in certain types of behaviour may lose their salvation, and thus join the ranks of those who will be destroyed.<sup>370</sup> How then should Romans 5 be interpreted?

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<sup>367</sup> See, for example, Robinson 1949; Hultgren 1985, 82-124; cf. also Boring 1985. For the argument against the universalist view see Torrance 1949; Wright 1979. For an historical overview of the question see Bauckham 1979.

<sup>368</sup> K. Barth 182.

<sup>369</sup> Sanders 1977, 473.

<sup>370</sup> *Contra* Gundry Volf 1990, 131-154.



In verse 18 Paul speaks of acquittal for all humanity (εἰς πάντας ἄνθρωπους). In verse 19, however, he speaks of "the many" (οἱ πολλοί) being made righteous. Is there any significance in the change of words? According to Sanders, the πολλοί of verse 19 modifies the πάντας of verse 18. Paul changes the πάντας of verse 18 into πολλοί when he realises the course his thought is beginning to take, and thus stops short of universalism.<sup>371</sup> However, it is doubtful whether his analysis of these verses is correct. The parallelism between verses 18 and 19 does seem to suggest that πάντας and πολλοί have essentially the same meaning here: the actions of both Adam and Christ have significance for *all* humanity.<sup>372</sup>

It seems that the πολλοί of verse 19 should be seen as meaning "all". However, if the passage is seen in the larger context of the letter we need not conclude that Paul is confused and contradictory on this point. As we have seen, in chapters 1-4 Paul is concerned with the fate of humanity as a whole, with Jews and Gentiles alike. In 2:1-16, for example, it is clear that Paul does not think that only some were made sinners through the trespass of Adam. Rather, the point is that all men, Jews and gentiles alike, are sinners. So too, the message of the gospel is relevant for all humanity, regardless of race (1:16f; 3:29f). By the same token, we must give full credence to the "all" of 5:18b and equate the πολλοί of 19b with it. Christ was obedient for the sake of all humanity, regardless of race. Once again, Paul has the sin and salvation of the whole human race in mind.

However, despite his focus on God's plan for the whole of humanity, Paul never loses sight of the fact that men and women must respond to the offer of the gift, before they can enjoy its benefits. He does not say that every individual will eventually be saved. As we have seen, in 11:26ff, Paul can speak of the eventual salvation of the entire Jewish race without losing sight of the fact that individual Jews may choose to reject the gospel. Similarly, in 5:17, reigning in life is limited to those who *"receive*

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<sup>371</sup> Sanders 1977, 473.

<sup>372</sup> Cf. also Mark 10:45 in which πολλοί is synonymous with πάντες; see Jeremias in TDNT VI:543 In addition, as Hultgren points out, the phrase "for many" is a Semitism which means "for all" as in Isa 52:13 -53:12. Hultgren 1985, 90. See also Dunn 285.

(λαμβάνοντες) the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness" through the one man Jesus Christ. The element of choice and responsibility remains: each individual must make a decision and make the defeat of death a truth for him or herself.<sup>373</sup>

It appears, then, that while Paul does speak of Christ bringing salvation for all humanity in 5:17f, the universalist interpretation cannot be upheld on contextual grounds. Paul is quite consistent: individuals are expected to make a decision as to whether they will accept the gospel. The potential for universal salvation exists, but some, as Paul has already discovered, will refuse to accept it, and thus cannot be saved at the end time. Christology, justification and hope, in Paul's view, are inseparably bound together.

2.4. As at 4:24f, by using the first person plural in 5:1-11 and 5:21, Paul is deliberately attempting to create a sense of solidarity between himself and the Roman congregation. He is also, no doubt, building up support for his apostolate and mission against possible opposition. Further, as he explores the implications of justification he also builds up a sense of solidarity within the community itself. Believers are united in their certainty that they have been reconciled to God and in their hope of future salvation. They recognise the Lordship of Christ (5:1,11,21) over the community and understand themselves to be inhabitants of the new era which he has inaugurated, having been acquitted of their sins. They know that there is a cosmological battle between the power of death on the one hand, and God's "life giving" grace, manifest through Jesus Christ, on the other.<sup>374</sup> Although believers still have individual battles to fight, and must suffer because they remain in the world, they inhabit the new age and are united in hope.

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<sup>373</sup> Many scholars e.g. Bultmann 1952, 302-3 have objected to this idea that λαμβάνοντες in 5:17 entails an element of decision. Wilckens (I:325), for example, is willing to concede that it refers to believers, but for him Christians merely represent the wider unity of mankind freed from the reign of sin and death (5:18). Boring 1986, 287 has argued that λαμβάνω in the New Testament has only the passive meaning "to receive", not the active meaning "to take"; cf. however, Marshall 1989, 316f who notes that in Gal 3:2,14 Paul speaks of receiving by faith, and Phil 2:7 where the verb refers to the decision of the recipient.

<sup>374</sup> On this see de Boer 1980, 144-180.

Such a description of life in the new age can only serve to encourage the Roman believers' faith and build up their sense of solidarity with one another.<sup>375</sup> The more they understand themselves to be reconciled to God, the more they should see themselves as reconciled to each other. Shared beliefs should guard against divisions within the church as they realise that God's salvation is for all humanity. If there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the divine plan, there should be no such distinction in the community of faith, since all are in receipt of God's gift of righteousness through Christ.<sup>376</sup> As McDonald notes, Paul is discreetly preparing the way for what needs to be said later.<sup>377</sup> If the Romans follow through the implications of their justification, they will see that there is no place for the trouble between Jewish and Gentile believers of the sort with which the apostle deals in chapter 14. They have been brought together by Christ, and their goal should be to continue to praise God in unity (15:6).

As their sense of community identity is built up, so will their sense of being different from the outside world. They are in the age of Christ, the rest of humanity remains in Adam. They have access to God, but everyone else remains at enmity with him. They have hope of salvation, the outside world does not. The boundaries separating the community of Jesus Christ from the world, including unbelieving Israel, are strengthened by Paul's argument.

2.5. N.T. Wright takes a different view of the Christology of Romans 5. For him, Paul's "Adam-Christ typology" supports his view that the church is the natural continuation of Israel in Paul's thinking. In intertestamental and rabbinic literature, he argues, Adam speculation is not about 'humankind in general' but about Israel, the people of God:

"God's purposes for the human race in general have devolved on to, and will be fulfilled in, Israel in particular. Israel is, or will become, God's true

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<sup>375</sup> Wilckens I:300 describes 5:1-11 as "ein kleines Kompendium christlichen Lebens."

<sup>376</sup> See Dahl 1977; Carter 1989, 59.

<sup>377</sup> McDonald 1990.

humanity. What God intended for Adam will be given to the seed of Abraham. They will inherit the second Eden, the restored primeval glory. If there is a 'last Adam' in the relevant Jewish literature, he is not an individual, whether Messianic or otherwise. He is the whole eschatological people of God."<sup>378</sup>

According to Wright, the apostle's so-called Adam-Christology ought to be seen against this background. As a Jew, Paul knew that Adam is to be equated with Israel, that Israel is God's true humanity, and that she should embody in herself all that God intended for men and women. Following his conversion, however, (Wright supposes) Paul comes to see that God's intentions for Israel are summed up in Christ, the Messiah, even to the extent of embodying her resurrection from the dead (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-28). Christ enacts and fulfils Israel's true vocation. However, he is much more than a substitute for the Jewish nation: in this passage, Paul has modified his beliefs about Israel and her status before God in the light of the cross, realising that Christ has not merely inaugurated a new people but has also forgiven the sins of Israel.

"Jesus, as last Adam, had revealed what God's saving plan for the world had really been - what Israel's vocation had really been - by enacting it, becoming obedient to death, even the death on the cross."<sup>379</sup>

If Wright's argument is correct, there is little support for the theory set out above that the Christology of this passage points to radical discontinuity between the church and Israel rather than continuity. On the contrary, it would add to the evidence for the view that the two communities are very closely related in Paul's understanding, and suggest that the apostle sees very little difference between them. Christ is the Messiah who fulfils the expectations of Israel, his followers become members of Israel, and the church is merely a modification of the historical Israel in Paul's view. There are, however, some difficulties with Wright's view, which plays down the

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<sup>378</sup> Wright 1991, 20-21. He goes on to give textual evidence, mainly from Genesis, but also from 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and Qumran. See pages 21-6.

<sup>379</sup> Wright 1991, 40.

apocalyptic significance of Christ to such an extent that Paul's thinking is liable to become seriously distorted.

In the first place, Wright makes the mistake of limiting the significance of Paul's Adamic Christology to Israel alone. This is most clearly seen in his treatment of 5:20 in which Paul notes that the Law served to help humanity to recognise sin. According to Wright, "the place where sin abounded is undoubtedly Israel"(39). However, Paul is not necessarily thinking merely of Israel in this verse, as the preceding insistence on the sin of all men and women suggests. Gentiles as well as Jews are sinners.

In 5:20, Paul states that Law came in to increase the trespass, and that as sin increased grace abounded all the more (RSV): νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν, ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα οὐ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις. The key to his thinking here lies in the use of παράπτωμα for Israel's sin. As Paul has already shown, ἁμαρτία is estrangement from God, the failure to honour him and do his will (1:18-2:16). And as Paul has said in 3:23, all humanity has sinned. Only Israel, however, can be said to have trespassed, because only she has possession of Torah. Israel's sin also constitutes estrangement from God; the difference is that her sin is measurable in terms of trespass against the Law, which made Israel's sin more apparent than that of the Gentile world.

Paul is, therefore, referring to the trespass of Israel as part of the sin of the larger world as a whole. The verse reiterates the constant refrain of this letter, that God's grace through Christ is given for Jews *and for Gentiles*, all of whom sin (cf 1:16f; 2:9f). Certainly, as Wright says, Christ's obedient act was "the act of Israel's representative, doing for Israel what she could not do for herself" (39), but the point of 5:20 is that it was *also* the obedient act for the Gentiles - so that they too might be reconciled to God.

Secondly, Wright seems to neglect the importance of Christ's resurrection existence in Paul's Adamic Christology. He correctly objects to the view that Christ is the last Adam only in his resurrection: as this passage shows, the righteous act of Christ is an

essential part of Paul's adamic Christology. But he fails to take account of the fact that by virtue of his victory over the powers of sin and death, Christ remains the exalted Lord, worshipped by the community who may now live in the realm of grace with the hope of eternal life (5:17,21).<sup>380</sup> The second Adam is important not only as the Messiah Son of God, but as the exalted Lord. Failing to see the cosmic significance of the Christology of this passage, Wright underestimates the profound difference Christ's coming makes. A completely new age has begun in which Jew and Gentile alike may be justified by faith.

Wright's treatment of the passage also misunderstands the continuing importance of the relationship between Christ and the new community in Paul's mind, the intimate bond between Christology and the believer's self identity, and thus the profound difference between believers and unbelievers, including Jews. The church, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, takes its identity from the exalted Lord Jesus; it is therefore much more than a modification of Israel. It is a new community in which access to God is available through the Lordship of Christ.

### **3. Romans 6:1-14: Life "in Christ".**

3.1. In the course of his argument that righteousness has been given through Jesus Christ, Paul asserts that where sin obtained, grace proliferated (5:20). The power of grace, which leads to eternal life, is far greater than that of sin, which leads only to death; the more humanity sins, the more God's grace is to be seen. At this point, however, Paul becomes vulnerable to the charge, already noted in 3:8 with regard to his teaching about the Law, that he is advocating libertinism amongst believers. In chapter 6, he ensures that this charge is unfounded, this time with particular reference to the life of the church, showing that righteousness and its concomitant freedom are inextricably bound up with a moral imperative.

Life in the new age is under the Lordship of Christ. There is no excuse for libertinism because believers have died with regard to sin at baptism (6:2). As far as sin is concerned, they are dead: it has no hold over them. The power of sin itself, however,

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<sup>380</sup> Cf. Fitzmyer 395 who on 5:1 notes that "through the Lord Jesus Christ" connotes the present actual influence of the risen Christ in the lives of believers.

has not died, and believers (in the meantime) must consciously and continuously decide not to open themselves up to its influence again. Having moved from one age to another, and now awaiting the final resurrection, each individual is engaged in an eschatological battle against the power of sin and should be presenting arms to God "to be used as weapons of his glorious righteousness" rather than serving unrighteousness and sin (6:13).<sup>381</sup> Käsemann writes,

"There thus arises a dialectical understanding of Christian existence. It belongs to the sphere of power of the risen Lord, but it does so on earth and therefore is still exposed to the attack of the powers which rule this aeon, is always under assault, and is constantly summoned to preserve and verify eschatological freedom in the service of its true and only Lord".<sup>382</sup>

On the practical level, the key to winning the battle is abstention from sin, loving each other and following the advice which Paul will give in chapter 12. However, the believer's motivation for moral responsibility is not merely a sense of obligation to one's neighbour, or even a sense of allegiance to one leader as opposed to another. For Paul, baptism and an ethical way of life are inextricably bound together.<sup>383</sup> So, in verse 3 he reminds them (ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι) of the significance of their baptism and explains how they have died to sin.<sup>384</sup> Those who were baptised εἰς Χριστόν were baptised into his death (εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ 6:3), even to the extent of being buried with him (συνετάφημεν): in baptism their death is final and complete.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Marcus 1988.

<sup>382</sup> Käsemann 176.

<sup>383</sup> Gäumann 1967, 125f.

<sup>384</sup> On the significance of ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, see Wedderburn 1987, 40-43.

<sup>385</sup> The phrase εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν is more likely to be an allusion to the kerygma tradition of 1 Cor 15:3f than to immersion in water (Michel 205; Wagner 1967, 290; Wilckens II:12). Käsemann 164 rightly notes that this passage contains no evidence about the preparation of initiates or the rite of baptism as such. Cranfield's argument (1994, 41) that baptism is the outward ratification of the human decision of faith is no doubt correct with regard to Paul's wider thought (cf. Rom 10:9), but cannot be proven from this passage in which Paul seems to make no distinction between baptism and a conversion experience.

Similarly, just as Christ was raised from the dead by God, believers (ἡμεῖς) can now be said to walk in "newness of life"(6:4).

The death which takes place in baptism not only liberates, but leads to a subsequent transformation (6:6,8).<sup>386</sup> It is a replica of Christ's (τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ 6:5):<sup>387</sup> the believer has been united in Christ's death (σύμφυτοι), so that the "old man" (ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) has been crucified and the sinful self which belonged to the old age no longer exists (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἀμαρτίας 6:6).<sup>388</sup> Thus, any moral transformation which takes place in the believer's life is a direct result of the existential change which has taken place: the baptised individual is a new person who no longer serves sin; in dying, he (or she) has been freed from sin (6:7).<sup>389</sup> Further, although the term is properly applied to the future (τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα 6:5), there has been a "resurrection" of sorts in as much as

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<sup>386</sup> Wedderburn 1987, 63f notes contrasting views of death in this passage: humanity must be liberated from it, but at the same time death itself is a liberating force. On the significance of death in Paul, see C.C. Black 1984.

<sup>387</sup> Bornkamm 1969, 77; G.R. Beasley-Murray 1962, 134; Wilckens II:14. The believer is not caught up in a repetition of Christ's death, which remains historical and ἐφάπαξ (6:10). Bornkamm 1969, 75; Michel 201; Ridderbos 1975, 406-414; *pace* Warnach 1954, 329ff. This is an important reason for rejecting the belief of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* that baptism had its origin in pagan mystery religions and the re-enactment of the dying and rising of the deity; see Cranfield 302. For a full examination of this question see Wagner 1967 and Wedderburn 1987.

<sup>388</sup> Σῶμα refers to more than simply the physical body; Dunn 320.

<sup>389</sup> The uncharacteristic use of δεδικαίωται here leads some to suspect that Paul is dependent on a Jewish proverb that death liberates from obligation to the Law (e.g. Sipr Num 112 on 15:31, "All who die obtain expiation through death", or Sabbat 151b Baraita, "When a man is dead, he is freed from fulfilling the Law") e.g. Schrenk in TDNT II:218; Kuhn 1931; disputed by Scroggs 1963-64; cf. Kearns 1961 who takes the thought of this verse to be Christian. The use of περιπατέω in 6:4 suggests to Cranfield (305) that Paul is thinking primarily of a moral transformation here, and that baptism means a change in conduct. Dunn (316) notes the common Old Testament metaphor of walking in the "law/statutes/ordinances/ways" of God, and suggests that in referring to "newness of life" Paul intends to draw a contrast between that and the new life of freedom from the Law in the eschatological age. However, 6:5-9 shows that Paul believes baptism to entail not simply a change of conduct or lifestyle, but of identity: the believer becomes a different person.



the believer is in the new age of which Christ, the defeater of death, is head (6:11,13).<sup>390</sup>

2. Transference from the Adamic to the new age entails a change in identity which is now defined by and inseparable from that of Christ Jesus. Whereas believers were previously "in Adam", they are now said to be ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (6:11), part of the new race inaugurated by Christ, and under his dominion rather than that of sin. Moreover, just as those "in Adam" share the experience of the head of the race and are in some sense inseparable from and caught up in his representative actions, so Paul's language about baptism shows that to be ἐν Χριστῷ entails a sharing in Christ's experience. The believer's identification with him is so close that baptism εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν means sharing in his death and becoming part of a new solidarity with him, and knowing that they will be united with him at the end time (6:5,9).

Baptism for Paul signifies much more than a mere "initiation" rite; there is a radical change in the believers' existential status.<sup>391</sup> They have been freed from the realm of

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<sup>390</sup> Without disputing that the full resurrection is yet to take place, Cranfield 1994 and Beasley-Murray 1962, 139 hold that some sort of resurrection is implicit here. Our interpretation of verse 5 takes ἐσόμεθα as a temporal rather than logical future; Barrett 124. There is no evidence that Paul is here correcting a primitive view (held by Tannehill 1967, 10 to be found in Col 2:11-13) that resurrection has already taken place at baptism. See Wedderburn 1987, 1-6.

<sup>391</sup> Against the view of Cranfield 1979, 301, Barrett 122 that εἰς Χριστόν is no more than an abbreviation for "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "with reference to Jesus Christ", this interpretation understands the phrase to be similar to ἐν Χριστῷ, denoting union with Christ and thus existential change for the believer; cf. Best 1955, 65-73; Eliade 1958, 117; Leenhardt 153; G.R. Beasley-Murray 1962, 128ff; Wedderburn 1987, 54-60; Carlsen 1993. Although it remains unclear exactly how this change takes place, εἰς Χριστόν is more than a metaphor pointing to a spiritual reality, as Dunn 1970, 140 suggests. There is, however, no hint of a mystical absorption into Christ (*Contra* e.g. Bousset 1913, 160-8; but the phrase certainly denotes more than Wedderburn's (1985) causal interpretation (translating ἐν in terms of the Hebrew ׁ) allows. Moule 1977, 54-63 speaks of believers being "included" or "located" in Christ cf. Oepke TDNT II: 542; The notion of Christ as "inclusive man", embodying the new era, as Adam embodied the old (Tannehill 1967, 7-39), has become problematical following Rogerson's (1970) questioning of the validity of the closely related Hebrew concept of the "corporate personality" as a "given" in Biblical study (cf. its use by Schnackenburg 1964, 114f). Ziesler 1990 refers to living under Christ's power and authority and stresses the corporate nature of this phenomenon.

sin and death and are exempt from obligation to the Law, and are now subject to a new set of conditions.<sup>392</sup> Paul's return to the use of the first person plural throughout, however, indicates that he is primarily concerned with the corporate nature of this identity. The church is made up of people who have their identity not in the group itself, but in Christ, and motivation for moral behaviour stems from the knowledge that they have been freed from the power of sin and from their continued relationship with him.<sup>393</sup>

This further exposition of the believer's new identity in Christ has much the same function in Paul's strategy as in chapter 5 of the letter. As he dwells on their common experience of baptism and on their new identity, he builds up solidarity, promoting moral behaviour within the community. Their sense of unity with one another and their special relationship with Christ should, Paul hopes, render division and strife less likely. Once again, however, we find that Paul's view of the relationship between Christ and the church as expressed in baptism also points up the "apocalyptic" nature of their existence in Christ. For baptism does not merely bind believers together in a common experience, it also denotes a profound difference between the community and the outside world. Those who are baptised have an identity which is completely different from any found in the outside world: no one else can be said to share in the experiences of Jesus Christ whose service gives a new meaning to the believer's life.<sup>394</sup> Baptism also, as Meeks shows, symbolises the movement of the believer from his old way of life into a completely new existence.<sup>395</sup> The lives of those within the

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Most useful is Hartman's recent (1997, 68-77) idea of being "baptised into Christ-communion" which includes the ideas of the change of the ages, liberation from the power of sin and participation in Christ's death and resurrection.

