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FAITH AS PARTICIPATION:  
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF SOME KEY PAULINE TEXTS

BY

JEANETTE M. HAGEN

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AT THE

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DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

2016

## Abstract

This thesis explores the Pauline conception of faith in 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. While most studies on this topic focus attention on Galatians and Romans, this thesis begins in letters less commonly explored while also looking beyond the word πίστις to explore conceptual cognates. By expanding the framework in these two ways, this study elucidates disputed passages in Galatians, while casting fresh light on significant debates in Pauline theology.

The introductory chapter sets the discussion of faith in the context of contemporary debates on the centre of Pauline theology, the πίστις Χριστοῦ formula, and the relation between divine and human agency. In three chapters on 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, respectively, we observe that faith, for Paul, is at once both self-negating and self-involving dependence on Christ. As a surrender to God, it is an active and productive mode of existence. In chapters five and six, on Galatians 2 and Galatians 3–6, we test this definition of faith in a number of important and contested texts, which as a result, elucidates three significant Pauline debates. First, we discover that Paul connects faith to both the concept of participation and the doctrine of justification; faith is an ongoing state of participatory dependence in the Christ-mediated process of salvation, not simply the entry point of justification. Secondly, on the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ, the objective genitive is read in a way that preserves the theological priorities of those who advocate the subjective genitive reading while also conveying the vital role of human faith in Pauline theology. Finally, on questions of agency, we discover that divine and human agency cannot be reduced to a competitive relationship; God's activity grounds and enables human activity as the believer unites himself or herself in a dependent relationship to Christ. In conclusion, several of the apparent conundrums in recent Pauline scholarship turn out to derive from an inadequate understanding of what Paul means by faith, which is the mode of self-negating participation in the prior gracious work of Christ.

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## **Abbreviations**

All abbreviations of ancient literature, academic journals, and monograph series follow the forms indicated in the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*, second edition (Atlanta, SBL Press: 2014).

## **Declaration**

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and no part of it has been previously submitted to Durham University or in any other university for a degree.

### **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any format, including electronic, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*“A Theology and a Christendom that no longer knows what the New Testament calls ‘faith’ is death.” A. Schlatter*

For years, faith has been understood as an axiomatic theme in the New Testament, especially in the Pauline epistles. Yet, in modern New Testament studies, there has been an increasing trend to downplay the significance of human faith for Paul. This has become evident in a number of ways. Many are concerned that focusing on human faith replaces works of the Law as just an alternative condition for salvation. For some, faith represents a form of self-achievement. Often, the role of faith is diminished lest Paul’s theology appear anthropocentric. Coincident with this concern is that underscoring human faith detracts from Paul’s primary focus—Christ.

Interestingly, some of the most important debates in Pauline theology seem to have arisen within the same span of time that less attention has been paid to this once central Pauline theme of faith. For instance, in the late nineteenth century, there arose a challenge to the Reformation focus on justification by faith. It was posed instead that the centre of Paul’s theology is union with Christ. Secondly, there arose a challenge of how to interpret the genitive phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ, suggesting that the traditional objective genitive translation replaces the works of the Law, against which Paul was arguing, with just another human work—faith. Thirdly, theological concerns about the interplay of divine and human agency have also risen to the surface in Pauline studies in recent years.

These issues get to the heart of Pauline theology, interlocking in integral ways. The core concern navigating this study is that an accurate understanding of the Pauline conception of faith should illuminate some of the key issues driving these debates, offering clarification and unification to these central Pauline themes. Thus the primary question driving this study is: What does Paul mean by faith? In pursuing this simple question, we have in the background the additional goal of elucidating the three debates mentioned above. This first chapter will explore previous scholarship in these areas, highlighting both the strengths of previous studies and various weaknesses or lacunas that warrant further investigation. The scholars selected here present a few snapshots into what significant people have said about these issues, rather than a full account that takes all of the secondary literature into consideration. I have broken up the presentation into five key areas, first discussing influential

scholars on the topic of faith in general, then addressing leading figures in the three aforementioned debates, and concluding with some recent attention that has been paid to the concept of faith as participation. The major thread of this thesis's argument is that Paul's presentation of faith is much more participatory than has been generally noted.

## 1. The Meaning of Faith

To begin, we will trace some interpreters who have made more substantial and influential efforts towards the endeavour of describing what Paul means by faith in general.

### 1.1 Martin Luther (1531)

Martin Luther's position of prominence in the history of theology hardly needs defending. What gave rise to Luther's reformation is his rather complex and diverse background in education and ecclesiological engagement. As a late medieval theologian, Luther stood within three theological traditions: nominalism, scholasticism, and Augustinianism.<sup>1</sup> Critical of the anthropological optimism of nominalism and the speculative bent of scholasticism, Luther favoured Augustine's theology of grace; humans are completely corrupt and God is wholly gracious in the giving of his son, Jesus, the sufficient saviour of all who receive him by faith. For Luther, the doctrine of justification by faith was the "principal doctrine of Christianity,"<sup>2</sup> faith being the critical mark of a true relationship with God.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the key issues in Luther's presentation of faith are present in his *Lectures on Galatians*, the heart being drawn out of the antithesis of Galatians 2:16. In this context, being declared righteous by faith is key, but faith has no meaning for Paul apart from its relationship of dependence on Christ. "Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him present, enclosing Him as the ring encloses the gem. And whoever is

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<sup>1</sup> Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.); Alistair E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin*

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1–4*, trans. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 26, Luther's Works (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 106.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous.”<sup>4</sup> It is Christ himself who is righteous, and grasping Christ by faith, participating in his righteous life, is the only way that the believer is considered righteous before God. Essential to his understanding is that the believer is *simul iustus et peccator*, but because the Christian has accepted Christ by faith, God does not impute his sin.

To have faith in Christ is to recognise that salvation does not come by works, a term that Luther uses broadly of practices that are thought to be characteristic of the Christian life.<sup>5</sup> However, this does not mean that faith is inactive or unproductive. As Luther engages with the concept of ongoing life in faith described in Galatians 2:19-20, he argues that faith without works is “worthless and useless.”<sup>6</sup> After one is justified by faith and thus possesses Christ by faith, “he will certainly not be idle but, like a sound tree, will bear good fruit (Matt 7:17).”<sup>7</sup> Faith is the precondition of “doing,” which is always understood as “doing with faith.”<sup>8</sup> As something active and productive, faith can grow or wane.<sup>9</sup>

Though faith is a human activity, it is absolutely Christocentric in Luther’s reading. Faith is about taking hold of Christ—holding him as gift and treasure—“yet the smallness of this gift and treasure, which he holds in faith, is greater than heaven and earth, because Christ, who is this gift, is greater.”<sup>10</sup> The work of salvation is completely through Christ, faith simply being the appropriation of this reality: “Therefore victory over sin and death, salvation, and eternal life do not come by the Law or by deeds of the Law or by our will but by Jesus Christ alone. Hence faith alone justifies when it takes hold of this.”<sup>11</sup> In Galatians 2:19, the believer now lives to Christ and is under a different Law—the law of grace, which rules over sin and the Law. The means of living under this new law is faith in Christ.<sup>12</sup> “Christ does

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<sup>4</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:132.

<sup>5</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:126, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:155.

<sup>7</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:155.

<sup>8</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26: 262–63, 266.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Martin Luther, “Prefaces to the New Testament,” in *Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann, trans. Charles M. Jacobs, vol. 35, *Luther’s Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 370.

<sup>10</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:134.

<sup>11</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:138.

<sup>12</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:158–161.



everything alone. But I, as a believer, am crucified with Christ through faith, so that all these things are dead and crucified to me as well.”<sup>13</sup>

Luther is clear that faith is not self-contrived or some form of personal achievement. For Luther, Christ “forms and trains faith.”<sup>14</sup> Faith is a denial of the self, for by paying attention to the self, one loses sight of Christ.<sup>15</sup> In self-denial, faith is simultaneously supreme worship: “it attributes glory to God.... To attribute glory to God is to believe in Him, to regard Him as truthful, wise, righteous, merciful, and almighty, in short, to acknowledge Him as the Author and Donor of every good.”<sup>16</sup> In this way faith is knowledge about God which leads to a response of worship.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.2 Adolf Schlatter (1885)

The Swiss theologian Adolf Schlatter (1852–1938) dedicated himself to both scholarly and ecclesial work. Having taught in Bern, Greifswald, and Berlin, Schlatter spent the majority of his career as professor of New Testament in Tübingen (1898–1922). As a prolific writer, most of his research focused on Second Temple and New Testament philology, exegesis, and theology. *Der Glaube im Neuen Testmament* is a classic expression of his scholarly engagement in these areas.

Schlatter’s initial discussion of faith in Paul falls within the context of the apostle’s concept of righteousness. For Paul, faith is specifically a surrender to righteousness<sup>18</sup> which occurs in the words of faith, ῥῆμα πίστεως, that pronounce that Jesus came and was raised and is the Lord.<sup>19</sup> Ἀκοή πίστεως (e.g., Gal 3:2, 5) indicates that listening to God leads to submission to him, bringing faith to an act of obedience (ὕποταγῆναι – Rom 10:3).<sup>20</sup> By faith believers share in Christ’s death, and such participation entails consequences; just as Christ died to sin, so also, in faith, believers die to sin and to self.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:165.

<sup>14</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:130.

<sup>15</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:166.

<sup>16</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:227. Cf. Gal 3:6, Rom 4. In reference to Rom 4:19-24, Luther writes, “With these words Paul makes faith in God the supreme worship, the supreme allegiance, the supreme obedience, and the supreme sacrifice” (226–27).

<sup>17</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:238. “Faith is nothing else but the truth of the heart, that is, the right knowledge of the heart about God.”

<sup>18</sup> Adolf Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament: Eine Untersuchung zur Neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 1885), 329.

<sup>19</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 344.

<sup>20</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 337.

<sup>21</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 341, 343, 355.

Just as faith is a renunciation of one's own rights, strength, and life, at the same time faith entails reception of a gift; it is the affirmation of the imparting grace of God and the love of Christ within believers.<sup>22</sup> All believers will be partakers of the heavenly existence of Christ, which is to say, partakers of true existence (cf. 1 Cor 15:20ff). Through self-renunciation, recognising oneself as dead, the believer is given new life through the Spirit, who becomes an effective force within.<sup>23</sup>

Axiomatic to Schlatter's discussion is that faith is the very means of relating to Christ.<sup>24</sup> As faith draws the believer away from him or herself into a higher relationship to God, it results in the indwelling of God. The life of Christ now belongs to the believer, and in this way, the act of surrender in faith results in an all-encompassing gain. Thus Schlatter can say: "Der Verzicht, der im Glauben liegt, verwandelt sich somit nach seinem ganzen Umfang in Gewinn."<sup>25</sup> Faith is not simply hope for the future, but a present participation in Christ's resurrection.<sup>26</sup>

As faith relates to the nature and work of Christ, it can and should grow.<sup>27</sup> Along the same line, faith works (1 Thess 1:3); faith is the means by which work is accomplished because it is the way of experiencing the Spirit and the power of God. Through faith, humans are empowered to cooperate with God as *συνεργὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*.<sup>28</sup> Faith enables people to love one another.<sup>29</sup> Yet, faith is not a way of achieving justification; it does not contribute to divine power.<sup>30</sup> God is the single causal power of faith.

In conclusion, Schlatter writes that whether we speak of the ethical or intellectual activity of faith, "er ist alles, was er ist, durch Christus. Jesus ist Glaubensgrund, Glaubensinhalt und des Glaubens Kraft."<sup>31</sup> As a result, "Der Glaube hat sich als Princip und Wurzel seiner ganzen Existenz erwiesen."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 358.

<sup>23</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 342–43, 355.

<sup>24</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 342–43.

<sup>25</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 343.

<sup>26</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 356.

<sup>27</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 364.

<sup>28</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 380.

<sup>29</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 360.

<sup>30</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 331, 345.

<sup>31</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 388.

<sup>32</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 344.

### 1.3 Rudolf Bultmann (1952)

For Bultmann, “Theology is the exposition of faith.”<sup>33</sup> While he can depict faith with such basic descriptions as the acceptance of the *kerygma* and as confession of God’s saving deed in Christ, Bultmann clarifies that this faith is not “mere cognizance” and simple agreement.<sup>34</sup> Faith, in Bultmann’s reading of Paul, is so much more; it is obedience to the message and entails a new understanding of one’s self.<sup>35</sup> What begins with acceptance of the Christian message continues through a transformation of one’s identity and obedience. This is because the word of the cross forces a decision on the hearer, that is, whether the hearer will acknowledge that the crucified one is Lord and whether the hearer will surrender a previous self-understanding to make the cross the determining power of his life.<sup>36</sup> Faith is a radical renunciation of the self and a turning toward Christ, the object of one’s faith. Bultmann picks up on Paul’s extensive discussion of boasting to explicate this self-renouncing component to faith. Faith is the opposite of boasting; it cannot take credit for itself.

Existence in faith is a movement between “no longer” and “not yet.” This movement exposes the reality of a dynamic relationship; the posture of reception implies both an active response to Christ as Lord and a passive reception of a divine act which “accomplishes itself within him.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, grace and faith relate in such a way that “‘faith’ is what it is only with reference to the ‘grace’ which is actively present in the word.”<sup>38</sup> Of primary importance, then, is that faith is not merely a human action. Rather, “Faith can only be the affirmation of God’s action upon us, the answer to his Word directed to us.”<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Bultmann clarifies that faith is not a single act, “done once for all like a declaration of church membership.”<sup>40</sup> On the contrary, faith is a continuous

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<sup>33</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, “Liberal Theology and the Latest Theological Movement,” in *Faith and Understanding*, ed. Robert W. Funk, trans. Louise Pettibone Smith, (London: SCM Press, 1969), 52.

<sup>34</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 317, 324.

<sup>35</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 324.

<sup>36</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 303. Cf. 1 Cor 1:18-31; Gal 6:14.

<sup>37</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 314.

<sup>38</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 319.

<sup>39</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, “What Does It Mean to Speak of God,” in *Faith and Understanding*, ed. Robert W. Funk, 63.

<sup>40</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, “Church and Teaching in the New Testament,” in *Faith and Understanding*, ed. Robert W. Funk, 201.

state of being: “a placing of one’s self at God’s disposal, for the act to which God summons a man at any given moment.”<sup>41</sup>

#### 1.4 Fritz Neugebauer (1961)

The work of Fritz Neugebauer begins in conversation with Lüdemann’s study of Pauline anthropology<sup>42</sup> which proposed two circles of thought within Pauline theology: a juridical circle that was shaped by Jewish concepts and led to Paul’s doctrine of justification, and a mystical circle deriving from Hellenistic ideas that formed Paul’s mystical-real doctrine of salvation. In this view, the term πίστις belongs to the first category and the “formula” ἐν Χριστῷ to the second. Neugebauer critiques this division while seeking to offer a fresh analysis of πίστις in light of his detailed study of the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ.<sup>43</sup>

Neugebauer shows that ἐν Χριστῷ and πίστις are interrelated in Paul’s thought; faith fits within the context of the overarching concept of life ἐν Χριστῷ.<sup>44</sup> Neugebauer points out that the two expressions are uniquely characteristic of the interval between the resurrection and Parousia.<sup>45</sup> Πίστις is enclosed and defined within the ἐν Χριστῷ reality—the meaning of πίστις is determined by the ἐν Χριστῷ formula, thus πίστις is entirely Christological.<sup>46</sup> In this way, Neugebauer highlights that δικαιωθῆναι ἐκ πίστεως could just as easily be δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ (Gal 2:16-17). Thus, Neugebauer shows that, contrary to Lüdemann’s proposition, there is no hint of two distinct soteriologies in Paul’s thought.

Neugebauer argues that the primary significance of πίστις is a reference to God’s faithfulness.<sup>47</sup> Faith is primarily God’s decision, and human decision is relevant only in the context created by the divine decision.<sup>48</sup>

#### 1.5 Teresa Morgan (2015)

Teresa Morgan’s important recent monograph differs widely from the contributions just discussed because of its focus on Paul’s faith language within its

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<sup>41</sup> Bultmann, “Church and Teaching,” 201.

<sup>42</sup> Hermann Lüdemann, *Die Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus und ihre Stellung innerhalb seiner Heilslehre. Nach den vier Hauptbriefen* (Kiel: Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1872), 171–173.

<sup>43</sup> Fritz Neugebauer, *In Christus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 9–17.

<sup>44</sup> Neugebauer, *In Christus*, 171–172.

<sup>45</sup> Neugebauer, *In Christus*, 173.

<sup>46</sup> Neugebauer, *In Christus*, 162.

<sup>47</sup> Neugebauer, *In Christus*, 163.

<sup>48</sup> Neugebauer, *In Christus*, 165, 167, 169f. Contra Bultmann’s emphasis on human decision.

wider social and historical context. She begins with the simple question of why faith is so important to the earliest followers of Christ that it already plays a key role in the New Testament, arguing that the New Testament writers must be read as products of their complex sociocultural context, both Graeco-Roman and Jewish, as well as being contributors to it. In this way there is a focus as much on “the embeddedness” of Christian faith in its socio-cultural context as on “its uniqueness.”<sup>49</sup>

By examining *pistis* in its socio-historical context, Morgan demonstrates how faith with δικαιοσύνη is foundational to every society. Faith is fundamentally relational, something evident in written sources from the first century BCE to the second century CE. Thus she approaches her study of *pistis* in the New Testament as a relationship that shapes a community. This, she argues, takes a different approach from many studies that, following Augustine, separate two features of *pistis/fides*: 1) the interiority of faith, that is, that which takes place in the heart and mind of the believer (*Fides qua*); 2) faith’s object of focus (*Fides quae*). By approaching her study of faith in this way, Morgan downplays the interiority of faith, which she avers became important to later Christians but was not as significant in the first century.<sup>50</sup>

Morgan observes that it is obvious in the Greek and Latin sources that *pistis/fides* and their cognates are semantically connected. While some strands of New Testament interpretation have tended to treat *pistis* and *pistos* in separate senses, Morgan argues that such segregations should only be made when the texts clearly attest them.<sup>51</sup>

Morgan also explores the use of *pistis* within the Septuagint as potential background for the New Testament. Although it is not a central theme in the Septuagint in the way that it is in the New Testament, two principal modes of *pistis* are evident. First, it is one of the primary qualities for both forging and developing relationships. Secondly, it is the ongoing quality of divine commitment to human beings and vice versa. The Septuagint presentation of *pistis* also has overtones of hope and obedience, while coexisting with fear of the Lord but not fearing circumstances or people.

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<sup>49</sup> Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith: Pistis and Fides in the Early Roman Empire and Early Churches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. chapter 11.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. chapters 6–10.

Morgan divides her analysis of πίστις in the Pauline letters into two chapters.<sup>52</sup> The first treats 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians together, noting that in these letters the relationship of *pistis* between believers and God is dominant, over against the Jewish and Graeco-Roman emphasis on intra-human *pistis*. Trust in God “contributes to” salvation, and because the end time is imminent, Paul underscores that faith is what matters. Additionally, Morgan observes that few are called like Paul to be active ambassadors of divine *pistis*. The gospel shines through Paul and in this way faith “acts as a channel of the power and proclamation of God in the world. For the apostle to be the instrument of this power, his *pistis* must be of an extreme kind: a form of slavery, even of death in life (2 Cor. 4.10-11).”<sup>53</sup> For the community, faith is primarily an exercise of trust that involves the heart, mind, and action. It is intimately connected with belief in the sense of dependence. Faith does hold certain things to be true, but the real essence of faith is found in the relationship in which believers find themselves released from their sins and in which they have hope to enter God’s kingdom.

In her chapter on Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon Morgan argues that Paul is interested more in how πίστις is founded and less with what it means to live in an ongoing basis in faith. πίστις is the quality and practice that *forms* new divine-human relationships and communities. Christ is the integral link in the *pistis* relationship between God and humanity, and *pistis* is the chief way that Paul describes the economy of salvation. Moreover, Christians end up defining the nature of their community and the content of its proclamation through the term *pistis*.

The general picture that emerges for both Jews and Gentiles is that God is trustworthy and fosters πίστις between humans, creating a “triangular relationship in which the divine practises *pistis* towards human beings and vice versa, and human beings practise it towards one another.”<sup>54</sup> Christian faith operates in a cascade: “God places *pistis* in Christ, Paul, and other community leaders; they channel it to other community members, who *pisteuein* in God, in Christ, and in those entrusted with authority over them by God and Christ.”<sup>55</sup> Morgan finds that in Greek, Roman, Jewish, and early Christian sources, πίστις, *fides*, and their cognates are treated

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<sup>52</sup> Morgan’s work investigates the whole New Testament, but for our purposes we shall focus on her readings of the Pauline Hauptbriefe.

<sup>53</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 260.

<sup>54</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 504.

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 504.

simultaneously as cognitive and affective, active and relational. Although in theory it is possible to separate the roles of emotion, cognition, action, and rationality in trust, in practice it is impossible.<sup>56</sup> Faith is both backward and forward looking; it refers to both past experience and future hope.<sup>57</sup>

### *1.6 Summary: A Consensus on the Pauline Conception of Faith?*

This brief survey of select thinkers has uncovered many points of agreement about the nature of Pauline faith. In general, although faith in Paul certainly carries with it a dimension of holding certain ideas to be true, most would agree that it is much more than cognitive assent. For Luther, Schlatter, and Bultmann, especially, a sort of renunciation of the self and of sin is fundamental to the idea of faith. For Luther this takes shape in acknowledging one's sin and inability to achieve salvation. Bultmann's conception is centred on the idea that faith involves a new self-understanding as one acknowledges Christ as Lord and appropriates the cross as the defining power of one's life. Most interpreters highlight faith as the way humans relate to God. Morgan uniquely draws out the importance of faith for relationships within the community of God as well. Also fundamental to Pauline faith for these interpreters is that faith grounds the believer in salvation, in hope of a future resurrection with Christ.

Where these interpreters differ raises questions for further elucidation of what exactly Paul means by faith. While he offers rich descriptions of faith, perhaps Luther's work would be enhanced by demonstrating more fully how faith itself links the believer to salvation, which can be conveyed by a variety of terms, justification being one.

Overall, Schlatter presents a rather wide-ranging exegetical study of faith in Romans and Galatians. While he incorporates other Pauline letters where appropriate support is found for his primary points, the study could certainly be enhanced by a more comprehensive examination of Paul's broader corpus. Moreover, Schlatter would have done well to explain in more detail what is meant by the necessity of reduction and renunciation of the self through faith. Finally, Schlatter's exposition is primarily in the context of his discussion about righteousness. His work would be

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<sup>56</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 22.

<sup>57</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 22.

enhanced by exploring how faith relates to other important Pauline themes such as participation in Christ.

Bultmann's treatment of faith in Paul is extensive and insightful. Although he has often been critiqued for being anthropocentric,<sup>58</sup> Bultmann's presentation of faith is entirely dependent on an accurate understanding of grace. Bultmann's strong emphasis on a new self-understanding would perhaps be better received with more discussion of believers' union with Christ. However, this lacuna in his writing is probably explainable on account of his understanding of faith as more of an existential than ontological reality. Bultmann is more inclined to refer to a "possibility of existence" in regard to which a decision must be made by faith, but that decision must be constantly renewed as it is not an objective life source. Bultmann also does well to integrate other Pauline concepts that show some overlap with πίστις (e.g., καυχάομαι). However, where it comes to his discussion of the "dogmatic" element of faith, the objective basis, Bultmann discredits Paul's own assurance that his faith is based in actual, historical events.<sup>59</sup> Like Luther, it seems the concerns of his own era, modern science over against "religious mythology," interfered with his understanding of the apostle on his own terms.

Neugebauer's work is certainly a step forward in revealing the relationship between faith and participation in Christ. However, his study is limited by focusing solely on the ἐν Χριστῷ formulation and πίστις expressions. This opens the question of how faith relates to the many other expressions of participation in Christ.

Morgan's approach to the topic stands out from other interpreters because of her background in Graeco-Roman culture and her *histoire des mentalités* approach. The way she separates 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians from Romans, Galatians, and Philippians is rather typical, distinguishing the former grouping as one which speaks of faith as an ongoing state and the latter grouping placing emphasis on faith as the initial entry into the community of God. But can we find more continuity across the Pauline corpus than Morgan finds?

With many common threads revealed, our review thus far has exposed many unanswered questions related to the nature of faith. Is faith more a state of constant subjective renewal such as Bultmann portrays, or more of an objective state fitted in

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xxv–xxvi, 5–6, 47–52.

<sup>59</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 305.



the context of being in Christ, per Neugebauer? How exactly do faith and Christology relate? Within the Pauline canon, is there more continuity in Paul's presentation of faith than Morgan portrays? These and similar questions warrant further investigation into the Pauline conception of faith.

## **2. The Centre of Paul's Theology: Justification or Participation?**

Having explored the way that faith is perceived in general, we have already picked up on a common trend to treat faith as a separate thread of Paul's theology, connected primarily to the doctrine of justification, but disconnected from what has often been perceived as the more central feature of Pauline soteriology—participation in Christ. The specific trend of bifurcating these two themes arose particularly in nineteenth century German scholarship which sought to move away from the post-Reformation stress on Paul's doctrine of justification by faith in order to emphasise a more "Christological" core. In this section we shall survey a few of the key voices in the debate over the centre of Paul's theology.

### *2.1 William Wrede (1904)*

William Wrede, a key figure of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen in the late nineteenth century, is widely noted for his historical-critical study of the gospels, most prominently in his work, *The Messianic Secret in the Gospels*. In the final years of his life, however, he dedicated his research to a reassessment of Paul. Wrede sought to rectify the apparent imbalance of emphasis in Paul's soteriological categories by depicting Pauline theology through two circles of thought. The first circle comprises the doctrine of justification and the second encompasses the doctrine of redemption.<sup>60</sup> Wrede deems that the second circle, redemption, carries the true Christological weight because it is simply the doctrine of the person and work of Christ, the two being inseparable.<sup>61</sup> Paul's essential line of thought is the significance of Christ for the world—He is the redeemer who died to release humanity from the curse and domination of the powers of sin, death, the flesh, and the Law, and he rose again to bring humans into new life by sharing in his death

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<sup>60</sup> William Wrede, *Paul*, trans. Edward Lummis (London: Philip Green, 1907), 84; trans. of William Wrede, *Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1907).

<sup>61</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 86.

and resurrection.<sup>62</sup> Such participation, Wrede warns, should not be taken in merely an ethical or symbolic sense, but rather “actually and literally.”<sup>63</sup> Still wearing the body of death, believers anticipate the future but have a real experience of redemption already through Christ’s death and resurrection and by receipt of the Spirit.<sup>64</sup> Justification, on the other hand, has the polemicising role of distinguishing Christianity from Judaism.<sup>65</sup> Its significance is not in its content but only its function to free the mission from the burden of Jewish Law and demonstrate the superiority of the Christian faith over Judaism. It is a mere “weapon with which these purposes were to be won.”<sup>66</sup> Wrede defends this relegated view of justification on account of the fact that the doctrine appears only in Romans and Galatians.<sup>67</sup> We can conceive of Wrede’s two circles, then, such that the polemical doctrine of justification serves as the protective barrier for the more central and significant doctrine of redemption.

In Wrede’s reading, faith is only at issue in the context of the doctrine of justification. However, even in this context Wrede provides minimal discussion of faith lest it portray a humanly contrived soteriology. He writes: “our relation to God does not depend on performance and merit, not even on that of faith.”<sup>68</sup> Salvation is completely by grace, which is then appropriated by faith.

## 2.2 Albert Schweitzer (1930)<sup>69</sup>

Like Wrede, Albert Schweitzer first began his scholarly work in the gospels before turning to Paul. Schweitzer, critical of those who trace Paul’s theology under dogmatic loci, is credited with pinpointing the question of the centre of Paul’s theology as the key for understanding the apostle.<sup>70</sup> In his own quest to identify this

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<sup>62</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 92.

<sup>63</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 102–103.

<sup>64</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 104, 107–110.

<sup>65</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 122.

<sup>66</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 127. Interestingly, Wrede’s relegation of the doctrine of justification on the basis that it only plays a polemical role in two of Paul’s letters seems to contradict an earlier argument he makes that Paul’s strong theology is most distinct when he writes polemically. Wrede begs the question, then, as to what theological weight is to be found in Paul’s polemical doctrine of justification by faith. Wrede, *Paul*, 74–75.

<sup>67</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 122–23.

<sup>68</sup> Wrede, *Paul*, 130.

<sup>69</sup> For a detailed critical history of the question of the core of Paul’s theology in German scholarship up to the early twentieth century see Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912); trans. of Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1911).

<sup>70</sup> Schweitzer, *Paul*, 33f. Cf. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 434.

centre, Schweitzer presents three Pauline doctrines of redemption: eschatological, juridical, and mystical.<sup>71</sup> Eschatological redemption represents the end of the dominion of the angelic powers and the natural world that occurs through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; Christ will soon appear, opening the way for his elect to enter his Messianic glory.<sup>72</sup> The juridical doctrine of righteousness through faith, rooted in Genesis 15:6, focuses on the atoning death of Jesus; the true seed of Abraham is saved solely by faith in God in Christ.<sup>73</sup> It is the third doctrine, however, the mystical doctrine of “being-in-Christ,” that is “the prime enigma of the Pauline teaching” and “gives the clue to the whole.”<sup>74</sup> Schweitzer explains that Christ-mysticism is present “when we find a human being looking upon the division between the earthly and super-earthly, temporal and eternal, as transcended,” and yet still externally present in the earthly, temporal realm.<sup>75</sup> It is experienced by dying and rising with Christ, resulting in freedom from sin and the Law. The mystical Body of Christ is not a symbolic or pictorial expression but an actual physical union between Christ and the elect.<sup>76</sup> It is collectivistic and passive as opposed to individualistic and active.<sup>77</sup>

Schweitzer, like Wrede before him, perceives in the doctrine of righteousness by faith only the polemical purpose of revealing the inability of the Law to establish one’s righteousness.<sup>78</sup> Paul must establish the antithesis to righteousness, thus “righteousness by faith” is set in contrast to “righteousness by the Law.” Schweitzer contends that “righteousness in Christ” is more accurate, but Paul opted for “dialectic convenience,” human faith contrasted with human doing, over “logical correctness.”<sup>79</sup> Because his aim is to find one centre in Paul’s theology, Schweitzer relegates the doctrine of righteousness by faith as “a subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main crater—the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ.”<sup>80</sup> He contends that righteousness by faith is not connected with the other

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<sup>71</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A. & C. Black, 1931); trans. of *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930).

<sup>72</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 25.

<sup>73</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 25.

<sup>74</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 127.

<sup>77</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 220.

<sup>79</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 207.

<sup>80</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 225.

blessings of redemption, the possession of the Spirit, and the resurrection. Union with Christ, on the other hand, represents an all-encompassing expression for every spiritual blessing.

In Schweitzer's reading, the heart of Paul's theology is a divine event without preconditions. Schweitzer's aim is to draw out the broader implications of redemption, including a more objective, cosmic, corporate, eschatological, and passive redemptive reality. Thus, the concept of faith becomes problematic since believers "do" something. Faith must be logically prior to God's proclaiming believers righteous.

### 2.3 E. P. Sanders (1977)

It goes without saying that E. P. Sanders has left an indelible mark on Pauline scholarship, having challenged many prior assumptions regarding the Judaism of the first century and Paul's relationship to it. Sanders's quest is to examine how Paul understood human participation in God's saving action.<sup>81</sup> Sanders explains that many soteriological elements are deepened through participatory concepts,<sup>82</sup> and although Paul does not have one fixed terminology for it, participation is the main theme to which Paul appeals in both *paraenesis* and polemic; participation conveys the heart of Paul's soteriology and Christology.<sup>83</sup> The impact of Schweitzer and Wrede on Sanders is easily discernible—although varying in their terminology, all three interpreters perceive the centre of Paul's theology to be union with Christ.

Sanders must be credited for giving more attention to the role of faith in Paul's soteriology than his predecessors. Sanders asserts early on in his work that "the principal word for that participation is 'faith' or 'believing.'" Immediately after this claim, he announces his aim to "consider in greater detail how Paul understood and formulated human participation in God's saving action."<sup>84</sup> One might expect discussion of faith to occupy a fair share of his attention to the way Paul formulated human participation in salvation. He gives a few nods to faith as he proceeds: Faith is

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<sup>81</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 447.

<sup>82</sup> For example, the idea of possession of the Spirit as a guarantee is developed into the idea of participation in one Spirit. Similarly, the idea of Christ's death as cleansing past trespasses is deepened to convey "the means by which one *participated* in Christ's death to the *power* of sin." Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 453.

<sup>83</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 456.

<sup>84</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 447.

“the characteristic act of the Christian.”<sup>85</sup> The most general transfer term is “believe,” which he explains often means “be converted.”<sup>86</sup> However, he saves most of his discussion of faith until he addresses Paul’s argument in Romans 1–4. Here he concludes that no one positive definition of faith emerges from Paul’s argument.<sup>87</sup> The extent to which he attempts to define faith is that it can mean both “accepting the gratuity of salvation,” as in Romans 3:25, or “trust that God will do what he promises,” as in Romans 4:16-23. Faith is directed to God and has as its content the fact that he raised Jesus from the dead (cf. Rom 4:24). Sanders points out that faith is the exclusion of boasting and involves trust, but it is not defined simply in these terms. He begins to build momentum when he specifies that “faith represents man’s entire response to the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, apart from Law.”<sup>88</sup> But immediately he defaults to the position of Wrede and Schweitzer that faith is significant only for Paul’s polemical purposes. He writes: “the argument for faith is really an argument against the law.”<sup>89</sup> Just like Wrede and Schweitzer, Sanders relegates justification to a primarily polemical role against righteousness by the Law in Romans and Galatians.<sup>90</sup> This conclusion is based on his assertion that neither faith nor righteousness has one fixed meaning for Paul. Nor does Paul offer a single explanation of faith’s benefits.<sup>91</sup>

#### 2.4 Ernst Käsemann (1969)

In contrast to Wrede, Schweitzer, and Sanders, who relegate the doctrine of justification to a solely polemical purpose, Ernst Käsemann sought to revive the centrality of the doctrine of justification, but with a grounding in apocalyptic.<sup>92</sup> Käsemann develops two issues, highlighted by his predecessors, which are necessary

<sup>85</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 452.

<sup>86</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 463.

<sup>87</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 491.

<sup>88</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 491.

<sup>89</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 491.

<sup>90</sup> Sanders acknowledges that juridical and participatory categories cannot be completely separated. The death of Christ plays two different roles: expiatory sacrifice (Rom 3) and offering the opportunity for participation in death to sin and death (Rom 6). Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 487.

<sup>91</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 491–92.

<sup>92</sup> Note that this is representative of his later work. See Way, who divides Käsemann’s work into two periods: 1) Pre 1950s, in which Käsemann read the NT primarily against the history-of-religions background of Hellenism and Gnosticism. At this stage, he focuses primarily on Paul’s participatory themes; 2) Post 1960, during which time Käsemann read the New Testament against the background of Jewish apocalyptic, particularly focusing on the doctrine of justification and its ramifications throughout Paul’s theology. David Way, *The Lordship of Christ: Ernst Käsemann’s Interpretation of Paul’s Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

to appreciate the importance of the Pauline doctrine of justification.<sup>93</sup> First, Käsemann agrees that the apostle's message of justification *is* polemical, directed against Judaism, but he disagrees that this means it holds a subordinate place in Paul's theology.<sup>94</sup> Secondly, Käsemann also agrees that the doctrine of justification is not primarily concerned with the individual. However, he does acknowledge that the individual is important to New Testament writers, especially Paul, because this is where theology finds its "concrete application."<sup>95</sup>

The Pauline doctrine of justification is not just about a gift to the individual, however;<sup>96</sup> it is about God himself and about his *basileia*.<sup>97</sup> It must be communicated in anthropological terms because it must determine the everyday lives of humans, but it is "the stigmatization of our worldly existence through the crucified Christ."<sup>98</sup> In this way, the apocalyptic roots of this doctrine are revealed: "under the sign of Christ, God becomes Cosmocrator, not merely the Lord of the believing individual or the god of a cult."<sup>99</sup>

Käsemann builds on his thesis that justification is the centre of Paul's theology by demonstrating the key place that Romans 4 holds in the epistle.<sup>100</sup> Here Paul depicts Abraham as the "prototype of Christian faith."<sup>101</sup> Käsemann sees here a carefully crafted argument that provides scriptural support (Gen 15:6) for the thesis of Romans 3:21ff; it leads from belief in justification to belief in the resurrection, "its point lying in the fact that the two are identical."<sup>102</sup> For Käsemann, human faith both acknowledges one's sin and appropriates the promise.

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<sup>93</sup> His essay "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans" is written in order to challenge two fronts which he perceives to be a threat to Pauline interpretation: 1) the line of thought that justification was of minor concern to Paul, 2) that interpretation of Paul is based on salvation history. Käsemann challenged the idea that there must be a juxtaposition between justification and salvation history (64). Ernst Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans," in *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl, New Testament library (London: SCM Press, 1971), 60–78. See also Ernst Käsemann, *An Die Römer*, HNT 8a (Tübingen: Mohr, 1974).

<sup>94</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 70. Käsemann's more immediate interlocutor is Krister Stendahl (Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles, and Other Essays* [London: SCM Press, 1977]), but he shows that Stendahl's claims are rooted in the conclusions of Wrede and Schweitzer.

<sup>95</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 65.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. the cosmic horizons of Rom 1:18–3:20; 5:13ff; 8:18ff., and especially chs. 9–11. Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 74.

<sup>97</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 74–75.

<sup>98</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 75.

<sup>99</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 75.

<sup>100</sup> Ernst Käsemann, "The Faith of Abraham in Romans 4," in *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl, NTL (London: SCM Press, 1971), 79–101.

<sup>101</sup> Käsemann, "Faith of Abraham," 79.

<sup>102</sup> Käsemann, "Faith of Abraham," 81.

Ultimately, Käsemann appeals to Romans 4 to demonstrate that Christology and the doctrine of justification mutually interpret one another.<sup>103</sup> He finds in the “in Christ” expressions a description of the state of those who are called out of the old world and who belong to the new creation only in so far as they “continue to be confronted with the Lord who justifies the ungodly.”<sup>104</sup> Thus Paul’s doctrine of justification is actually his interpretation of Christology: “It proclaims the ‘true God and true man’ in its way by expressing the fact that the true God joins himself to the ungodly and brings them salvation, as he did through Jesus.”<sup>105</sup>

### 2.5 Summary: Pauline Centres?

A few general observations may be made from our analysis of these four interpreters. For Wrede, Schweitzer, and Sanders, participation, or union, with Christ is central to the way Paul viewed soteriology. Käsemann, on the other hand, understands justification by faith to be the centre of Paul’s theology. His view of justification, however, presented participatory expressions as a fundamental description of those who have been justified. A general lacuna arises, however, in that these interpreters offer very limited discussion of faith. For Schweitzer and Wrede, faith is discussed in the limited context of justification and presented simply as a matter of conviction or cognitive assent to a belief system. Sanders at least addresses the relationship of faith and participation, although he acknowledges that his study does not exhaust the meanings of faith and righteousness.<sup>106</sup>

This brief survey gives rise to a handful of questions. First, the tendency to relegate justification to a merely polemical role must be questioned. Why would Paul simply assert what the gospel is not without presenting a positive affirmation to fill the negating void? Is there evidence in Paul’s letter for a more integrated approach to thinking about the categories of justification and participation? How might the categories of justification and participation be related? Would the question of what is the centre of Pauline theology be elucidated by exploring how faith fits in the context of participation in Christ?

Along these lines, we noticed a tendency to discuss faith primarily in the context of justification but rarely in the context of participation. Is the Pauline

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<sup>103</sup> Käsemann, "Faith of Abraham," 101.

<sup>104</sup> Käsemann, "Faith of Abraham," 101.

<sup>105</sup> Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," 73.

<sup>106</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 495.

conception of faith solely or even primarily connected to his thinking about righteousness and justification? Or does Paul link faith to the idea of participation as well? If so, how precisely does faith unite the believer to the Christ-event? Perhaps faith is not simply the entry point to justification but exemplary for the entirety of life for the redeemed.

Perhaps the lack of attention to these questions explains Sanders's own concluding admission that although participation is the centre, nobody really knows what it means.<sup>107</sup> Perhaps expositing faith is just what is needed to elucidate participation in Christ. Perhaps a more detailed exposition of the Pauline view of faith will reveal a more transformative and participatory element to faith. Additionally, with a fuller examination of faith, the question of what is the centre of Paul's theology may be elucidated if faith is shown to be relevant to both justification and participation in Christ. Perhaps Paul also views justification in much closer relation to participation than Schweitzer presents.

### 3. Πίστις Χριστοῦ

Any discussion of faith must inevitably address the fraught debate of how to translate πίστις Χριστοῦ. Although the issue is not new in Pauline studies,<sup>108</sup> it has gained momentum in recent years, especially since the publication of Richard Hays's doctoral research. The seven contested phrases have generated copious discussions, a reflection of the import of accurately understanding what Paul means by this phrase.<sup>109</sup>

#### 3.1 Richard Hays (1983)

Few doctoral theses have impacted the field of New Testament studies in recent years in the way that Richard Hays's thesis has. Hays commences his study with the question we have just addressed: "what is the 'core' of Paul's thought?" For

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<sup>107</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 522.

<sup>108</sup> Johannes Haussleiter, "Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der Christliche Glaube," *NKZ* 2 (1891): 109–45; 205–30; Johannes Haussleiter, "Was Versteht Paulus unter Christlichem Glauben? Eine Untersuchung der Formel πίστις Χριστοῦ," in *Greifswalder Studien: Theologische Abhandlungen*, ed. Hermann Cremer (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag, 1895), 159–82; Gerhard Kittel, "πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ bei Paulus," *TSK* 79 (1906): 419–36; Adolf Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. William E. Wilson, 2nd ed, Harper TB 15 (New York: Harper, 1957), 161–65.

<sup>109</sup> πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – Rom 3:22; Gal 3:22; πίστις Ἰησοῦ – Rom 3:26; πίστις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ – Gal 2:16; πίστις Χριστοῦ – Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9; πίστις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ – Gal 2:20. Some have noted a possible eighth passage if the reading is accepted of P46 in Gal 3:26, which concludes: διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ.



him, any pursuit of this issue must take into account the centrality of *narrative* elements in Paul's thought, thus Hays's primary thesis is that Paul's argument in Galatians presupposes a story about Jesus Christ that is referred to in "shorthand through allusive phrases"<sup>110</sup> which include, but are not limited to, the πίστις Χριστοῦ expression.<sup>111</sup>

Employing Greimas's narrative model<sup>112</sup> and Northrop Frye's conceptions of *mythos* and *dianoia*, Hays explores allusions present within two Christological passages, Galatians 4:3-6 and 3:13-14,<sup>113</sup> which are "expressions and interpretations of a single foundational story."<sup>114</sup> He finds the same story-pattern in Galatians 3:21b-22, which proves to have particular importance because it connects the story-structure with the term δικαιοσύνη, providing clues about how the narrative gospel structure relates to Paul's theological language of justification. In this passage, Hays argues that πίστις is the "helper" that aids Christ, the subject, in carrying out his mandate.<sup>115</sup> The implication is that Galatians 3:22 should not be interpreted to mean that the promise is received when believers place their faith in Christ, but rather that Christ, "by the power of faith, has performed an act which allows believers to receive the promise."<sup>116</sup>

After exploring this theoretical framework, Hays sets out to provide exegetical support for this implied re-reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ by examining Paul's use of πίστις in Galatians 3. He suggests two theses: 1) Paul's emphasis does not lie upon the "salvific efficacy of the individual activity of believing" in any of these passages, and 2) Paul never speaks of Christ as the object of human faith in Galatians 3.<sup>117</sup> In support of these theses, Hays argues on both grammatical and theological grounds.

Addressing first the grammatical issue, he asks whether πίστις followed by a proper noun in the genitive case should be understood to mean "faith in Christ," the objective genitive reading, or "faith of Christ," the subjective genitive reading. Hays relies on George E. Howard, who assesses the twenty-four instances in the Pauline

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<sup>110</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 8.

<sup>111</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxiii.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 73–117.

<sup>113</sup> Frye adopts the Aristotelian sense of *mythos*, meaning the plot of a literary work, the linear sequence of events. However, he extends beyond the Aristotelian sense of *dianoia* to refer to a theme (Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 22).

<sup>114</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 81–82.

<sup>115</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 112–16.

<sup>116</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 116.

<sup>117</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 124.

corpus in which πίστις followed by the genitive of a person or of a personal pronoun occurs, concluding that the genitive is “unmistakably subjective.”<sup>118</sup> In a later article, Howard extends his study to the literature of Hellenistic Judaism, including the Septuagint, concluding that the object of faith was not commonly expressed by the objective genitive.<sup>119</sup> Although Hays concedes that there are instances of πίστις with an objective genitive in the New Testament, he maintains that this construction cannot be demonstrated in Paul’s writings.<sup>120</sup> Finally, and most convincing in Hays’s view, is the argument noted by Haussleiter that the expression ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Χριστοῦ) (Rom 3:26; Gal 3:22) has a parallel in Romans 4:16 that nullifies the objective reading. One would certainly not read ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ as “faith in Abraham.” Thus, he concludes that ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Χριστοῦ) should not be read as “faith in Jesus Christ.”

On theological grounds, Hays focuses on the question of what it would mean for Paul to emphasise Jesus’ own faith as the basis upon which “the promise” is given to believers.<sup>121</sup> Again he appeals to Paul’s use of the Abraham narrative to question the reading that human faith is the basis for receiving the promise. He notes that when Paul appeals to Abraham’s faith, it was not faith directed toward Jesus, but rather toward God. Thus, he questions in what way Abraham’s faith is analogous to the believers to whom Paul is writing. Hays avers that Paul’s argument makes sense when interpreted that Jesus Christ, like Abraham, is justified ἐκ πίστεως and consequently, believers are justified *in* him as a result of his faith(fulness).<sup>122</sup> Hays finds support for this representative Christology both inside and outside of the Pauline corpus. Notably, Ephesians 3:12 speaks of having boldness and confident access in him διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ. Hebrews 12:2 likewise speaks of Jesus as the author and perfecter of human faith: ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν. Within the Pauline corpus, Hays turns to Romans 5:1-2, which he compares with Ephesians 3:12, and to Romans 5:19, which speaks of the obedience (ὕπακοή) of Christ. Hays follows Bultmann’s insistence that obedience and faith belong “in the closest possible

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<sup>118</sup> Howard’s analysis excludes the seven contested phrases. George E. Howard, “On the ‘Faith of Christ,’” *HTR* 60 (1967). Cf. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 148.

<sup>119</sup> George E. Howard, “Faith of Christ,” *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 212–14. For an opposing conclusion see Roy A. Harrisville, “Before ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ: The Objective Genitive as Good Greek,” *NovT* 48 (2006): 353–58.

<sup>120</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 149.

<sup>121</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 150.

<sup>122</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 151. Cf. Markus Barth, “The Faith of the Messiah,” *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 363–70.

relation to one another”<sup>123</sup> and thus insists that it is logical to extend the saving significance and representative action of Christ’s obedience to Christ’s faith. Along these lines, Hays finds it theologically tenable to interpret πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as “the faith of Jesus Christ.”