<sup>392</sup> Hartman 1997, 76.

<sup>393</sup> On sin as a "controlling agent" in Paul see Aageson 1996.

<sup>394</sup> See Best 1955, 28.

<sup>395</sup> Wayne Meeks' interest in the social function of baptism within the early church is most useful here (1983a, 150-7). He notes that baptism for Paul is more than a rite of passage marking a movement from "one status to another within a small homogeneous society". It is rather, to use the language of the sociologists, a movement from one society to another with a different "symbolic universe" (157). While the washing motif is not to the fore in Romans 6 as it is in 1 Cor 6:11, Meeks' point that baptism becomes a "permanent threshold" between the "clean" group and

community have little in common with the world: an apocalyptic change has taken place.

#### **4. Romans 8: The Holy Spirit and the Children of God.**

4.1. One of the consequences of having moved into the new age and become slaves of righteousness is that Gentile believers are no longer under the sway of natural law and Jews no longer have to adhere to Torah. Moral behaviour, as we have seen, is motivated by allegiance to Christ rather than by adherence to or awareness of νόμος. Nevertheless, Paul knows from his own experience that despite living in the new age believers are still confronted with struggle; they still have to cope with the pull of the old era, and it is always possible that they could return to their former ways. Life ἐν Χριστῷ requires constant vigilance on the part of the believer. In particular, as Romans 7 shows, Paul knows that life in the eschatological age continues to be characterised by conflict between the desire to serve God, and the constraints of human weakness, just as it was before.<sup>396</sup>

Despite the fact that believers sometimes fail in their struggle, losing individual battles with sin, they cannot be condemned on the basis of Torah. Being "under grace" in the new age, their actions are not measurable by Torah's standards, but by Christ's (8:1f).<sup>397</sup> The reason for his great confidence is the cross itself, and Paul

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the "dirty" world illustrates well the profound dichotomy which emerges between the outside world and the community for those who believe themselves to be "in Christ" (154). For other studies of the social function of theological motifs in Paul, see Barton 1982; 1984.

<sup>396</sup> For the view that 7:7-25 refers to Paul's struggles in the eschatological age, in which he tries to obey God's Law (i.e. to fulfil the love command and behave ethically) but is still constrained by his existence in the flesh, see Seifrid 1992; Dunn 1975b; Winger 1992, 159-96. Paul is concerned with life in the new age. As in 14:1-15:13, although adherence to certain practical issues is unnecessary, for the Jew Torah remains holy and good; Paul, like other Jewish believers finds it to be his experience in the new age that he wishes to live by Torah as fulfilled by Christ (see below, chapter 7) but the already-not yet tension means that this is more difficult for him than he would like. For a survey of interpretation of this passage, see Hübner 1987, 2668-76.

<sup>397</sup> See Käsemann 223. Cf. Cranfield 372, Ziesler 201: Rom 8:1 connects with 7:6 rather than 7:25. Those who are in Christ Jesus are freed from the divine

reminds them of the tradition that God sent his Son to deal with sin (8:3).<sup>398</sup> Christ's sharing in the weakness of the flesh (ὁμοίωματι) meant that it could be tackled from within the age and sphere of sin itself.<sup>399</sup> By becoming a "sin offering" (περὶ ἁμαρτίας), Christ ensured atonement, and that reconciliation with God is made possible.<sup>400</sup> Each believer has been released from the rule (νόμος) of sin and death, and is now subject to the law or rule of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life (8:2).<sup>401</sup> This means that the just requirement of the Law (δικαίωμα, ie righteousness leading to salvation), previously unattainable in the age of the Law, is now fulfilled in him or her by God through his indwelling Spirit.<sup>402</sup>

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condemnation pronounced by God's Law.

<sup>398</sup> Since Schweizer 1966 it has been usual to speak of a *Sendungsformel* here. Most also accept Schweizer's view (although not necessarily his reasons) that the pre-existence of Christ is presupposed in the idea of God sending his Son, see e.g. Käsemann 217. For an argument against this view, see Dunn 1980, 44f.

<sup>399</sup> Brannick 1985. See also Gillmann 1987. For Käsemann 217, the tradition witnessed by Phil 2:7 also underlies this verse. There, ὁμοίωμα is limited by ἄνθρωπος, which indicates, according to Käsemann, that Jesus did not become subject to sin: Jesus was "passively exposed to sin, but in distinction from us he did not actively open himself to it". Barrett 156 speaks of Christ constantly overcoming a proclivity to sin.

<sup>400</sup> Cf. Lev 9:2; 14:31; Isa 53:10; Ps 40:6 cf. also Rom 3:25. On περὶ ἁμαρτίας as "sin offering" as opposed to merely "on account of sin", see Wright 1980. Cranfield 382 and Thornton 1971 see no contextual support for a sacrificial interpretation.

<sup>401</sup> According to Cranfield (377), the second person singular in 8:2 denotes the extraordinary nature of the truth Paul is expounding and that he wants each individual at Rome to comprehend its significance. With regard to the textual variations here, SH 191 adopt the reasonably well attested με instead of σε. The latter, however, is the more difficult reading and is supported by both Western and Alexandrian witnesses; see Metzger 1975, 516. For Dunn (416; also Lohse 1982 and Hübner 1984, 144-49) both instances of νόμος in this verse refer to Torah. It is more likely, however, that it means regime, rule of "structure of power", and that the contrast is drawn between the Spirit's authority over the believer's life as opposed to the control of sin. See Cranfield 377; Räisänen 1983, 50-53; Ziesler 202; Deidun 1981, 194-203. Van Dülmen 1968, 119-123; Keck 1980, 49. Barrett's view 1971, 155 that νόμος means "religion, way of life" misses the mark.

<sup>402</sup> Fee 1994, 517; 536 δικαίωμα means righteous requirement; also Cranfield 384. For the view that δικαίωμα refers to the command not to covet, see Ziesler 1987. Gundry 1980 thinks it refers to the commandment against adultery; he is followed by Watson 1986, 157 and most recently Boyarin 1994, 162ff.

4.2. Possession of the Spirit is a major identity marker for the new community, designating it as separate from the outside world. There is, however, the stark reality of every-day life to contend with, and each individual, despite having moved from the old age into the new, must continue to make an active choice to continue to walk *κατὰ πνεῦμα* (12,13). The Spirit enables this, reminding them that they are free from the tyranny of sin and death, and pointing forward to the time when they will be freed from the constraints of the mortal body (6:11).<sup>403</sup>

Besides this, the Spirit reassures believers of their new identity and status in the new age. At baptism, they come out of the old slavery which brought nothing but fear, and are now under a new master (8:15). As Paul has already said in 6:15-23, they are no longer slaves of sin, but of righteousness.<sup>404</sup> It is the function of the Spirit to assure them that they have been adopted as sons of God (the spirit of adoption), and enable them to cry out to God in worship and prayer, using the intimate form of address which Christ himself used - *αββα ὁ πατήρ* (v 15).<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Keck 1980, 54 rightly notes that it is not Paul's intention here to designate believers as morally superior to those outside the community, but to stress their freedom in the new age.

<sup>404</sup> Michel 260. According to Martin 1990, 60-62, Paul is contrasting the two spheres of existence in terms of good and bad masters. There is thus an apologetic note to Paul's thought here: belief in Christ and coming under his Lordship is a prudent choice to make. Martin also notes that the imagery of slavery to God as a metaphor for salvation appears in the Old Testament - Ps 34:22; 143:12; 123:2 LXX. On the slavery terminology in Rom 8:18-25 see Rollins 1987, who notes that in common practice, a slave might hope to become an heir at manumission. Paul is using a metaphor which would be readily understood by his readers.

<sup>405</sup> Sonship Christology seems to be closely linked with that of the sonship of believers in Paul's thought. In this passage, Paul does not explain the link between the two, they are simply juxtaposed. It is clear however, that the Spirit has a function to play in this link, being that which enables the believer to cry "abba father". The link is much clearer in the closely parallel Galatians 4:4-7, where it is stated that God sent his Son so that men might receive adoption as sons (*ἵνα* in v 5 denoting both purpose and result: R.N. Longenecker 1990, 72), and that it is the Spirit of his Son (*τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ*) which enables them to cry "abba father." Byrne 1979, 100 writes, "The whole thrust of the passage suggests that the Spirit (now thought of as 'experience' rather than as objective determinant of moral life as in the previous verses) is that which points to rather than grounds *υἰοθεσία*." Cf. Barrett 163 and *pace* Cranfield 379; Dunn 452. The close parallel between this passage (8:2f;14-16) and Gal 4:4-7 has led Osten-Sacken 1975, 130f to suppose an underlying tradition in

As children of God they also share in Christ's inheritance (συγκληρονόμοι), thus fulfilling the promise to Abraham that his seed would inherit the world (4:13).<sup>406</sup> Christ's "inheritance" is generally reckoned to be his universal sovereignty, as he sits at the right hand of God (8:34 cf. Ps 110:1 and 1 Cor 15:25).<sup>407</sup> Thus, the inheritance which believers share is participation in his kingdom. They have become brothers and sisters of Christ and at the end time God will give them "all things with him" (8:32).<sup>408</sup> Complete sharing in Christ's inheritance, like the full manifestation of their adoption (8:32) remains a matter for the future, the Spirit (of adoption) being merely the first instalment of what is to come.<sup>409</sup> At the general resurrection Christ, who is already the first to be raised from the dead (1:4), will become the firstborn of many brothers (8:29; cf. Psalm 89:27).<sup>410</sup> At that point believers will be transformed to

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which the cry "abba, father" was emitted by neophytes after the reception of the spirit at baptism. Wilckens II:138 rightly notes that this theory cannot be proven. The interpretation adopted here assumes that the words ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν are part of verse 16 ( Nestle Aland text, Cranfield 398f). On the significance of αββα, see Jeremias 1967, 1-65, especially pages 62-65 and cf Barr 1988.

<sup>406</sup> For the view that Paul is thinking in terms of the the Abrahamic tradition, see Scott 1992, 248-252; Dunn 455f; Barrett 164; *pace* Cranfield 406; Osten-Sacken 1975, 134; Wilckens II:138. This interpretation is supported by the recurrence of inheritance themes in a manner similar to Gal 3-4 in which believers are the Abrahamic heirs along with Christ, and by the probable allusion to the sacrifice of Isaac at 8:32 (cf Gen 22:12,16 LXX). Dahl 1969 notes the exegetical pattern: as Abraham did not spare his own son, so God did not spare his. See Swetnam 1981 for a critique of Dahl's essay and a survey of research on the *akedah* in Jewish tradition and the New Testament (4-22).

<sup>407</sup> Scott 1992, 253. Dunn 455 notes that inheritance and kingdom are co-terminous for Paul (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 4:7). *Contra* Hay 1973, 59-62 who maintains that 8:34 refers to the future role of Christ only. On inheritance in Paul see Hester 1968.

<sup>408</sup> The cosmological interpretation of τὰ πάντα is held by Wilckens II:173f. See however Cranfield 437 who thinks this refers to the fullness of salvation.

<sup>409</sup> The suspicion that Paul is here contradicting what he has said in verse 14 accounts for the omission of υἰοθεσία in some MSS. However, the statement that the Spirit is the firstfruit (ἀπαρχή 8:23) ensures that there is no such contradiction and is an example of the characteristic "already-not yet" tension of the eschatological age.

<sup>410</sup> Scott 1992, 244-258 brings out the correlation between chapter 8 and 1:4, "If πρωτότοκος in Rom 8:29 alludes to the Davidic promise that God would adopt the Messiah as his firstborn son (Ps 89:29) and ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ in Rom 8:34 alludes to another Davidic promise that God would enthrone the Messiah as world ruler (Ps 110:1), then this compares directly with Rom 1:4, which sees the Davidic

become exactly like him (συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνας τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ). Christ, in his risen state, is the image of God as Adam was intended to be.<sup>411</sup> The glory which was lost at the fall will then be restored to them, in accordance with God's plan (προώρισεν), and they will share in Christ's rule. Their true status as brothers of Christ will be revealed (8:19), and all creation will be freed from corruption and death (8:21).<sup>412</sup> It is a proviso of their eventual glorification, however, that they share in Christ's sufferings in the present time (8:17). As they have not yet been released from their physical existence they are subject to its limitations and trials (8:18-25).

4.3. Towards the end of this description of life in the Spirit, Paul takes up a number of Jewish anthropological ideas.<sup>413</sup> Like Israel, believers are termed "those who love him", an expression traditionally used to describe Jewish piety, for whom all things work together for good (8:28).<sup>414</sup> The idea of God's "call" (8:28,30) is now extended to refer to the opening up of God's election to those outside Israel (cf. Hosea 2:23 and 1:10; cf. Rom 9:25-26): God has called a people into being and has designated its members "sons of the living God" (cf. also 4:17). Similarly, the community is described as God's elect whom God foreknew, and for whom he has plans (8:29f).<sup>415</sup>

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Messiah as the adopted Son of God per 2 Sam 7:14 and as Lord per Ps 110:1 (255)."  
Scott's analysis is marred, however, by his insistence that the Son was adopted by God; πρωτότοκος in 8:29 and ὀρισθέντος in 1:4 need not express the idea of adoption.

<sup>411</sup> Wilckens II: 163; Dunn 483. The interpretation of 8:29 in future eschatological terms is supported by Michel 212; Barrett 170; Byrne 1979, 118. Cranfield 423, however, thinks Paul is thinking also of conformity to Christ in the present through suffering.

<sup>412</sup> See Byrne 1979, 107f.

<sup>413</sup> The idea of receiving life from the Spirit is deeply rooted in Jewish thought, (eg Gen 6:17; Ps 104:30), as is the notion that the Spirit will be present in the end time (further references in Dunn 418). The idea that the suffering righteous will be vindicated is also characteristically Jewish (eg Dan 7:17-27; Wisd Sol 2-5). Dunn 469.

<sup>414</sup> For a full citation of OT and Jewish references, see Cranfield 424. Similarly, the idea that God works things together for good is also taken from Judaism, πάντα being an implicit reference to the workings of God. See Dunn 481; cf. Ross 1978. For a discussion of the options of interpretation of this verse, see Cranfield 1966). For the view that the subject is the Spirit; see Black 1962, and most recently Fee 1994, 589f.

In particular, in referring to believers as sons and children of God (8:14,17) Paul is according them a status which traditionally had been applied to Israel in both the Old Testament (e.g. Deuteronomy 14:1f; 32:5-6;19-20; Isa 43:6-7; Mal 2:10; Hos 1:10; 11:1) and more frequently in some intertestamental literature.(eg Sirach 4:10; Ps Sol 17: 30; 18:4; Jub 1:25; Wisd 18:13; 3 Maccabees).<sup>416</sup> Byrne notes that while sonship is not an important or frequently recurring theme in the Old Testament,

"Sonship is the unique privilege of Israel as the people chosen and created by Yahweh for himself. It operates within the covenant relationship, adding a special element of intimacy and in several notable instances (cf Isa 1:2f;63:16;Ex 4:22f;Hos 1:10 cf 2:23) a demand for acknowledgement - mutual acknowledgement between Yahweh and his people and respect from outsiders for those whom he has made his sons and daughters."<sup>417</sup>

Paul not only takes over these ideas and applies them to the believing community, he transforms their meaning entirely by understanding them purely in Christological terms.<sup>418</sup> Sonship is now, as we have seen, a sharing in Christ's status as the messianic son of God and his inheritance. The idea of election (i.e. that God has known his people and long had a plan for them) is "Christologically stamped", and

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<sup>415</sup> For Israel as known by God, see e.g. Gen 18:18; Jer 1:5; Hos 13:5.

<sup>416</sup> Byrne 1979, 9-70.

<sup>417</sup> Byrne 1979, 16. See also page 84.

<sup>418</sup> The extent of the influence of Christology on Paul's thought is seen in his treatment of creation. The Jewish idea was that the fate of creation is intimately bound up with that of humanity, the world being seen as the "backcloth" for human history Isa 65:17; 1 Enoch 45:4f;72:1 ;1 QS 4:25; 1QH 11:13-14; see Käsemann 233. Men and women (in their relationship to God) are of central importance in the universe. As Lampe 1964 observes, in the New Testament this idea is translated in terms of Christology, God's purpose having been disclosed in Christ. Jones 1987 suggests possible parallels for Paul's thought here in 4 Ezra 7:101;11:46;13:25-26,29. See also Byrne 1979, 105 note 100. The restoration of creation to its proper glory, its liberty from the bondage to decay and corruption, is dependent on the glorification of the sons of God: the goal of creation's "straining forwards" is the restoration of the children of God: when they are freed from corruption and decay, creation will be too; Baumgarten 1975, 175. The sons of God have freedom from death and corruption: this too is the hope of creation for the end time when the children of God are made manifest (8: 21); Byrne 1979, 107.



culminates in their being conformed to the image of God's Son at the end time (8:29f; cf 11:2).<sup>419</sup>

In 8:31ff Paul returns to the point with which he began. Freedom from condemnation, present and future, has been brought about solely by virtue of the Christ event, and no spiritual power can separate believers from the love of God.<sup>420</sup> Their relationship with the risen Lord is one of "indissoluble union" (8:35), and through this God's love for the community is made manifest (8:39).<sup>421</sup>

4.4. In this passage, which is again designed to encourage the community, Paul gives an increasingly lofty view of the community's identity in Christ. The presence of the Spirit assures its members that they are children of God, that they are co-heirs with Christ. Thus, the identity of the believer still has its basis in Christology,- in the Christ event and in a continued relationship with him. The hope which the Spirit brings is dependent entirely on the fact that God gave up his Son for all (8: 32). The certainty that nothing can now separate them from the love of God (in Christ Jesus) is based on the continued exaltation of Jesus as Lord (8:39).

Chapter 8 repeats many of the themes of chapter 5:<sup>422</sup> believers are caught in the eschatological tension, but rejoice in their new relationship with God. They have come out of the old age into the new and look forward to eternal life and reigning with Christ at the end time. Here, the distinctive feature of the church is that believers have the Holy Spirit who provides moral guidance, intercedes for them, assures them of their new relationship with God, and points towards the eschatological hope. Here again, as in chapter 5, having spoken of their new status in Christ and reminded them of the hope they have, Paul draws an implicit distinction between those within the community (those who live *κατὰ πνεῦμα*) and those who remain outsiders (those

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<sup>419</sup> See Mayer 1974, 159-162.

<sup>420</sup> Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀποθανών in 8:34 is a statement rather than a question: the fact that God is for us is proven in the Christ event. Wilckens II:172 sees this as a traditional formula.

<sup>421</sup> Käsemann 249.

<sup>422</sup> On the relationship between chapters 5 and 8, see Dahl 1951.