Hays concludes by attempting to identify the argumentative logic of his selected text and argues: “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.”<sup>124</sup> The central point of coherence in the story, according to Hays, is the Messiah who lives by faith. Consequently, πίστις becomes the distinguishing mark of those who participate in him, but crucially, Christ’s πίστις is prior and that which enables Christians to share in the benefits of his righteousness and life. Ultimately, Hays believes that the greatest strength of his work is how his reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ relates the doctrine of justification and Christology.<sup>125</sup>

### 3.2 Morna Hooker (1989)

Morna Hooker, like Hays, focuses on the narrative of Christ in the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ. For Hooker, the narrative of Christ as the obedient and faithful second Adam is the foundational issue.<sup>126</sup> The Christian’s life is fully dependent on Christ’s life. She writes: “what the Christian becomes depends on what Christ is.... If Paul appeals to his converts to be obedient on the basis of Christ’s obedience (Phil. 2.8, 12), is it not likely that their faith also will be dependent on his?”<sup>127</sup> Hooker is so confident of the importance of the theme of Christ’s faith that she writes: “one can almost say that if Paul does not use this idea, then he ought to!”<sup>128</sup> Thus she sets out to offer exegetical support that Paul does indeed refer to the faith of Christ.

Hooker’s approach to supporting the subjective genitive reading is to find evidence that Christ had faith in Paul’s writings. She looks first to Romans 4. Here

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<sup>123</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 152. Cf. Bultmann, *ThNT*, 1.314.

<sup>124</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 166.

<sup>125</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxix. This claim comes in response to the criticism Gerhard Ebeling makes that the traditional post-Reformation understanding of “faith” and “justification” in Paul offers no coherent account of the relation between δικαιοσύνη and Christology. Cf. Gerhard Ebeling, “Jesus and Faith,” in *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1963), 201–46.

<sup>126</sup> Morna D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” in *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 168. Originally printed in Morna D. Hooker, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 321–42.

<sup>127</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 168.

<sup>128</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 168.

Paul presents Abraham, the model of Christian faith, in the midst of a context in which life “in Adam” (Rom 1–3) is contrasted with life “in Christ” (Rom 5–8). Indeed, the story of Abraham seems something of an intrusion (Rom 4). However, it was necessary to establish that God’s covenant with Israel was based on the principle of faith from the beginning. Moreover, Hooker asserts that it is obvious why Paul uses Abraham as the model for Christian faith and not Christ: it was not necessary to *reckon* faith as righteousness to Christ, since he *was* righteous.<sup>129</sup> In Galatians 3, Paul appeals to the story of Abraham again but does not focus on the word ἐλογίσθη as he does in Romans 4. Instead, Paul focuses here on the fact that it is those who share Abraham’s faith who are his children. The blessing of justification comes to Gentiles by their incorporation into Christ. In 3:15-16, Paul explains that the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. Here, the singular σπέρμα is used to indicate that the promised “seed” is Christ. In Romans 4, σπέρμα is used to refer to Abraham’s descendants, but here Paul insists that Christ is the one true descendant of Abraham. Since Paul writes in Galatians 3:7 that the one significant thing about Abraham’s sons is that they had faith, Hooker alleges: “it seems logically necessary to affirm that Christ also had faith.”<sup>130</sup>

This discussion of Abraham presents the backdrop for Hooker to discuss the translation of the allusive phrase of Galatians 3:22: ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῆ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. She suggests that because Galatians 3 emphasises that the promise is given to those who are incorporated into Christ, and because the promise was made on the basis of faith, then logic suggests that in Galatians 3:22, Paul is referring to the faith of Christ.<sup>131</sup> Galatians 3:13-14 confirms, in Hooker’s reading, that Christ did have faith in God. Here she equates Christ’s becoming a curse with his obedient acceptance of death on a cross.<sup>132</sup>

### 3.3 Douglas Campbell (1992)

Douglas Campbell has contended for the subjective genitive reading on a number of fronts, too many to provide a full analysis here.<sup>133</sup> Instead, we shall look at

<sup>129</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 169.

<sup>130</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 172.

<sup>131</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 174.

<sup>132</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 174.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Douglas A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3.21-26*, JSNT 65 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992); “The Meaning of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΝΟΜΟΣ in Paul: A Linguistic and Structural Perspective,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 91–103; “Romans 1:17 – A Crux Interpretum for the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

the broad contours of his work. One of Campbell's primary arguments is that the ἐκ πίστεως phrases in Romans and Galatians derive from Habakkuk 2:4, thus the quest of deciphering the meaning of the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases must involve interpreting the prophet's original words.<sup>134</sup> Campbell notes that Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17 immediately after the "problematic" prepositional phrases in verse 17b, ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, in order to define his use of its central phrase ἐκ πίστεως in the same sentence's preceding clause. Thus he argues that the two textual units should be understood in parallel.

Furthermore, he notes that the prepositional variations, such as διὰ πίστεως, in Galatians 2:16 indicate that the ἐκ functions instrumentally so that ἐκ πίστεως should be translated "through..." or "by means of πίστις."<sup>135</sup> Other instrumental phrases also function as parallels to the statistically dominant phrase ἐκ πίστεως in certain passages, most notably Romans 3:21-26. The interpretative question at this point is to whose instrumentality is Paul referring? Against the conventional reading of Christian faith, Campbell argues that it is Christ's.

Campbell notes that the meaning of ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν in Romans 1:17 is at the heart of what Paul is trying to communicate in both Romans 1:16-17 and 3:21-22. This verse is "the programmatic ... text for this debate in Romans" and serves as an "intertextually motivated allusion to the faithful death of Christ" by virtue of its dependence on Habakkuk 2:4.<sup>136</sup> For Campbell, Habakkuk 2:4 is a messianic proof text that is interpreted Christologically by Paul. Thus the best translation of Romans 1:17 is: "The eschatological saving righteousness of God is being revealed in the gospel by means of faithfulness (namely, the faithfulness of Christ), with the goal of faith/fulness (in the Christian)."<sup>137</sup> Campbell terms this a "cosmic eschatological reading" in which Paul is saying that "the eschatological, saving righteousness of God

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Debate," *JBL* 113 (1994): 265–85; "False Presuppositions in the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: A Response to Brian Dodd," *JBL* 116 (1997): 713–19; *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005); *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); "2 Corinthians 4:13: Evidence in Paul that Christ Believes," *JBL* 128 (2009): 337–56; "The Faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Romans 3:22," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody: Baker Academic, 2010), 57–71.

<sup>134</sup> Campbell, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΝΟΜΟΣ in Paul," 101.

<sup>135</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 378. Campbell argues that the expressions ἐκ πίστεως and διὰ πίστεως are used interchangeably; Campbell, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and ΝΟΜΟΣ," 94.

<sup>136</sup> Campbell, "Romans 1:17," 267.

<sup>137</sup> Campbell, "Romans 1:17," 281.

is being revealed within the gospel.” Thus this event must be accomplished independently of an individual’s faith.<sup>138</sup>

### 3.4 James Dunn (1997)

In the 1990s, the Pauline Theology group of the Society of Biblical Literature selected James Dunn to be the advocate of the objective genitive side of the debate. In his ensuing essay, Dunn begins by making a couple of formal, grammatical observations before analysing the individual phrases. He picks up E. D. Burton’s claim that when πίστις is accompanied by a subjective genitive, the article is “almost invariably present.”<sup>139</sup> Noting the limitations of Burton’s study, Dunn proceeds with a handful of citations that bolster Burton’s case (James 2:1; Rev 2:13; Rev 14:12; Rom 3:3; Col 3:12). Dunn concludes that the genitive phrase “the faith of Christ” was used within earliest Christian circles to refer to Christ’s faithfulness, but in the clearest examples of this, the definite article was included. In contrast, the disputed references in Paul all lack the definite article. Thus Dunn concludes that “the definite article is in itself almost sufficient to indicate that what is in view is *faith* (i.e., faith as exercised by believers in general), rather than *the faith* (i.e., the particular faith of Jesus himself).”<sup>140</sup>

A second formal point that Dunn makes is that the deutero-Pauline letters seem to have developed the formula “faith *in* Christ Jesus” (πίστις [anarthrous] ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) (1 Tim 3:13; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:15) and “the firmness of your faith in Christ” (τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν) (Col 2:5).<sup>141</sup> Dunn is reluctant to draw any strong conclusions from these instances other than that the “deutero-Paulines

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<sup>138</sup> Campbell, “Romans 1:17,” 273.

<sup>139</sup> Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 482. Cf. Arland J. Hultgren, “The Pistis Christou Formulation in Paul,” *NovT* 22 (1980): 253.

<sup>140</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 253; first published in *Pauline Theology Volume IV: Looking Back, Pressing On*, ed. David M. Hay, and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 61–81. Dunn notes two exceptions (Eph 3:12 and Rom 4:16). The case made about the definite article has largely been left aside in recent years, but Porter and Pitts have recently contributed to the discussion. Cf. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, “Πίστις with a Preposition and Genitive Modifier: Lexical, Semantic, and Syntactic Considerations in the πίστις Χριστοῦ Discussion,” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 33–53.

<sup>141</sup> Dunn, “Once More,” 255. Dunn also notes the earlier version of it in Eph 1:15, “your faith in the Lord Jesus (τὴν καθ’ ὑμᾶς πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ),” where the definite article is required in this case to indicate the faith (καθ’ ὑμᾶς) the writer has in view.

developed a way of speaking of ‘faith in Christ’ which Paul had not used.”<sup>142</sup>

However, the one exception in Philemon 5 (τὴν πίστιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν) in addition to the verbal equivalents (Gal 2:16; Rom 10:14; Phil 1:29) reveal that Paul did think in terms of belief in Christ. The presence of the more explicit πίστις ἢ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in the deutero-Paulines would seem to suggest that these later writings understood the Pauline phrase in this way.

As Dunn proceeds to address the individual πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases, he begins with an analysis of the antithesis of “works of the law” and πίστις Χριστοῦ in Galatians 2:16. Dunn argues that this is most naturally understood as Paul’s way of posing two alternatives of human existence on the basis of which (ἐκ) one hopes to be justified. Redundancy is no concern, argues Dunn, for there should be no surprise that Paul would repeat himself for the sake of emphasis and clarity on this central issue.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, Dunn connects Galatians 2:16 to Galatians 3:6-9 where the verbal and noun phrases are used interchangeably. The obvious parallel between the two passages is that God justifies on the basis of faith. Abraham provides the pattern of faith, and those who express the same faith shared in his blessing of justification. If one argues that Paul was referring to Christ alone, then the crucial argument of Galatians 3:6-9 would be lost. Furthermore, Dunn highlights that Paul talks about the divine counterpart to human faith in terms of grace (Gal 1:6, 15; 2:21; 5:4). Thus the most natural reading through Galatians is summarised as “justified by grace through faith.”<sup>144</sup>

In Romans, Dunn observes that the failure of subjective genitive proponents to be clear on whether Paul meant “faith of Christ” or the “faithfulness of Christ” is critical because such a distinction is crucial to Paul’s exposition of Abraham’s faith in chapter four.<sup>145</sup> Here, Dunn avers, Paul was attacking the traditional Jewish understanding of Abraham that saw him as the archetype of *faithfulness* (cf. Sir 44:19-21; 1 Macc 2:52). By appealing to Genesis 15:6, Paul insists that it was Abraham’s “naked trust” in God’s promise that was credited to him as righteousness, not his faithfulness in offering Isaac or his act of circumcision (4:9-15). Abraham was a model of trust, which indicates that the parallel between Romans 3:26 and 4:16 could not be in reference to Christ’s faithfulness to death. This is supported in the

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<sup>142</sup> Dunn, “Once More,” 256.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. his argument for the importance of repetition in Romans on p. 264.

<sup>144</sup> Dunn, “Once More,” 263.

<sup>145</sup> Dunn, “Once More,” 264–66.

concluding thought of Romans 4:22-24 that it is specifically faith in the life-giving power of God, not faithfulness, that is the issue at stake. Dunn rightly questions why, if the faithfulness of Christ is so important for Paul, is it only referred to in two grammatically ambiguous phrases in Romans (3:22, 26) in contrast to the far richer theme of God's faithfulness? Moreover, why is there no reference to Christ as πιστός, as there is to God elsewhere (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24)?

In Philippians 3:9, Dunn finds support for the objective genitive interpretation along three lines.<sup>146</sup> First, the repetition of the terms "righteousness" and "faith" show the priority of Paul's concern. Secondly, the lack of the definite article in the first reference to faith points away from "the faith of Christ" reading. Thirdly, the second reference to faith is not anarthrous—ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει—which must mean that Paul was referring to the same faith in both instances. If both of these refer to Christ's faithful death, then the means by which righteousness actually comes to the individual is left unexplained.

### 3.5 Barry Matlock (2000)

Barry Matlock entered the debate with a polemical punch, contributing particularly significantly in the area of lexical semantics, an area which had hitherto been largely ignored.<sup>147</sup> Noting an absence of methodological direction, Matlock proposes that lexical semantics offers a more "stable" methodology for analysis of word-meanings.<sup>148</sup> Matlock begins by exposing the semantic difference between the two senses of πίστις, that of belief and that of faithfulness, a distinction that subjective genitive proponents often fail to make.<sup>149</sup> Looking specifically at πίστις as it is represented in the New Testament, Matlock observes that the two primary New Testament lexicons (BAGD and L-N) are largely in agreement about the range of New Testament usage.<sup>150</sup> There are six basic meanings of πίστις in Louw-Nida that

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<sup>146</sup> Dunn, "Once More," 268–69.

<sup>147</sup> Richard Hays admits to this lacuna in his own work. See, however, the work of James Barr, which represents an early approach to the debate.

<sup>148</sup> Matlock compares this lack of methodology to a lottery in which interpreters choose from a short-list of feasible meanings. Matlock utilises the approach of Silva and Louw-Nida. R. Barry Matlock, "Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: Cautionary Remarks from a Lexical Semantic Perspective," *NovT* 42 (2000): 2.

<sup>149</sup> He applies D. A. Cruse's criteria for ambiguity to demonstrate the polysemy of the word (Matlock, "Detheologizing," 4–6). Specifically, Cruse maintains that "separate senses should be independently maximisable"; D. A. Cruse, *Lexical Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Ch. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Matlock, "Detheologizing," 6.



Matlock siphons into two groups. The first includes the meanings of πίστις as a proof,<sup>151</sup> a pledge,<sup>152</sup> and trustworthiness.<sup>153</sup> In the second grouping, πίστις as faith or trust represents the general sense,<sup>154</sup> with “Christian faith” and “the faith” being developments of that meaning.<sup>155</sup>

The heart of the matter for the subjective genitive, as Matlock sees it, is trying to get πίστις to mean what subjective genitive proponents suggest that Paul means, that is, the death of Jesus.<sup>156</sup> In Galatians 2:16, Matlock argues that the active sense of πίστις as faithfulness is generally assumed.<sup>157</sup> However, subjective genitive proponents have not been clear about what it is that connects Paul’s use of πίστις with Jesus’ death so that the particular sense of πίστις as faithfulness is clear. An additional question that has been left unanswered is: what is the particular relation to Χριστοῦ as the subject?<sup>158</sup> It seems inexplicable why Paul would have needed to be so indirect. Matlock opposes such ambiguity, reasoning that “real definitions as opposed to glosses make for both clarity and for accountability.”<sup>159</sup>

One proposal of subjective genitive advocates is to relate the noun to Christ and the verb to believers. However, Matlock points out that Louw-Nida defines πιστεύω (“trust”) and πίστις (“trust”) under the same entry, keeping the semantic derivatives together.<sup>160</sup> Douglas Campbell has objected to this association,<sup>161</sup> but Matlock counterargues by pointing to Paul’s reference of Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4, where he employs first the verb in verse three and then the noun in verse nine to refer to Abraham’s faith.<sup>162</sup> Louw-Nida clarifies that whether a verb or noun is employed is primarily dependent upon the “syntactic structure and the stylistic features of a

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<sup>151</sup> This definition occurs once in Acts 17:31.

<sup>152</sup> This definition occurs once in 1 Tim 5:12.

<sup>153</sup> E.g., Rom 3:3.

<sup>154</sup> Matlock adopts Louw and Nida’s terminology, “unmarked meaning,” which is explained to be that which requires the least contextual marking. This is distinguished from an “underlying meaning,” or the most frequent meaning; Eugene A. Nida and Johannes P. Louw, *Lexical Semantics of the Greek New Testament: A Supplement to the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, SBLSPS 25 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 12, 38, 50.

<sup>155</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 9–10.

<sup>156</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 11.

<sup>157</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 11. Matlock states that no one seems to be arguing that Paul is speaking of being “justified” by Jesus’ trusting. Since the publication of this article, the idea that πίστις is referring specifically to Jesus’ faith has been argued. Cf. Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13.”

<sup>158</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 12.

<sup>159</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 12.

<sup>160</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 13.

<sup>161</sup> Campbell, “False Presuppositions.”

<sup>162</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 13.

passage.”<sup>163</sup> This can be observed in Galatians 2:16, where Matlock suggests that what is actually happening is rather simple grammatically: “Surely what it signifies is that when you need a verb you use a verb, and when a noun, a noun.”<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, he demonstrates the close correlation between noun and verb where the verb in Romans 4:3 and 5 points to the sense “faith, trust” for πίστις in Romans 4:5 and 9.<sup>165</sup> When we come to the infamous πίστις Χριστοῦ passages, Matlock highlights the fact that they tend to be paired with the verb, as in Galatians 2:16, thus the verb and noun share the same semantic relation.<sup>166</sup> Thus it is not likely that Paul has demarcated his use of πίστις to Christ and πιστεύω to humans.

### 3.6 Summary: Πίστις Χριστοῦ

Space will not allow a full critique of each interpreter in this muddled debate. We shall suffice here with a few general observations that we expect will illuminate the path ahead in our study of faith. Positively, Hays, Campbell, and Hooker draw attention to Paul’s narrative focus. However, Dunn and Matlock have presented sufficient grammatical and syntactical points that challenge the tenability of their hypothesis that this narrative is somehow intended to be understood precisely through a subjective genitive interpretation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ expression.

A few further observations and questions stand out. What precisely does “the faith of Christ” mean?<sup>167</sup> Does it refer to the faith possessed by Jesus or the faithfulness he displayed? If so, why should πίστις be the descriptive word Paul uses to describe Christ’s atoning death? Did Jesus really need to be justified? Amongst subjective genitive proponents, Hays says that Christ was justified by his faith(fulness) while Hooker insists that it was not necessary for Christ to be justified because he was righteous.

While none of the subjective genitive advocates addressed above would eliminate altogether the role of human faith, they do avert attention away from human activity. Because there has been a lacuna in their treatment of human faith, how it is that the human relates to the divine has become obfuscated. It seems that the

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<sup>163</sup> J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), xii.

<sup>164</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 15.

<sup>165</sup> Also, in Rom 3:2, πιστεύω as “entrust” suggests a meaning of “trustworthiness” for πίστις in verse three. This meaning is further supported by the presence of ἀπιστέω, ἀπιστία, and other contextual factors. Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 15.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Gal 3:22; Rom 3:22; Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 15–16.

<sup>167</sup> Dunn, “Once More,” 258–59.

absence of a full exposition of faith severely limits their exegesis of the relevant πίστις Χριστοῦ passages.

Alternatively, was the objective genitive a reasonable way to understand the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation to Paul's first century readers? Hays relies on a couple of short studies by Howard, who concludes that the object of faith was not commonly expressed by the objective genitive. However, have more comprehensive studies shown otherwise?<sup>168</sup>

Furthermore, in this well-trodden debate, the discussion has primarily centred on the select passages in Romans and Galatians.<sup>169</sup> This is certainly logical since the seven phrases in question are focused here. However, perhaps more can be learned and contributed to the discussion if attention is given to the Pauline concept of faith in general. Such a pursuit will take the discussion outside of Romans and Galatians and provide a much wider framework for understanding.

As we shall see in our study, the question of how we understand what Paul means by faith has the potential to aid in how we understand the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases. Perhaps these are not as elusive as some have deemed them to be. Most subjective genitive proponents tend to qualify that interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as “the faith(fulness) of Christ” does not eliminate human faith. However, as we shall see, such interpretations tend to obfuscate the relationship between human faith and Christ. In fact, what happens with Hays, Campbell, and Hooker is that, at almost every exegetical point, attention is averted from human activity to emphasise divine priority. But does this do justice to Paul's pastoral concerns for how believers relate to the Christ-event? Perhaps the theological concerns of the subjective genitive proponents can be upheld with an objective genitive reading.

#### **4. Divine/Human Agency**

As we have just seen, much of the discussion surrounding the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate centres on an apparent conundrum of how divine and human agency relate. Many interpreters tend to set the two in competition to one another. Yet, agency is not

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<sup>168</sup> Hooker admits that Howard's evidence appears to be inconclusive (Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 166 n.4).

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Schenk and Campbell, who attempt to argue for a subjective genitive reading based on 2 Cor 4:13. They will be interacted with in chapter four of this thesis. Kenneth Schenk, “2 Corinthians and the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate,” *CBQ* 70 (2008): 524–37; Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13.”

limited to being understood in terms of a competitive relationship. Below we shall explore alternative depictions of how agency can be comprehended within Paul.

#### 4.1 Rudolf Bultmann: *The Indicative/Imperative Paradigm* (1924)

Bultmann has been particularly influential in articulating how Paul's seemingly paradoxical presentation of divine and human agency is made coherent through underscoring the way that Paul often qualifies imperatives with indicatives that illuminate the divine enablement for human work. For Bultmann, the indicatives and imperatives form a genuine antinomy whereby what seems to be contradictory assertions in actuality "belong together, developing from an undivided state of affairs."<sup>170</sup> A classic example of the indicative/imperative paradigm is found in Philippians 2:12-14. After Paul lays the foundational, self-giving work of Christ in 2:6-11, he exhorts his readers: μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε. Immediately following this command to work out their salvation, Paul provides the theological indicative that makes such a command possible: θεὸς γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας (Phil 2:13). Because the whole existence of the justified person is determined by χάρις, so also is the imperative addressed to him or her.

#### 4.2 Karl Barth: *Covenant Partners with God* (1956)

For Karl Barth, enquiry into dogmatics, particularly the action of God in Christ, necessarily entails the relation of humans to divine.<sup>171</sup> Webster depicts Barth's objective in *Church Dogmatics* as one to "safeguard not only the *axiomatic divinity* of God, but also the *authenticity of the creature*."<sup>172</sup> Barth's moral ontology, which finds its culmination in his "ethics of reconciliation," is rooted from the outset in his doctrine of revelation, which is revelation precisely directed to humans. Barth concludes that Christian dogmatics "undeniably has to do with the relationship *founded and completed in the Word of God* between the true God and true man, i.e., man in his totality and therefore as an active agent."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Ethics in Paul," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches*, ed. Brian S. Rosner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 196.

<sup>171</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, III.4 (London: T&T Clark, 1961), 3.

<sup>172</sup> Italics are mine. John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33.

<sup>173</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, I.2 (London: T&T Clark, 1956), 788.

Barth depicts this relationship between God and humans through a variety of themes. For example, Barth's doctrine of election is understood to have ethical significance because it is election to a specific kind of life, a life of obedience.<sup>174</sup> Barth explains that believers are confronted by "the omnipotent and unsearchable Therefore of God," who defines who believers are and summons them to obedience.<sup>175</sup> Webster explains: "Election is not a decree imposed and, as it were, complete in its imposition, requiring no corresponding attitude and activity on the part of the one determined; it is, instead the movement of the being of God, carrying with it, and establishing, the human agent."<sup>176</sup> For Barth, grace is imperative: "Grace does not will only to be received and known. As it is truly received and known, as it works itself out as the favour which it is, it wills also to rule."<sup>177</sup>

For Barth, human agency can only be properly understood within the greater scope of reality in which Christ is the centre of God's work and purpose. The fellowship of God with man is understood in original form in Jesus Christ, who represents the divine-human unity of God's being and work.<sup>178</sup> In Christ "we are dealing both with God and with man."<sup>179</sup> For Barth, Jesus Christ is the centre of all of God's action in history. "Everything which comes from God takes place 'in Jesus Christ,' i.e., in the establishment of the covenant which, in the union of His Son with Jesus of Nazareth, God has instituted and maintains and directs between Himself and His people."<sup>180</sup> The question of how humanity is incorporated into this covenant of grace, and what that precisely means, is centred in his understanding of participation in Christ, which has a twofold form in Barth's understanding.<sup>181</sup> From an objective sense, human *being* only exists by being "in Jesus Christ." But this objective participation in Christ does not exclude the action of humans but rather, in the words of Adam Neder, "establishes a trajectory for humanity, defining humanity by giving it

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<sup>174</sup> Cf. Webster, *Barth's Ethics*, 40–58.

<sup>175</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, II.2 (London: T&T Clark, 1957), 31.

<sup>176</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.2: 12.

<sup>177</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.2: 12.

<sup>178</sup> Karl Barth, *The Christian Life* (London: T&T Clark, 1981), 3.

<sup>179</sup> Barth, *The Christian Life*, 3.

<sup>180</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.2: 8.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Adam Neder, *Participation in Christ: An Entry into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 17–18.

a telos.”<sup>182</sup> The objective sense grounds the subjective sense of participation in Christ which is the consequence and goal—active obedience “in Christ.”

Barth’s understanding of humans as agents is depicted in terms of a response to the Word of God. He writes: “We live in responsibility, which means that our being and willing, what we do and what we do not do, is a continuous answer to the Word of God spoken to us as a command.”<sup>183</sup> Thus, the relationship is perhaps best represented in terms of covenant: “The grace of God wills and creates the covenant between God and man. It therefore determines man to existence in this covenant. It determines him to be the partner of God. It therefore determines his action to correspondence, conformity, uniformity with God’s action.”<sup>184</sup>

As covenant partners with God, human agency is entirely a response to God’s election and action. It can only be understood within the scope of reality that has Christ as its centre. Because God has elected humanity to a specific kind of life, this new life in Christ will demonstrate the manner of living that Christ himself manifested.

#### 4.3 John Barclay (2006)

John Barclay has contributed helpfully to the discussion by raising first the question of what is meant by “agency.” Typically, human agency is understood to involve the capacity to know, to will, and to act.<sup>185</sup> Barclay clarifies that within human agents there can be stronger or weaker versions of human freedom: “to be free is not necessarily to be independent or autonomous.” God can still be at work through a free human agent. Furthermore, a voluntary act is not necessarily wholly self-initiated.<sup>186</sup> God’s agency can similarly be understood as “direct or indirect” while also able to be “conceptualized in stronger or weaker forms” ranging from “absolute predetermination through foreknowledge, intention, enabling and permission.”<sup>187</sup> Thus it is possible to conceive of a human agent that is empowered by a divine agent, preserving the emphasis on divine sovereignty as well as human freedom.

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<sup>182</sup> Nider, *Participation*, 18.

<sup>183</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.2: 641.

<sup>184</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II.2: 575.

<sup>185</sup> John M. G. Barclay, “Introduction,” in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole, LNTS 335 (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 5.

<sup>186</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>187</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 6.

With this range of possibilities in view, Barclay explores three available models for understanding the relationship between divine and human agencies. The first and most common modern model is to place divine and human agency in a competitive relationship in which the two operate in “inverse proportion.” In this model, “the greater the affirmation of God’s power (in strength or scope), the more inconsequential must be human agency”<sup>188</sup> and vice versa. Thus the two are “mutually exclusive,” and human freedom is understood as freedom *from* God.<sup>189</sup> In the second model, divine and human agency are related to one another by kinship, whereby “the agency of one is shared with the other, rather than standing in competition against it.”<sup>190</sup> Here human freedom is not freedom from God, but it is a freedom expressed by “acting in accordance with God.”<sup>191</sup> Thirdly, divine agency can be conceived of in terms of “non-contrastive transcendence.” In this model, divine and human agencies are in direct rather than inverse proportion. God’s sovereignty grounds and enables human freedom, rather than limiting or reducing it.<sup>192</sup> Thus, the more that the human agent is active, the more activity may be attributed to God. This being the case, however, does not suggest that the two agencies are identical. Rather, “created human agencies are founded in, and constituted by, the divine creative agency, while remaining distinct from God.”<sup>193</sup> The freedom that humans stand in may be independent of other created agencies but stands in total dependence on divine agency. “Hence, if God is everything, humanity is nothing without God—but may be both powerful and effective as a created agent in dependence on God.”<sup>194</sup>

#### *4.4 Summary: Human or/and Divine Agency?*

In both Barth’s model of covenant partnership and Barclay’s description of three models, it is obvious that the relationship between divine and human agency can be conceived of in a variety of ways. Especially helpful were Barclay’s observations about the view that divine and human agency operate in inverse proportion, as a sort of competitive relationship. As we explore our question of what Paul means by faith, we will surely see a number of cases in which interpreters shy away from speaking of

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<sup>188</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>189</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>190</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>191</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 7.

<sup>192</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 7.

<sup>193</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 7.

<sup>194</sup> Barclay, “Introduction,” 7.

human faith lest humans be credited with work or achievement. Clearly, such tendencies have in mind this sort of competitive relationship in which the activity of God and of humans should play out in a zero-sum game. However, this need not, and most likely is not, the way that Paul conceived of the relationship between divine and human agency. Returning to our primary question, then, one important thread of our search will be to inquire how Paul relates faith, as a human mode of existence, to divine activity. Can such an understanding illuminate issues related to our previous questions of how to interpret πίστις Χριστοῦ and what is the centre of Paul's theology?

## 5. Faith as Participation

More recent treatments of faith have sought to rectify previous divisions in presentations of righteousness, faith, and participation by arguing that faith ought to be understood as a means of participation. Indeed, such a suggestion poses tremendous promise for enriching our apprehension of Paul's theology.

### 5.1 Axel von Dobbeler (1986)

Von Dobbeler's aim is to investigate the impact (Wirkung) that Paul's statements about faith would have had on his addressees. In his view, previous scholarship failed to address the significance of πίστις in the actual life (Lebenswirklichkeit) of the early Christian communities. Thus rather than presenting the history of the concept of πίστις, von Dobbeler's study focuses on the history of its effect.<sup>195</sup> In order to illuminate the reception of Paul's faith expressions by his readers, von Dobbeler places them in context by investigating similar expressions in pagan and Judeo-Hellenistic literature.

Von Dobbeler sets himself against both the intellectual view of faith as simply holding something to be true and the Bultmannian view of faith as a new "self-understanding." Rather, von Dobbeler develops the thesis that for Paul, πίστις enables participation, establishing a personal relationship in terms of both access to God and entry into the community of believers.<sup>196</sup> This twofold relational component, participation in God and participation in God's community, drives the structure of von Dobbeler's thesis, although he acknowledges that the two overlap. Their sequence

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<sup>195</sup> Axel von Dobbeler, *Glaube als Teilhabe*, WUNT 2:22 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 5.

<sup>196</sup> Von Dobbeler, *Glaube*, 22.



corresponds to the precedence of the divine action in Jesus Christ; faith is understood as participation only in view of the background of the saving action of God that has already been accomplished and that opens the believer to a personal relationship.<sup>197</sup> Πίστις, effected by the Spirit, is not only a matter of present salvific participation in God and guarantee of eschatological salvation, but it also effects a new sociological community.<sup>198</sup>

As von Dobbeler investigates the Jewish background, he notes that the faith community must be characterised by δικαιοσύνη. Justification by faith allows the believer to stand before God as one reconciled and forgiven for sin through atonement available in Jesus Christ.<sup>199</sup> Yet, justification by faith is not simply a one-time act of faith. Von Dobbeler underscores that it is only by continuing in the life of faith that the believer remains outside the power of sin and is thus enabled to participate in God's action and his community.

In von Dobbeler's investigation of reception based on the Greek linguistic tradition, he uncovers that Greek readers would have understood faith to be connected to friendship and loyalty within households. Thus von Dobbeler details the ecclesiological consequences of faith as an important aspect of this ongoing dynamic of participation by faith.

## 5.2 David Hay (2006)

David Hay has also attempted to articulate faith in terms of participation. He puts forward the thesis that "Paul's concept of faith is best understood as the mode by which Christians participate in Christ, a mode with both individual and corporate dimensions, and one that combines elements of cognitive assertion, trust, and faithfulness."<sup>200</sup> In contrast to those who have seen a separation in the way Paul speaks of justification and faith (e.g., in Rom 1–4) and union with Christ (e.g., in Rom 5–8), Hay understands Paul to utilise alternative ways for describing salvation. Yet the alternative expressions are at times combined in Paul (e.g., Gal 2:20; Phil 3:7-11). Hay summarises: "However he varies his descriptions of Christian existence, for him faith means existing in Christ and life in Christ for him is always—at least this side of

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<sup>197</sup> Von Dobbeler, *Glaube*, 6.

<sup>198</sup> Von Dobbeler, *Glaube*, 60–61.

<sup>199</sup> Von Dobbeler, *Glaube*, 77–93.

<sup>200</sup> David M. Hay, "Paul's Understanding of Faith as Participation," in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, vol. 3, Pauline Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 46.

the eschaton—a life of faith.”<sup>201</sup> In conclusion, he notes that varying aspects of faith often flow together for Paul, for example, the concepts of belief, trust, and faithfulness. This variety probably reflects that all are constitutive of participation in Christ. Faith language, however, is necessary, Hay reasons, because, although Christians participate in Christ, they are still subject to human limitations.<sup>202</sup>

### 5.3 Douglas Campbell (2014)

Douglas Campbell has been the most recent scholar to examine the relationship between participation and faith.<sup>203</sup> For Campbell, the appropriate question to ask is: What is the agency or causality of Christian believing? Because believing is “largely coterminous” with Christian thinking in Campbell’s reading of Paul, he directs us to the agency of the Holy Spirit, who creates a new mind and enables believing in Christians (Rom 12:2; 15:13). That the “new Christian mentality” is one of “steadfast, rock-like believing in the unseen realities of future resurrection” must mean faith is a divine gift.

The question of agency or causality of faith also requires discussion of ethics. Because Christians possess the mind of Christ, it follows that Christians will act and love as Christ does. For example, in Romans 15:5, Paul grounds the exhortations to his readers in Christ’s way of thinking. Campbell understands this to mean that ethics are grounded “in a christological ontology that has been gifted to Christians by God.” It is because believers have the mind of Christ that they are able to love like Christ. Campbell writes: “Love is rooted in a certain way of thinking so it is, at bottom, a particular set of beliefs and a certain believing activity.”<sup>204</sup> Thus Paul can link believing and love together (Gal 5:5-6). Campbell concludes by drawing out the implications of how faith and participation relate. In contrast to the idea that belief is the entry into Christianity and participation the continuation of that life, Campbell suggests the two are intimately connected.

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<sup>201</sup> Hay, “Faith as Participation,” 56.

<sup>202</sup> Hay, “Faith as Participation,” 77.

<sup>203</sup> Douglas A. Campbell, “Participation and Faith in Paul,” in *“In Christ” in Paul: Explorations in Paul’s Theology of Union and Participation*, ed. Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Constantine R. Campbell, WUNT 2: 384 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 37–60.

<sup>204</sup> Campbell, “Participation and Faith,” 50.

#### 5.4 Summary: Participation by Faith?

Von Dobbeler, Hay, and Campbell have highlighted an aspect of Paul's theology that has in recent years been increasingly overlooked: participation in Christ is just as much a matter of faith as is the doctrine of justification. Each has underscored that Paul views faith not simply as an entry requirement for God's saving activity but as a continuing existence. This observation serves as a necessary correction to the bifurcation of justification and participation we observed above.<sup>205</sup> Von Dobbeler in particular has made an advancement in Pauline scholarship by demonstrating that faith is a comprehensive interpersonal event, tying in the often neglected component of participation in the community of God. Campbell as well argues for a Pauline faith that is comprehensive, ethical, and ecclesial. Hay's work underscored the reason why Paul uses faith language to describe the situation of believers—although they participate in Christ, they are still subject to human limitations.<sup>206</sup>

Having made a move in a positive direction, there are still significant strides to be made in deciphering the way that faith and participation relate for Paul. For example, while von Dobbeler represents faith as that which enables participation, his work seems to give priority of focus on faith as a conversion, a sort of entryway to the Christian life, and subsequent participation is primarily about participation in the community of God. He says very little about faith as the means of participating in an ongoing dynamic of crucifixion and resurrection. In this regard, passages such as 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 and Galatians 2:19-20 could be very illuminating as to how Paul relates faith and an ongoing participation in the dynamic of Christ's death and resurrection.

A significant portion of Campbell's exposition on faith as participation is also devoted to defending the view that Christ also believes. However, does a participatory rationale for faith mean that believers participate precisely in the faith of Christ? Does viewing faith as participation necessitate a subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ?

One glaring lacuna in the work of Campbell especially is the lack of discussion about the aspect of dependence in Paul's view of faith. In view of the notion of human limitation in Paul's writing, it is worth exploring a crucial

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<sup>205</sup> See § 2.

<sup>206</sup> Hay, "Faith as Participation," 77.

component to the way Paul perceives faith and calls for fuller exposition and expression.

## **6. Methodology**

Through this extended survey, a number of key points and questions have been raised regarding the nature of faith and its role in the broader scope of Paul's theology. As we stated at the beginning, the primary conviction driving this study is that an accurate understanding of the way that Paul portrays faith should provide clarification to a number of notorious Pauline debates, namely on the centre of Pauline theology, on the relation between human and divine agency, and on the interpretation of the phrase *πίστις Χριστοῦ*.

In this thesis, I will be studying the Pauline texts on their own terms and not addressing wider contextual issues. The recent works of Morgan and von Dobbeler have accomplished the goal of setting Paul in the context of his Graeco-Roman and Jewish contexts. These approaches are certainly valuable, but a sharper focus on the Pauline texts themselves allows due weight to be given to complex interpretative issues. With our primary question, what does Paul mean by faith, driving this study, we will navigate our way through four Pauline epistles: 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. I have intentionally chosen to start this discussion outside of the classic passages in Galatians and Romans, the two letters that most scholars have given almost exclusive attention to. As we observed in our brief history of research, it is all too common to associate faith with justification while overlooking its connection to other soteriological categories, to ethics, and to participation in Christ. By exploring outside of the primary texts on justification, we have the potential to uncover faith's role in these broader Pauline themes. As we tread through the numerous exegetical issues in Galatians, we will test our conclusions from the first three letters in order to see if they provide a viable way of working through the aforementioned debates.

Additionally, this thesis is not so much a word study as a thematic study. I have chosen to study the Pauline conception of faith by looking beyond the word *πίστις*, exploring conceptual cognates as well. Where we do examine *πίστις*, careful attention is paid to the surrounding context in order to discover how other language

and ideas help to elucidate what Paul means by faith. In this way it is not simply a word study, but an analysis of Paul's concept of faith in general.

This methodology makes a hermeneutical advance as it widens the Pauline frame of discussion and provides a larger context, both in terms of the epistles examined and the concepts explored. Unfortunately, space will not allow us to give rigorous exegetical attention to Romans and Philippians. However, after summarising our findings in the conclusion, I will include some brief observations about how this thesis might apply to Romans and Philippians.

## Chapter 2: Faith and Participation in 1 Thessalonians

*“Faith is the central concept used to denote the human correlate of the eschatological redemptive reality revealed in Christ.”*<sup>207</sup>

In our quest to elucidate what Paul means by faith and how faith connects to some of the broader themes in Pauline theology, it seems fitting to begin with the first letter Paul wrote.<sup>208</sup> 1 Thessalonians, however, has not often been regarded as a significant source for illuminating the keys to Paul’s theology.<sup>209</sup> Indeed, the dominant themes of “justification by faith” and “participation in Christ” are not central in this letter. Nor does the disputed genitive phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ appear. However, Paul does write fluently and frequently about the role of faith as a prominent and continuing feature in the life of a Christian.<sup>210</sup> In fact, as we will see, faith is a cardinal leitmotif in this letter, signalling the core concern of Paul’s missionary objective. As Paul’s first letter, 1 Thessalonians has the potential to reveal what faith meant for Paul in the earliest recorded stages of his ministry and thus also to serve as the foundation of our understanding of the Pauline conception of faith.<sup>211</sup> It is the aim of this chapter to unveil Paul’s inaugural conception of faith.<sup>212</sup> Additionally, we will ask of this text: in what sense does faith unite the believer to Christ? 1 Thessalonians has the potential to unveil a fresh perspective on how these themes of faith and participation played out on a foundational level in Paul’s

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<sup>207</sup> Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 738.

<sup>208</sup> The majority view in scholarship holds that 1 Thessalonians is Paul’s first letter. Cf. Raymond F. Collins, “Recent Scholarship on the First Letter to the Thessalonians,” in *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians*, BETL 66 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1984), 11–12; Pieter G.R. De Villiers, “Safe in the Family of God: Soteriological Perspectives in 1 Thessalonians,” in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, ed. Jan G. Van Der Watt, NovTSup 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 305–30; Charles A. Wanamaker, “1 Thessalonians,” in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 148.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Jouette M. Bassler, “Peace in All Ways: Theology in the Thessalonian Letters. A Response to R. Jewett, E. Krentz, and E. Richard,” in *Pauline Theology I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, ed. Jouette M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 71; Victor Paul Furnish, “Faith, Love, and Hope: First Thessalonians as a Theological Document,” in *The Impartial God: Essays in Biblical Studies in Honor of Jouette M. Bassler*, ed. Calvin J. Roetzel and Robert L. Foster, NTM 22 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 221.

<sup>210</sup> The topic of faith in this letter is rarely adequately addressed, despite the prevalence of πιστ- terms. At the finishing stages of this project, the only scholarship seriously addressing the topic of faith in 1 Thessalonians included: Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*; Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

<sup>211</sup> Margaret Mitchell asserts that 1 Thessalonians “is an enormously important document: the first Christian letter, the inaugural text of a tradition of Christian epistolary literature that extends to the present day.” Margaret M. Mitchell, “1 and 2 Thessalonians,” in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 53.

<sup>212</sup> Inaugural, that is, insofar as we have written record.

theology, and more specifically, how these two themes intersect, thereby providing a basis to address the questions posed in our introduction as we draw attention away from the hotbed of debates in Romans and Galatians and into a less addressed, less contested, but richly informative text.

## 1. Identifying the Centrality of Faith in Paul's Theology (1 Thess 1–3)

### 1.1 Faith as the Primary Identifier of Christians

The manner in which Paul opens his letters reveals the matters close to his heart. In the first three chapters of 1 Thessalonians, the primacy of Paul's concern about the Thessalonians' faith becomes readily apparent. Here we observe his emphasis on the quintessential role of faith in the life of a Christian and that faith is evident by its activity. Paul<sup>213</sup> begins his letter to the Thessalonians with an extended encomium that focuses on the steady faith that has been manifested by the new converts.<sup>214</sup> Throughout the letter, Paul's principal way of identifying followers of Christ is with the term πίστις and its related cognates.<sup>215</sup> The first occurrence falls within the opening expression of Paul's gratitude and stands at the head of the triad of faith, love, and hope that Paul often employs to describe the essence of the Christian life (1:3).<sup>216</sup>

Two observations about how Paul uses πίστις in this context are noteworthy. First, the pairs of nouns in each triad are best understood so that the second noun in each pairing is interpreted as a subjective genitive and the source of the former.<sup>217</sup> In this light, we interpret the couplets to mean: “your work produced from faith” (ὁμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως), “your labour from love” (τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης), and “your

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<sup>213</sup> Recognising that he had two co-writers, Silvanus and Timothy, I will refer to Paul as the chief communicator in this letter for ease in prose.

<sup>214</sup> F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, WBC 45 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 12.

<sup>215</sup> In 1 Thessalonians, πίστις occurs eight times (1:3, 8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 5:8); πιστεύω occurs five times (1:7; 2:4, 10, 13; 4:14); πιστός occurs once (5:24).

<sup>216</sup> Bornkamm has described this triad as the “quintessence of the God-given life in Christ.” Günther Bornkamm, *Paul*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), 219. Cf. 1 Thess 5:8; Rom 5:1-5; 1 Cor 13:12; Gal 5:5f. In the disputed letters cf. Col 1:4f; Eph 4:2-5.

Note that all Scripture references in this chapter that do not explicitly identify the book indicate texts in 1 Thessalonians (e.g., 1:3 instead of 1 Thess 1:3).

<sup>217</sup> So Schlatter, *Glaube*, 379; Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 12. I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 51; Traugott Holtz, *Der Erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, EKKNT 13 (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1986), 43; Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 75; Furnish, “Faith, Love, and Hope,” 226; Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 85.

Morgan treats the pairings as appositional (Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 226).

endurance which comes from hope” (τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος). Understanding faith as the source for work underscores the active nature of faith. It does not lie dormant and unaffected by the gospel but rather yields good works as its fruit.

Secondly, we observe that the triad is dependent on the pronoun ὑμῶν that precedes it,<sup>218</sup> clearly identifying the Thessalonian Christians as the subject of the faith being described. Paul has human recipients of the gospel in mind each time that he refers to πίστις in this letter. In seven of the eight occurrences of the noun, he addresses his readers with the second person plural possessive pronoun ὑμῶν when speaking of their faith (1 Thess 1:3, 8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10). The eighth occurrence (5:8) has the first person plural pronoun ἡμεῖς, thus containing the same implication that human subjects of faith are in view. The other references to faith clearly have a human subject as well. In fact, faith is the chief way of identifying believers, as noted by the substantival participle of πιστεύω (οἱ πιστεύοντες—1 Thess 1:7; 2:10, 13). Additionally, the use of the verb in 4:14 has a clear human reference noted by the first person plural subject of πιστεύομεν. This observation is significant in light of the increased acceptance of the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ that emphasises the *faithfulness of Christ* over against humans exercising faith applied *toward* Christ. While the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ does not occur in 1 Thessalonians, the force in Paul’s employment of πίστις on its own contains no ambiguity that the grammatical subjects are the very readers to whom Paul is writing.

That Paul chooses to employ the participle οἱ πιστεύοντες as the primary way of identifying Christians in this letter is also significant (cf. 1:7; 2:10, 13). Functioning as a substantival participle, it is consistently translated as “the believers” here and throughout the Pauline corpus.<sup>219</sup> Paul Trebilco’s recent study on group

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<sup>218</sup> So Holtz, *Die Thessalonicher*, 43. Holtz argues that the genitive τοῦ κυρίου is also connected to the three terms: “Jedenfalls darf das ὑμῶν weder allein auf ἔργον usw. noch allein auf πίστεως usw. bezogen werden, sondern nur auf die Verbindung beider Begriffe, und zwar auf alle. Auch der Genitiv τοῦ κυρίου ... gehört zu allen drei vorangehenden Gleidern, nicht nur zum letzten.”