κατὰ σάρκα being still "in Adam"). Those within are inhabitants of the new age, freed from the tyranny of sin, those outwith remain in bondage to its power. Once again, as Paul considers the nature of the believing community and its special relationship with God through Christ, he also emphasises the apocalyptic shift which has taken place, and the fact that a new aeon, in which believers may be called the children of God, has dawned.

## **5. Church and Israel in the Aeon of Christ**

5.1. The significance of Christ in the life of believers has a profound effect on the relationship between the church and the rest of the world. The church is part of the new aeon and is radically different from the outside world, which remains firmly in the old. Christ has inaugurated a new age in which new norms and modes of existence apply. We have seen that believers are said to be reconciled to God, and have special access to God through Christ. They have undergone a transformation at baptism, are dead to sin and alive because of righteousness (8:10).

As far as the pagan world is concerned, this is straightforward enough. There can be no question that Gentile unbelievers remain in the old age and the church is completely distinct and separate from it. With regard to Jewish unbelievers, however, the situation is rather more complex. The church and Israel are closely related, but they are also profoundly different. The acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, in Paul's view, means that the church is in a direct continuous line of tradition with Israel. Believers, like the people of Israel, may be called children of God. They have become heirs of the Abrahamic promise, and may consider themselves to be the chosen people of God. Terminology traditionally used only by Israel may now legitimately be used to describe the church's relationship to God. As Paul will argue in chapter 11, the church is now part of Israel, Gentile believers being grafted on to the main plant, and even those unbelieving Jews who have been cut off will be grafted on again at the end time.

Israel (i.e. unbelieving Jews), on the other hand, remains part of that world which has not accepted the gospel, and therefore remains in Adam, without access to God, and

without forgiveness of sins. Because it is not in Christ, if we follow Paul's logic, it must be in Adam. Here, however, we meet with a problem, for there are serious implications for Paul's view of the relationship between the church and Israel. For example, does he really mean to imply that unbelieving Jews are enemies of God, simply because they have not believed in Christ? Does he really mean to imply that the church has access to God, while unbelieving Jews do not, that most of Israel does not have a relationship with God? Moreover, does he intend to suggest that unbelieving Jews, because of their failure to accept Christ and enter into the new age, cannot and should not consider themselves to be the children of God?

The argument of chapters 9 to 11 is, of course, intended to dispel any doubts which may have arisen about the status of Israel in God's sight. There can be no doubt that Jews are the children of God, that the covenant has not been abolished, and that the promises still stand. Paul is determined that nothing in his argument can be taken as suggesting that Israel has forfeited its special relationship with God. True, much of Israel still inhabits the old age, but Paul does not think unbelieving Jews are at enmity with God, that they do not have access to him, or that they have lost their special inheritance as Jews. Although believers are sons of God in chapter 8, it is clear from the overall argument of the letter that Israel itself retains the special privilege of adoption, along with the covenant, the Law, worship and the promises (9:4). The Jews are those whom God foreknew (11:2) and he has not rejected them.

However, although the possible implications of his argument noted above may be said to be dealt with in chapters 9 to 11 of the letter, there are elements of his thinking which remain problematic. For certain aspects of Paul's thought, from the point of view of the unbelieving Jew, must remain puzzling and may even be offensive. In the first place, Paul's view of the church does appear to be supersessionist. Promise of inheritance of the land has now been superseded by the promise of inheritance in the kingdom.<sup>423</sup> The old Israel needs to be incorporated into the new for its true destiny to be realised. And, although the restoration of Israel is important to Paul, it is clear from this passage that the ultimate aim of God's election of all his people is that they should be restored to the image which they forfeited at

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<sup>423</sup> Hester 1968, 79.

the fall, and be conformed to the image of his son. While Paul certainly does not say or even imply that Israel has lost its privileged status as sons in chapter 8, the general flow of his argument in chapters 5-8 points to sonship in Christ as the superior state now that the scope of God's salvation has widened (cf. Rom 9:6-7;25-26).

Further, the believer's identity is said to be bound up with the historical event of the death of the Messiah.<sup>424</sup> The new community is thus considered to have participated in an aspect of Jewish history (as Paul sees it) in which those who do not believe can have no part. To say that the community is alive to God and dead to sin implies that non-believing Jews are still under sin's dominion, on the wrong side of the eschatological battle.<sup>425</sup> Believers are in the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι verse 9), since (εἴπερ) the Spirit of God dwells in them.<sup>426</sup> Non-believers, on the other hand, have minds which are set on things of the flesh. Such minds, says Paul, are actually hostile to God, because they refuse to submit to God's law, and cannot please him (7).<sup>427</sup> There is even an implication that they are "dead to God", as believers are said to be dead to sin and alive to God because of their identity in Christ Jesus (6:10f).

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<sup>424</sup> Paul's use of Χριστός here is probably dictated by the subject of baptism in which he refers back to the historical death of the Messiah. Neugeberger's distinction (1957-58), between ἐν Χριστῷ as determined by eschatological history and ἐν κυρίῳ as used in imperative contexts is too rigid. That Paul can use the two interchangeably is seen in chapter 16 ( eg 16:2,3,7,8,9,12). See Kramer 1966, 178. Paul can also combine the two titles, see eg 6:23; 8:39.

<sup>425</sup> I.e. a "dative of reference" or "relation", they are dead " so far as sin is concerned". See Moule 1970.

<sup>426</sup> Michel 253 thinks verse 9b "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him" is a formula of exclusion like 1 Cor 16:22 (*Scheideformel*), but Cranfield, 388 is right to focus on the positive statement which is made here about the nature of the believer being indwelt by the spirit. εἴπερ here has an affirmative sense rather than a limiting conditional sense, see Käsemann 223; contra Dunn 428. Despite the implications of his argument here, Paul's purpose is not to exclude anyone.

<sup>427</sup> For νόμος as referring to Torah, which is viewed positively by Paul, see Dunn, 426.

## 6. Conclusion

This investigation of the significance of Christ for the lives of believers has caused something of a change in our understanding of the relationship between the church and Israel. We are forced to acknowledge a tension in the apostle's thinking with regard to the continuity and discontinuity between the church and Israel. Both are essential elements of his thinking, and we misrepresent Paul's position if we stress the continuity while disregarding the discontinuity between the two groups in his argument. While the continuity between the church and Israel was evident when we considered Christ as Messiah and his part in revealing God's righteousness, we have now seen that as Paul meditates on the significance of Christ in the lives of believers, the gulf between the two groups is very much in evidence.

Further, these chapters indicate that the implied *κατὰ πνεῦμα* category, which we suspected may be present in 9:1-5, is indeed part of Paul's thinking. The church has an existence *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, and while, as we saw above, the limitation of most of Israel to the *κατὰ σάρκα* category does not have derogatory connotations, it does suggest limitation, which, although this will one day (in Paul's view) be resolved, does have the implication that the church is somehow, if temporarily, superior to Israel. As we have seen, from the unbelieving Jew's perspective, this could be seen as "anti-Judaic".

As far as the argument of the letter is concerned, Paul's aim is to encourage the community and promote unity within it. He wants to build up a sense of identity in Christ, and bolster the church against possible trouble, from both outside and in. However, there is a sense in which this strategy is problematic. For it is hard to see how the self-identity which he promotes within the church in chapters 5 to 8, with its strong belief in a community which inhabits an age quite different from any other group (including unbelieving Israel), may be reconciled with his instructions to the "weak" believers that they should continue to observe Jewish Law. If we follow Paul's logic, unbelieving Israel belongs to the old age, her people are "in Adam" and slaves of sin. It would follow that Israel's traditions, including Torah observance, also belong firmly in the old era and have no place in the church. And yet we

have seen that Paul does feel that *kashrut* and feast days do have a place in the lives of Jewish believers. How is it that Paul feels that he can allow the "weak" to keep a "foot in both camps" in this manner? In order to tackle this problem, we must now consider the relationship between Christology and Torah. We know that Israel is still precious in God's sight, but where does Law observance fit in? What is the status of Torah in the new age?

## Chapter 7

### Christology and the Law

#### 1. Introduction

We have now considered the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus, Christ's place in God's plan of salvation, and Christology in relation to the community. This last revealed a tension in Paul's own thinking regarding the significance of Christology for the relationship between the church and Israel. Unbelieving Jews are beloved of God, but limited by their refusal to accept Christ, while the church now enjoys Israel's privileges *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. We must now consider Paul's view of the significance of Christ's coming with regard to the Law. What is its place in the new scheme of things, now that Christ has opened up the way of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles?

Paul's attitude to the practical application of Torah within the believing community is found in 14:1-15:6. When we considered this passage from a social-historical perspective, we found Paul to be saying that Jewish believers may observe sabbath and *kashrut* if they wish, but must understand that these are unnecessary elements in their lives as believers. In order to complete our Christological study we must now return to 14:1-15:6, and consider the significance of the Christological references (14:6-9,14,15,18; 15: 3,6-8) which are to be found there. How does Paul's use of Christological ideas and language in this passage inform his view of the relationship between the church and Israel?

First, however, we must consider the central Christological statement of 10:4 - that Christ is the *τέλος* of the Law. What does this tell us about Paul's view of the relationship between the church and Israel? In order to understand what this notorious *crux interpretum* means, we must set it in the context of Paul's argument that Israel has rejected the gospel. We will then be in a position to consider the statement itself in 10:4 and support our exegesis by an interpretation of the argument of 10:5ff.

## 2. Romans 9:30 - 10:3 Israel's Mistake and Responsibility.

2.1. In 9:6-29 it is Paul's main concern to show that the current situation within Judaism - that only some will be saved - is not incompatible with the belief that Israel is the elect of God, or with the promises which are found in scripture. It has always been God's way to select certain people within Israel for certain purposes, as the examples of Ishmael and Isaac (9:6-9), and Jacob and Esau (9:10-13) show. Paul also cites the scriptural principle that the salvation of Israel will follow the preservation of a remnant made up of those who have been obedient to God's will (9:27-29; 11:1-6).

The apparently arbitrary rejection of some parts of Israel is not the action of a capricious God who lacks compassion for his creatures, but of a God who acts entirely within the constraints of his own merciful intentions, and whose goal is the final salvation of the people he has chosen. Paul's purpose in speaking of the remnant of Israel is not to depict God as a harsh judge who will save only a few, but to present a God whose mercy is shown in the fact that he has saved anyone at all (9:15ff). The remnant is the beginning of the ultimate rescue of the nation as a whole (9:29).<sup>428</sup> Paul not only asserts the merciful nature of God and his right to act as he wishes, but reiterates the scriptural theme that the divine mercy has prevailed throughout Israel's history despite continual episodes of apostasy and disobedience on her part.

At 9:30, having drawn these lessons from Israel's past, Paul turns to consider Israel as she is now. In his view, most Jews have again taken the wrong course, and have again become apostate. He will spend the rest of chapters 9-11 demonstrating that despite this, God will remain faithful to her. In 9:31ff, Paul discusses her failure in terms of the Law and righteousness. Israel had been given a Torah which was designed to help her in her quest for a righteous status with God, and whose continued observance would sustain her within that relationship. She may be pursuing this Law, but according to Paul she has failed to attain ( $\epsilon\phi\theta\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$ ) its goal (9:31).<sup>429</sup> In the apostle's mind, this is only attainable through faith in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>428</sup> See D.G. Johnson 1984.

<sup>429</sup> E.P. Sanders 1983, 36f rightly objects to Cranfield's (505) understanding of  $\epsilon\phi\theta\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$  (translated as "attain") as "failing to obey its own law". On the race imagery in this word, see Badenas 1985, 104. Also Pfitzner 1967, 135-38 who notes



Most Jews, however, do not share this perspective because they have "stumbled over the stumbling stone" (προσεκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος), as Isaiah foretold. They have failed to recognise that Jesus is God's Messiah, whom God intended for Israel's good and protection.<sup>430</sup> And they have not heeded the warning of Isaiah 8:14, that rejection of the λίθος will cause Israel to fall.<sup>431</sup>

In other words, Israel has failed to attain the Law of righteousness on the basis of faith (οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως 9:32).<sup>432</sup> She has missed the point of the message of Torah itself, that following the Christ event, a right relationship with God will be achieved through faith in Jesus. Not only that, in Paul's view this calamitous failure results in an unintentional, but very serious misuse of the Torah itself. For Paul, those Jews who have not pursued the Law of righteousness on the basis of faith in Christ (ἐκ πίστεως) have, in effect, done so ὡς ἐξ ἔργων. That is to say, the rejection of Christ means that they are pursuing the Law of righteousness *as if* it were attainable on the basis of works. It is crucial to take proper account of ὡς here.<sup>433</sup> From Paul's post-Damascus road perspective, if there is no faith in Christ, there is no faith at all, as far as a righteous relationship with God and eventual salvation is concerned. The impossibility of faith without Christ means that those who reject him but continue to adhere to Torah are, in effect, reducing the Torah to a matter of works, distorting its meaning and purpose. In other words, Paul considers the continued Jewish rejection

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that the emphasis is not on exertion but "intention on a course of behaviour". *Contra* Noack 1970.

<sup>430</sup> Paul interprets Isa 28:16 messianically, understanding the λίθος to refer to Christ; against Meyer 1980, 64 who thinks it refers to Torah. Wright 1991, 240 thinks it could refer to both Torah and Christ - this, however, is stretching the point. Paul is concerned with Christology here, and is using a text which has been identified by both Hellenistic Judaism and the earliest believers as Messianic (cf. 1 Peter 2:6-8; see Selwyn 1961, 268-77). This tradition seems to have begun with the LXX version which has the ἐπ' αὐτῷ adopted by Paul.

<sup>431</sup> Lindars 1961, 175. Käsemann 276 points out that the responsibility of Israel and God's work in history are held in tension throughout this passage.

<sup>432</sup> There is no evidence to support Gaston's view (1987, 128) that ἐκ πίστεως here refers to God's own faithfulness. Paul is thinking in terms of two options, believing in Christ or rejecting him.

<sup>433</sup> For ὡς as "as if" see Liddell & Scott 1996, 2039.

of Christ as *tantamount* to seeing righteousness as something which can be attained through merely keeping the requirements of the Law. Paul is accusing them not only of having rejected the Messiah, but of misusing the other privileges given to them by God, which he has enumerated in verses 1-5. In particular, they are misusing the *νομοθεσία*, the gift of the Law (9:4), and he is charging them with denying the very essence of their tradition and faith.<sup>434</sup>

2.2. It is, however, also crucial to note what Paul is *not* saying here. First, he is not speaking of Israel prior to the coming of Christ. From 9:30 onwards he is concerned only with Israel in the new age, since the coming of Christ, not with her relationship with God in the past. As far as he is concerned, the history of Israel's faith is set down in Scripture, and, like any other Jew, he acknowledges that there have been periods of faithfulness to God's statutes and periods of apostasy. He is now concerned with what he sees as a current period of apostasy in Israel's history, brought about by lack of belief in Jesus Christ. This, in turn, means that he is not making a pronouncement about the nature of Israel's religion and traditions. He *is* drawing a contrast between faith and works, but he is not, as the traditional Lutheran view would have it, thereby saying that Israel is or ever was a religion characterised by "works righteousness" rather than faith in God.<sup>435</sup>

Secondly, Paul is *not* saying that the pursuit of the Law of righteousness is or ever was the wrong thing to do, as Sanders contends.<sup>436</sup> What is at issue is the fact that those who do not believe in Christ are now trying to attain the right goal in the wrong way, and that in doing so they are actually disobeying a central tenet of their own

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<sup>434</sup> Cf. also B.W. Longenecker 1997, 141 who writes that in Paul's eyes, "outside of the community of God's eschatological people, any Jew who considers nomistic observance to be a response to divine grace in covenant relationship is, for all intents and purposes, attempting to earn salvation through works apart from grace, and is thereby cut off from the people who enjoy God's eschatological bestowal of grace."

<sup>435</sup> Cf. also Westerholm 1996, 321. "The 'faith' in question is obviously and necessarily faith in Christ: faith has for Paul the character of response, and saving faith is response to the proclamation of God's salvation in Christ". For the traditional view see, for example, Käsemann 281; cf. Rhyne 1981, 103ff.

<sup>436</sup> Sanders 1983, 37: Israel's fault is that she has perceived the goal of the Law wrongly. Also Räisänen 1987, 53f.

tradition, that righteousness is attained by faith in God. Paul has always maintained that this is the correct goal for Israel (2:1-29), and he is not here suggesting that the Jews did not attain the Law because they could not achieve its demands.<sup>437</sup> Israel's tradition has always been that righteousness is attainable on the basis of faith (2:25-29; 3:28-29);<sup>438</sup> her fault is that she has failed to see that God's righteousness is now revealed in and attainable through faith *in Jesus Christ*.<sup>439</sup> The result of their rejection of Christ is that they have, *from the believer's perspective*, reduced the Law to a matter of doing works to gain favour with God.

The presence of ὥς here does not only indicate that the pursuit of righteousness ἐξ ἔργων is "objectively wrong" although that would certainly be the case.<sup>440</sup> Rather, Paul's point is that in rejecting Christ, Israel has so misconstrued what God's righteousness on the basis of faith means that they *might as well* be pursuing salvation on the basis of works. They have thus been unfaithful to their own tradition, and have adopted a course of action which is completely at odds with Torah itself.

Paul knows, however, that their rejection of Christ does not constitute a rejection of God (10:2). In fact, he is the first to bear witness to their zeal for him. Nevertheless, their passionate desire for God must be seen as misguided. If it is not Christ-centred, it is a zeal based on ignorance (οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν). Through preaching, Israel *has* heard of Jesus Christ (10:18), and so this ignorance does not refer to a lack of knowledge about him, but to a lack of understanding of his true significance.<sup>441</sup> This means that most Jews have also misunderstood the nature of God's righteousness,

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<sup>437</sup> See Rhyne 1981, 101; *contra* van Dülmen 1968, 125f.

<sup>438</sup> *Contra* Hofius 1990, 25 note 47 who states with regard to 9:31 that the Torah has nothing in common with faith. For Hofius, Israel's view was that salvation required the keeping of the commandments and nothing else.

<sup>439</sup> Räisänen 1987, 174 rightly notes that Paul is not speaking of Israel's faith before the coming of Christ. See also Wilckens II: 213.

<sup>440</sup> So BAGD, 898. Nor does it simply denote "the delusory character of Israel's quest" - so Cranfield 1975a, 509.

<sup>441</sup> Most commentators see Paul as referring to of a lack of understanding on Israel's part here. See however, SH 283 for whom ἐπίγνωσις means the "true moral discernment by which they might learn the right way".

which has been manifested in and through Christ. If they have failed in this, they have also failed to grasp that God's righteousness in the new age takes the promise of salvation beyond Israel itself to include the Gentiles. The result of Israel's misguided view is that they have not submitted themselves to be obedient to God's righteousness as it is now revealed (τῆ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπεταγησαν 10:3).<sup>442</sup> From Paul's perspective, this means that they are seeking to establish their own righteousness (τὴν ἰδίαν δικαιοσύνην), both in focussing on the works aspect of the Law and in refusing to extend the possibility of righteousness to Gentiles.<sup>443</sup>

### 3. Christ the τέλος of the Law.

3.1. Israel's rejection of Christ then, from Paul's perspective, has serious implications for Judaism itself. At 10:4 Paul sums up the argument of 9:30-10:3 with the statement: τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι (10:4). As the use of γὰρ indicates, he intends to explain Israel's misunderstanding of Christ's significance even further. Israel has also failed to see that Christ is the τέλος of the Law. As we shall see, the statement also summarises his view of the significance of Christ as far as the Law is concerned for all those who have accepted the gospel. However, the statement is by no means straightforward, there being difficulties in the interpretation of both νόμος and τέλος.