<sup>219</sup> Other occurrences of πιστεύω as a participial identifier for Christians in the authentic letters include: Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:5, 11, 24; 9:33; 10:4, 11; 1 Cor 1:21; 14:22 (twice); Gal 3:22. The aorist participle is found in 2 Thess 1:10; 2:12. Wallace points out the NT writers opted more frequently for the present participle with the aspectual force in view. He writes: “the present was the tense of choice most likely because the NT writers by and large saw *continual* belief as a necessary condition of salvation” (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 621, n.22). Paul sometimes speaks of those who are of faith, both in the plural, οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (Gal 3:7, 9), and singular, ὁ ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (Rom 3:26), ὁ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (Rom 4:16). In Galatians he also refers to the household of faith: οἱ οἰκεῖοι τῆς πίστεως (Gal 6:10). The adjective, πιστός, is also used to designate Christians in 2 Cor 6:15 and Gal 3:9. Trebilco suggests that there is no significant difference between ὁ πιστός (Gal 3:9) and οἱ πιστεύοντες (Gal 3:22). Paul Trebilco, *Self-*



identity has given special attention to “the believers” as one of seven self-designations used within the New Testament, noting that this self-designation confirms the priority given to faith and believing among early Christians.<sup>220</sup> This point is underscored in light of the fact that “the believing ones” is not a designation found in Greco-Roman religions or even in general Greco-Roman thought, nor is it prominent in Jewish texts.<sup>221</sup> Thus, the prevalence of believer-designations is “one of *the* very significant ‘identifiers’” in the New Testament. It was crucial to early Christian identity since “‘believing’ was a *characteristic* emphasis of the movement” and something they “‘habitually regarded as vital.’”<sup>222</sup> Faith was the boundary marker for those inside the group, thus the use of οἱ ἄπιστοι can be used to identify the “outsiders.” Likewise, the use of οἱ ἄπιστοι corroborates how crucial “believing” is for early Christians; the absence of faith is what separates others from the Christian group.<sup>223</sup>

While “the believing ones” is a prominent designation throughout the New Testament,<sup>224</sup> it is particularly significant to Paul.<sup>225</sup> Whereas prior to his conversion, the apostle would have distinguished between Jew and Gentile, Paul now nullifies all other boundary markers (Gal 3:26-28), uniting Christians under the rubric of faith (Rom 1:16). In 1 Thessalonians, this primary way of identifying followers of Christ is already abundantly apparent.

## 1.2 Active Faith

Throughout this letter, Paul speaks of faith in such a way that reveals it as vibrantly active in nature. For example, at the outset of the letter, Paul’s praise of the Thessalonians is not simply because of some generic declaration of faith. Rather, it is specifically because their faith generated action through good works. We highlighted above that each couplet in the triad of faith, hope, and love (1:3) ought to be understood so that the second noun is interpreted as a subjective genitive and thus the

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*Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87.

<sup>220</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*. Cf. p. 118.

<sup>221</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 118. Trebilco notes that in the LXX, the absolute use of “the believers” without a specified object of belief is not found. Yet in the New Testament, about half of the cases are used as an absolute, suggesting that “the believers” has become a technical term in the New Testament (119).

<sup>222</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 118

<sup>223</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 84.

<sup>224</sup> Christians are identified as “believers” 79 times. The present, aorist, or perfect participle of πιστεύω is used substantively 65 times, and the adjective πιστός is used substantively 14 times.

<sup>225</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 72.

source of the former: “your work produced from faith” (ὕμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως), “your labour inspired from love” (τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης), and “your endurance which comes from hope” (τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος).<sup>226</sup> If faith is the locus in the human from which work arises, it is clear that faith is not simply a one-off cognitive assent to certain truth claims. On the contrary, faith is essentially active and productive; good works are yielded as its fruit.

The active nature of faith is also revealed in the participle οἱ πιστεύοντες (1:7; 2:10, 13), which in the present tense emphasises the ongoing nature of faith. Wallace points out that although the aorist participle was sometimes used, the New Testament writers opted more frequently for the present participle with the aspectual force of continual belief in view.<sup>227</sup>

The activity of faith is evident as well when Paul rejoices that their faith spread to Macedonia, Achaia, and all places (1:7-8). The intriguing statement, ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, is explained by the activity that Paul summarises in the surrounding verses: 1) they became examples to believers in Macedonia and Achaia; 2) the word of the Lord sounded forth from them (v.7); 3) reports about their welcoming spirit to the apostles (v.9); 4) turning to God from idols (v.9); 5) serving a living and true God (v.9); 6) waiting for the return of Jesus (v.10). The importance of an active faith is evident in many ways throughout the letter, and will be addressed in more detail throughout this chapter. Yet in the first chapter of Thessalonians alone, the preponderance of evidence makes clear that faith is not simply an inward feeling or persuasion. Nor is faith merely cognitive assent to truth claims. Faith is manifested through action, the evidence that transformation has occurred.

### *1.3 Actively Passive Receiving*

In addition to direct linguistic cognates, various conceptual parallels can be found in the text which help to illustrate the nature of faith. When Paul refers to the Thessalonians’ response to the gospel, he employs the verbs δέχομαι (1:6; 2:13) and

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<sup>226</sup> Fee suggests that just as the possessive pronoun ὑμῶν goes with each pairing within the triad, so does the final phrase τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In this way, it is not only their “hope in the Lord, Jesus Christ,” but also their “work that is produced from their “faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ,” and their labor is inspired by their “love for Christ.” Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 22.

<sup>227</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 621.

παραλαμβάνω (2:13). Both words are commonly defined as “to take, to receive.”<sup>228</sup> Where elsewhere he speaks of responding to the gospel in faith, *receiving* the word appears to be faith’s correlate.<sup>229</sup> In the first instance in 1:6, Paul employs the participle of δέχομαι to describe their response to the word of God. It is best to take δεξάμενοι as exegetical, depicting a correspondence between the preaching and receiving.<sup>230</sup> When the gospel came to them in power and full assurance (ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πληροφορία πολλῇ, 1:5), the Thessalonians’ response was to receive the word, even in the midst of affliction. The word of God commands a response that is both passive and active. Receiving is passive in that it requires the prior action of another, the act of giving, and is dependent on the giver. Equally, receiving entails a decision to actively accept or reject the gift. We might understand receiving then as an active passivity. In this way, receiving explicates faith as something that is self-involving as the believer chooses to appropriate the gift. Furthermore, this self-involving component is indicated by Paul’s inclusion of the circumstances surrounding their receiving. The Thessalonians became imitators of Paul and of the Lord as they received the word in affliction. Arguably, this reference alludes to the Thessalonians’ participation in the sufferings of Christ.<sup>231</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we see that Paul employs both παραλαμβάνω and δέχομαι. Louw-Nida defines the two verbs together as: “to receive or accept an object or benefit for which the initiative rests with the giver, but the focus of attention in the transfer is upon the receiver—‘to receive, receiving, to accept.’”<sup>232</sup> Siede avers that in the New Testament, the two express the “complementary movements of faith in appropriation and acceptance.”<sup>233</sup> This complementary relationship is demonstrated in 2:13 where the aorist participle παραλαβόντες is connected to δέχομαι as the main verb revealing the active passivity of the faith. The NRSV renders it well: “We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received (παραλαμβάνω) the

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<sup>228</sup> Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 744; Louw-Nida 18.1.

<sup>229</sup> Delling corroborates an association between παραλαμβάνω and faith, suggesting that the former “derives from πίστις, from living union with Christ, so that its attaining can be described as παραλαμβάνειν τὸν Χριστόν.” Delling, “λαμβάνω κτλ.,” *TDNT* 4:14.

<sup>230</sup> So also Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 115.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, 68–76. The connection between faith and participation will be developed inductively as we progress through each chapter. At this point, it serves us best to allude to this possibility here.

<sup>232</sup> Louw-Nida 57.125.

<sup>233</sup> Brown, *NIDNTT*, 1:744.

word of God that you heard from us, you accepted (δέχομαι) it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.”

A helpful illustration to understand the meaning of παραλαμβάνω comes from the context of ancient Greek pedagogy in which the relationship between a pupil and teacher was depicted as παραλαμβάνων and παραδιδούς respectively.<sup>234</sup> There was “a definite relation of confidence on the part of the παραλαμβάνων” who finds in the παραδιδούς “absolute authority.”<sup>235</sup> In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, the παραδιδούς is not a human teacher, as in the context of Greek pedagogy, but God himself.<sup>236</sup> Clearly, this relationship of *confidence* and *trust* is established by divine initiative. Yet, receiving the word requires that active passivity of receiving the gift. In this way faith can be described as self-involving in the prior activity of God. In receiving the gospel, one actively depends on this “word of God which is working (ἐνεργέω) in those who believe” (1 Thess 2:13). In other words, faith brings one into the sphere of God's saving work.

#### 1.4 The Basis of Faith: The Power of God

We have just identified the axiom on which Paul's theology of faith hangs: faith arises and remains in a believer always and only through a prior divine act. Faith does not arise from autonomous human effort. This is seen early in this letter when Paul justifies the authenticity of the Thessalonians' faith by the fact that the gospel came to them ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ (1:5) and is reiterated in 2:13 when Paul reminds his readers that the word they preached was not from men but truly was the word of God (ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ).<sup>237</sup> Karl Barth explains that “The Word of God is itself the act of God.”<sup>238</sup> This becomes evident in this verse when Paul makes a noteworthy shift in this passage from the past action of receiving the gospel, παραλαβόντες ... ἐδέξασθε ..., to the present working of God in them (ὅς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν). The present tense of ἐνεργέω

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<sup>234</sup> The arrow indicates the relationship of dependence and confidence of the παραλαμβάνων upon the παραδιδούς. Delling, *TDNT* 4:11; cf. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 198b.

<sup>235</sup> Delling, *TDNT* 4:11.

<sup>236</sup> In general, when Paul employs παραλαμβάνω it is in the context of receiving the gospel, which he emphasises was delivered in the power of God and what Paul had received directly from Jesus (1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:12). The word is found 8 times in the undisputed letters (1 Cor 11:23; 15:1, 3; Gal 1:9, 12; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1) and an additional 3 times in the disputed letters (Col 2:6; 4:17; 2 Thess 3:6).

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Rom. 1:16 and 1 Cor. 1:18.

<sup>238</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G.W. Bromiley, I.1 (London: T&T Clark, 1956), 143.

carries the force of Paul's emphasis on God's past action into a present and continuing work of God. Ridderbos notes that this verse explains the relationship of the power of God and faith such that this power works faith in a person and causes that person to live by it.<sup>239</sup>

These essential details make clear that faith is not an independent operative power within the believer, but rather faith relies on a power outside of oneself. The power of God always precedes and effects πίστις. Faith is elicited by the power of God before it responds and is the definitive mode in which the transformative power of God takes effect in the believer who connects himself or herself in a dependent relationship to God.

### *1.5 Evidence of Faith*

The basis of Paul's emphatic praise of the Thessalonians' faith in the opening of this letter is illuminated in chapters two and three as the apostle describes the context of suffering in which he first presented the gospel and which the Thessalonians have been left to endure. Having received the word of God which is at work in these new believers (2:13), the Thessalonians have entered into an experience of suffering which appears to be common in the life of believers (1:6; 2:14). Because Paul was so swiftly led away after their conversion (Acts 17:1-10),<sup>240</sup> he expresses acute uncertainty and concern about the present state of faith amongst those in the newly formed church. They had begun this life of faith well, as Paul conveys through his prayers of remembrance (1:3), and as evidenced by their testimony of faith in surrounding regions (1:8). But have they stood fast in the face of adversity? He might easily have posed a question similar to that which he asked of the Galatians: "You were running well; (have you been) prevented from obeying the truth?"<sup>241</sup> Thus, in view of their suffering (θλίψις 3:3) and Paul's apprehension that they might be disturbed (σαίνω 3:3) by their afflictions or tempted by the tempter (3:5), Paul sends Timothy to seek evidence that these new believers have remained steadfast in their faith.

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<sup>239</sup> Ridderbos, *Paul*, 235.

<sup>240</sup> On the accuracy of Acts at this point cf. Todd D. Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and Its Neighbours*, JSNTSup 183 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Gal 5:7. Note the altered wording to fit to the situation in Thessalonica.

### 1.5.1 Re-identification with the Christ-event

Some exploration of the specific historical context and sociological implications of conversion in Thessalonica will illuminate our understanding of the angst Paul expresses particularly in chapter three. As a crucial first point, we note that their new faith necessitated radical life changes. This life transformation began with re-directed worship, turning toward God and away from their previous focus of worship, pagan idols (1 Thess 1:9). This new worship had ramifications for their whole way of life because religion was deeply integrated within their social world, thus a rejection of pagan worship and practice had definite social ramifications. Todd Still discusses this issue at length, arguing that the *θλιψις* experienced by the Thessalonians is best understood as “intergroup conflict between Christians and non-Christians.”<sup>242</sup> John Barclay argues similarly that this *θλιψις* is best understood as “social harassment” which most likely arose from the new converts’ “offensive abandonment” of Greco-Roman religion.<sup>243</sup> What Paul praised in their turning to God from idols (1:9), families and broader society would deem as insolent, resulting in severe “social dislocation” which was manifested in a variety of ways.<sup>244</sup>

One example of this social dislocation would likely have been in the realm of political repercussions. Barclay highlights that “Thessalonica was dependent on good relations with Rome and would not welcome those whose message questioned the status quo.”<sup>245</sup> More difficult than repercussions over political concerns, however, was the “personal and social offense of Christianity.”<sup>246</sup> Drawing upon a number of early sources, Barclay exposes the “surprise and resentment” of non-Christians when their Christian friends converted and “declined to take part in normal social and cultic activities.”<sup>247</sup> In support of this assessment, Meeks notes that the new Christians’ *ἴδιοι συμφυλέται* (2:14), who have shown hostility towards them, are likely people who belong to the same *φυλή* or “tribe.”<sup>248</sup> Betrayal of family would have been another

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<sup>242</sup> Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica*, 17. Still argues that the Thessalonian believers were perceived as socially exclusive and subversive to family, religion, and government, thus inciting the harassment of the outsiders.

<sup>243</sup> John M. G. Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 512–30; cf. p. 514.

<sup>244</sup> Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” 514.

<sup>245</sup> Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” 514; the author of Acts exposes the concern of the broader Thessalonian community that the Christians were acting “contrary to the decrees of the emperor” in their allegiance to “another king named Jesus” (Acts 17:7-8).

<sup>246</sup> Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” 514.

<sup>247</sup> Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” 515; Barclay cites 1 Pet 4:3–4; Tacitus *Ann.* 15:44.

<sup>248</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, “Social Functions of Apocalyptic Language in Pauline Christianity,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 691.

consequence for those of a newly formed commitment to the Christian faith as individuals broke ancestral traditions and neglected familial responsibilities.<sup>249</sup> Thus, on every social level—political, communal, and familial—Christians were an offense to those around them. Barclay estimates: “We can imagine, then, an especially sharp reaction in Thessalonica at the appearance of this exclusive sect, a reaction extending perhaps beyond verbal to physical abuse.”<sup>250</sup> The exact nature of the affliction is unknown to us, but based on the vigorous expression of concern on Paul’s part, we can be sure that it was severe enough to provoke pressure on the Thessalonians to recant their faith in God and his Son Jesus Christ.

In a helpful comparison between Paul’s techniques and the procedures various first century philosophers used in shaping new members into their community, Abraham J. Malherbe comes to similar conclusions as Barclay; the process of conversion proceeded tentatively as new converts were vulnerable to the pressure they felt by society. He writes: “Conversion was a disturbing experience that did not lead to a placid life in a safe harbor. The radical reorientation demanded by philosophers required social, intellectual, and moral transformation that often resulted in confusion, bewilderment, and sometimes dejection.”<sup>251</sup> For example, Epictetus exhorts his followers not to be distressed by the dishonour they felt from their society: Οὐτοί σε οἱ διαλογισμοὶ μὴ θλιβέτωσαν· ἄτιμος ἐγὼ βιώσομαι καὶ οὐδεὶς οὐδαμοῦ.<sup>252</sup> Plutarch likewise addresses the possibility that his new converts might be disheartened by their new way of life.<sup>253</sup> At times the social pressure was so great that the converts were at risk of renouncing philosophy altogether.<sup>254</sup> Philo, as a closer contemporary to Paul, expresses similar apprehension for new converts who have left everything from their former life behind.<sup>255</sup> After presenting many such examples, Malherbe concludes: “Paul’s converts apparently experienced the same distress and anxiety at and after their conversion that converts to other groups experienced.”<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Barclay cites: 1 Pet 3:1-6; 1 Cor 7:12-16; Tertullian *Apol.* 3.4; Justin 2 *Apol.* 2; Philo *Spec.* 1.51-53; 4:178.

<sup>250</sup> Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” 515.

<sup>251</sup> Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 36–37, 45.

<sup>252</sup> Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, 24.

<sup>253</sup> Plutarch, *On Listening to Lectures*, 46E-47B.

<sup>254</sup> Plutarch, *Progress in Virtue*, 78A-C.

<sup>255</sup> Philo, *Special Laws*, 1.52; *On Dreams*, 2.273.

<sup>256</sup> Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 46.

Having established the social context in regards to the afflictions the Thessalonians were suffering, we better understand the burden Paul feels in regards to the Thessalonians' faith. His uneasiness is directly related to the degree to which his converts show resolve in the face of such radical reorientation and social harassment. Thus, Paul is forthcoming regarding his goal to fortify continually the Thessalonians in their faith, eliminating weaknesses that might cause them to succumb to social pressures to recant their devotion to Christ or return to any previous familial, religious, or political commitments.

As a helpful theoretical comparison, we might apply the sociological concept of symbolic capital as a metaphor for the Pauline conception of faith. Although the idea is grounded in theories first developed by Thorstein Veblen and Marcel Mauss,<sup>257</sup> the phrase "symbolic capital" was coined and the idea developed by French social anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>258</sup> According to this theory, what an individual or community deems to have worth or value is determined not solely from a financial perspective. Rather, symbolic capital refers to any property (whether physical, economic, cultural, or social) that is perceived by social agents to have value.<sup>259</sup> For example, the concept of honour is a typical form of symbolic capital in Mediterranean societies. Honour exists as symbolic capital when it is represented by a shared set of beliefs that perceive certain patterns of conduct as honourable or dishonourable.<sup>260</sup>

Symbolic capital can be more narrowly conceived in terms of social capital theory in which the core idea is that social networks have value.<sup>261</sup> In view of our discussion regarding the social harassment experienced by the Thessalonian Christians, we can perceive their newfound faith in God as the symbolic capital that replaced their previous system of worth established by the pagan society around them. Previous allegiances and relationships would have provided the Thessalonians' sense of social capital, but their value is now in Christ alone. Thus they can withstand

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<sup>257</sup> Cf. especially Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, ed. Martha Banta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Marcel Mauss, *Techniques, Technology, and Civilisation*, ed. Nathan Schlanger (New York: Durkheim Press/Berghahn Books, 2006).

<sup>258</sup> Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (ed. John B. Thompson; trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) 231; Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 47–52; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (trans. Richard Nice; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 112–121.

<sup>259</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 47.

<sup>260</sup> Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, 47.

<sup>261</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 18–19.



persecution, harassment, and social dislocation because they now depend upon a system of worth found only in Christ. What others think or say about the Thessalonians has no sway over them now because this previous symbolic capital has been replaced by their faith in Christ.

This context explains the concern Paul expresses that these converts not be disturbed by their afflictions. Paul’s desire is that they be strengthened in this faith that has reshaped their whole system of value. They have realigned themselves with Christ, and thus, in contrast to a society that finds its worth in social connections, the Thessalonians now find their complete worth in their new Lord. In this faith, they are empowered to resist any temptation to turn back to their former way of life. Our understanding of faith is coming into clearer focus as we see that it involves the ability to discount what others think, replacing previous social capital with the matchless worth of Christ.

### 1.5.2 Standing in Christ

When Paul receives the good report from Timothy, once again it is specifically on the basis of the strength of the Thessalonians’ faith that he finds comfort: *διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ’ ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως* (3:7).<sup>262</sup> In the next verse, he applies a metaphor that seems to extrapolate what he means in verse seven. With penetratingly affective language Paul writes: “now we live if you stand fast in the Lord” (3:8). These two concepts are seen in parallel so that “standing in the Lord” (v.8) explains their “faith” (v.7).

Verse 7:

*διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν ...*

*διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως,*

Verse 8:

*ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν*

*ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.*

The idea of “standing” in relation to faith occurs frequently in Paul’s writings and serves as an appropriate metaphor for faith.<sup>263</sup> In a few key passages, Paul depicts his readers’ allegiance to Christ as “standing in faith.”

<sup>262</sup> Wanamaker notes that Paul uses *διά* instrumentally here “as the real source of his encouragement” (Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 135). Cf. Wilhelm Mundle, *Der Glaubensbegriff des Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zur Dogmengeschichte des ältesten Christentums* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977), 159.

<sup>263</sup> Some form of “to stand” is used 16 times in the undisputed Pauline letters (10 forms of ἵστημι and 6 forms of στήκω), mostly bearing theological significance. Grundmann, “στήκω, ἵστημι,” *TDNT* 7:649.

καλῶς· τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν, σὺ δὲ **τῇ πίστει ἔστηκας** (Rom 11:20a)

Γρηγορεῖτε, **στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει**, ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε (1 Cor 16:13)

οὐχ ὅτι κυριεύομεν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως ἀλλὰ συνεργοὶ ἐσμεν τῆς χαρᾶς ὑμῶν·  
**τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε** (2 Cor 1:24)

In early Christianity, standing and its opposite, falling, represent persevering or failing to endure,<sup>264</sup> something Paul is particularly concerned about in light of their afflictions. Thus, we understand Paul’s metaphor of “standing in faith” to illustrate his exhortation to persevere in faith. It seems plausible to read Paul’s exhortation to stand in Christ here in the same way as his exhortation to “stand in or by faith”<sup>265</sup> since faith ultimately is directed toward Christ. Paul seems to have in mind both the human posture of faith and the Christological focus in each case.

The imagery of “standing in Christ” is a perfect metaphor for faith for it conveys total dependence upon Christ. Being grounded in Christ provides the basis for one’s spiritual stability despite tribulation, temptation, and suffering of various forms. Malherbe again assists in our understanding by noting that the Greek word *στήκειν* conveys the idea behind the Latin *stare*, meaning “to stand firm” in a military sense, which took on moral or spiritual significance in late Stoicism.<sup>266</sup> Malherbe claims that Paul was familiar with the Stoic use, but unlike the Stoics, who stood fast in the security of their reason, Paul defined security by being “in Christ”<sup>267</sup> and urged the Thessalonians to maintain a concentrated dependence upon him through every circumstance. In light of the parallelism we noted between “faith” and “standing in the Lord,” we understand faith to be the “means and power by which one stands”;<sup>268</sup> it is the mode of existence in which one is firmly grounded and dependent on Christ. The metaphor contributes to a participatory understanding of faith as seen in the parallel way Paul relates *πίστις* and “standing in the Lord” and reinforced through the locative sense of *ἐν κυρίῳ*.

### 1.5.3 Growing in Faith

Having explored the historical background and the sociological factors that served as the impetus for Paul’s concern about negative influences impacting the

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<sup>264</sup> Grundmann, *TDNT* 7:649.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Phil. 4:1.

<sup>266</sup> Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 203. Cf. also Grundmann, *TDNT* 7:636–38.

<sup>267</sup> Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 203.

<sup>268</sup> Grundmann, *TDNT* 7:651.

Thessalonians’ faith, we turn our focus now to some linguistic matters that support the notion that faith is dynamic—faith has the potential to grow or to wane. The first clue that faith is not a fixed status, but rather a dynamic mode of existence, occurs in 1 Thessalonians 3:2. Here Paul explains that his purpose in sending Timothy was to strengthen and to encourage the Thessalonians in their faith: εἰς τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν.<sup>269</sup> στηρίζω means to fix firmly in a place, set up, establish, support.<sup>270</sup> It can refer to a physical establishment (e.g., a city) but is also often used to denote the sense of “causing to be inwardly firm or committed; to confirm, establish, strengthen.”<sup>271</sup> Paul uses it in this way in Romans 1:11-12 when he declares his desire to impart a spiritual gift to the Romans in order to strengthen them: εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς (v.11). Verse twelve clarifies what this means. Paul desires that they may be mutually encouraged in their faith: τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ (Rom 1:12).<sup>272</sup> In 1 Thessalonians 3, Paul uses the verb in a similar manner to convey the notion of inwardly bolstering the believers, specifically in their faith.<sup>273</sup>

In conjunction with the verb στηρίζω, Paul employs the verb παρακαλέω,<sup>274</sup> which is generally understood to mean either “to exhort” or “to encourage.”<sup>275</sup> Arguably, the ideas often coincide. When Paul exhorts, he intends to likewise encourage; when he encourages, he means also to exhort. In 1 Thessalonians 3, Paul applies παρακαλέω in both 3:2 and in 3:10, where he confesses his own longing to be with them that he also might attend to their faith. The repetition of his concern regarding the strength of their faith in 3:2 and 3:10 seems to form an inclusio, bolstering the force behind his concern. Because he is unable to visit the

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<sup>269</sup> ὑπὲρ is best taken to indicate the focus of concern. Various translations have been rendered for the preposition including: “for the benefit of” (Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 128), “about” (Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 191), “in” (Fee, *Thessalonians*, 116), and “for the sake of” (Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 62). It seems best to take the second half of the phrase, καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν, as clarifying the initial statement of purpose, εἰς τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμᾶς. That is, Paul sent Timothy with the purpose to strengthen the Thessalonians by encouraging their faith. The force is primarily to show that the locus from which the strength of the Thessalonians lies is in fact their faith.