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<sup>442</sup> Michel 326 rightly notes Paul's stress on the disobedience of Israel here.

<sup>443</sup> Despite the omission of δικαιοσύνη from 10:3 in some important MSS and several minuscules, its inclusion should be understood as Pauline. Sanders 1983, 38 has rightly noted that τὴν ἰδίαν denotes a righteousness which the Jews limit to those who follow the Law, rather than "self righteousness". See also Howard 1969 who understands a reference to excluding the Gentiles from the possibility of righteousness. Nevertheless, the view that this refers to a δικαιοσύνη based on works should not be dismissed since that is the net result of Israel's rejection of Christ. However, Cranfield's view 1975(b), 42 is surely questionable: of Israel he writes, "Its determination to establish its own righteousness by its works naturally made it blind to the righteousness God was making available in Christ as a free gift, while its failure to recognise Christ could only drive it deeper into legalistic misunderstanding and perversion of the law." Quite apart from the dubious nature of the assertion that Israel had ever "perverted" the Law in Paul's view, Cranfield 1975, 42 has misconstrued Paul in his insistence that Israel's rejection of Christ was *a result of a conscious determination to establish their own δικαιοσύνη*. For a similar view to Cranfield, see Barrett 196.

The view of Sanday and Headlam, that νόμος in 10:4 means "principle" has rightly been rejected by modern scholarship.<sup>444</sup> Paul has been speaking of Israel's Law, which is her special gift from God (cf. 9:4 νομοθεσία), since the beginning of chapter 9, and it is unlikely that he would adopt a different meaning of the word here. It is also important to note that in 10:4 he does not simply speak of the Law but of "the Law which leads to righteousness" (νόμος εἰς δικαιοσύνην). In accordance with his argument up until now, and in order to warn against the implications of Israel's rejection of Christ, Paul is concerned to point out that "with respect to the attaining of righteousness", Christ is the τέλος of Torah.<sup>445</sup> That is to say, he is referring to the Law which was given to Israel, adherence to which was intended not only to lead the Jewish people into a righteous status before God but to enable them to maintain the relationship thus established (cf 9:31).

The question is whether Paul is referring to the Torah as a whole (i.e. the Pentateuch, the prophets and the writings), or simply the legal prescriptions contained in the Pentateuch to which Israel should adhere. In other words, is Paul thinking solely in terms of *halakah*, or does he include *haggadah* in his idea of the Law in these verses? Most scholars have tended to understand the verse to mean that Christ is the τέλος of the Law as legal prescription, adherence to which leads to salvation.<sup>446</sup> The Christ event means that men and women no longer need to obey the Law in order to be saved. J.D.G. Dunn has recently modified this view. Taking up the Reformed tradition's distinction between moral and ceremonial Law, he has argued that νόμος here refers to those ritual and cultic laws which act as "boundary markers" establishing Israel's identity as separate from the rest of the world. When Paul speaks against the Law, it is this aspect of it which he has in mind, not the moral law whose

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<sup>444</sup> SH 284. On the varied meanings of νόμος in Paul, see Bultmann 1952, 259f and most recently Winger 1992.

<sup>445</sup> *Contra* the RSV which translates "For Christ is the end of the law, that everyone who has faith might be justified"; Cranfield II: 519 also takes εἰς δικαιοσύνην with Χρίστος; Williams 1980, 284; Käsemann 267. The displacement of Χριστός here may be for emphasis.

<sup>446</sup> For an overview of opinions, see Badenas 1985, 35.

prescriptions are now expressed in the ἀγάπη principle. According to Dunn, the broader understanding of Torah as story or revelation as "misses the point".<sup>447</sup>

However, it is doubtful that Paul is making a such a distinction in 10:4. His concern with *halakah* in 2:18ff (theft, adultery and idolatry) indicates that he can understand νόμος in terms of both moral and ceremonial Law, in this case circumcision (2:25ff). Similarly, in chapter 7, there is nothing to suggest such a distinction as Paul struggles with the Law in the eschatological age. In the immediate context, the only support for Dunn's view is found in the phrase τὴν ἰδίαν δικαιοσύνην in 10:3, the righteousness pursued by Israel, which he interprets in terms of Israel's "covenant consciousness."<sup>448</sup> However, in line with our interpretation of 9:30ff, this phrase should be taken as referring to the rejection of Christ as tantamount to seeking righteousness through their own means rather than God's.

J.A. Sanders has said that Torah in Judaism is and always was a balance between *haggadah* and *halakah*, *mythos* and *ethos*, story and laws, and should be seen as the story of divine election and redemption, of God's righteous dealings with Israel.<sup>449</sup> Certainly for Paul, Torah not only prescribes for men and women, but describes the condition of humanity and God's dealings with it. For example, Paul's reference to ὁ νόμος, and its efficacy for those who are "under the Law" in 3:19, immediately follows a string of quotations from the Psalms in 3:10-18 and indicates that he considers the Psalms to be a part of Torah. Similarly, he follows his claim that his teaching about righteousness by faith upholds the Law (3:31) with examples from *haggadah*, the stories of Abraham and David illustrating the biblical precedent for faith apart from works. These stories, in Paul's view, are included in scripture to teach the principle behind the Law's requirement (cf. also 15:4). Thus it seems reasonable to understand νόμος εἰς δικαιοσύνην at 10:4 as referring to the Torah

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<sup>447</sup> Dunn 590; cf. also his essay: "The New Perspective on Paul: Paul and the Law" in the same commentary (lxiii-lxxii).

<sup>448</sup> Dunn 587.

<sup>449</sup> J.A. Sanders 1977, 138.

as a whole - God's word to Israel which reveals the true condition of man in his fallen nature, and points to the means of salvation.<sup>450</sup>

3.2. The two basic meanings of τέλος are "goal" and "termination". Christ may be seen as the termination of the Law or the goal to which Torah has always pointed. A third meaning is closely related to that of "goal", in which Christ is seen as the fulfilment of Torah, as the one who fulfils what the Law requires for the righteousness of men.<sup>451</sup> Those who hold the view that τέλος means "termination" tend to think in terms of the abrogation of the Law.<sup>452</sup> Christ has brought an end to the era in which the Law might be said to have any salvific function at all. Part and parcel of this view, which is held generally by those who understand νόμος in the restricted sense of *halakah*, has been the tendency to think of the Law in negative terms and to see Paul as engaged in some kind of polemic against it, declaring it obsolete in the new age. Peter Stuhlmacher's understanding is fairly typical of this school of thought:

"With Christ the law, fallen into the clutches of sin and thereby falsely made the basis of the world's claim to be pious or impious in God's sight, reaches its end, the law that is merely a caricature of the good, revealed will of God."<sup>453</sup>

However, Paul's own insistence that he upholds the commandment which is "holy, just and good" (7:12) makes this notion of polemic highly unlikely. In this letter, there seems to be no sense in which the Law might be seen as a "curse", as he states in Galatians (Gal 3:10).<sup>454</sup> If the view is taken that νόμος εἰς δικαιοσύνην refers to the entire "Old Testament" revelation, we can see that an interpretation of τέλος as "goal" is appropriate. From Paul's post-Easter perspective, everything in scripture

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<sup>450</sup> Bring 1971, 22ff. Bring's view is taken up by Badenas 1985, 103.

<sup>451</sup> See Badenas 1985, 7-37 for the history of the interpretation of τέλος in this verse.

<sup>452</sup> E.g. Van Dülmen 1968, 126; Räisänen 1987, 55f (who considers this to be in contradiction to Paul's thought in 9:30ff); SH 284; Michel 326; Käsemann 282.

<sup>453</sup> Stuhlmacher 1986, 142.

<sup>454</sup> *Contra* Wilckens II: 223.

points towards the ultimate manifestation of God's righteousness in Christ. True, he says in 3:21 that it has been manifested "apart from the Law", but as we have seen, this a reference to the fact that Christ's work embraces Gentiles as well as Jews, rather than a criticism of the Law itself. Christ is the Messiah of whom scripture has spoken (9:33); the promises to the patriarchs point towards the time when the Gentiles will participate in the blessing of their descendants (4:17). If the Torah has always pointed to righteousness by faith, as Paul contends, then Christ can now be seen to be the realisation of that goal.

By the same token, it is also appropriate to speak of Christ as the "fulfilment" of the Law which leads to righteousness. By virtue of his saving death and ensuing resurrection, Christ has fulfilled all that the Law required to make a righteous status before God possible (8:3). His self sacrifice is the supreme expression of ἀγάπη which, for Paul, constitutes the fulfilment of Torah (13:10). Christ's action has also made it possible for believers to attain the "goal" of Torah. In other words, believers can now have a righteous relationship with God through him. Not only that, the Law has been fulfilled in the sense that the Gentiles may now take their proper place in God's plan of salvation (cf. 15:7-13), and only because of the work of Jesus Christ. Thus, he is the τέλος of the Law παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. Christ has brought about the conditions in which Jews and Gentiles alike can attain the righteousness of God.

It makes good sense to interpret τέλος in the sense of "goal" and "fulfilment."<sup>455</sup> However, despite our objections to the idea that the Torah is "terminated" as an undesirable element in the new age, it remains appropriate also to see Christ as the "end" of the Law.<sup>456</sup> Clearly, for the apostle, the Law is not obsolete. The believer may have "died to the Law" but the Law itself has not died (7:2ff); he or she is no longer bound to the Law but has a new freedom which makes possible the understanding of its teaching in the light of the Holy Spirit (7:6 cf. 14:5-23).

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<sup>455</sup> See Badenas 1985; Ziesler 1989, 258.

<sup>456</sup> Stuhlmacher 1986, 142 and Barrett 197 recognise that τέλος as "termination" and as "fulfilment" are not mutually exclusive but indeed imply one another. See also Bring 1971, 32.



There are two senses in which Christ may be said to be the "end" of the Law. Firstly, as we have seen, Paul makes a contrast between the function of the Law in the new community and its place in the synagogue. As we have seen, those who have refused to accept Christ have, in Paul's view, in effect opted to reduce Torah to a matter of works, and are behaving as if this were the way to salvation. For those Jews who will now enter the new community, however, Christ marks the end of such a distortion of the significance of the Law, and the beginning of a new righteousness by faith in Christ.

Secondly, for those Jewish believers and former Gentile synagogue "adherents" for whom Law observance had been a way of life, Christ marks the end of the *necessity* of keeping certain aspects of halakic Law. But the idea is not, as Dunn would have it, that Christ brings about the end of Israel's abuse of the Law to exclude the Gentiles from God's righteousness.<sup>457</sup> As Paul argues in chapter 14, Jewish believers must understand that food laws and sabbath observance are essentially elements belonging to the old age, adherence to which is now a matter of personal choice. They may still feel the pull of their old way of life, and indeed may still adhere to it in the new age, but they must realise that they have been set free from all condemnation regarding the law by the Holy Spirit (8:1).<sup>458</sup> The fact that Christ brings about the "end" of the Law is significant not only for Jewish believers but also for Gentiles (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι).<sup>459</sup> Those who have been grafted on to the olive tree find that Jewish Law is no longer binding. They should not take up ritual requirements, must understand that the moral law is summed upon the ἀγάπη principle, and, as Paul's instructions in 14:ff show, recognise the inherent goodness and holiness of Torah even in the new era.

3.3. It seems that Paul is exploiting the ambiguity of τέλος.<sup>460</sup> Christ is both the end and the goal of the Law for those who believe, and he fulfils its requirements in order

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<sup>457</sup> Dunn 590.

<sup>458</sup> See Schnabel 1985, note 291; Wilckens II:222; and the argument of Martin 1989, 129-54.

<sup>459</sup> Gaston's view 1987, 130 that this phrase refers only to the Gentiles is based on his thesis that the gospel is only intended for the Gentiles, and cannot be supported.

to bring men and women into a righteous relationship with God. This interpretation of 10:4 is supported by Paul's argument in 10:5-13. Again, Paul's use of γάρ in 10:5 indicates that he is continuing in the same vein; he is about to defend and expand on the view he has just put forward. Having said that Israel has failed to grasp the significance of Christ, Paul goes on to explain further the meaning and implications of righteousness by faith.

At 10:6, he puts the words of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 into the mouth of a personified "righteousness by faith" and writes an exegesis in the *peshar* style.<sup>461</sup> In the original text, Israel is assured that there is no need to find someone willing or able to ascend into heaven or cross the sea in order to bring the word of the commandment closer to them, because it is already close to them - "in your mouth and in your heart" (Deut 30:14). The Law is not inaccessible or too hard for them to keep.<sup>462</sup> For Paul, these verses speak of the Christ who is found in the preached gospel - the "word of faith" (10:8). In the new era, there is no need to go searching for it in heaven or in the abyss because Christ, who has already ascended into heaven having first descended into the realm of the dead, has brought it near to men and women. Righteousness is accessible because of Christ's actions and his exaltation by God.<sup>463</sup> These actions

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<sup>460</sup> Käsemann 282 objects strongly to this approach: "the message of the NT would soon no longer be recognisable if exegesis were allowed to exploit every linguistic possibility, and Paul does not leave the least room for attempts of this kind."

<sup>461</sup> That is, in a style similar to that found in some Qumran documents e.g. 11QpHab. Neusner 1987(b), 109 defines *peshar* as "an interpretation or explanation of a verse of scripture in which a given statement is identified with an event or personality in the present time". Paul's free handling of the text irked some earlier modern scholars, notably Dodd 166; Byrne 1986, 196. See also Black 1971-72. However, Paul's adaptation of the text (in which he replaces "going over the sea" with "descending into the depths") is paralleled in Baruch 3:29-30; Philo *De Posteritate Caini* 84-85; Targum Neofiti Deuteronomy 30 (see Dunn 604). In the light of these similarities, fewer commentators today are as critical of Paul's free citation and method.

<sup>462</sup> Hellenistic Jewish sources show that this passage was a common focus for exegesis. The writer of Baruch 3:29-30, for example, understands it as referring to Wisdom, while Philo interprets it in terms of the abstract principle of "the good" (Philo *De Posteritate Caini* 84-85). If there is a link with Wisdom texts here (so Suggs 1968; Käsemann 1971; E.E. Johnson 1989), then it is an echo rather than an overt discussion, as Hays 1989, 79 notes.

<sup>463</sup> Paul is referring here to Christ's resurrection and exaltation, rather than his incarnation; see Dunn 605. Michel 329 notes that only God can bring Christ up from

continue to be significant as long as that word of faith is preached by Paul and his associates (κερύσσομεν).

These beliefs are encapsulated in the traditional statement of 10:9 that Jesus is Lord. The message of the gospel is that Christ is Lord of the cosmos following his resurrection from the dead. Public confession of this at baptism and full recognition of his defeat of the powers at the resurrection means that men and women will be saved from the wrath of God at the end time (10:9-10).

Paul concludes his exposition of righteousness by faith by quoting again from Isaiah 28:16 (10:11; cf. 9:33). Those who believe in Christ will not be ashamed. This time, however, he adds *πᾶς* to emphasise the availability of salvation to Jews *and* Gentiles through Jesus Christ. The same point is made in the quotation from Joel 3:5 which Paul also now understands Christologically: all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved.<sup>464</sup> The message is repeated - righteousness by faith is for all without distinction, and Christ, who is Lord of all, brings salvation to all who believe.

This is in contrast to the "righteousness which is based on the Law" (10:5), of which Moses could say only: "the man who does these things shall live by them (Lev 18:5)."<sup>465</sup> However, Paul's aim here is not to say that the Law cannot be fulfilled.<sup>466</sup> Nor is he contrasting the written and spoken word, as Käsemann claims.<sup>467</sup> He is, rather, drawing a contrast between those who live in the old age and those who live

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the dead.

<sup>464</sup> Since this passage is concerned with Christology, it is unlikely that κύριος in 10:13 refers to Yahweh, as Ziesler 1989, 264 thinks.

<sup>465</sup> Paul has contracted the original LXX text which read καὶ ποιήσετε αὐτά, ἃ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. ὅτι should be read before ὁ ποιήσας, as in the Nestle-Aland text. Given that Paul is contrasting a law of works with the Law of faith, it is unlikely that ὁ ποιήσας refers to Christ as Cranfield 1975a, 522; M. Barth 1983, 39 and W.S. Campbell 1980(b), 77f suggest.

<sup>466</sup> As held by, for example, Hofius 1983, 272.

<sup>467</sup> Käsemann 1971; see also Michel 327.

in the new.<sup>468</sup> For those who (in his view) effectively limit righteousness to a matter of doing, adhering to the Law can only be a matter of everyday living. One may and can live by the statutes in everyday life, but this will not lead to salvation. Righteousness based on faith, on the other hand, is and always has been the way to salvation.<sup>469</sup>

Our exegesis of Romans 9:3-10:3 has shown that Israel's fault is a failure to grasp the true significance of Christ. Despite the fact that God has ordained that this should happen, Israel as a whole bears responsibility for the fact that most Jews are not now members of the new community. For Paul, the significance of Christ is that through his death and resurrection he has made the righteousness by faith (always a fundamental tenet of Jewish teaching) available to all without distinction. He has thus fulfilled the word contained in scripture that the Gentiles would be included in Israel's salvation. From his post-Easter perspective, Paul can see that scripture has always pointed to Christ, who is now exalted as Lord and confessed as such in the community. He can see too that Christ has fulfilled all that the Law required for men to be restored to a righteous relationship with God. However, Christ is also the "end" of the Law insofar as he ends its condemnatory function and the necessity of keeping its ritual statutes for those who believe in him.

3.4. The Christological thought of this passage has important implications for our understanding of Paul's view of the relationship between the church and Israel: it sums up and explains both the continuity and discontinuity between them.<sup>470</sup> Insofar as Christ is the goal and fulfilment of the Law, there is no doubt that in Paul's view

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<sup>468</sup> B.W. Longenecker 1991, 223. Badenas 1985, 120-124 rightly notes that Paul is not contrasting two verses of Scripture. It is part of Paul's aim here to show that righteousness by faith *is* found in Scripture. But Badenas' view that 10:5 is not in contrast but an introduction to 10:6 misses the point that "righteousness based on the law" refers to the Jews' misunderstanding. Badenas' view is a modification of that found in Bring 1966; see also Hays 1989, 76ff; Vos 1992. For the view that the two verses are in antithesis, see Dunn 1987.

<sup>469</sup> This may explain the notable omission of the words "so that you can do it" from Paul's exegesis of Deuteronomy 30:14 in 10:8: Paul is reiterating that righteousness is much more than a matter of "works".

<sup>470</sup> A point noted by Rhyne 1981, 119f.

there is a fundamental continuity and therefore close relationship between the new community and Israel. Faith in Jesus Christ does not mean that the Law is invalid or obsolete.<sup>471</sup> On the contrary, Paul would say that the new community upholds and honours it, precisely because it sees Christ in it. If Torah points to Christ, then there can be no question of declaring it null and void; and if he fulfils its requirements, these should be seen as having the highest value. The church and Israel thus share this common view of Torah and its revelation of righteousness by faith. Further, the recognition that Christ is the goal and fulfilment of Torah is the basis for Paul's reminder to the Gentile believers at Rome that they are the ones who have been grafted on to the original tree. Torah itself has declared that the Gentiles should be included in Israel's blessings, that righteousness by faith is a matter for Gentile as well as Jew. Gentiles must therefore always remember to whom Torah first belonged.

Paul's use of the ambiguous τέλος also draws attention to the *discontinuity* between the two groups. For Christ has inaugurated a community in which a completely different view of Torah prevails. By virtue of its recognition of the true significance of Christ, it believes itself to have attained the Law which leads to righteousness, and thus to be the true interpreter of Torah. Moral law may now be fulfilled by adopting the ἀγάπη principle within the community. There is, however, no need for Jewish believers to continue to do as Torah requires so far as sabbath observance and *kashrut* is concerned, and no reason for Gentile believers to adopt this aspect of the Law. Clearly, this entails a profound dissimilarity between the two groups, which is underscored by Paul's view that Israel, i.e. those Jews who have rejected Christ, has failed to attain righteousness by faith.<sup>472</sup> The gap thus created can only be bridged by the acceptance of the "word of faith" by the Jewish community.