<sup>270</sup> BDAG, στηρίζω, 6826.

<sup>271</sup> BDAG, στηρίζω, 6826.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. Rom 16:25 where Paul uses the same verb as he prays for the Romans to be strengthened according to the gospel. On the strength of manuscript evidence for the inclusion of this doxology in the original form of the epistle, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 476–477.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. 1 Thess 3:13 where Paul employs the same verb in his prayer that the Thessalonians’ hearts be strengthened in holiness: εἰς τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>274</sup> Cf. 2:12; 3:7; 4:1,10,18; 5:11,14.

<sup>275</sup> BDAG, παρακαλέω, 5584.

Thessalonians, Paul continues in chapters four and five with a paraenetic aim<sup>276</sup> that is connected to the desire he expressed in 3:2 to encourage their faith. Utilising the same verb παρακαλέω, he passes on this exhortation of encouragement to his readers in 4:18 and 5:11. These two imperatives conclude two pivotal passages concerning the future *parousia* and future participation in Christ (4:13-18 and 5:9-11). Noting the hortatory function of παρακαλέω in all three instances (3:2; 4:18, 5:11), we can understand all of 4:13–5:11 to follow upon the idea found in the first reference (3:2). That is, just as Paul sends Timothy in 3:2 to encourage (παρακαλέω) the Thessalonians in their faith, he provides specific content for the encouragement of their faith in 4:14: “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.” In these latter passages, Paul demonstrates what it looks like to encourage the believers with these words. Indeed, it involves reminding the believers of the credal content in which their future hope and faith are based.<sup>277</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 3:10, Paul makes another intriguing assertion regarding his desire to restore (καταρτίζω) what is lacking in their faith (τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν). The verb καταρτίζω has the sense of either: a) to cause to be in a condition to function well, *put in order, restore*; or b) to prepare for a purpose, *prepare, make, create, outfit*.<sup>278</sup> τὸ ὑστέρημα<sup>279</sup> is generally understood to indicate imperfections inherent in the life of faith of the Thessalonians.<sup>280</sup> In light of the meaning of the noun, it makes best sense to interpret the verb, καταρτίζω, in the first sense of “to restore,”<sup>281</sup> specifically restoring something that is currently flawed to its proper condition. Paul still sees weaknesses and uncertainties in the life of the community, a concern alluded to a couple of verses earlier when it qualifies his joy on

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<sup>276</sup> Malherbe uses *paraenetic* and *hortatory* interchangeably. He explains that the paraenetic aim belongs to the whole letter, not just to the paraenetic section. Abraham J. Malherbe, “Exhortation in First Thessalonians” *NovT* 25 (1983): 238–56; cf. p.238, 240.

<sup>277</sup> There is also a strong component of encouraging the believers in how they are personally involved with the salvation process in Christ. This will be interacted with in more depth in section 2.

<sup>278</sup> BDAG, καταρτίζω, 4050

<sup>279</sup> This word is not often used in Paul’s writings, a total of 6 times in the undisputed letters. Half of those instances appear in 2 Corinthians and are used in the context of a lack of financial and material means (2 Cor 8:14, 9:12, 11:9).

<sup>280</sup> Holtz writes: “Man darf davon ausgehen, dass das nicht in der Intention des Paulus lag, dass er vielmehr an Unvollkommenheiten dachte, die dem Glaubensleben der Thessalonicher noch anhaften” (Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, 138).

<sup>281</sup> So Fee, *Thessalonians*, 127.

the condition “if you continue to stand firm in the Lord” (3:8). Thus, the apostle still aims to see them face to face to minister to this need.<sup>282</sup>

Commentators have offered various explanations as to what τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν might mean. The two general conceptions include: 1) “gaps in their moral and theological training,”<sup>283</sup> or 2) weakness in theoretical or practical faith, the power of belief.<sup>284</sup> The text supports both conceptions.<sup>285</sup> In one sense, it anticipates chapters four and five where Paul both corrects and supplies what is lacking in their theological and moral understanding (4:3-8; 4:9-12; 4:13-18; 5:1-11). Yet, the dimension of practical faith is key to Paul’s concern in these first three chapters. The cognitive dimension seems to be the foundational level of faith, but without its practical outworking in the face of life’s trials and temptations, it is rather powerless. In this way, the concept of faith as one’s mode of existence comes to fuller expression. Faith truly is a way of being and living that responds to threats against it with full confidence that Christ alone is the centre and in fact the entire sphere of the believer’s identity. All of this refers back to his concern in 3:1-5 about the persecution the Thessalonians had faced, the reason for his sending Timothy “to strengthen and encourage” their faith (3:2) and to “learn about their faith” (3:5).

From this exploration of 1 Thessalonians 3, we understand Paul to imply that faith has varying degrees, which Paul and his fellow-workers hope to build upon (3:10). This is a concept he will develop in his later writings, but it is important to note that the seeds of the idea are exposed in his earliest letter.<sup>286</sup> Again, we reiterate the point that to *strengthen* and *complete what is lacking* entails the goal of continually fortifying faith, eliminating weaknesses that might cause the Thessalonians to succumb to external social pressures that oppose their new Christian identity. Faith is presented as something that increasingly grows in self-identification

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<sup>282</sup> Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, 138.

<sup>283</sup> Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 174; cf. Ernst von Dobschütz, *Die Thessalonicher-Briefe*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 147; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 139.

<sup>284</sup> Hermann Olshausen, *Die Briefe Pauli an die Galater, Ephesier, Kolosser, und Thessalonicher* (Königsberg: Unzer, 1840), 449.

<sup>285</sup> Von Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 147; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 127.

<sup>286</sup> In an article on faith in Romans 14–15, John Barclay argues that: “the difference between strong and weak faith is the degree to which faith, although always expressed in culturally specific practice, is disaggregated from any one cluster of cultural norms.” Comparing Christian faith to the Stoic redefinition of value, he writes: “the stronger the faith the more it allows the recalibration of worth in Christ to render indifferent any standards of worth (inherited or adopted) not derivable from the Christ-event” (“Faith and Self-Detachment from Cultural Norms: A Study in Romans 14–15,” *ZNW* 104 (2013): 194).

with Christ. Faith involves a commitment to Christ that has potential to grow or wane as outside pressures weigh on the believer. Thus Paul is concerned to bolster their faith and see that the Thessalonians are strengthened to stand unmoved in the face of adversity.

#### 1.5.4 Suffering with Joy

In the context of discussing their receipt of the gospel, Paul observes that the Thessalonians had become imitators of himself and of the Lord in suffering with joy in the Holy Spirit (1:5-6; 2:13-16). Robert Tannehill notes that imitation is not so much a matter of “conscious imitation” as it is “the result of the power of the gospel working itself out in the lives of the believers” which results in a certain pattern of behaviour.<sup>287</sup> Similarly, Ernst von Dobschütz argues that “receiving the word in power” and “becoming imitators in suffering” are parallel ideas.<sup>288</sup> Essentially, being imitators in suffering is proof of their truly having received the word of God and that this word is at work in them.<sup>289</sup> As we saw earlier, receiving the word is a correlate to faith, and thus we see the relationship between suffering and faith. Connected in a dependent relationship to Christ through faith,<sup>290</sup> one is enabled by the power of God to endure suffering with joy. Particularly important here is that the believers are able not only to endure suffering, but to experience afflictions with joy. The joy they exemplified in the midst of their suffering demonstrates the authenticity of their faith<sup>291</sup> because their joy signifies that their value is rooted not in temporal matters of this life but in their eternal life in Christ.

#### 1.6. Conclusion

Our exegetical expedition thus far has traced Paul’s use of πίστις, along with various conceptual cognates, as a dominant leitmotif in this letter. From the outset, Paul traces the health and progress of the Thessalonians’ faith, noting their initial reception of the gospel in full conviction (1:5) and with joy in the midst of affliction (1:6). Their faith was active through good works (1:3) so that they became an example to believers in surrounding regions (1:7). Evidence of their faith was seen in

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<sup>287</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967), 103.

<sup>288</sup> Von Dobschütz, *Thessalonicher-Briefe*, 73.

<sup>289</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 101.

<sup>290</sup> For Tannehill, the idea of imitation is directly related to their sharing in Christ’s sufferings (*Dying and Rising*, 100).

<sup>291</sup> χάρα is connected with θλίψις in other Pauline passages; cf. 2 Cor 7:4-5; 8:2. The Holy Spirit is commonly noted as responsible for joy (Rom 14:17; 15:13; Gal 5:22).

their turning to God from idols (1:9), standing in the Lord (3:8), and even reflecting joy in the midst of suffering (1:5-6; 2:13-16). Their new worship had ripple effects on their whole way of life as they suffered social and possibly even physical harassment. Nevertheless, because their previous symbolic capital had been replaced by their new faith, they were able to withstand their afflictions, standing in Christ alone. All that they valued was focused in their identification with Christ and thus also they fully depended on him.

Faith is not simply a way of entry into a new religion. Nor is faith merely a static state of being. Rather, through Paul's correspondence to the Thessalonians it has become clear that faith is a dynamic mode of existence that has potential either to develop or to diminish. Paul conveys his apostolic endeavour to "strengthen and encourage" (3:2) the Thessalonians in their faith as well as to "supply what is lacking" (3:10). Faith can be lacking in terms of moral or theological understanding but also and primarily in terms of its practical outworking in the face of adversity. Paul certainly addresses both of these aspects in that he supplies teaching where their theological understanding was flawed or insufficient (cf. especially 4:13-18) and where they needed moral instruction (cf. 4:1-12) and exhortation (cf. 5:1-22). Yet, the heart of these first three chapters is the author's fixated concern regarding the vitality of the Thessalonians' faith in practice. What has happened to their faith in the wake of persecution? To Paul's great relief, the Thessalonians have stood firm.

Finally, the faith of the Thessalonians, which proves to be dynamic and susceptible to alteration for good or for bad, is absolutely and fundamentally dependent upon the prior elicitation and continual nurturing of God. In summary thus far, we have seen that faith is elicited by something before it responds, it is evidence of the word of God acting (*ἐνεργέω*) in believers, and it entails receipt of something that is transformative. We now look further into the effect and evidence of faith in the Thessalonian converts.

## **2. Faith as Participation (1 Thess 4–5)**

In surveying the first three chapters we have seen how thoroughly concerned Paul is with the faith of the Thessalonians. It is interesting that thus far Paul's tendency is to speak of faith in God (*ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν*) or *πίστις* without a direct object (i.e., as a state of being; faithfulness). Yet, central to our quest to

understand Paul's conception of faith is determining specifically how faith unites the believer to Christ. Thus far, participation in Christ has figured more implicitly through such concepts as "standing in the Lord" and through a general sense of commitment and dependence upon Christ. However in the last two chapters, and specifically in two important passages, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 5:9-11, Paul more explicitly connects the concepts of faith and participation.

### *2.1 Participation in the future resurrection (4:13-18)*

Already in chapter one, waiting for the return of the Lord has been introduced as a key component of the Thessalonians' faith (1:10). In chapter four, Paul clarifies the events surrounding the *parousia*. Because many have died, there seems to be growing anxiety about whether their deceased loved ones will share in the future return of the Lord.<sup>292</sup> The γάρ in verse fourteen connects the statement to the previous verse, giving the reason why Christians need not grieve about those who have fallen asleep. Paul reassures the Thessalonians that those who trusted Christ in life will experience life with Christ in the future. Paul's affirmation of the future resurrection and participation in the *parousia* for all who are "in Christ" (4:16) is based on their faith in the Christ-event. In order to develop this idea, a couple of interpretative issues must first be addressed.

#### **2.1.1 Interpretative Issue #1: Logical or Conditional?**

The first interpretative question centres on whether we understand Paul to be making a logical deduction or a conditional statement in verse 14. If logical, the verse would read:

*"if we believe that Jesus died and rose again"*  
εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἀνέστη

*"(then we believe also that) God will lead with him<sup>293</sup> those who are dead through him"*

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<sup>292</sup> Alternative explanations have been offered to explain the grief among the Thessalonians including: a) a gnostic-like denial of the resurrection, b) the abrupt interruption of Paul's teaching, c) fear that those who have already died will not get to witness the *parousia*. The most substantiated explanation is that the community expected Jesus to return in their lifetime and thus were grieving in light of their assumption that those who had already died would miss the *parousia* (cf. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2012), 62–63; Anthony C. Thiselton, *1 & 2 Thessalonians Through the Centuries*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Chichester: Blackwell, 2011), 115; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 135; Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, BNTC (London: Black, 1972), 185; Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 95.

<sup>293</sup> The syntax of 14b will be justified below in Interpretative Issue #2.



οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει σὺν αὐτοῖς

If conditional:

“*if we believe* that Jesus died and rose again  
*then God will* lead with him those who are dead through him”

Because the concern here is the status of the deceased loved ones, we know that Paul is not making a conditional statement; the future of those who are dead is not based on the belief of the living Christians. Rather, Paul is explaining the logical extension of their belief in Christ’s death and resurrection by utilising a first class conditional statement.<sup>294</sup> In this way, he assumes it is true that the Thessalonians believe Jesus died and rose again, and thus what follows from that belief is a reassurance that those who are in Christ will also be raised.<sup>295</sup> The future hope for those who have died is founded upon the historical Christ-event. The Thessalonians need not fear that their loved ones will miss the *parousia* because, as Paul goes on to explain, God who raised Jesus from the dead will raise those who are “dead in Christ” (4:16)<sup>296</sup> to be caught up together with those who are alive in the clouds to meet the Lord.

### 2.1.2 Interpretative Issue #2: διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἄξει οἱ κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ?

A second interpretative issue centres on the phrase διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1 Thess 4:14). The question is: should διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ be connected to the verb ἄγω which follows or to the preceding participle of κοιμάομαι? If connected to ἄγω, the connotation is that Jesus will be the agent of God in bringing “those who sleep.” This is the interpretation rendered in the NRSV: “For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.”<sup>297</sup> However, as Morris points out, this creates a tautology: “God will bring through Jesus with Jesus those who sleep.”<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, this rendering raises difficulties since it could be read to imply that all the dead, and not only the Christian dead, will be brought through Jesus.<sup>299</sup> Gaventa points out that the passage is clear elsewhere that

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<sup>294</sup> The first class conditional statement indicates “*the assumption of truth for the sake of argument.*” Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 690.

<sup>295</sup> Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 123.

<sup>296</sup> With Holleman, we understand ἐν Χριστῷ to be connected to the preceding noun οἱ νεκροί and not to the following verb ἀναστήσονται. Joost Holleman, *Resurrection and Parousia: A Traditio-Historical Study of Paul’s Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15*, NovTSup 84 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 46 n.2; 171.

<sup>297</sup> So Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 318–20; Fee, *Thessalonians*, 170.

<sup>298</sup> Morris, *Thessalonians*, 139.

<sup>299</sup> Morris, *Thessalonians*, 139.

Jesus is God's agent (v.16).<sup>300</sup> Thus, it is not likely that διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ought to be linked to ἄγω.

Although it appears the more difficult reading, it is better to understand διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in connection with the preceding participle κοιμηθέντας, conveying the idea that those who “are sleeping,” a common euphemism for death,<sup>301</sup> had identified themselves with Jesus until the time of their deaths. A few points help to support this reading. First, we notice that the participle κοιμωμένων in verse thirteen is in the present tense, but Paul switches to the aorist tense in verse fourteen. Wanamaker suggests this means that verse fourteen refers to the moment of their dying, “when the issue of whether they belonged to Christ or not was of central importance for their future salvation.”<sup>302</sup> We find support for this interpretation in 1 Corinthians 15:18 where Paul makes a similar argument that those who have “fallen asleep” in Christ, οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ, will be raised with him.<sup>303</sup> There he uses the more common prepositional construction ἐν Χριστῷ to qualify οἱ κοιμηθέντες, showing that Paul can use more than one preposition to communicate a believer's shared experience in or through Christ. Paul also uses ἐν Χριστῷ in conjunction with the less euphemistic term οἱ νεκροί in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 to encourage the believers that the dead in Christ will be raised at Christ's return. In his later letters, Paul will more frequently employ ἐν Χριστῷ to express one's participation in Christ, but we understand διὰ with the genitive to convey the same idea here.<sup>304</sup>

An additional point in support of interpreting διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ with κοιμηθέντας is that διὰ is generally understood as a primary way to express instrumentality, and more specifically a mediatorial relationship.<sup>305</sup> When διὰ is used in association with Christ (διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, διὰ Χριστοῦ, etc.), it often

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<sup>300</sup> Gaventa, *Thessalonians*, 64

<sup>301</sup> Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 131. Thiselton notes the significance of using the metaphor of sleep for death since it carries with it “the expectation of *awakening to a new dawn and a new day*, i.e. the expectation of resurrection and the gift of renewed life and vigor” (Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1220).

<sup>302</sup> Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 169; cf. Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 98.

<sup>303</sup> The context in 1 Cor 15 is, of course, negating the Corinthians' denial of resurrection, thus Paul is making his argument in this verse by drawing out the negative implications of such a denial. Paul, however, adamantly defends the resurrection both of Christ and those “in Christ” throughout the chapter. This text will be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter of this thesis.

<sup>304</sup> Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 169.

<sup>305</sup> Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 237, 266; Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 70.

conveys the instrumentality of Christ in salvation to those who believe.<sup>306</sup> Thus, the phrase διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 should be read as an implicit reference to the role of Christ as the mediator of salvation.

Further support is gained when compared with a similar construction in 5:9-10. Here again Paul employs διὰ with the genitive in connection with Christ: σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v.9). In this case, the phrase introduced by διὰ clearly shows the mediatorial role of Christ in salvation, being grammatically connected to the verbal idea of “obtaining salvation” which immediately precedes the clause (περιποίησιν σωτηρίας).<sup>307</sup> In what follows, Paul makes explicit the believers’ connection to the Christ-event:

Christ’s mediatorial role: διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ  
Believers’ connection to Christ: τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν,

Salvation is through Christ, who died “on our behalf” (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν).

### 2.1.3 Conclusions

These two interpretative issues facilitate our quest to decipher Paul’s meaning of faith in two significant ways. First, we see that faith does have an objective element, a noetic content. Paul appeals to the specific content of belief to which the Thessalonians have intellectually assented. Throughout the first three chapters, Paul has already referred several times to the gospel that he had declared on his first visit to Thessalonica.<sup>308</sup> Barclay asserts that on the basis of Paul’s frequent referral to his preaching “we can reconstruct its content with some confidence.”<sup>309</sup> Still has categorised that content, as depicted in the first three chapters of the letter, under three headings—God, Christ, and until Christ comes.<sup>310</sup> He concludes that, based on the hints given in 1 Thessalonians, “the gospel that Paul and his coworkers declared in Thessalonica was decidedly christological and eschatological with a strong admixture of moral and ecclesial instruction” and most certainly centred on the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>311</sup> By the time Paul gets to 4:13, he can

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<sup>306</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union With Christ*, 253.

<sup>307</sup> Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 188. cf. Morris, *Thessalonians*, 139; Hollemann, *Resurrection and Parousia*, 71, n.1; 172, n.1; T. Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, 193. Similar constructions are found frequently throughout Paul’s writings (cf. Rom 5:1, 11; 1 Cor 15:57).

<sup>308</sup> Cf. εὐαγγέλιον (1:5; 2:2,4,8,9; 3:2); λόγος (1:5, 6, 8; 2:5, 13 (3x)); παράκλησις (2:3). Todd D Still, “‘Since We Believe That Jesus Died and Rose Again’: The Gospel Paul Preached in Thessalonica as Evidenced by 1 Thessalonians,” *ResQ* 54, no. 1 (2012): 11).

<sup>309</sup> Barclay, “Conflict in Thessalonica,” 516.

<sup>310</sup> Still, “Since We Believe,” 11.

<sup>311</sup> Still, “Since We Believe,” 15.

summarise the content of this gospel to the core beliefs that Jesus died and rose again. This element of propositional belief is foundational to the Pauline conception of faith. Paul refers to the content of his teaching precisely to ground his readers in their faith, particularly in light of all that would have been vying for their loyalty.

While foundational, propositional belief represents the first layer of Paul's understanding of faith. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 reveals a deeper logic that brings the believer to participate in the very core of the gospel; faith is the very means by which the Christ-event envelops others. As believers trust in the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection, Paul argues that the believers are enveloped into that truth. Those who are κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ are such by virtue of the faith they exercised in life. In essence, verse 14 can be interpreted to say: "since we believe that Jesus died and rose, thus also God will raise those who, when they died, were enveloped in his saving death and resurrection." Jesus' life attaches to those who trust him, who believe he died and rose for them. Thus, if it was true that Christ rose from the dead, it will likewise be true for believers. Bruce states this idea nicely: "Death 'through Jesus' is but the prelude to resurrection 'with Jesus.'"<sup>312</sup> The faith of the Thessalonians brought them into a participatory experience in Christ, evidenced by the way Paul speaks of those who are "asleep through Jesus." As we argued above, this language communicates that these believers had identified with and participated in Christ in life up to the point of their death. Thus, their faith in a future participation in the resurrection is based on the experience of participation in Christ through faith in their earthly life. Faith in the Christ-event encompasses faith that what was true of Christ will be true of believers; Christian faith is fundamentally participatory in nature. □

## 2.2 *The Future Orientation of Faith (5:1-11)*

The primary purpose of Paul's opening passage in chapter five is to encourage (παρακαλέω, v.11) and build up (οικοδομέω, v.11) the Thessalonians in the future hope of being with Christ. He begins by recalling the teaching of "the day of the Lord" while contrasting those who will experience the wrath of God with the Thessalonians who need not fear. In view of who they are as children of light as well as the destiny they know they will have with Christ, Paul extends a series of exhortations to be alert and sober (vv. 6-8) which concludes with a participial phrase echoing his opening approbation of their faith, love, and hope. However, his praise

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<sup>312</sup> Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 98.

for the presence of these characteristics at the letter's opening (1:3) turns here to become exhortation to appropriate the spirit of "sobriety" which is characteristic of their faith, hope, and love: νήφωμεν ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ περικεφαλαίαν ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας (5:8). Paul appeals to their faith, encouraging them to continue exercising it in view of the coming day of the Lord (5:2) and the future they will share with Christ (5:11).<sup>313</sup>

The hortatory function in this section ought to be understood in view of the process of salvation that Paul is describing—salvation is still something to be obtained in 5:1-11, an object of hope (5:8).<sup>314</sup> In this way, hope and faith are integrally related to one another, and the nature of salvation as a process is exposed. Believers depend upon Christ who died on their behalf (past). Yet there is still something to look forward to—the hope of living with him (future).<sup>315</sup> In the present, believers experience this salvation process through faith, which is the mode of experience in this Christ-mediated movement of salvation.

Absolutely essential to this whole process is that salvation by faith is wholly Christological. By faith, the believer is wrapped up in the Christ-mediated process of salvation through identifying with the Christ-event (past), living in a new mode of dependent existence upon a new Lord (present), and living always with hope of being reunited with him in the future. Yet again, faith is absolutely and fundamentally participatory in nature.