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<sup>471</sup> *Contra* for example Sanders 1977, 491 for whom "the argument from faith is really an argument against the law".

<sup>472</sup> As Käsemann 292 notes, the voice of righteousness by faith speaks through the church in distinction from the "synagogue". The ambiguity of τέλος, however, means that this distinction is not as harsh as Käsemann would argue.

#### **4. Christ, God and Community in Romans 14:1-15:6**

4.1. Throughout our study of the Christology of Romans, we have been finding that Paul's understanding of Christ's Messiahship and faithfulness to God's plan of salvation supports his belief that the church has the closest possible relationship with that of Israel. Theologically and Christologically, for Paul, the church's thought is entirely in line with Jewish theology and, indeed, is its logical outcome. However, we have also noticed a supersessionist strand in the apostle's thinking, which is hard to reconcile with this view. This first came to our attention when we noted his designation of Israel as a people *κατὰ σάρκα*, and became more evident when we considered Paul's view of the relationship between the risen Christ and the church community. We also noted an "exclusivist" element in his thinking - the belief that those outside the community cannot have the same relationship with God. His insistence on the new identity of baptised believers, and their status as children of God in the new age, reveals a gap between them and unbelieving Jews who remain in the old Adamic age, still enslaved to sin.

When this aspect of his thought is seen alongside his understanding of his own Jewish identity, and his continued belief in Israel as the covenant people of God, we can detect a deep ambivalence in Paul's attitude towards unbelieving Jews. He loves them, and recognises their privilege, but thinks they are mistaken. Our study of Romans 10:4 has shown us that this ambivalence has its basis, not only in his own emotional ties with his own people, but also in his Christology itself. For Paul, Christ in one sense is the fulfilment and goal of Torah, and in another sense constitutes the end of Torah for those who believe. In other words, Paul's Christology contains within itself both the continuity between Israel and the church advocated by Wright and Hays, and the apocalyptic discontinuity espoused by J.L. Martyn.

Theoretically, then, there is adequate explanation for the tension in Paul's thinking. Christology does mean that there is a close relationship between the church and Israel, but it also means that there is a profound gulf separating the believing community and those Jews who do not believe. However, Paul is not simply concerned with ideas in the abstract, he is also a pastor for whom theology must always be related to every-day life. Thus, the question arises as to how Paul deals

with this tension when it comes to coping with the practical problems which arise when Jewish and Gentile believers attempt to live and worship together. So far as the letter to the Romans is concerned, how does Paul balance his conviction that the weak may retain their Jewish identity with his equally clear belief that they are inhabiting a new age with a completely new identity in Christ?

The problem of the practical application of the Law in the new community is, as we have seen, dealt with in Romans 14:1-15:6. In our first examination of this passage, we saw that Paul stresses the continuity between the believing community and Israel. In this last stage of our investigation we must now return to that passage, and ask what function the Christological language and ideas have in Paul's argument, as he tries to promote unity in the church. Is the tension detectable in chapters 5-8 also to be found here and, if so, should we then modify our interpretation of this passage?

4.2. We have already seen that in Romans 15 Paul refers to Jesus the Messiah as the example for believers to follow. Like Christ, they should be aiming not to please themselves but to work to build up their brothers and sisters (15:2). In this way they will be able to live in harmony with each other and worship God together. They must welcome one another, because Christ has welcomed them (15:7). In a sense, too, the strong have to follow his example and become servants of the circumcised by supporting those who wish to follow Jewish practices, in order that God's plan that Jews and Gentiles should worship together might be fulfilled (15:7-13).

Besides citing Christ as the example, Paul also frequently refers to Jesus' Lordship over the church (14:4-9).<sup>473</sup> As such, Jesus has authority over believers, and the Romans are warned not to judge each other for the simple reason that it is not their

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<sup>473</sup> Wilckens III:85 thinks that Paul is using the terms κύριος and θεός interchangeably throughout verses 4-9, and speaks of a constant merging and intertwining (*ineinander übergehen*) of Christological and theological ideas. He sees κύριος at verse 4 as referring both to God and Christ. On the other hand, Barrett 258f seems to understand κύριος as referring to God throughout. Cranfield 702 note 3, reserves judgement. The statement of verse 9, however, that Christ died in order to be Lord of the living and the dead (ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ), makes it likely that Paul's use of κύριος in verses 4-8 refers to Christ rather than God.

place to do so: this would be to usurp the Lord's role (14:4). Paul also refers to the fact that the κύριος of the house holds the future of his servants in his hands. Christ is the master of the house-slaves (οἰκέτης), according to Paul's metaphor, and as such he only has the right to judge the individual slaves. Moreover, whether the believer stands or falls, perseveres or fails to persevere in the new life, is a matter for the Lord to decide (σταθήσεται δέ, δυνατεῖ γὰρ ὁ κύριος στήσαι αὐτόν).

Christ as Lord constitutes the focus of believers' lives. Paul reassures both the weak and the strong groups that neither is wrong in its practice, as long as each individual is convinced that what he or she is doing is right. In this way, the Lord will be honoured. The believer who observes certain feast days does so for the Lord (κυρίῳ), and the fact that each one gives thanks to God for whatever food is eaten indicates the intention to honour the Lord whatever decision regarding food laws is made (14:6).<sup>474</sup> For the believer, there is no escape from the authority of the Lord, whose property he or she has become since he identified with him at baptism (14:7).<sup>475</sup> Every aspect of life is carried out for the Lord Jesus Christ and with his glorification in view (τῷ κυρίῳ).<sup>476</sup> Christ, having died and been raised, now reigns as cosmic Lord with dominion over all things, even over the dead and the living: death cannot separate the believer from his rule (14:8f).<sup>477</sup>

4.3. When Paul speaks of Christ's Messiahship and example, he appeals to a shared tradition of what Christ has done for them, and so helps to build up a sense of solidarity within the community. Christ's death and resurrection are the starting point and rationale for the existence of the church, the very reason that they have been brought together in the first place (14:9,15). Paul urges that they do not forget this in

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<sup>474</sup> Winger 1992, 162 note 16 observes that the term νόμος does not appear in Rom 14:1-15:6, and suggests that Paul may be guarding "against sweeping conclusions about νόμος-observance in general."

<sup>475</sup> Wilckens III:84.

<sup>476</sup> τῷ κυρίῳ is a dative of advantage, see Cranfield 703; Moule 1970. Kramer 1966, 169-72 notes that Christ's dominion is the reference point in ethical and practical matters (cf. 1 Cor 7:10-35; 2 Cor 5:6-8,11).

<sup>477</sup> See Stanley 1961, 199.



their differences of opinion, and thus strengthens the sense of unity which following Christ should bring. Similarly, Paul's references to Christ as Lord are designed to promote a unity which is founded on a common knowledge of their identity as the people of the Lord Jesus. Christ's dominion, and the adherence to the ἀγάπη principle which this demands in the life of the community, means that it is better to remember that Christ died for and loves the person one might disagree with, than to hold on to a matter of principle, even if that principle comes from the Lord himself (14:14).<sup>478</sup> Love far outweighs even the most firmly held conviction in matters of behaviour (14:15), and no believer's salvation should be jeopardised for the sake of something as trivial as food.

Paul's Christological references in this passage therefore have much the same function in Paul's argument as his use of the ἐν Χριστῷ and sonship motifs, and his Adamic Christology.<sup>479</sup> They serve to build up the sense of community within the church and at the same time draw a firm line between it and those outside. Those who do not confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Rom 10:9) and who do not believe that Christ is Messiah remain in the old Adamic age and are of a different order of existence from those who do. The ἀγάπη principle also means that a different morality applies within the community.

The acknowledgement of Christ's Lordship, like their lives ἐν Χριστῷ, constitutes their existence as a community and distinguishes them from the rest of the world (cf. 1 Cor 12:3). Believers live under the Lordship of Christ. Theirs is a high calling, for Paul's references to Christ as Lord also remind his readers of the tradition that Jesus is the risen Christ who has been exalted to the highest honour: he sits at the right hand of God and has been given "the name above all names" (cf. Ps 110:1; 1 Cor 15:25; cf. Phil 2:6-10).<sup>480</sup> Moreover, Paul's constant references to "our Lord Jesus

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<sup>478</sup> See above chapter 2, note 77.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. Wiles 1974, 82: unity in the community is "grounded in Christ as Lord and illustrated by Christ as messianic servant."

<sup>480</sup> The majority view is that the "name above all names" in Phil 2:10 is κύριος, *pace* Cerfaux 1959, 479. On the link between resurrection and Lordship, see Foerster in TDNT III:1088; R.N. Longenecker 1970, 128-40. For the tradition that Christ is Lord cf. also Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Acts 2:34; Heb 1:3; 13:8; 8:1; 10:12; Mk 12:36; 14:62; Mt

Christ" throughout the letter suggests an intimacy between Christ and his people (e.g. 4:24;5:11,21;7:25;8:39;15:30;16:20) which is unavailable to those outside the community. Not only do they belong to him, he in some sense belongs to them.<sup>481</sup> The question is, how can this aspect of Paul's thinking be reconciled with his belief in the continuity between the church and Israel? How can those who live under the authority of Christ reconcile this with a desire to continue with practices which are part of the old age?

4.4. There is no doubt that Paul understands the community of believers to be accountable to Christ. However, he also thinks that the true vocation of the church is to worship *God* (15:6, 7-13). A correct attitude to Torah observance in the church does mean that they are serving Christ (τῷ Χριστῷ 14:18), but in so doing they are pleasing God (as well as being acceptable to other people) whose work the church is (τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ 14:20).<sup>482</sup> It is the responsibility of each individual to discern *God's* will as to what they should do in these practical matters (14:22).<sup>483</sup> Admittedly, the roles of Christ and God seem a little blurred on occasion: it remains unclear, in this passage at least, where the limits of Christ's cosmic rule are to be found. Another example of this is the reference to both God and Christ having welcomed the

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22:44;26:64; Luke 20:42; 22:69. On the material which Paul inherited from the church, see Kramer 1966, 65-150. Although the idea that Christ is Lord is not Paul's own, there is no doubt that it was developed and expanded in his work (R.N. Longenecker 1970, 120f.).

<sup>481</sup> The special relationship between Lord and community comes to expression in the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, which Paul uses interchangeably with ἐν Χριστῷ or ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (16:3,7, 9,10) as a designation of fellow believers. Ampliatius, for example, is his "beloved" ἐν κυρίῳ (16:8), Tryphaena and Tryphosa are workers ἐν κυρίῳ (16:12). As they participate in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-33), and as they await the return of the Lord (1 Cor 16:22;1 Thess 4:13-18) their sense of community increases.

<sup>482</sup> ἐν τούτῳ here refers to "in this matter", i.e. the correct understanding of Torah observance (see Dunn 824), rather than to "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (so Cranfield II:719, who gives a list of the options) or to "in the Holy Spirit" (so Wilckens III:94 note 463). For τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ as the church, see Merk 1968, 172; Wilckens III:95; *pace* Michel 437 for whom the "work of God" is the cross of Jesus.

<sup>483</sup> For this specific application of πίστις see Cranfield 697 & 726.

believers into the community.<sup>484</sup> Nevertheless, despite this, and the clear authority which Paul understands the risen Christ to have, he still attributes the highest authority to God himself.<sup>485</sup>

In 14:10 he reminds them that they will stand before God's judgement seat at the end time.<sup>486</sup> This, given his emphasis on Christ's cosmic Lordship in 14:9 and the emphasis on his authority over the community in verses 4-8, is a rather abrupt change of focus.<sup>487</sup> Moreover, he has already in the letter referred to Jesus' part in the final judgement (2:16), and we know from 2 Cor 5:10 that he can and does refer to the judgement seat of Christ. Here, however, he points out that God is the final arbiter of humanity's behaviour and so warns them that in judging one another they are taking upon themselves the role of God himself.<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> There is some contention as to the meaning behind Paul's statement that "God has welcomed him" in 14:3. Black 165 and Barrett 258 see a reference to God welcoming them into the household (cf. verse 4); according to Käsemann 369, Paul is referring to baptism. Wilckens' view (III:82) that Paul is referring to the death of Christ as the means by which God has welcomed them is consistent with the overall argument of the letter.

<sup>485</sup> See Dunn, 804. *Contra* Wilckens III:85 (also Thüsing 1965, 30-39), who from the change of subject between verses 7-9 in which Christ is the subject, and verse 10-12 in which the reference is to God as judge, deduces that there is little difference between the authority of God and Christ.

<sup>486</sup> Some MSS do refer to the judgement seat of Christ rather than God here. Howard 1977 accounts for the variation by means of his theory that the κύριος of verse 11 had replaced an original reference to Yahweh (in the LXX), leading to a confusion on the part of manuscript scribes: they thus replaced θεοῦ in verse 10 with Χριστοῦ. However, Howard's theory is based largely on supposition, and it remains most likely that the textual variation is the result of assimilation of this text to 2 Cor 5:10. See Metzger 1975.

<sup>487</sup> The issue in verse 4 is accountability and acceptability to Christ in the present, rather than punishment or approval at the final judgement, see Dunn 804 and Käsemann 370.

<sup>488</sup> According to Kreitzer 1987, 111-29, in this passage and in 2 Cor 5:10 there is "interplay and conceptual overlap between God and Christ with respect to the execution of Final Judgement". He sees a "referential shift" in Paul from the "Day of the Lord Yahweh" to the "Day of the Lord Jesus Christ" (e.g. 1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2), and finds precedent for this in Jewish pseudepigraphical documents such as 1 Enoch, 4 Esra and 2 Baruch, in which, he contends, "the functional overlap between messianic agent and God is so complete that it tends to slide into an identification between God and his agent in which the

Paul continues in the same vein in the next few verses. In verse 11 he prefixes a slightly modified version of Isaiah 45:23 with the phrase ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος, "as I live, says the Lord", and depicts the risen Christ declaring God to be the ultimate sovereign and judge who alone will be worshipped at the end time; then every knee will bow to Christ (ἐμοί) and every tongue praise God (ἐξομολογήσεται).<sup>489</sup> The point of the quotation is underscored in verse 12 with his own affirmation that each individual will have to give account of himself to God.<sup>490</sup>

Similarly, in verses 17-18, having cited Christ as the authority for his views on the food laws (14:14) and warned against being instrumental in the destruction of one for

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boundaries separating them are breached" (90). However, "conceptual overlap" is not the same as "referential shift". Paul's ability to move easily between language about Christ and language about God does not mean that he thinks God and Christ are the same, as Kreitzer comes near to suggesting (for example, he speaks of having explored one of the "borderlands of ontology"[170]). See Dunn 32, also cited by Richardson 1994, 275 note 2.) What it does mean is that he understands God and Christ to share the same *functions* with regard to judgement: they both are said to be arbiters of judgement at the end time. It is thus far more accurate to speak, with Richardson, of a "functional overlap" (N. Richardson 1994, 278 note 2). Whether Paul speaks of God or Christ as the main figure depends largely on his purpose in any given context.

<sup>489</sup>*Contra* Käsemann 373 who holds that κύριος is equivalent to θεός here and that God is declaring himself sovereign. In support of this interpretation Dunn 810 argues that the "as I live" formula is nowhere else applied to Christ. In an effort to account for the use of κύριος here, Cranfield 710 has suggested that a "slip of memory" has caused Paul "inadvertently" to replace one formula with another. However, as Capes has recently argued, it is much more likely that Paul's replacement of the LXX's κατ' ἐμαυτοῦ ὀμνύω with the "As I live" formula (ζῶ ἐγώ), is deliberately intended to refer the reader to 14:9, in which Christ is said to have died and come to life (ἔζησεν). (Capes 1992, 123-130. The words are presumably taken from such passages as Num 14:28; Isa 49:18; Jer 22:24; Ezek 5:11). In this case, it would appear that Paul has deliberately combined Isaiah 45:23 with the "As I live" formula in order to make the point that Christ himself declares God to be the ultimate sovereign and judge. See Black 1971-72 who also thinks that the first part of the quotation refers to Christ and the second to God, the worship of Jesus as Lord being accompanied by universal thanksgiving to God (for this interpretation of ἐξομολογέω, see BGD 277), and cf. Phil 2:6-11.

<sup>490</sup>This theory renders it more likely that the τῷ θεῷ of verse 12 is original to Paul. The UBS committee, however, remains non-committal. See Metzger 1975, 531f.

whom Christ died (14:15), he refers, quite unexpectedly, and with considerable rhetorical effect, to the sovereignty of God as the ultimate authority for his instructions: οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρώσις καὶ πόσις ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (14:17).<sup>491</sup> Believers are under the universal eschatological reign of God and as such they have a righteous relationship with him. The peace and joy which will be the mark of the end time when Jews and Gentiles worship together without quarrel (15:7-13), should be a part of this reality, by means of the Holy Spirit.<sup>492</sup> However, if they succumb to wrangling and schism, their relationship with God will inevitably be damaged.

4.5. It appears, then, that as part of his strategy for unity, Paul deliberately stresses the sovereign rule of God over and above the authority of Christ in this passage. This allows Paul to speak to both sections of the community, and suits his purpose very well. On the one hand, he can reassure his weak brothers and sisters, who prefer to maintain Jewish practices, that the new community of believers is under the authority of the God of Israel - Christ's Lordship does not displace the sovereignty of God.<sup>493</sup> They should not, therefore, be undermined by those who think that they should give up their long held traditions. Paul's emphasis on the rule of God also serves as a reminder to the strong of the continuity between the new community and Israel. Implicitly, he repeats the warning that they should not despise the weak and reminds

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<sup>491</sup> If, as Thompson 1991, 201ff has suggested, this verse forms the centre of a *chiasmus*; it would seem that Paul sees this reference to ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as the key point in his argument. The chiastic structure is seen as commencing at v 13, completed at v 21, with the centre at vv 17 and 18. On the significance of *chiasmus* in Paul see Thomson 1995, especially 38-45, 220-26. For Jungel 1962, 26 note 1, this verse, with its reference to the consequences of the righteousness of God for the community, is the theological centre of chapters 12-15; see also Reumann 1982, 91.

<sup>492</sup> Pace Goulder 1994 who argues that Paul always speaks in terms of a future kingdom. The parallel structure in 1 Cor 4:20 strongly suggests that Paul has taken up a conventional formula and adapted it to suit his argument. There the Corinthians are warned that they should not look for evidence of God's sovereignty in the words of men but through the power which he gives them. On the kingdom of God motif in Paul see G. Johnson 1984.

<sup>493</sup> This tells against Capes' conclusion (1992, especially 164f) that while Jesus was considered distinct from God, the earliest church identified him with God, being in some sense Yahweh himself. The fact that Jesus was the object of veneration and devotion is not enough to prove that he is identified with Yahweh.

them that it is the Gentiles, rather than the Jewish believers who have been grafted into the olive tree.

Nevertheless, although the emphasis is on the continuity between the church and Israel in this passage, as Paul considers the significance of Christ's Lordship over the community, we are again reminded of the fact that this is a community unlike any other. And although the exclusivist language which was so evident in chapters 5, 6 and 8 is muted here, we still hear resonances of it as Paul reminds them of their special relationship with the risen Lord. Thus, despite Paul's clear desire to stress the similarity between the church and Israel here, traces of the tension in his thought are discernible. For the distinctive identity of the believing community remains: their existence and identity in relation to the Lordship of Christ sets them apart from the outside world. For them, according to Paul, pleasing God consists in living  $\tau\omega\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omega$ , and the God they worship is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (15:6).

## **5. Conclusion**

That Paul believes the church to be a part of Israel and at the same time radically different from it does not stem from confusion or even idealism on his part. Rather, our exposition of the Christological statement of 10:4 has shown that this has its roots in his beliefs about the role of Christ in history. Christ has opened up a new age, but Torah, although it belongs to the old era, is not obsolete. The Law is still valid, but since Christ has fulfilled it, its observance must be seen as unnecessary in the lives of believers. It is on this basis that he can take the rather surprising step of advising the weak at Rome effectively to live with "a foot in both camps". Despite the fact that most of Israel remains in the old aeon, her beliefs are not obsolete, and unbelieving Jews continue to have a privileged place in God's sight. The weak have to make an extraordinary leap in their thinking and recognise that Torah observance is unnecessary for them, and the strong equally cannot insist that it has no place in the life of the church.

As Paul argues this point he weights his argument theologically and stresses the authority of God rather than Christ. Jesus has authority over the community and is the example that they should follow. Every aspect of the believer's life is governed by the fact the he or she lives for the Lord. Once again we see Paul encouraging the community by emphasising their new identity in Christ. However, despite this, and despite the fact that he is Lord of the cosmos, it is God who is the ultimate sovereign and judge. As in 9:5, Jesus is not to be equated with God. The community has its identity in Christ, but its purpose is to worship the God of Israel. There is no sense in which believing in Jesus compromises allegiance to the God of Israel. In fact, belief in Christ is the very thing which brings believers to God. The church is, in Paul's mind, a part of Israel. On this basis, Paul can warn the strong against haughtiness and encourage the weak as they struggle with their new life in Christ and their desire to maintain a Jewish identity.

In order to get his point across to the Roman church, Paul stresses her close relationship with Israel: they all worship the same God. Yet, as we have seen, there is no doubt that there is also a profound difference between them. And at the end of the letter to the Romans we are left with the suspicion that the apostle cannot quite reconcile these two aspects of his thinking. For, despite his own best efforts to keep the lines open between church and Israel, there is both an exclusivist and supersessionist tendency in his thinking which cannot be ignored and which, from the unbelieving Jew's perspective must surely be offensive. As well as the implication which we saw in the last chapter that unbelieving Jews remain slaves of sin and are not sons of God, we have now had occasion to note Paul's suggestion that they have not only failed to understand their own Law and attain its goal, but that they have effectively reduced it to a matter of works.<sup>494</sup> Moreover, if faith and salvation are now Christologically defined (10:9), and the way to please God is through serving Christ (14:8), the implication of Paul's interpretation of righteousness by faith must be that the faith of the Jews, which remains thoroughly theocentric in nature, is ultimately of no import for their salvation.

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<sup>494</sup> See Wilckens II:211.

The emphasis on theology rather than Christology in 14:1-15:6 is not simply an expediency for the sake of peace in the Roman community. Paul, like the strong at Rome, knows that Torah observance is an unnecessary part of the new age. He also, like the weak, knows what it is to be a believer- very much a part of the new age, but with a Jewish identity which he cannot relinquish. The joy for Paul is that he knows that he does not have to abandon his Jewishness, and this, in part, is his message to the Jewish believers in Rome. Life in Christ, although quite different from life in the old era, is compatible with maintaining a Jewish identity because the church is continuous with Israel. Paul really does believe that the church and Israel are of the same family. However, as we have been discovering throughout this investigation, although this is a reasonable stance to take from Paul's own point of view, it is also rather precarious. Christology brings about discontinuity, and Paul's understanding of the nature of the new community, with its exclusivist and supersessionist tendency, entails the belief that the church is right and Israel wrong so far as Jesus Christ is concerned. And this, despite his best intentions and hopes, may be less than conducive to good family relations.



## Chapter 8

### Interpretation and Dialogue

#### 1. A Matter of Perspective

1.1. We began this study by noting Rosemary Ruether's view that Paul may be held partly responsible for Christian anti-Semitism, and Lloyd Gaston's argument that there is nothing in Paul which could be considered "anti-Judaic". We saw that there is currently a broad spectrum of scholarly opinion as to the relationship between the church and Israel in Paul's thinking. With this in mind, we set out to analyse Paul's thinking with regard to the Jews. Is Ruether right, we asked, to say that anti-Semitism is the "left hand" of Paul's Christology? In chapter two, we saw that in Rom 14:1-15:6, Paul advocates that those who wish to observe Torah may do so, and that the strong should, if need be, enable them to observe *kashrut* and feast days. This suggested that Paul is far from anti-Judaic, but continues to hold the traditions of Israel in high regard, even if he does think that they are unnecessary in the new era. In chapter 3 of the thesis, this interpretation was supported by exegesis of those sections of the epistle which deal specifically with the place of Israel in God's plan. The Jews remain the chosen people of God and the Gentiles have been given the opportunity to share in their privilege.

This first part of the study, therefore, supported the view of Hays and Wright that, for Paul, the church is directly continuous with Israel. However, bearing in mind the warnings of Martyn that Christ's coming is an "apocalyptic" event which brings about an entirely new age, we proceeded to consider the Christological ideas and language of the letter to assess the significance of Christ in Paul's thinking for both Israel's history and the new community of believers.

In chapter 4 of the thesis we found that Paul's belief that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel supports the view that he considers the church to be continuous with Israel. We did, however, note the possibility of an implied supersessionism in Paul's thinking which considers the church to be living *κατὰ πνεῦμα* while most Jews are, through their unbelief, limiting themselves to an appreciation of their privileges

κατὰ σάρκα. An examination of Romans 3:21ff in chapter 5 further supported the stance of Wright and Hays: the Messiah has brought about the circumstances in which God's plan for humanity might be fulfilled. We stopped short, however, of wholly advocating Hays' interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ, which could suggest that the need for faith on the part of men and women, and the idea of the faithfulness of God could in some way be diminished.

In chapter 6, we considered the significance of Christology for believers as it is found in Romans 5 to 8. We saw that here the difference between the church and Israel becomes much more evident as Paul, as part of his strategy to encourage unity within the community, stresses the new identity which believers have in Christ - the fact that they live in a new age and are freed from the power of sin, and that they may consider themselves to be children of God. We saw that supersessionism (i.e. the idea that the church has superseded Israel as the place of God's privilege) is implied here and is enhanced by an exclusivist tendency (his belief that salvation is available only through Christ) which sits uneasily with his continued belief in the privilege of Israel. The discontinuity between the church and Israel, we argued, is much more to the fore here, and a deep ambivalence in Paul's mind towards his own people and their traditions may be detected. Paul continues to think of unbelieving Israel as the privileged people; however, he also thinks that believers in Christ share in these privileges, have grasped their meaning, and are enjoying them in a way that unbelieving Israel cannot.

Chapter 7, which looked at the relationship between Christology and the Law, noted that this ambivalence has its roots in Christology itself - that Christ constitutes the end of the Law as a necessity in the new age as well as its fulfilment and goal. We ended by returning to Romans 14:1-15:6, and investigating the Christological language and ideas there. We saw that Paul uses these ideas in much the same way as in chapters 5 to 8, and that the same tension in his thinking with regard to the church's relationship with Israel is present, but that he seems deliberately to stress the authority of God and the continuity between church and Israel. The church

community has its identity in the Lord, but the God of Israel remains the ultimate authority.

1.2. In a recent essay, Charles B. Cousar rightly notes that both continuity and discontinuity between the church and Israel are part of Paul's thinking. The coming of Christ necessarily entails both. Cousar writes,

"It is not simply a matter of getting the right balance - forty percent of discontinuity and sixty percent of continuity - but of discerning the role of each in relation to the other. Martyn's metaphor of marriage is helpful. When partners unite and share their lives together, both will likely change but the two will not be dissolved into one. Each has his or her own particular role to play and only by doing so can the marriage be a mutually enriching union."<sup>495</sup>

Cousar's own feeling on the matter is that "the apocalyptic presentation of Christ provides the essential lens through which God, Israel and the church are viewed."<sup>496</sup> This may well be so, but it simply reiterates the warnings not to be drawn in hook, line and sinker by the arguments of Hays and Wright. A balance must be found: there is truth in Martyn's position as well. There can be little doubt that the apostle considers the church to be continuous with, and indeed a part of, Israel. At the same time, there are elements of Paul's thought which indicate a profound discontinuity between the church and Israel.

As far as Romans is concerned, however, it seems that Paul himself has deliberately tipped the balance in favour of continuity. Not only does he stress the privilege of Israel in God's plan, he also emphasises that the purpose of the church is to worship God.<sup>497</sup> His reasons for this are both political and personal. He wishes to promote

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<sup>495</sup> Cousar 1995, 209.

<sup>496</sup> Cousar 1995, 210.

<sup>497</sup> Besides 15:7-13, cf. also 12:1. God's mercies, shown above all in the Christ event, have made it possible once more for men and women to worship God in a rational way (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν 12:1) as was always intended. This view takes διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ in 12:1 to refer to Paul's argument throughout chapters 1-11, and not merely chapters 9-12 (see Cranfield 596; Furnish 102). Minds which were previously ἀδόκιμος (1:28), and unable to discern the will of God may now be renewed and made capable of discerning what is good and pleasing and

unity in Rome; he may also want to prove his "Jewishness" to the church in Jerusalem as well as to the unbelieving Jewish community itself. But he also has very deep emotional ties to Israel which his theology, as well as his heart, tell him should not be severed. In Romans, we may well be witnessing the apostle's attempts to prevent a further breach between himself and his kindred, and possibly, between the church and the unbelieving Jewish community. He really does think that the church is part of Israel, and despite his belief that his people have stumbled over the stumbling stone as Scripture foretold (9:32f), he cannot understand why they have refused to accept their Messiah.

1.3. In this sense then, we can see that Rosemary Ruether's view of Pauline Christology as "anti-Judaic" is wrong. From Paul's perspective, there should be no quarrel with Israel - he does not set out to attack it. He does feel duty-bound to criticise the majority's lack of belief and to point out the consequences of their actions, but he never says that Israel as a whole has lost her covenant status with God, or that her theology or cult is faulty in itself, either prior to or after the coming of Christ. And although his own particular calling is as the apostle to the Gentiles, he retains the hope that through it, and the conversion of the Gentiles, he will somehow bring about the conversion of his own people.

Yet there is also a sense in which Ruether is right. There are elements of Paul's christology which lead him to opinions and beliefs which could be perceived as "anti-Jewish". For, as we have seen, although he does not declare Torah obsolete or polemicise against the Jewish way of life, there is a clear supersessionist element in his thinking in which he understands the church to be the natural successor to Israel. He does think that the church has got it right, while Judaism is wrong. There is a sense in which Israel has limited herself to being God's people *κατὰ σάρκα*,

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perfect (12:2). See also C. Evans 1979 and Hooker 1985. On the translation of *λογικῆν* as "rational" rather than "spiritual" (*pace* Barrett, 231), see C. Evans 1979, 18-20 who cites Philo as support for this interpretation, and Daly 1978, 243-6. See also Smiga 1991: "rational worship" does not mean judging and despising one another, but includes striving for the unity of weak and strong so that the body of Christ may function as it should (12:4ff). It is also noteworthy in this connection that Paul's instructions on obeying civil authorities in chapter 13 are given a theological rather than Christological slant.

without going on to enjoy his privileges *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. The more he thinks of the special relationship which the church has with the risen Christ, the more evident this strand in his thinking becomes. Christ has such significance for those who believe, that he brings them into a new age, they become new people with new identities, and have a particular relationship with God. These ideas contribute to an "exclusivist" tendency within the church itself, and can be seen as contributing to the kind of anti-Semitic attitude which has been a feature of the Christian church throughout her history. Moreover, they have implications for the status and identity of Israel which are likely to be offensive and alienating from an unbelieving Jew's point of view, and are thus less than conducive to good relations between the two groups. There is even a sense in which his belief that "all Israel will be saved", as Boyarin and Ruether have noted, can be seen as "anti-Judaic" in its implication that Israel's religious system has lost its own salvific significance.

But if Ruether is right (to a certain extent) - where does that leave Jewish-Christian dialogue? If there are elements of Paul's thought which can be construed as "anti-Judaic" (even if this is unintentional), can he be referred to in contemporary Jewish Christian dialogue, or must we dispense with him altogether? It is my belief that we should not, that the apostle does have something to contribute to the modern debate and that Christians can still refer to him as a guide. However, before we consider this, there is one further task. In the introduction to the thesis it was stated that it is naive for Christian scholars to think that they can determine what is "anti-Jewish" in Paul's thinking without checking with Jewish readers. We have suggested that Paul's supersessionism and his exclusivist tendencies may well be offensive to them. We must now check with Jewish writers on Paul to see if this is a reasonable assumption to make. Do they find implications or statements in Paul that the religious beliefs and traditions of Israel are obsolete or ineffective?<sup>498</sup> Is our argument that Paul's implied particularism and supersessionism are offensive and therefore alienating to Jews reasonable from the Jewish perspective? To answer these questions and contribute to our assessment of Paul's usefulness in modern Jewish-Christian dialogue, we will conduct a brief survey of modern Jewish readings

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<sup>498</sup> See above, page 26.

of Paul, in order to assess how far they consider him to be "anti-Jewish". We will initially try to gain a general impression of Jewish perceptions of Paul, starting with Montefiore's work at the beginning of this century, and ending with Alan Segal. We will then consider four modern major Jewish thinkers on Paul in greater detail: Martin Buber, Leo Baeck, H.J. Schoeps and Daniel Boyarin. What objections to Paul's views on Israel do these writers have?

## 2. Some Jewish Views of Paul

2.1. In his essays *Judaism and St Paul* Claude Montefiore argues that the Judaism against which the apostle speaks in his letters is not the Rabbinic religion with which he, Montefiore, is familiar. Rather, it is an impoverished Judaism characteristic of the Diaspora in Paul's time, in which the idea of the loving fatherhood of God has receded into the background, the Law has become burdensome rather than a blessing, and mystery religions have had considerable influence. Montefiore implies that any criticism of Jewish teaching and tradition on Paul's part is the result of a profound misunderstanding of true Judaism, and is therefore excusable.

Montefiore's agenda is to find out what relationship, if any, Paul might have with a "modern liberal Jew" such as himself, who wishes to establish the validity of all religions. The result of this slant is that Montefiore is offended not so much by any critique of Judaism in Paul, but by Paul's particularism, his belief that only the Christian believer can possess the Spirit of God.<sup>499</sup> He finds this "abhorrent" and incomprehensible in comparison with the Jewish belief that all are equal before God. The principle problem with his work, however, is that his theory about Paul's original Judaism is based on supposition and conjecture, as he himself admits. We simply do not know whether Paul had experienced "only the horrid feeling of the unconquered evil inclination gnawing in his soul" prior to conversion (115). Montefiore has also been criticised for not making use of contemporary scholarship and for understanding Rabbinism as a unified whole.<sup>500</sup> Nevertheless, his work is interesting as he is the

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<sup>499</sup> Montefiore 1914, 164. For criticism of Montefiore, see Davies 1948, 1-16 and Schoeps 1961, 25ff.

<sup>500</sup> Schoeps 1961, 26.

first Jewish writer to be sympathetic towards Paul and to make a genuine attempt to understand him.

J. Klausner considers most of Paul's thought to have been Jewish, but that it has been coloured by its pagan environment. The result is an anti-Jewish religion in which the sharp edge of Torah has been taken away and the figure of a dying and rising Messiah, which is foreign to Judaism, introduced.<sup>501</sup> For Klausner, Paul is a mystic who also has practical administrative skills which account for the success of his mission. As well as declaring that monotheism is compromised by placing Jesus and God on the same footing, Klausner cannot understand the deification of a resurrected Messiah. These he calls "unnatural beliefs".

Two aspects of Klausner's argument mar his work: first, his fanciful insistence that Paul's conversion experience was actually an epileptic seizure during which he had the idea that Jesus was the Messiah; and secondly his overriding concern to promote the cause of Jewish nationalism. The first must be considered to be sheer speculation: the accounts of the Damascus Road incident contain nothing to support such a diagnosis. As to the second, Klausner's main protest against Paul is that the apostle is concerned for the individual to the extent that he is said to have rejected the collective Jewish nation.<sup>502</sup> Although this stand-point is understandable given that Klausner was writing at the height of German anti-Semitic activity, his complaint can be shown to be mistaken in the light of Romans 9-11 in which Paul is clearly concerned for the fate of Israel as a whole.

Samuel Sandmel manages to keep Paul within the confines of Judaism, while also accusing him of attacking Judaism. Sandmel sees the entire New Testament as a "repository for hostility" to Jews and Judaism.<sup>503</sup> He recognises that Paul remains a Jew in his own perception, but argues that in his hands Christianity becomes a Greek movement entirely different from Judaism.<sup>504</sup> Hellenistic influence explains the

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<sup>501</sup> Klausner 1943.

<sup>502</sup> See Jacob 1974, 162-71.

<sup>503</sup> Sandmel 1978b.

<sup>504</sup> Sandmel 1970; 1978a, 308-36.

presence of elements in Paul which are foreign to Judaism. He considers that the abrogation of the Law is a criticism of the very essence of Judaism, and objects to Paul's view of Judaism as an inferior religion which merely prepared the way for Christianity. Sandmel's work is popular rather than scholarly, and his ideas about Paul are largely dependent on Christian scholarship, in particular the work of E.R. Goodenough.

For Hyam Maccoby, writing in the 1980's and 90's, Paul is the "originator of Christian anti-Semitism."<sup>505</sup> Paul, born a Gentile, and having failed as a Pharisee following his conversion to Judaism, has become Christian in a state of disillusionment. He then creates the Christian "myth" by deifying Jesus, transforming Jesus' death into a cosmic battle between good and evil, and takes over current Gnostic ideas of the Jews as the representatives of cosmic evil. His anti-Law ideas are, according to Maccoby, taken from Gnostic views which saw the commandments of God as enslaving and petty, and the Jews as the pawns of the demiurge. The coming of Christ has now made this Law obsolete. Paul's "isolation of the Jews as divinely appointed Opposers, together with his introduction of the mystery religion theme of the death of a divine figure by violence" opened up the way for "anti-Semitism" within Christianity.<sup>506</sup> Maccoby's scathing critique, which largely ignores the insights of the "new perspective", has not been accepted by mainstream scholarship because (among other things) it depends on the anachronistic use of second and third century Gnostic texts and the speculative use of "Ebionite" documents to explain Paul's thought.

2.2. Scholem Ben Chorin thinks he can understand the "pre-conversion" Paul.<sup>507</sup> He too is a Diaspora Jew, and feels he can identify with difficulties Paul had in keeping the statutes of the Law. Paul's thought is rooted in Judaism - his belief that the coming of the Messiah means the age of Torah has passed. His mistake lies in his reduction of Jesus Christ to an abstraction - the "shadow of a vision". His religion is based on a highly individualistic apocalyptic experience and excludes those who do

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<sup>505</sup> Maccoby 1986, 203.

<sup>506</sup> Maccoby 1991, 88.

<sup>507</sup> Ben Chorin 1970.



not share his visionary outlook. But Paul is not anti-Judaic - his Gentile mission is dictated by his love for Israel; when the Gentiles come in, so the Jews will be saved. The outburst of 1 Thess 2:15-16 can be shown to be an example of "Jewish self-hatred" rather than anti-Jewish polemic. Ben Chorin tends to overplay this "personal" understanding of Paul's anxiety, and his theory that Paul was influenced by Philo is doubtful, it being more likely that both had recourse to a common Diaspora tradition. His book is interesting, however, for its very sympathetic view of Paul's thought at a time when Lutheran influence still held sway among Christian scholars.