### 2.3 Faith in the Faithful One (5:23-24)

As we draw this chapter to a close, we return to the axiom with which we began: the Pauline conception of faith is always based upon the underpinning truth that God has accomplished all that is necessary for a believer's life and salvation. Thus it is natural for Paul, who has strenuously contended for the faith of the

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<sup>313</sup> There is some debate about whether to interpret the aorist participle ἐνδυσάμενοι as coincident or antecedent to the main verb νήφωμεν. Marshall interprets it as coincident with νήφωμεν while Wanamaker interprets it as antecedent (Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 138; Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 185). Regardless, the implications in context seem to be clearly hortatory. Marshall connects this passage to a similar discussion in Romans 13:12, 14. Drawing on the same contrast of those who are of the day vs. those who are of the night, the Romans are encouraged to "put on the armour of light" (Rom 13:12) and commanded to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." The same verb, ἐνδύω, is used, but in Romans as an aorist middle subjunctive (Rom 13:12) and an aorist middle imperative (Rom 13:14) instead of the aorist middle participle used in 1 Thess 5:8. By correlation to a parallel text, then, we can read ἐνδυσάμενοι θώρακα πίστεως in 1 Thess 5:8 as having a similar hortatory function.

<sup>314</sup> Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 188.

<sup>315</sup> Cf. 1 Thess 1:10; 4:14, 17.

Thessalonians throughout this epistle, to conclude by drawing his readers' focus back to the One upon whom they trust. In the concluding verses, Paul employs a chiasm that illustrates this truth:

A Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης  
B ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς  
B' καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως  
ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθείη.  
A' πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει

Through this chiasm, Paul calls attention to the source of all sanctification—the God of peace. As believers apply their faith in Christ, they can be confident that God is faithful (πιστός) and will bring their salvation to completion. Following his pattern of blessing and encouragement, this passage reinforces the truth of God's continued work of grace in the believer's life, lest one be disheartened by his or her own inability to effect transformation. This passage beautifully demonstrates the truth of God's faithfulness to sanctify believers entirely (*divine agency*) along with appropriate admonitions encouraging believers to yield in faith to his continuing work (*human agency*). The faith of the Thessalonians πρὸς τὸν θεόν (1 Thess 1:8) is ultimately grounded in God's faithfulness (5:26).

### 3. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the question of what Paul means by faith and in what sense faith unites the believer to Christ. The first question was explored primarily through surveying 1 Thessalonians 1–3. We found that faith is Paul's primary designation for Christians. Faith is presented as an active mode of existence, evidenced through good works and unambiguously identified as a human mode of existence. As such, however, faith is not an independent operative power within the believer. Rather, faith is elicited by the power of God before it responds and is evidence of the word of God acting in believers. Faith entails the receipt of something that is transformative. By faith believers have realigned themselves with Christ and thus find their worth in him so that, through temptations and afflictions, believers are able to stand firm in their new identity. Paul reveals that faith is a process that is to be completed. One's faith has the potential to be strengthened and perfected; conversely, there is always a risk that one might turn back to his or her former way of life. Thus,

the first three chapters of Thessalonians revealed faith to be the dynamic mode of existence that enables the transformative power of God to take effect in the believer.

Ultimately, we saw that faith is firmly grounded and dependent on Christ, which led into the second part of our study, examining faith as participation in Christ in the last two chapters of Thessalonians. By faith, believers participate in Christ's death and resurrection, which defines their present eschatological existence that is oriented in hope towards an unhindered future union with him. Paul presented faith as the means of involving oneself in the Christ-mediated *process* of salvation.

Specifically, faith believes in the historical Christ-event and is presently wrapped up in the eschatological tension of consistently identifying oneself with the crucifixion and resurrection. Faith also displays the confident hope of participating in the future resurrection when believers will live forever in union with Christ. As an active dependence upon Christ, faith is the life-sustaining mode of existence in Christ.

### Chapter 3: Faith and Participation in 1 Corinthians

*Fides quae creditur ... fides qua creditur*<sup>316</sup>  
*Augustine*

The opening of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians conveys a remarkably positive tone when compared to the rest of the letter. In the first nine verses, Paul firmly establishes the identity of the Corinthian believers "in Christ" by carefully qualifying each theological indicative with this favourite prepositional phrase.<sup>317</sup> This opening greeting serves as the vital foundation of Paul's letter as he prepares to address ways in which these believers have strayed from their new Christologically defined identity.<sup>318</sup> The letter is artfully crafted with the Christ-event providing the framework of its composition. Paul opens by laying a strong foundation of the *kerygma* of the cross and closes with the glorious hope of the resurrection, thus enclosing the *paraenetic* aims within a Christological *inclusio*. Yet, within this Christological framework, what does Paul make of the role of faith and how does faith unite the believer to Christ? These questions will again guide our way through this significant letter.

#### 1. Faith as Participation in 1 Corinthians 1–2

In the first two chapters, as Paul prioritises the singularity of the gospel, he simultaneously displays a concern about his readers' response to it and corresponding manner of existence. Unsurprisingly, the language of faith takes centre stage in his explication of Christ-centred living. The first indication is seen in Paul's assertion that they preach this gospel of folly specifically "to save those who believe" (σώζειν τοὺς πιστεύοντας – 1 Cor 1:21).<sup>319</sup> In the midst of Paul's juxtaposition of the strength and

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<sup>316</sup> Augustine, *De Trin.* 13.2.5

<sup>317</sup> From his very first words, Paul grounds the Corinthian believers' identity in Christ, expressing this in a variety of ways: God has called them into the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ (πιστὸς ὁ θεός, δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν – 1 Cor 1:9), they are being sanctified in Christ Jesus (ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – 1 Cor 1:2), God's grace has been given to them in Christ Jesus (τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – 1 Cor 1:4), they are being enriched in him in speech and knowledge (ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ γνώσει – 1 Cor 1:5), and the witness of Christ is confirmed in them (τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν – 1 Cor 1:6).

<sup>318</sup> Most egregious are issues of gross immorality (1 Cor 5–6) and denials of the resurrection (1 Cor 15).

<sup>319</sup> As we discussed in the previous chapter, the substantival participle οἱ πιστεύοντες is one of the primary ways Paul identifies Christians.



wisdom of this world against that of God, there is insight to be gained about how Paul conceives of human faith.

### 1.1 Boasting and Faith (1:26-31)

As we observed in 1 Thessalonians, Paul utilises a variety of terms and metaphors to convey the proper human disposition toward God. This is indeed the case in 1 Corinthians as well. In 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and 2:1-5, Paul proceeds with two parallel lines of argumentation in which he employs both *καυχάομαι* (1:31) and *πίστις* (2:5) to articulate the only acceptable human posture before God. The similarity of structure and conceptual overlapping in the two passages suggests that Paul uses the two words, *καυχάομαι* and *πίστις*, in parallel to one another, such that “boasting” explicates what he means by faith. In the first passage, Paul exposes the low social status of many of the Corinthians in order to elucidate the purposes of God to overturn the worldly structures of worth by the power of the gospel (1:26-31); in the presence of God, there is no other basis of boasting but Christ Jesus (1:31).

1:29 ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.  
1:30 ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἔστε ἐν **Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ**,  
ὃς ἐγενήθη **σοφία** ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ,  
**δικαιοσύνη τε**  
**καὶ ἁγιασμὸς**  
**καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις,**  
1:31 ἵνα καθὼς γέγραπται· **ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω.**

In the second passage, Paul draws upon his own personal experience to expound his point. Just as the Corinthians were lacking in notable qualities (1:26),<sup>320</sup> Paul details his own weaknesses. He lacked eloquence and wisdom in his preaching (2:1). Instead of an impressively powerful presence, Paul exhibited weakness, fear, and trembling (2:3). His intentional point of focus was solely Jesus Christ and his crucifixion (2:2). In short, his stature and presentation were antithetical to the values of the Corinthians

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<sup>320</sup> The general consensus among scholars is that the Corinthian church was made up of individuals of mixed socioeconomic status. Cf. Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. John H. Schütz (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982); Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 32. For alternative positions on the socioeconomic status of the church see: Wilhelm H. Wuellner, “The Sociological Implications of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 Reconsidered,” in *SE*, ed. Livingstone, vol. 6 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), 666–72; Gail R. O’Day, “Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality,” *JBL* 109 (1990), 259–67. Wuellner argues that 1:26 should be translated as an interrogative and not as an indicative as it usually is. In this way, the Corinthians would respond that many of them were, indeed, wise, powerful, and noble. O’Day concludes that Paul “confronts the Corinthians with the paradox of their social location and theological identity” (264). For our purposes, the point that Paul is making remains unchanged.

precisely so that their faith would be based not in the “wisdom of humans but in the power of God” (2:5).

- 2:2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον.  
2:3 καὶ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῶ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς,  
2:4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις]  
ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως,  
2:5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

Following parallel lines of argumentation, the two passages end with similarly constructed purpose statements.

- 1:31 ἵνα καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχᾶσθω  
2:5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ

Together, these two concepts serve to exemplify human faith as a renunciation of all earthly forms of worth, while embracing instead a singularly focused boast in and dependence upon Christ. This idea is worth unpacking in greater detail.

This close correlation between καυχάομαι and πίστις has been noted by Bultmann, who understands Paul to convey human boasting as the attitude “of self-reliance,”<sup>321</sup> “of self-confidence which seeks glory before God and which relies upon itself.”<sup>322</sup> In human boasting “we see that man desires to stand on his own feet and not to depend on God.”<sup>323</sup> For this reason, Bultmann maintains that Paul contrasts καυχᾶσθαι with πίστις; the former portrays the human desire to be self-sufficient instead of depending on God,<sup>324</sup> whereas the latter necessitates a surrender of all self-glorifying because the human stands before God only as one who has received (1 Cor 4:7).<sup>325</sup> In 1 Corinthians 1:29, Paul renounces this kind of boasting: ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. Yet, two verses later he turns this idea on its head, urging the Corinthians to boast in such a way that rejects self-glorifying to glory in Christ instead.<sup>326</sup> The way he uses the verb καυχάομαι conveys the same dependence upon God implied in his use of the term πίστις. This kind of boasting looks away from the self and to the Lord: ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχᾶσθω (1:31). In light of the parallel argumentation between the two passages (1:26-31 and 2:1-5)

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<sup>321</sup> Rudolph Bultmann, “καυχάομαι, καύχημα, κτλ.,” *TDNT* 3:644–54; *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. (London: SCM Press, 1952), 241; transl. of *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1958), 242–43.

<sup>322</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *TDNT*, 3:648–49. Many have critiqued Bultmann for over-individualising the ideas of boasting and faith, e.g., Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 51.

<sup>323</sup> Bultmann, *TDNT*, 3:646.

<sup>324</sup> Bultmann, *TDNT*, 3:646.

<sup>325</sup> Bultmann, *TDNT*, 3:649.

<sup>326</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 242.

and in view of the way Paul redefines boasting in 1:31, it seems clear that Paul intends a propinquity in his use of the two concepts conveyed by *καυχάομαι* and *πίστις*; “boasting in the Lord” is parallel to the way Paul speaks of “faith in the power of God.”

Paul’s use of the expression, “as it is written” (1:31), invites us to explore the source of his citation, which has the potential to shed additional light on the way Paul uses *καυχάομαι*.<sup>327</sup> The concept of boasting is presented frequently throughout the Old Testament, primarily in a negative sense, condemning self-glorying.<sup>328</sup> Most scholars look to Jeremiah 9:22-23 (LXX) as the most plausible point of reference for Paul since the two passages and their contexts bear many similarities.<sup>329</sup> Although it is not a direct citation, given the slightly varied terminology, the language and paraenesis run parallel between the two passages. First we note the similarity of language. Through Jeremiah, the Lord commands *ὁ σοφός* (the wise), *ὁ ἰσχυρός* (the strong), and *ὁ πλούσιος* (the rich) not to boast in these resources just as Paul condemns false boasting in wisdom (*σοφία*), power (*δύναμις*), and nobility (*εὐγένεια*) in 1 Corinthians 1. Secondly, Paul adopts a pattern of a threefold rhetorical dismissal similar to the prophet’s.<sup>330</sup> Furthermore, as Hays suggests, the reference to Christ as the believers’ righteousness in verse 30 may be an echo of Jeremiah’s reminder that

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<sup>327</sup> Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, “The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah,” *JBL* 70 (1951): 297–307.

<sup>328</sup> See for example: Prov 20: 9; 25:14; 27:1. Bultmann notes that such self-glorying is the mark of a foolish and ungodly man (Ps 52:1; 74:4; 94:3). *καυχάομαι* is used widely throughout the LXX, primarily to replace *הלט* (*hitp*), but Bultmann notes it is used to replace *עלו* twice and *רבו* and *פאר* once each (Bultmann, *TDNT*, 3:646). Cf. Deut 10:21; 26:19; 33:29; Judg 7:2; 1 Sam 2:3, 10; 1 Kgs 21:11; 1 Chr 16:27, 35; 29:11, 13; Pss 5:12; 31:11; 48:7; 88:18; 93:3; 149:5; Prov 11:7; 16:31; 17:6; 19:11; 20:9; 25:14; 27:1; Jer 9:22f; 12:13; 13:11; 17:14; 28:41; 16:12, 17, 39; 23:26, 42; 24:25; Dan 5:1, 6; Zeph 3:19f; Zech 12:7. Deuterocanonical: Jdt 15:9; 3 Macc 2:17; Odes 3:3, 10; Sir 1:11; 9:16; 10:22; 11:4; 24:1f; 25:6; 30:2; 31:10; 38:25; 39:8; 44:7; 45:8, 12; 48:4; 50:11, 20; Ps Sol 17:1

In the NT, Paul uses the term most frequently: Rom 2:17, 23; 3:27; 4:2; 5:2f, 11; 15:17; 1 Cor 1:29, 31; 3:21; 4:7; 5:6; 9:15f; 13:3; 15:31; 2 Cor 1:12, 14; 5:12; 7:4, 14; 8:24; 9:2f; 10:8, 13, 15ff; 11:10, 12, 16ff, 30; 12:1, 5f, 9; Gal 6:4, 13f; Phil 1:26; 2:16; 3:3; 1 Thess 2:19. Within the contested Pauline letters it occurs only once: Eph 2:9. Outside of the Pauline corpus it occurs only thrice: Heb 3:6; Jas 1:9; 4:16.

<sup>329</sup> For a detailed defence of this view see: O’Day, “Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31,” 259–67. O’Day relies on Walter A. Brueggemann, “The Epistemological Crisis of Israel’s Two Histories (Jer 9:22-23),” in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. John G. Gammie et al. (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 85–105. Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 80; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, EKK, 7:1 (Zürich: Benziger, 1991), 205–06; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 187; Craig S. Keener, 1–2 Corinthians, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 31.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 34.

the Lord acts with righteousness.<sup>331</sup> Indeed, the context of dismissing all categories of worth and dependence apart from the Lord found in both passages makes Jeremiah a likely prophetic source to draw upon in support of his exhortation to the Corinthians.

Another possible source for Paul's citation is 1 Samuel 2:10 (LXX) where, in the context of Hannah's prayer, ὁ φρόνιμος (the wise, prudent), ὁ δυνατός (the powerful), and ὁ πλούσιος (the rich, wealthy) are admonished against boasting (καυχᾶσθαι) in these resources.<sup>332</sup> Again, the true boast is in the Lord, here specifically in understanding and knowing the Lord:

... μὴ καυχᾶσθω ὁ φρόνιμος ἐν τῇ φρονήσει αὐτοῦ  
καὶ μὴ καυχᾶσθω ὁ δυνατὸς ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ  
καὶ μὴ καυχᾶσθω ὁ πλούσιος ἐν τῷ πλούτῳ αὐτοῦ  
ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν τούτῳ καυχᾶσθω ὁ καυχώμενος συνίειν καὶ γινώσκειν τὸν κύριον  
καὶ ποιεῖν κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς (1 Sam 2:10b-e LXX)

Although the passage utilises similar terminology as Jeremiah, the context is different. Hays suggests this could be the more likely inspiration behind 1 Corinthians 1:31, reasoning that while Jeremiah 9 pronounces judgment, Hannah's song celebrates God's blessing and the reversal of status, something that has dominated Paul's diatribe about wisdom and folly, strength and weakness.<sup>333</sup> However, Conzelmann pinpoints the thrust of Paul's argument to be: "Paulus lehrt nicht, dass 'die' Niedrigen erhöht werden, sondern dass der Glaube das Heil ohne Rücksicht auf den weltlichen Stand empfängt."<sup>334</sup> Conzelmann aptly identifies Paul's primary concern. It is not primarily that the "lowly" will be exalted but rather that, despite their lowliness (1:26), God chose them so that faith and boasting are directed to God alone. Thus, Jeremiah seems the more natural source for Paul's citation.

Turning to the New Testament, we observe that 54 of 59 occurrences of καυχᾶομαι and its variants appear in Paul's letters.<sup>335</sup> An overwhelming majority of these occurrences are in the Corinthian letters: ten times in 1 Corinthians; 29 times in 2 Corinthians. The heavy concentration of καυχᾶομαι and its cognates in these letters is understandable when considered alongside the key themes Paul addresses as well as

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<sup>331</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 34.

<sup>332</sup> Note that the MT does not include this longer conclusion about boasting.

<sup>333</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, 34. Schrage considers 1 Sam 2:10 as a possibility but concludes that Jeremiah 9 is the more likely source (Schrage, *An die Korinther*, 1:205–06).

<sup>334</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, KEK 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 67.

<sup>335</sup> If the disputed letters are included the number of cognates changes to 55 of 59 (cf. Eph 2:9).

the cultural and historical context of first century Greco-Roman society. At the time of Paul's writing, Corinth was growing to be one of the largest and most prosperous cities in Greece.<sup>336</sup> A zeal for δόναμις makes sense in light of a government that was set up to reflect the earlier Republican era; citizens were given property ownership rights as well as rights to initiate civil lawsuits. Witherington notes: "As residents of a new city that was undergoing continual rebuilding and that was increasing in fame, the people of Corinth had both growing civic pride and individual pride."<sup>337</sup> The "fame" of the Corinthians has been documented and preserved in inscriptions describing individuals' charitable contributions, achievements, or societal status.<sup>338</sup> Interestingly, these inscriptions were often self-funded, corroborating that self-promotion was commonplace in Corinthian culture.

Thus, as a city noted for its wealth, with citizens striving after power and fame, Paul appeals to the prophet Jeremiah's admonition against boasting in their own resources. Walter Brueggemann argues that this triad of wisdom, might, and riches characterises the royal history of Israel. He writes: "Jeremiah disposes in one stroke of all the sources of security and well-being upon which the royal establishment is built."<sup>339</sup> Gail O'Day adds that these values represent both individual and social identity and well-being.<sup>340</sup> John Barclay explains the Corinthian situation in similar terms: "we should hear 'wisdom' and 'folly' not merely in intellectual terms, as rationality or illogic, but as umbrella labels for the presence or absence of 'civilized' values."<sup>341</sup> Indeed, Paul seems to be singling out the prized badges of honour in this significant Greco-Roman city and replacing them with the singularity of the gospel. In

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<sup>336</sup> Strabo notes Corinth's strategic position for commerce, which resulted in the city's distinguished wealth: "Corinth is called 'wealthy' because of its commerce, since it is situated on the Isthmus and is master of two harbours, of which one leads straight to Asia, and the other to Italy; and it makes easy the exchange of merchandise from both countries that are so far distant from each other" (Strabo, *Geography* 8.6.20).

For summaries of the history of Corinth see: Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 16–21; Schrage, *An die Korinther*, 1:25–29; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 5–9; Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 2–3.

<sup>337</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 8.

<sup>338</sup> Cf. John Harvey Kent, *Corinth: Results of Excavations Carried Out by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens: VIII/3: The Inscriptions 1926–1950* (Princeton: ASCSA, 1966).

<sup>339</sup> Brueggemann, "Epistemological Crisis," 93.

<sup>340</sup> O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31," 261.

<sup>341</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Crucifixion as Wisdom: Exploring the Ideology of a Disreputable Social Movement," in *The Wisdom and Foolishness of God: First Corinthians 1–2 in Theological Exploration*, ed. Christophe Chalamet and Hans-Christoph Askani (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 2.

the previous chapter, we explored the concept of symbolic capital and how that connects with the way Paul conveys faith. For the Thessalonians, the symbolic capital found in their new relationship with Christ was contrasted with their previous symbolic capital of peaceable social relations. For the Corinthians, previous symbols of value were found in human wisdom, social status, and power. The believers in Corinth had been consumed by their surrounding culture's system of value, and Paul rather abrasively confronts their values with the blunt and perplexing gospel of Christ's crucifixion. In God's economy, human wisdom, social status, and power are valueless. Having demarcated the values of God against the values of the Corinthians, Paul reminds them that their worth is ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1:30). To be in Christ is to boast in Him only. This currency "in Christ" is wholly contrary to the way in which the Corinthians have conceived of worth and even appears as folly (vv.18, 23) and a stumbling block (v.23) to those who are perishing. But for those who are being saved, the cross of Christ has displaced all else. In this way, "boasting in Christ" can be understood as taking the cross as one's symbolic capital; it is the only thing that has any worth to the believer (1:23) because Christ Jesus has now become to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1:30).<sup>342</sup> In the pivotal passage of 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5, we observe that Paul underscores the elevated and unmatched wealth in Christ using both πίστις and καυχάομαι. We have seen that the two terms reveal faith to include a sense of dependence and a sense of worth that is grounded solely in Christ. Christ is the only object of a believer's sense of worth and the only ground for dependence.

In light of our conclusions regarding boasting and faith in 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5, we notice that καυχάομαι occurs a handful of times in the remainder of the letter.<sup>343</sup> In chapter three, boasting is taken up again in the summarising conclusion of Paul's admonition against disunity and the false attribution of honour to human leaders: "So let no one boast about human leaders" (3:21a). This recalls the leitmotif of boasting and faith from 1:31 and 2:5, and "recapitulates" the argument of 1:18–2:5.<sup>344</sup> Many commentators have explained that the expression that follows this

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<sup>342</sup> Thiselton notes how the three terms, σοφοί, δυνατοί, and εὐγενεῖς (1:26), find their inversion and redefinition in the later references to righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), holiness (ἁγιασμός), and redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις) in Jesus Christ (v.30) (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 178). Cf. Schrage, *An die Korinther*, 1:215.

<sup>343</sup> 1 Cor 3:21; 4:7; 5:6; 9:15; 9:16; 13:3; 15:31.

<sup>344</sup> Thiselton comments that this verse "recapitulates" 1:18-31 (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 324). However, I have argued for the necessity of including 2:1-5 in this passage which has such

prohibition, “For all things are yours . . . all belong to you” (3:21b, 22b), reflects a Stoic maxim that was applicable in a variety of situations.<sup>345</sup> While the philosophers used the maxim to establish human self-sufficiency and mastery over all circumstances, Paul uses it to establish complete identity in and dependency on Christ.<sup>346</sup> ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ θεοῦ (3:23). In this way it is a fitting conclusion to his admonition against finding a false sense of security and symbolic capital in human leaders.

In 1 Corinthians 4:7, Paul identifies the underlying reason why he so adamantly renounces human boasting: τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβῶν; Believers have nothing to boast of themselves because all that they possess, they have received through Christ. Contrary to the pagan boast in self-achievement, the believer’s boast is in the “accomplishment” of Christ. 1 Corinthians 5:6 likewise condemns anthropocentric boasting: Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν. When we come to 1 Corinthians 9:15, however, we see that Paul speaks of his own ground for boasting. It is important to note that Paul’s boasting in his ministry is not inconsistent with his prohibition of human boasting because he is aware that his apostolic work is grounded solely in what Christ does through him (1 Cor 15:10).<sup>347</sup>

Central to Paul’s theme of boasting throughout this letter is that the only acceptable posture before God is one that is self-negating. Paul rejects any form of anthropocentric boasting. Rather, boasting is directed to the Lord. In this way, Paul’s discourse about boasting reflects what he means by faith. In 1 Corinthians 2:5 we saw that Paul defined faith as dependence upon the power of God, which is Christ himself (1 Cor 1:24), and as such the one exercising faith finds his or her value, security, identity, and well-being in nothing other than the one upon whom the believer is dependent. In this way, faith is implicitly participatory.