One of the more bizarre reconstructions of Paul's pre-conversion *Angst* is provided by Rubenstein who also feels that he can identify with Paul in his struggle to obey the statutes of the Law.<sup>508</sup> He believes (but without producing evidence to back up his claim) that Paul, like the author himself, was driven by an intense fear of death, which was relieved by his belief in Jesus Christ. On this basis Rubenstein proceeds to carry out an analysis of Paul along Freudian lines. Rubenstein does not think that Paul attacks Judaism, but that he is deluded in his views about it.

Alan Segal, writing at the same time as Maccoby but taking the opposite view, is very much influenced by Christian scholarship. Like Gaston and Gager, he is reluctant to ascribe any anti-Judaic thought to Paul and thinks it is possible to see the Gospel as the medium of salvation only for the Gentiles, not for the Jews.<sup>509</sup> Gentiles have to be saved by faith, but Jews still have the validity of Torah unchallenged. Segal's main thesis is that Paul converted from one sect of Judaism to another, that the apostle did not think he had left Judaism.<sup>510</sup> Paul's views on the Law are not to be seen as anti-Jewish because of the perspective given by his conversion - now that the Messiah has come there should be no need for Gentile Christians to see the obligations of Torah as a way of salvation. Segal is right to emphasise the change of perspective brought about by the Damascus Road experience, but unfortunately his

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<sup>508</sup> Rubenstein 1972.

<sup>509</sup> Segal 1986, 111.

<sup>510</sup> Segal 1990.

tendency to view Paul's thought as explainable in terms of Paul's conversion fails in the end because so little is known about the Damascus Road experience itself.

2.3. We can see that there is considerable diversity of opinion among these Jewish writers on Paul. Some (e.g. Klausner, Sandmel, Maccoby) take the view that Paul is actively engaged in polemic against Jews and Judaism. Segal (very much influenced by the "new perspective" and at the other end of the scale) has come to the conclusion that Paul is not hostile to Judaism and has no criticisms to make of its religious teachings.. Ben Chorin is remarkable in that he emphasises the Jewishness of Paul's beliefs well before this became popular among Christian scholars. Between these two extremes, some are prepared to exonerate Paul of certain charges of offence on the grounds that the Judaism with which he is familiar must be of an inferior nature (Montefiore), and that his ideas about Judaism are deluded (Rubenstein). Those who take an unfavourable view of Paul tend to be less interested in his own religious experience than in *Religionsgeschichtliche* questions of the origin of his theological ideas.<sup>511</sup> It is more common, however, to find a certain sympathy with and for Paul's spiritual struggles, and an openness to Paul's thinking for its own sake.

We will now turn to consider in greater detail four major Jewish thinkers of this century who have tackled Paul, to try to identify which particular aspects of the apostle's thought might be considered offensive from their perspective. With the exception of Schoeps, their questions and approach are different from those of Christian scholarship. Buber and Baeck both set out to show that Christianity is inferior to Judaism and consider Paul's writings as part of their argument. Schoeps declares himself to be an objective historian of religion, but despite his claims reveals his own religious reaction to Paul's thought. Daniel Boyarin, who describes himself as a post-modern Talmudic Jew, sets out to see if Paul can help him to answer questions about the place of the twentieth century Jew in the world.

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<sup>511</sup> On the idea of a Paul influenced by paganism, Markus Barth (1971, 15) writes, "Whenever such a concept is furthered and respected, Paul must be seen as the adversary of pious Jews, and Jews who love the Law must be his adversaries. The primacy of pagan influence on the apostle to the Gentiles is not only assumed but also used to legitimate pagan elements in the teaching, worship and life of the church."

### 3. Buber, Baeck, Schoeps and Boyarin.

3. 1. In *Two Types of Faith* Martin Buber undertakes a study of both Christianity and Judaism. Israel's faith - defined with the Hebrew term *emunah* - is a living dynamic relationship with God, the collective faith of a nation, based on the covenant given by God.<sup>512</sup> This is to be contrasted with Christian "faith" (identified with the Greek term *pistis*) which requires belief in a particular tenet or dogma. Although Paul does not invent this kind of *pistis* faith, he is responsible for its development, and the creation of a religion which is not only inferior to Judaism but quite different from anything a Jew can understand.

According to Paul, God has provided the proposition which is to be believed, and demands adherence to it. But this God does not seek to have a continuing close dynamic relationship with his people. Rather, he demands a response to a particular tenet (as in the case of Abraham), and only this will ensure that the obedient believer is accounted righteous before him. God is not primarily concerned with his creation or with individuals but with his plan for the world, and will exercise his wrath against those who thwart his plan through disbelief. The inevitable result of this emphasis on adherence to dogma is the idea that the church is superior to Israel. If the Jews have failed to adhere to the tenet of faith, they have disobeyed God through unbelief. This implies that Jews who do not believe in Christ are not righteous, and that their assurance of a continued covenantal relationship before God is ultimately false.

For Buber, the Christian God is capricious, as the Pauline motif of "hardening" shows (Rom 9:18; 2 Cor 3:14ff). The hearts of men and women are hardened by God, not in the Old Testament sense of divine intervention in extreme situations, but in the sense of a rejection of individuals, such as Pharaoh in Rom 9, whose destiny then becomes inevitable. Similarly, God is severe and has demanded the impossible of men and women - the fulfilment of the Law - in order to force them to fall back on divine grace.

In Buber's view, the creation of Christian dogma leads to a distancing between God and the human race. He objects to what he sees as the limitation of faith to an

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<sup>512</sup>Buber 1951.

individual response, and thinks that *pistis* can never be a dynamic relationship with God. The Christian, of course, would say precisely the opposite, that Christ makes it possible for men and women to have the very *emunah* relationship with God of which Buber speaks.

Buber complains that Romans 11:29 is the only instance in Paul where the grace of God is mentioned without reference to Christ, thus shutting Israel out. But it can be argued that as far as the Jews are concerned, the exception of 11:29 is highly significant, making it clear that Paul does not lose sight of the covenant of God with his own people or of the importance of Israel as a nation in God's plan. Nor is the apostle completely unconcerned with the *emunah* type of faith for those who believe in Christ, as the ἐν Χριστῷ motif, the idea of a close continuing relationship between Christ and the believer, makes clear. The Christian reader could argue against Buber's conception of a capricious God by pointing out that Paul's use of the ideas of God's "hardening" and wrath is, in Romans at least, set within a framework of God's mercy towards Jew and Gentile alike, and serves the ultimate purpose of showing that God has not rejected his people.

Buber's exegesis can be exciting, and we could wish for more. For example, in his treatment of Romans 9:30f, he gives an insight into Paul which few Christian interpreters noted until very recently: the recognition that the faith-works antithesis does not apply to the Jews before the coming of Christ.<sup>513</sup> Prior to Sanders, the traditional Protestant view had been that when Paul accused Israel of pursuing works instead of faith, he was declaring that Israel had always been a nation without faith, and was condemning it as such. But Buber saw, before any Christian writer did (so far as I know), that Paul was only speaking of Israel's lack of belief in the risen Christ. He is not saying that Israel has always been a faithless nation. Buber's Paul is thus much more measured in his critique of Judaism than is allowed by many of his Christian contemporaries.

Despite his complaint that Paul makes Christ the only "door" to salvation, Buber is remarkably unconcerned by the apostle's belief that the church has taken Israel's place

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<sup>513</sup> See above, chapter 7 section 2.

as God's special people. In his insistence on an antithesis between faith and works of the Law in Paul, Buber is no different from mainstream Pauline exegesis of his day. Yet he does not engage in polemic, as we might expect, against the "anti-Judaism" in Paul which this might suggest. What really worries Buber is Paul's view of an unloving and remote God, which he thinks is erroneous, impoverished and dangerous for the existential well-being of all men and women. We can see why he would want to confront false theology, but why does he not defend Judaism against the claims of Paul, or at least go further to point out where Paul's view of *Judaism* is faulty?

Part of the answer may lie in his belief that Christianity actually poses no threat to Jews and Judaism. For Buber, the evidence does not support Christianity's claims. As he pointed out to the conservative Christian theologian Karl Schmidt in 1933 - the world is quite patently as yet unredeemed.<sup>514</sup> While he could have great sympathy for the earthly Jesus, and even go so far as to call him his "great brother",<sup>515</sup> the supposed Messiah simply had not done what he was supposed to do: there has been no great "caesura" in history. It is this, perhaps, which prevented Buber from reacting angrily to Schmidt's voicing of the traditional Christian view that the church is the true Israel - he could dismiss it as self-evidently false. Since the events of World War II could only serve to confirm his belief, this might also explain the lack of concern over Paul's supersessionist view of Israel in *Two Types of Faith*.

Another clue might lie in his remarkable ability to recognise, as Stegemann puts it, "an untouchable certainty of faith", the ability to see that firmly held ideas are to be found on both sides and that, ultimately, the one will never understand the other on some issues. Buber is certain that Israel remains the people of God. Yet he can write that "The gates of God are open to all. The Christian need not go via Judaism, nor the Jew via Christianity, in order to enter into God"(142). Thus, although the "mission to the Jews" is intolerable to him, he does not polemicise against it, but tries to enable Christians to understand from the Jewish point of view, to see instead the need for dialogue and a renewal of Christianity "from its Jewish roots".<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> A report of the discussion between Schmidt and Buber may be found in Schmidt 1981.

<sup>515</sup> Buber 1951, 12.

3.2. In his early work, Leo Baeck also sets out to show that Christianity is inferior to Judaism. Like Buber, he has great sympathy for Jesus and his earthly ministry, but feels that problems have begun with Paul, who has left Judaism and changed the character of this new movement beyond all recognition. Jesus had taught a strictly ethical religion - the response of humanity to the demands and commands of God - but Paul's stress on the need to believe in Jesus Christ meant that he "wound up with sacrament and dogma" and invents a religion wholly different from Judaism.<sup>517</sup>

These ideas, expressed in his 1921 essay "Mystery and Commandment," are developed further in his famous essay "Romantic Religion".<sup>518</sup> Judaism is the "classical" religion which has kept its ethical foundation, while Christianity is "romantic", imbued with emotion and concerned with the pursuit of mystical experience. For Baeck, such a religion is vacuous and sentimental, the consequence of the "transformation" which took place in Paul on the Damascus road.

Paul could maintain his belief that Jesus is the Messiah and remain within the confines of Judaism if two fundamental ideas did not collide in his mind. First, Paul's Jewish background teaches him that if the Messiah has come, a new era has begun. Baeck writes,

"At that time the view was prevalent that there were three epochs of history: first that of chaos, of *Tohu-wabohu*; then that of the Torah, which began with the revelation on Mount Sinai, and finally, that of the Messiah. If this last epoch has begun, it followed therefore that the one of Judaism and of its Bible must have come to its termination [Sanhedrin 97a; cf. Jer Meg 70d]" (93).

This means that the Law, which is part of the old age, has no place in the new. Paul has to become "anti-Law" and say that those who uphold Torah are working against Christ. If the new age has come in Christ, it follows that Christ must be the "end of the Law" as a means to salvation and freedom. The second factor stems from Paul's

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<sup>516</sup> Stegemann in Rothschild 1990, 113, 118.

<sup>517</sup> Baeck 1925.

<sup>518</sup> Baeck 1922/38.

hellenistic background. According to Baeck, the sacraments are taken over by Paul "almost unchanged from ancient romanticism". Baptism and the Eucharist are not symbols but have "miraculous divine energy", being the means through which the relationship between the deity and men and women is maintained, and through which humanity's experience of God becomes real. This kind of "mysticism" constitutes the difference between Paul and Judaism.

In these early essays Baeck is concerned with the "essence" of Judaism and Christianity, the essential elements which determine their distinctive natures.<sup>519</sup> His treatment of Paul is only one part of his argument. In a later essay, "The Faith of Paul", Baeck turns to the Pauline texts.<sup>520</sup> He continues to regard the sacramental aspects of Paul's religion as the product of pagan ideas, with no debt to Judaism whatsoever. As for Christology, Paul has taken the notion of a resurrected saviour from the mystery religions. But this is to be balanced with his recognition that Christ as Messiah is a thoroughly Jewish concept for Paul, who sees the Messianic age as having begun - the result of the coming of a "son of man" figure of the type found in the vision of Daniel. Ultimately, however, the belief that the Messiah has brought redemption is incompatible with belief in the continued validity of Torah.

While we may criticise Baeck for an exaggerated view of pagan influence on Paul (he is very much a child of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* of his time), and the anachronistic application of the term "romantic" to first century Christian belief,<sup>521</sup> we must also marvel at the extent to which he allows Paul to stay within Judaism in this later essay. He recognises the great depth of feeling which the apostle has for his people and even acknowledges that Paul saw the salvation (and therefore mission) of the Gentiles as based in Jewish thought. Even the use of Stoic language is said to be well within the Jewish sphere. Paul, according to Baeck, "did not step out of the Jewish compass and the Jewish sphere" (107).

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<sup>519</sup> In this Baeck is stimulated by A. von Harnack 1901.

<sup>520</sup> Baeck 1952.

<sup>521</sup> A point made by J.L. Martyn in his introduction to Baeck's thought in Rothschild 1990, 34.

As far as the Law is concerned, although the Torah is part of the old age, Baeck thinks that Paul has not rejected it completely. The Law constitutes the road leading to the goal, the "written" leading to the "fulfilled". It is no longer necessary in the new age, but it has had an essential part to play in the preparation for it. Thus for Baeck, unlike most Christian scholars, the question of the Law fades into the background and is not seen as the central issue between Paul and Judaism.

Baeck is not upset by Paul's belief that the Messiah has come. But he cannot tolerate the idea that Christ has become the risen Lord who is worshipped in the community. Although he does not think that Paul equates Jesus with God, he does object to the worship of Jesus taking over from that of God, and the replacement of the old religion with something quite different in nature. Christ has become such an important figure ("the final answer") in Paul's mind that Christianity cannot be said to be theocentric.

"A turning point in the history of religion, of monotheism, is seen here. The old theocentric faith of Judaism is superseded by the new Christ-centred faith. The belief in God, the One, has receded before the belief in Christ. Here is a parting of the ways in religion. It is true the faithful would not think of the Messiah without being conscious of God; they would not lift up their minds toward the Son without at the same time being aware of the Father. But the human mind is such that an older belief is impaired by a new one, and the new belief commands the way of the future. What happened or evolved afterwards was involved already in the beginning. God, as it were, was removed into the background".<sup>522</sup>

In this later essay, Baeck's attitude to Christianity is unchanged; he still sees it as a "romantic" and sentimental religion with little or no ethical content.<sup>523</sup> However, he no longer sees Paul as setting out to introduce a new religion, although, as the quotation above shows, this is recognised as an inevitable development. It remains paradoxical that Paul's own Jewish world-view has partly contributed to his move

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<sup>522</sup> Baeck 1952, 97.

<sup>523</sup> *Contra* Meyer 1961, 105f; cf. Friedlander 1973, 137.



away from traditional Judaism. Paul's thought is grounded in the Bible, but at the same time he believes that the Messianic age has come. As he had written in "Judaism in the Church",

"He had lived so deeply within Judaism that spiritually he could never become altogether free from it. Whether he willed it or not, he always found his way back into the Jewish paths of thought. The Jew, which he still remained at the very depth of his being throughout his entire life, constantly kept up in his soul a struggle with the man of the new faith which he had become. The discord, which is to be found in his teaching as well as in his personality is to be explained on the ground of this fact."<sup>524</sup>

It is remarkable that after his experiences in Theresienstadt concentration camp Baeck was prepared to consider Paul on his own merits. It is even more remarkable that he became rather more sympathetic towards the apostle than he had been before the war. Perhaps because of his experience, Baeck can understand, to some extent, a crisis of spiritual identity in individuals, and he sees Paul as struggling to maintain his integrity as a Jew. At any rate, Baeck is now prepared to go some way towards reclaiming Paul for Judaism and reduce the gap between the apostle and the Jew, Jesus Christ.

3.3. In the first systematic study of Paul to be produced by a Jewish writer, Schoeps states that his aim is to see the true significance of Paul within primitive Christianity.<sup>525</sup> Having first provided a survey of Pauline scholarship, he proceeds to give an account of Paul's views on eschatology, soteriology, the Law, and saving history. Following Albert Schweitzer, Schoeps believes that eschatology forms the centre of Paul's thought and that "justification by faith" plays a secondary role. The Messianic age has dawned, and Paul has been expecting an imminent parousia. However, the return of Jesus has been delayed, and Paul has to accommodate this. Thus, for example, he develops a sacramental theology which neutralises the delay,

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<sup>524</sup> Baeck 1925, 95.

<sup>525</sup> Schoeps 1961.

conveys to the church the presence of the risen Christ, and allows the believer to maintain a close relationship with the deity (111).

Schoeps finds Paul's soteriology, the idea that the Messiah atones for the sins of humanity, to be based on Jewish ideas: the suffering servant in Isa 53, the *aqedah* (Gen 22), and the motif of vicarious suffering which is found, for example, in the Psalms of Solomon, and the Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs (129). But the transference of these ideas to a divine son of God, and the exaltation of the Messiah "beyond all human proportions to the status of real divinity" is radically un-Jewish. It is blasphemous, and reveals the influence of pagan myths. Such teaching, according to Schoeps, compromises monotheism and divine transcendence, interrupts the norm of creation, and is intolerable to Judaism (162).

In accordance with Jewish tradition, Paul believes that the dawning of the Messianic age means the end of the age of Torah. This is the first thing with which the non-believing Jew will disagree - there is no evidence that the Messiah has come. Nevertheless Schoeps can understand Paul's thinking thus far because it is based on Jewish thought. However, he also detects some errors in Paul's view. He thinks that Paul reduces Torah to a matter of *halakah* to the exclusion of any haggadic element. For Paul, the Law is unfulfillable, so he sees Torah as "a law unto death" (Rom 8:2-3; Gal 3:21), a view which is completely mistaken. On the contrary, for the Jew, the Law is a means for life (Deut 32:47). Paul's view of the Law shows a failure to understand that what is important is the intention to fulfil Torah, that the Law was not merely a sum of prescriptions, but was given to bind men and women to God in a close relationship. It must be seen in the context of the covenant which has been given to bind the Jew closely to God, and a new covenant in which the Law is abrogated, can only be in antithesis to the old.

The success of the Gentile mission raised the question of the place of the Jews in God's plan of salvation. In Romans 9-11, Paul argues that the unbelief of the Jews becomes part and parcel of God's plan for the redemption of mankind. The second coming of Christ is closely connected with the final conversion of the Jewish people (Rom 11:25), and the delay in the parousia is to be explained by their continued

unbelief. The new age has dawned and although in the end the Jews will be saved, for the present they are the enemies of God.

Whether eschatology or justification is the centre of Paul's thinking is still a bone of contention in Pauline studies. But whatever view one takes, there is little doubt that Schoeps plays down the "now and not yet" element in Paul's thought. He pays scant attention to the fact that although the new age has come, Paul does not consider the old age to be obsolete or even completed. Paul's use of scripture shows that he still believes these words to have some power in the new age, death is still to be defeated, and the full consummation of all that Jesus the Messiah promised has still to be achieved. Paraenesis is required precisely because there is still a battle with the old age to be waged.

The "now and not yet" aspect means that Paul is not entirely anti-Law, as Schoeps believes. Had Schoeps considered this more, he might have been able to accommodate the idea that τέλος can mean fulfilment as well as end, and that the Law for Paul is holy, just and good as well as a curse. He might also then have modified his idea that faith completely replaces the Torah or that Torah is divorced from the covenant in Paul's thought.

Other questions arise. For example, does Paul really deify Jesus as Schoeps thinks? As we have seen in this study, it can be argued that Paul never goes quite that far, always keeping Christ subordinate to God. The assertion that Paul reduces Torah to prescription is also questionable, given the extensive use of *haggadah* in his writings. With regard to method, Schoeps continually refers to Rabbinic sources as his yardstick for Judaism. This is not only anachronistic, but it also gives the impression that there was such a thing as a unified rabbinic view in Paul's day, the very error for which he rebukes Montefiore.

Schoeps' belief that Paul's view of Torah is mistaken means that although he finds the content of the apostle's thought distasteful, he cannot accuse him of being offensive to Judaism on this basis. Paul is thinking in Jewish terms and does not intend to criticise Jewish belief. Similarly, the deification of the Messiah is unacceptable to

Judaism, but the belief that the Messiah has come may be accommodated. What Schoeps does find deeply offensive is the implication that Jews who do not accept Jesus are no longer the true Israel, that Judaism is somehow inferior to the church. Closely related is the accusation that Paul "mutilates" the text, which the apostle thinks can be understood in the light of κύριος and πνεῦμα. According to Schoeps, Paul's use of Scripture is "a most arbitrary typological treatment of the history of Israel adapted to the needs of nascent evolving Christianity" (244). The idea that the new age supersedes the old entails the belief that Israel, and all it stands for, is secondary and inferior, and has significance only as the "type" of the church. This is seen particularly in his treatment of Abraham in Galatians 3:

"Since in this characteristic dialectical proof of the apostle, Abraham's inheritance rests on the strength of the promise, the title to that inheritance springs not ἐκ νόμου but ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας and Abraham received it ἐκ πίστεως. Conclusion: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως are the true υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ. If we add to this line of argument Gal 4:21-23 it becomes quite plain that, for Paul, descent from Abraham κατὰ σάρκα is utterly to be derided, since the Jews insist on appealing to their descent from Abraham as a biological guarantee of their spiritual election" (181f).

Schoeps' theory that Paul is mistaken in his interpretation of the Law has often been noted by Christian scholars. This last insight into Paul's "supersessionist" views, however, has not, to the best of my knowledge, been a matter for discussion. Recently, a very similar reading of Paul has been taken up by another Jewish writer, Daniel Boyarin, in his book *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*.<sup>526</sup>

3.4. Boyarin declares himself to be deeply concerned about the place of the Jewish people within the world, and committed, as he puts it, to the significance and continuation of Jewish culture and particularity. Christianity, he says, is the most powerful hegemonic cultural system in the world, and Paul is one of its main textual

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<sup>526</sup> Boyarin 1994. Boyarin is also very much interested in feminist critique, but this does not concern us here.

sources. Boyarin sets out to reassess these texts which have served as "major supports for theological anti-Judaism".

Boyarin's Paul is placed within the "thought world of the eclectic middle platonism of Greek speaking Judaism of the 1st century" in which all phenomena are divided into "binary relations" (e.g. flesh - spirit, Jew - Greek, men - women), and the phenomenal world is a representation in matter of a spiritual or ideal world which corresponds to it (59). Like other platonists, Paul's overriding desire is to look for unity and immovability in a world characterised by difference and change. He wants to find a way of understanding the fact that there are differences of race and gender in the world.

Besides being a platonist, however, Paul is also a Jew, and as such he belongs to a people and tradition whose ethnocentrism clashes with his Hellenistic desire for unity (52). The fundamental question for Paul is, "How could the God of all the world have such a disproportionate care and concern for only a small part of his world?" (257). That this question has to be asked at all indicates to Paul that there was a problem with Judaism itself, and it is this difficulty with which he is wrestling when he has the blinding insight on the Damascus Road. At this point Paul realises the significance of Jesus' coming for the Jewish people. For Paul, Boyarin writes,

"The birth of Christ as a human being and a Jew, his death, and his resurrection as spiritual and universal, was the model and apocalypse of the transcendence of the physical and particular Torah for Jews alone by its spiritual and universal referent for all" (39).

Following his Damascus Road experience, Paul considers that in Jesus the spiritual has transcended the literal, and the true structure of reality can now be seen through allegorical interpretation of scripture. As far as Judaism is concerned, as Galatians 4 indicates, the true meaning of Torah is revealed through and in Jesus Christ. In practical terms this means, for example, that circumcision is now replaced by baptism, Jew by Christian, works of the Law by faith, and Israel by the church.

It is, however, crucial to Boyarin's thesis that Paul's platonism is not as thoroughgoing as it might be. Unlike Philo, Paul does not see flesh and its correlates as necessarily negative. The *κατὰ σάρκα* category is of itself neutral, taking its colour from its context. For example, Paul does not eschew the body altogether (2 Cor 5:1-4; 1 Cor 15:42-50). Fleshly Israel, whose proper spiritual correlate is the church (the Israel of God) in the allegorical scheme of things, is not to be seen as negative (1 Cor 10). Neither is Paul against the Law, but against the literal as opposed to the spiritual interpretation of it.

"Life and interpretation *κατὰ σάρκα* become pejoratively marked only when they have the negative social effects in Paul's eyes of interrupting the new creation of the universal Israel of God. The Law understood spiritually remains the ethical foundation of the new Israel, just as the Law understood carnally was the ethical foundation for the old" (73).

In this view of the Law, Boyarin is indebted to Dunn: Paul criticises those aspects of the Law which set the Jewish people apart and promote ethnocentrism, most notably, circumcision, food laws and sabbath observance, and understands "works of the Law" as the material signifier of faith, which is the signified. Here, however, Boyarin becomes troubled by Paul. His post-modern perspective means that he cannot hold with Paul's platonistic urge, but he can see that it is born out of a genuine concern for unity among men. What he, a rabbinic Jew, cannot tolerate is the allegorisation of Israel in terms of the church. If Israel is only the signifier of the signified, if it finds its true meaning only as a signifier of the true faith, its distinctiveness and identity is in effect dissolved altogether. It becomes relevant only in its relationship with the true Israel. For Paul,

"The Jews as concrete signifier of the fulfilled spiritual signified, the body of Christ, the church, have simply outlived their usefulness. They stand in the world now only as the sign of something else. They have been allegorised out of real historical existence, and their concrete, separate existence and cultural difference are now vestigial, excepting only that in the end God will keep his promise to them, and they will be redeemed - as Christians" (156).

Thus Paul, according to Boyarin, deprives the Jews of their right to be different. While Paul may not actively strive to achieve this in practice, he does think that the spiritual ideal would be that racial differences no longer exist. To say that circumcision is irrelevant, because the Law was only temporary and is replaced by faith, is inimical to all that makes Judaism distinct. However, the practical impossibility of achieving the ideal of Gal 3:28, the eradication of difference, means that Paul, rather than resort to cultural violence, must insist that differences should be tolerated. Jewish practices may have been superseded, but the desire to maintain them may be tolerated, for example, the circumcision of Jewish believers.

Boyarin has great sympathy for Paul, whom he sees as something of a kindred spirit. Paul is struggling with the tensions of being part of humanity and a Jew, of desiring the unity of humankind, while wishing to maintain his Jewish identity. Boyarin rightly rejects both the traditional view that Paul is anti-Judaic and the more recent idea of Gager and Gaston *et al* that Paul has no critique of Judaism at all. His own view is that Paul's attitude towards non-believing Israel and her traditions is one of "tolerance".

Here, however, there are a few points to be made. Firstly, it is doubtful that Paul's thinking should be seen as "platonism", even if it is a "watered down" version. While it is true that Paul does use dualistic categories in his discourse, it is unlikely that he should be seen as driven by a desire to secure the unity of all races. His fundamental urge is not, as Boyarin thinks, towards the "unity of mankind" but towards the recognition that Jesus Christ is Lord. Certainly, if this recognition were universal, a united humanity would be a happy by-product, but this is not the main focus of Paul's attention.

We must also question Boyarin's assumption that prior to his conversion, Paul was struggling with the question of Jewish particularity. The little evidence which we have of Paul's previous life seems to suggest that Paul was quite secure in his Judaism (Phil 3:4-6), that he was extremely proud of its traditions and his genealogy (Romans 9:1-5), and desired only to maintain its distinctiveness within the world. Post-Damascus, as far as his own Judaism is concerned, Paul is caught in a tension,

as Boyarin rightly discerns. But it is not a tension between his Jewishness and his identity as "everyman": it is a tension between his Judaism and his belief in Christ. Paul is struggling to come to terms with the fact that while he believes that the Messiah has come, most of his kindred do not. He also has to reconcile the fact that he remains a Jew by race with the belief that he has a new identity "in Christ".

However, the main problem with Boyarin's book is his reliance (mainly) on Galatians to tell him what Paul's view of Israel is. The issue in Galatians, as is well known, is not the place of Israel itself, but whether or not Gentile Christians should be circumcised. Paul's statements that the Law is a temporary custodian and unable to save are directed towards these Gentile believers (and the "Judaisers") to show that Gentiles do not need to adopt Jewish Law to be members of the community. They are not intended to be part of a discussion of the place of Israel in God's plan. Paul is concerned with a pastoral problem here, not with the relationship between the community and the outside world. We cannot deduce from his argument in Galatians that Paul feels the Law to be a matter of indifference for unbelieving Jews within their own environment or even for Christian Jews. The contention that in Galatians, Paul is inimical to Jewish difference (and all difference as such) cannot be upheld.

In Romans, Paul does tackle the place of Israel, and addresses the problem of the behaviour of Jewish believers. He explicitly says that the Law is holy and just and good, and is fully aware that the Jews are the holy people of God, possessing the promises, the covenants and the prophets (Rom 9:1-5). There is no sense in which these "identity markers" (if it were legitimate to reduce Torah to mere "boundary markers" in this way), could be said to be eradicated in Paul's thought. His criticism of the Jews here is that they are as guilty of sin as every other race - a point with which no Jew could quibble, as Boyarin himself points out - and that they have failed to accept God's offer of righteousness to all humanity.

Boyarin is convinced that Paul is not anti-Judaic. But for Paul to say that the veil has now been removed from Moses' face (2 Cor 3) only in the new dispensation, and to say that the Torah only has significance as an allegory for the church, is to hold a supersessionist view of the church's relation to Israel, which cannot be acceptable to



Jews. The same must be said of Paul's belief (according to Boyarin) that the Law can be adhered to but is ultimately unnecessary. As Boyarin says, it effectively robs Judaism of any intrinsic value and identity other than as the "signifier" of the "signified". Such a view of Israel is bound to be construed by Jews themselves as offensive, even if it is not intended to be.

3.5. Though a surprising number of Jewish writers has tackled Paul, we cannot say that their work constitutes a "Jewish" view of the apostle. Nor can we say that there is one single idea of his which they find offensive. This is hardly surprising given the great diversity within Judaism itself and the differing backgrounds of these writers, each of whom has his own theological and/or political agenda.<sup>527</sup> From the Christian point of view, it is noteworthy that Paul's belief that the Messiah has come and his understanding of the Law are rather less troublesome to Jewish writers than we might think. We have seen that Paul's belief that adherence to Torah (or at *least* certain aspects of it) in the age of the Messiah is no longer necessary is feasible in Jewish terms. As far as Christology is concerned, the idea that the Messiah has come is also understandable (although mistaken), but the notion that he might atone for the sins of humanity less so. It may be obvious, from the Jewish perspective, that the Messiah has not come, but such a belief does not, of itself, constitute a threat to the Jewish way of life. It seems also that, on the whole, Jewish writers on Paul have been much less concerned about the apostle's attitude to the Law than Christian scholars have been.

The survey has confirmed, however, that the particularism and supersessionism which we detected in Paul's thinking can be, as we suspected, a source of offence from the Jewish point of view. Montefiore, flushed with liberal idealism at the beginning of the century, describes Paul's particularism as "abhorrent". After the Second World War, Baeck is rather more concerned with maintaining Jewish identity in the world, and knows enough about human nature to realise that Paul's introduction of a deified Messiah (as Baeck sees it) is ultimately incompatible with the maintenance of traditional Jewish belief. Martin Buber, also writing post-war, is

<sup>527</sup> These Jews are, of course, atypical of Judaism as a whole; most Jews are not interested in Paul at all.

well aware of a supersessionist tendency in Paul, but does not allow it to cloud his belief that Christianity is a valid, if inferior, way of faith. For Schoeps and Boyarin, on the other hand, it is insulting and dangerous. As we have seen, Schoeps is incensed by the implications of seeing Israel as sons of Abraham *κατὰ σάρκα*. Boyarin, aware of the "new perspective", argues that although Paul does not intend to be supersessionist, he most certainly is, and is thus inadvertently offensive to Judaism. The worship of the Messiah, while posing no threat theologically (there can, after all, be no threat to God), has far more dangerous sociological implications from the Jewish point of view. For, as Schoeps and in particular Boyarin show, the suggestion, however unintentional, that Israel is somehow inferior and even obsolete as a salvific system, is likely to throw Jewish readers of Paul on to the defensive, and ultimately drive a wedge between the church and Israel.

As far as Christian Pauline scholarship and Jewish-Christian relations is concerned, this means that the idea that there is nothing offensive to Jews and Judaism in Paul (as held by Gaston, Gager and Stowers), must be seen as suspect. It indicates that it is naive to think that if we can show that the apostle is not intentionally offensive to his own people, the offence is thereby removed. While it may be true (as we have argued in this thesis) that the apostle does not set out to cause offence or consider himself to be undermining the beliefs of his own people in any way, the implied supersessionism does cause problems for those who do not share his basic Christological premise that the Messiah has come. For, as we have seen, this premise has profound implications for the believer's understanding of unbelieving Israel, her teaching and institutions. Indeed, the resultant gulf between the world view of those who do believe and those who do not, means, as history has shown, that the two groups, although they come from the same family, must live apart, unless one or the other is prepared to change.<sup>528</sup>

<sup>528</sup> Christian scholarship should perhaps take this into account in its analysis of the impact of Paul's thought in the ancient world. The majority of Paul's own people certainly did not share his Christological perspective, the sociological implications of which may have contributed to his struggles with the Jewish authorities and the eventual split between the two communities.

Nor can Christian scholars ignore or disparage these writers on the basis that their failure to understand the impact of Christology on Paul's thought constitutes a failure to understand Paul altogether. It is quite legitimate to disagree with them about their methodologies, arguments or conclusions (as we have had occasion to do above), but we cannot dismiss their efforts as inadequate simply because they do not recognise that the Messiah has come. In other words, it is not productive merely to say, as for example Hagner does, that the whole of Paul's theology can be integrated satisfactorily into a fully Jewish framework, but will be understood by Jewish readers only "when the truth of his gospel is accepted".<sup>529</sup> What we can do is attempt to see the Jewish perspective, admit that there are difficulties, discuss them, and thus hope to contribute to a new basis from which greater mutual understanding can be reached.

#### **4. Paul and Jewish-Christian Dialogue**

4.1. The results of this study will, I hope, at least caution Christian readers against the complacent belief that there is nothing offensive to Judaism in Paul. It must be borne in mind that what is insulting or denigrating is a matter of perspective. It is, as we have seen, possible to hold that Paul himself does not intend to polemicise against Judaism. This may persuade some readers (even Jewish ones) that Paul may be absolved of all responsibility for Christian hostility to Jews. But for many Jews who do not share the apostle's Christology, the implications of his thought certainly might be considered to contain the seeds of later anti-Judaic activity on the part of the Christian church. Christian readers of Paul who wish to engage in dialogue with Jews should at least have the honesty to admit that Paul may not be so free of offence as we might like to think.

But if there is a problem in Paul, and this is an inherent part of his Christology, how can Christians still refer to him in any contribution to Jewish-Christian dialogue? What exactly is Paul's message about Jews and Judaism? In Daniel Boyarin's view, Paul is advocating "tolerance" towards Judaism. As we have seen, for Boyarin, Paul's

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<sup>529</sup>Hagner 1980, 159.

great desire is for unity in humanity (Gal 3:28), but he realises that the eradication of difference is not achievable in this age, and has to operate on a "live and let live" basis, while retaining the "knowledge" that Christianity has the "true" way. We have already taken issue with Boyarin's view that Paul is driven by an urge to eradicate all difference, but what about the notion that Paul thinks Judaism should be "tolerated"? Such a solution, as Boyarin points out, is problematic; the trouble is, as he himself notes, that "tolerance" may be positively or negatively understood. Once again, it is a matter of perspective.

"What will appear from the Christian's perspective as tolerance, namely Paul's willingness - indeed insistence - that all cultural practice is equally to be tolerated, from the rabbinic Jewish perspective is simply an eradication of the entire value system which insists that our cultural practice is our task and calling in the world and must not be abandoned or reduced to a matter of taste. The call to human Oneness, at the same time as it is a stirring call to equality, constitutes a threat as well to Jewish (or any other) difference. While it is not anti-Semitic (or even anti-Judaic) in intent, it never the less has had the effect of depriving continued Jewish existence of any reality or significance in the Christian economies of history" (32).

For Boyarin, the very fact that Paul has to resort to tolerating Jews is disparaging to and ultimately inimical to Jewish difference. To "tolerate" implies holding on to the belief that one party can claim to be right and declare another wrong, and this, for a post-modernist such as Boyarin, is hardly satisfactory. As a rabbi, too, he is profoundly suspicious of the belief that fulfilment has been found, that there is one interpretation which constitutes the truth over and above the others. As a post-modernist, his instinct is to pull away from cultural hegemony which he sees as the inevitable result of such a view, and his rabbinic hermeneutic means that he is deeply distrustful of attempts to replace diversity and discussion with what he sees as the "logocentrism" of Christianity and western thought in general.<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Although Boyarin finds Paul's system to be conducive to racism, he is also deeply alarmed by what he perceives to be racist tendencies within Judaism itself. Jewish concern for its particularity has, for Boyarin, led to a disregard for the "other", concern only for the welfare of its own. In order to combat such racism, Boyarin

Paul, of course, is no post-modernist, and has no qualms in declaring others to be wrong. His criticisms of Israel's failure to accept Christ make this clear. But more than this, our study of Romans 14:1-15:6, in which Paul's attitude towards Israel is expressed in practical terms, has shown that Paul actually goes a step further than this. The weak are not merely to be tolerated by the strong. Rather, they are to be enabled to fulfil their need to live as Jews within the church, and Paul actually seems to require the Gentile Christians to support them in their actions (βαστάζειν 15:1). He asks that they become servants of the Jews as Christ himself was. This certainly does not suggest a desire to eradicate the distinctive identity of the Jews, but a willingness to encourage adherence to Jewish practices if that is what the weak believers want.

Perhaps Paul can be rescued for Jewish-Christian dialogue after all. Certainly, there are supersessionist elements in his thought. Clearly, he thinks that the believing community has taken the "right" path, and that non-believing Jews, until they accept Christ as Messiah and worship him as Lord, are in the "wrong" way. He probably does think that it would be better if there were no distinctions between Jew and Greek, at least none which cause problems within the believing community. After all, he does label those who do not feel the need to adhere to Jewish practice as the "strong".<sup>531</sup> But Paul also gives the church a positive lead in practical relations with non-Christian Jews. There can be no doubt that he does continue to value Jewish identity in a positive way. The church, like the strong in the congregation at Rome, can be warned to guard against a "haughty" attitude towards the plant on to which she has been grafted, and promote the maintenance and understanding of Jewish religious tradition and practice. This is far more than mere tolerance, it is an active attempt to

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wishes to find a middle way between Christianity's concern for the other (leaving aside the hegemonic agenda) and the Jewish desire and need to maintain cultural particularity. His solution to the problem of all human difference is a "diaspora mentality", in which different races live together without territorial (and gender) frontiers and in which "the irreducibility and the positive values of cultural differences" are respected (249).

<sup>531</sup> As far as Galatians is concerned, we need also to remember that the statements about the Law, although not intended for non-Christian Jewish ears, would certainly sound insulting to them.

promote respect for Jewish difference on the part of those who may be tempted to despise it.

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