### *1.2 πίστις is Rooted in the Power of God in Christ Crucified (2:1-5)*

The connection between participation in Christ and faith is made more explicit in chapter two as Paul reaches the climax of his argument. The concluding sentence

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interpretative significance to the letter. Note also that this verse picks up the issue of factions addressed in 1:10-12.

<sup>345</sup> Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, SP 7 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 166; Marion L. Soards, *1 Corinthians*, NIBCNT 7 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 84; Fee, *Corinthians*, 154–55; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 124.

<sup>346</sup> Cf. Soards, *1 Corinthians*, 84; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 124.

<sup>347</sup> Bultmann, *TDNT*, 3:650. See also the following chapter on 2 Corinthians, which addresses this theme thoroughly in the context of Paul’s defence of his apostolic ministry.

asserts the overarching purpose of this section (1:18–2:5) and creates an *inclusio* with 1:18: Paul eschewed the kind of “excellent speech” of his contemporaries in order that the Corinthians’ faith might not rely on the wisdom of men but on the power of God (2:5).<sup>348</sup> Just as we observed in 1 Thessalonians, so we find in 1 Corinthians that the power of God plays the instrumental role in effecting πίστις. In this letter, Paul narrowly defines this power as Christ himself (1:24), and it is enacted in the cross and the preaching thereof (1:17, 18; 2:2, 4-5). In this way, Christ is again the clear focus of and power behind human faith.

The grammar and syntax of 1 Corinthians 2:5 beckon exegetical exploration, for here we find one of the rare instances in the Pauline corpus of πίστις followed by the preposition ἐν with Christ or God as the direct object: ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.<sup>349</sup> More typically, Paul employs ἐν in a spatial sense with πίστις to convey faith as the sphere of the believer’s existence. For example, Paul urges the believers to stand in faith (στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει – 1 Cor 16:13); to test themselves whether they are in the faith (Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε εἰ ἐστὲ ἐν τῇ πίστει – 2 Cor 13:5); Paul himself lives in faith in the Son of God (ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ – Gal 2:20).<sup>350</sup> Elsewhere Paul can speak of believing in the heart (ἐάν ... πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου – Rom 10:9). In this case Paul refers to the locus within the human where believing takes place.

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<sup>348</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 offers a couple of interpretative challenges. First, on the matter of the eleven textual variants, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 481. With Thiselton, we agree that the result does not drastically affect the thrust of Paul’s argument (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 215–16).

The second interpretative issue hangs on the question: in what sense does Paul renounce “persuasive speech”? Some argue that *πειθός* is used positively in a persuasive sense, others argue it is used neutrally in a plausible sense, and some conclude Paul uses it pejoratively in an enticing sense. Naturally, context must be taken into account as well as its relation to the contrasting phrase ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως. Thiselton offers three helpful “markers” as a guide through this complex debate (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 218–23). First, the Corinthians judged Paul by the same criteria by which popular orators were judged (cf. Witherington III, *Conflict and Community*, 47). Regarding such criteria, Savage explains that the Corinthians wanted “assertiveness and demagoguery”; Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul’s Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 219. Secondly, Thiselton deduces that Paul determines “to let truth speak for itself, confident in the power of the Holy Spirit of God to bring this truth home” to the hearers. At the price of renouncing personal status as a rhetorician, Paul ascribes that role ultimately to the Holy Spirit (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 220). Thirdly, the relationship between 2:4-5 and Paul’s argument in 1:18-31 reveals that Paul’s claim to “weakness” in chapter two should be read in light of his making the Lord the sole ground of confidence and boasting.

<sup>349</sup> Note that in 2:5 Paul’s reference to their faith in the power of God can be interpreted as faith in Christ. 1:24 makes the connection that “Christ is the power of God” when Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναντον (1 Cor 1:24) is understood as having a subject/predicate nominative relationship.

<sup>350</sup> Gal 2:20 will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter five, including the translation of the genitive expression τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.



Paul employs a variety of other prepositional expressions to convey the idea of “faith in God/Christ.” In 1 Thessalonians 1:8, he speaks of their faith *towards* God: ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν. In Philemon 1:5, it is Philemon’s faith *toward* the Lord Jesus for which Paul expresses thanks: σου ... τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν. Sometimes the participial form is followed with ἐπι as in Romans 9:33: ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ. Here the believer relies upon the stone of stumbling, which conveys a similar meaning as πίστις + ἐν.

As we have seen, Paul employs a variety of prepositions with πίστις- cognates. At times these convey faith more as the sphere of one’s existence,<sup>351</sup> and at other times these prepositions convey a sense of metaphorical direction *toward* which faith is focused, or resting *upon* that on which it is dependent. Yet, with a diversity of expression, Paul always intends faith to have both anthropological and Christological spectra. In 1 Corinthians 2:5, we see the human spectrum through the second-person plural possessive pronoun ὑμῶν. The faith is the Corinthians’ own: ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν. However, the Christological spectrum (δύναμις θεοῦ which is Ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ – 1:18, 2:5) is what fills out and gives substance to their faith.<sup>352</sup> Taking the dative in verse 5 as a dative of reference, the Pauline conception of faith is focused toward Christ. Or perhaps Schrage depicts the metaphorical relationship between the believer and object of faith more fully. He writes that “ἐν vor δύναμις *gibt das Fundament, nicht den Inhalt des Glaubens an.*”<sup>353</sup> Indeed the idea of the power of God, that is Christ, as the foundation of faith presents a fuller and more substantive understanding of the relationship between divine and human agents in faith, and it fits well with the idea of “standing in Christ/faith” that we observed previously.<sup>354</sup>

As a final point of clarification, this human response to the power of God necessarily involves recognition of one’s own inability to save oneself and thus cannot be construed as a human work or self-contrived effort. The first two chapters have established the principle that God works through weakness, even the weakness of the cross.<sup>355</sup> It is through that weakness that God’s power is displayed (1:17). Faith is the human response to that power. Furthermore, the Corinthians themselves are

<sup>351</sup> When conveyed as a state of existence, it is never self-contained or self-sustaining.

<sup>352</sup> In fact, Paul explicitly rejects human priority (μη ἢ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων) to emphasise the Christological priority of faith.

<sup>353</sup> Schrage, *An die Korinther*, 1:324. Cf. Rom 3:25 and Gal 3:26.

<sup>354</sup> Cf. discussion on 1 Thess 3:8 in chapter two § 1.5.2 and later in this chapter, § 2.1.2, on 1 Cor 15:1 and 16:3.

<sup>355</sup> Barclay, “Crucifixion as Wisdom,” 7–16.

exposed in their weakness (1:26). Thus, faith is necessarily self-negating at the same time as being Christ-affirming.

In summary, this important passage has shown that faith is a human posture indeed. But it is elicited by, based upon, and directed toward Christ. By faith, one connects oneself in a dependent relationship with God, identifying with the cross and participating in God's power through it. In this way, faith and participation in Christ can be seen as two sides of the same coin.

### *1.3 Summary of 1 Corinthians 1–2*

In our survey of the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians, we first observed that Paul employs πίστις and καυχόμῃ in a similar manner, both depicting a human posture that renounces all conceptions of worth apart from Christ, depending on him alone. Rather, in faith a believer redirects his or her boast to Christ alone, finding him to be the source of all that has value. In Christ, believers find their identity and share in all of his benefits. Faith is thus a singularly focused boast in and dependence upon Christ. In this way, faith is understood to be a form of participation in Christ.

Of central importance is that faith is based on the power of God. Faith is not a human work; rather, it is a self-negating mode of existence by which the believer grabs hold of God's gift in Christ. The self is thus re-defined in light of one's participation by faith in Christ.

## **2. Faith as Participation in 1 Corinthians 15**

In his well-known work, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, Karl Barth conveys the significance of 1 Corinthians 15: "It forms not only the close and crown of the whole epistle, but also provides the clue to its meaning, from which place light is shed on the whole."<sup>356</sup> Thiselton agrees, emphasising the climactic portrayal of grace through the cross, to which "the dead" contribute nothing. Rather, they experience the shocking transformation from death to life just as the Lord Jesus Christ experienced.<sup>357</sup> Indeed, this climactic portrayal forms the apex of Paul's argument when considered in conjunction with his opening exposition on the crucifixion of Christ (1 Cor 1:17–2:5). In chapter fifteen, Paul clearly presents the elements of the

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<sup>356</sup> Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, trans. H. J. Stenning (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1933), 11.

<sup>357</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 1169.

gospel that are of fundamental importance to the Christian faith; indeed these are the aspects of Jesus' life in which believers share. In focusing on the centrality of Christ's resurrection, this chapter demonstrates both the subjective and objective aspects of πίστις. Objectively, faith believes to be true that Christ died for one's sins and rose from the dead; subjectively, faith is self-involving through active dependence on the Christ-event.

### 2.1 Subjective Features of Faith (15:1-2)

On the most foundational level, faith involves an active response to and continuous dependence on the message of the gospel. Paul is careful to pair the detailed summary of his preaching (vv.3-4) with a reminder to the Corinthians that they had accepted and had actively responded to his preaching of the gospel message. Paul employs four active verbs to describe the Corinthians' reception of the gospel: they received (παραλαμβάνω v.1), they have stood (ἵστημι v.1), they hold fast (κατέχω v.2),<sup>358</sup> and they believed (πιστεύω). Fee perceives an A-B-A-B structure to Paul's argument in these two opening verses.<sup>359</sup>

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>A)</b>  | Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον<br>ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, |
| <b>B)</b>  | ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε,<br>ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,<br>δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε,   |
| <b>A')</b> | τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν<br>εἰ κατέχετε,                     |
| <b>B')</b> | ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε.                                    |

'A' represents the gospel and the preaching of it while 'B' represents the Corinthians' response to it. Thiselton describes 'B' helpfully as "the *self-involving dimension* ... : the stability of Christian existence, the experience of salvation, and the implication of coherent appropriation."<sup>360</sup> Fee's assessment provides a useful summary of the dynamic that occurs in salvation. As we have already clarified, salvation is predicated upon the divine act of God in Christ. However, Paul takes pains here to implicate the Corinthians in the activity of God. In the last chapter we argued that "receiving" (παραλαμβάνω) and "standing" (στήκω) provided commentary on what Paul means

<sup>358</sup> Some MSS (D\*, F, G) read ὀφείλετε κατέχειν instead of εἰ κατέχετε. But the reading is not significantly altered.

<sup>359</sup> Fee, *Corinthians*, 720.

<sup>360</sup> Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1184.

by faith. Paul’s employment of the same verbs again here with the added verb κατέχω seems to indicate that Paul intends to explicate aspects of the final verb (πιστεύω) so that faith encompasses their meaning. Indeed, the combination of verbs portrays the “self-involving dimension” of faith as we shall see in our analysis of the verbs below.

### 2.1.1 Receiving (παραλαμβάνω)

Faith ineluctably involves the act of personally receiving (παραλαμβάνω) the gospel. As we have already seen in our survey of 1 Thessalonians, receiving reflects active passivity—it is active in accepting and appropriating the gift but passive in the sense that the receiver is dependent on the action of the giver. Unique to the act of receiving the divine gift is that the activity of the giver does not cease upon reception of it. As we have already explored, the power of God which precedes and elicits reception continues on as the receiver appropriates the gift. The παραλαμβάνων conveys a sense of continuing and active dependence upon the παραδιδούς, an act of involving the self in the very Christ-event.<sup>361</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 15:1, Paul delivers the gospel in the power of God. The Corinthian reception of this gospel indicates, on one level, their cognitive agreement with the propositional, creedal assertions regarding the Christ-event—Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected (vv.3-4). Yet, their reception also indicates a comprehensive active involvement with these truth claims.<sup>362</sup> This active involvement plays out through a subjective sense of confidence. Furthermore, these believers have chosen to stake their lives upon the veracity of the Christ-event to the degree that nothing else matters and to the extent that it is self-involving in the death and resurrection of Christ.

### 2.1.2 “Standing in the Gospel”

The second self-involving verb that Paul employs, ἵστημι, portrays faith metaphorically as “standing on” the truth of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1). It builds from the idea of receiving and accepting as true the claims of the gospel to add the idea of a continuing perseverance in faith. We observed this metaphor in greater detail in our examination of 1 Thessalonians 3:8. There, Paul speaks of “standing in Christ” to explicate metaphorically the faith he spoke of in 1 Thessalonians 3:7. The symbolism

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<sup>361</sup> Cf. 1 Thess 2:13.

<sup>362</sup> Cf. Lietzmann, who understands παραλαμβάνειν to mean *active* acceptance. Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 3. Aufl., HNT 9 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1931), 76. Contra Conzelmann, who understands παραλαμβάνειν to simply convey that the Corinthians are receivers of the tradition (Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 295).

depicts the idea of total dependence on Christ. In him, the believer finds stability and security despite tribulation, temptation, and affliction.

In 1 Corinthians 15:1, once again, the gospel is symbolically understood as the ground upon which one stands. Paul has already presented a similar metaphor earlier in the letter. In opposition to the factious claims of the Corinthians, Paul contends that Jesus Christ alone is the foundation (θεμέλιος) of the believers' existence (1 Cor 3:11).<sup>363</sup> At the close of the chapter Paul exhorts the Corinthians again to stand in faith: Γρηγορεῖτε, στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει (1 Cor 16:13).<sup>364</sup> By using the present perfect in 15:1, Paul conveys that it is an ongoing phenomenon. It is a present stability based on a past action.<sup>365</sup> Through this metaphor, Paul conveys faith as a continued and intentionally expressed confidence in Christ. The Christ-event is the foundation upon which one lives through faith.

### 2.1.3 Holding Fast in Faith (κατέχω)

The third verb that Paul employs, κατέχω, also conveys the continuing state of faith through the present tense. Indeed, faith is not simply a decision made once in the past, but must be actively exercised, which is powerfully communicated through the idea of “holding fast” (κατέχω). κατέχω is found to have a varied semantic range. Paul utilizes this verb seven times in the undisputed letters.<sup>366</sup> In some cases it is used negatively in the sense of “holding back” or “suppressing,” as in the case of those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness in Romans 1: Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὄργη θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων (Rom 1:18). Later in Romans, Paul employs κατέχω when

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<sup>363</sup> Cf. Wolff, who argues similarly that the gospel is the foundation of the believers' existence (Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther/Teil 2, Auslegung der Kapitel 8–16*, THKNT 7/2 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 152.

The metaphor of the gospel, or Christ himself, as the foundation upon which one stands derives from Isaiah 28:16, which speaks of trusting the cornerstone (ἀκρογωνιαίος). The authors of Ephesians and of 1 Peter both interpret the cornerstone to be Christ (cf. Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6). Examples of the gospel and of Christ as foundation can be found also in Mt 7:25; Luke 6:48; Heb 6:1. Col 1:23 presents the perfect passive participle of θεμελιόω to depict being founded or firmly established in the hope of the gospel.

<sup>364</sup> Cf. Rom 11:20 and 2 Cor 1:24.

<sup>365</sup> So Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1185. Grosheide also seems to take the perfect of ἵστημι here as a true perfect, indicating past action with present implications (F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 347). Others take the verb here to be perfect with a purely present meaning. Cf. Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC 33 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 331. Whichever way the perfect form is taken here, context supports that the verb is intended to convey a present state that is based on a past action.

<sup>366</sup> Rom 1:18; 7:6; 7:30; 1 Cor 7:30; 11:2; 15:2; 2 Cor 6:10; 1 Thess 5:21. Two additional references are found in 2 Thess 2:6, 7.

referring to the Law by which they “were bound”: νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα (Rom 7:6). It can also be used in the sense of possessing something, as in 1 Corinthians 7:30 and 2 Corinthians 6:10.

In the remaining instances, Paul utilises the word in the sense of “holding fast” or “to adhere firmly to.”<sup>367</sup> It is this sense of the word that fits best in 1 Corinthians 15:2 as Paul seems to progress in his thought with each active verb that he employs, from the aorist tense of the verb παραλαμβάνω, conveying their past reception of the gospel, to the perfect of ἵστημι, which carries the force of their past reception into a present state of standing in dependence on the gospel,<sup>368</sup> to concluding with a present tense verb expressing a contingency on their continuing to adhere to its truth.

We find a helpful illustration in the writings of Herodotus, who employs the word to describe the sailing of the Persian fleet with a focused direction to the Magnesian land: κατέσχε ἐς τὸν αἰγιαλόν.<sup>369</sup> A vivid picture is also provided in the account of Paul’s dangerous seafaring to Rome. After much travail amidst the storm, the sailors discover a beach towards which they directed their sails (κατεῖχον – Acts 27:40). Indeed the picture is of “holding fast” to the course. The imagery of focused direction and holding firmly to the course aids in the conceptualization of faith as a focused “holding fast” amidst the circumstances of life, or more specifically, the challenges to one’s faith. Alternating from a series of past tense verbs which describe the initiation of their faith to the present tense of κατέχω reveals Paul certainly has in mind the necessity of continuing in faith with a focused direction towards and holding fast to the word of the gospel (15:1, 2). Faith is a continuous self-involvement in a new reality in Christ.<sup>370</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Being Saved

With one passive verb, Paul points to the gospel as the source through which the Corinthians are being saved (σώζω – v.2). Two essential points can be drawn from the grammatical changes in this word. The first is seen in Paul’s shift from the active to the passive voice. By utilising the passive voice, Paul presents salvation as

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<sup>367</sup> BDAG 4138

<sup>368</sup> See our discussion about the perfect above. Although the perfect of ἵστημι is often purely present in meaning, it is striking how Paul progresses grammatically from the aorist, to the perfect, and finally to the present tense. This does seem to be an indication of Paul’s concern for their comprehensive and continuing state of faith. This dynamic nature of faith is confirmed then in the final verb κατέχω.

<sup>369</sup> Hdt. 7, 188.

<sup>370</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 15:20-28, 49-58; this new reality in Christ will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4: “Participation by Faith in 2 Corinthians.”

orchestrated by God, lest faith be misconstrued as a form of achieving salvation. Faith is never portrayed as an autonomous human work; faith is always predicated upon divine enablement in Paul’s letters. Secondly, we note the present tense of σώζω, which further demonstrates that Paul is presenting salvation as a process.<sup>371</sup> The future hope of salvation is implicit in his contingent statements: δι’ οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, τίνι λόγῳ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, εἰ κατέχετε, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε (15:2).<sup>372</sup> The process of faith and salvation is a crucial point for Paul, who seeks to remind his readers of their past expression of faith and to discern whether their faith is genuine (ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ εἰκῆ ἐπιστεύσατε – 15:2).<sup>373</sup> Faith is necessarily active and dynamic. The challenges of life, whether persecution in Thessalonica or immorality, false forms of worth, and erroneous doctrine in Corinth, present the opportunity to test the authenticity of faith as one holds fast to Christ in the midst of any storm.

### 2.1.5 Summary

Paul’s detailed explanation of the Corinthians’ response to the Christ-event in these two verses elucidates the subjective aspects of faith. As a confident, continuous standing upon Christ which holds fast through life while awaiting the culmination of our future salvation (vv.19-58), faith is shown to be self-involving in Christ’s very death and resurrection. Fee explains that this gospel is “the one to which they owe their very existence.” It is the one on which their past (“you received”), present (“you stand”), and future (“you are being saved”) are predicated.<sup>374</sup> Paul deliberately reminds the Corinthians of their existential response, their own subjective, continuous acceptance and active dependence upon the objective Christ-event.

### 2.2 *The Objective Basis of Faith (1 Cor 15:1-20)*

As we have just seen, Paul’s depiction of the Corinthians’ response reveals that faith is more than belief in a series of propositional statements; he is careful to show that faith involves the subjective involvement of the Corinthians through their active past, present, and future dependence on the Christ-event.<sup>375</sup> Yet, cognitive

<sup>371</sup> Paul moves from the aorist, to the perfect, to the present. Cf. 1:18.

<sup>372</sup> Garland notes that in using the present tense, Paul refers to both a present process (cf. 1 Cor 1:18) and a future reality (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 683). See also Robertson and Plummer, *Corinthians*, 331.

<sup>373</sup> See below for a discussion of the meaning of εἰκῆ.

<sup>374</sup> Fee, *Corinthians*, 720.

<sup>375</sup> Where I use the terms “objective” and “subjective,” Morgan summarises 1 Cor 15 in terms of the propositionality of faith (vv 1-4) and the relationality of faith. She argues that the relationality is the principal form and focus of the Corinthians’ *pistis* (230) because they are released from their sins,

agreement is also essential to the way Paul understands faith. At the most fundamental level, faith accepts as true the claims regarding Jesus' death and resurrection. Thus, Paul reminds the Corinthians of these claims which form the heart of the gospel that he preached and that they believed: 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 2) he was buried, and 3) he was raised on the third day (15:3-4).

In response to those who have rejected a general resurrection of the dead (15:12), Paul emphatically reiterates to his readers the truth of the resurrection, upon which their faith and hope are grounded, reasoning that if there is no resurrection then their faith is εἰκῆ. He proceeds to corroborate his claims concerning the gospel with a detailed account of eyewitnesses. Verses 5-8 list the appearances of the resurrected Christ to Cephas, the twelve, over 500 brothers and sisters at one time, to James, and last of all to Paul himself.

Paul's effort to substantiate the resurrection has been criticised by Bultmann, who argues: "For the resurrection, of course, simply cannot be a visible fact in the realm of human history."<sup>376</sup> Convinced that "the kerygma is incredible to modern man" who is "convinced that the mythical view of the world is obsolete,"<sup>377</sup> Bultmann's solution to the perplexing idea of a supernaturally resuscitated dead body is to reason that: "The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially."<sup>378</sup> Bultmann has written extensively about the centrality of faith in Paul's writing and, arguably, he has articulated its existential aspects more comprehensively than any of his contemporaries. Yet, by arguing against the objective reality of the resurrection, he has taken the content out of Paul's eschatology and thus of the faith in which the believers exist. A careful reading of the text is enough to show that in listing the eyewitnesses Paul was not merely "pushed ... by Gnosticizing objections" to represent the resurrection as a "visible fact in the realm of human history."<sup>379</sup> Nor is faith in the resurrection merely faith that "Christ himself,

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brought into proper relationship with God, and have as their ultimate hope a participation in the kingdom of God. Cf. Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*. 230.

<sup>376</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 295.

<sup>377</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1972), 3.

<sup>378</sup> Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," 10.

<sup>379</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 295.



yes God *himself*, speaks in the proclaimed word.”<sup>380</sup> Rather, Paul intends to demonstrate both the reality of the resurrection and that it is in this way that God has revealed Himself to the world, as a closer look at the text of 1 Corinthians 15 will reveal.<sup>381</sup>

In verse 12, Paul abruptly questions his readers: “πῶς λέγουσιν ἐν ὑμῖν τινες ὅτι ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν;” Remembering Paul’s previous and intentional implication of the Corinthians in the Christ-event through their faith, we see that Paul proceeds to display the logic of denying resurrection:

Protasis: εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν,

Apodosis: (C1)<sup>382</sup> οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται (v.13)

Paul continues in verse 14 by explaining the consequences if Christ had not been raised:

Protasis: (C1) εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται,

Apodosis: (C2) κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν,

(C3) κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν· (v.14)

The list expands throughout his argument to include these additional and repeated consequences:

(C4) εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ (v.15)

(C1) οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται (v.16)

(C3<sup>1</sup>) ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν (v.17a)

(C5) ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν (v.17b)

(C6) ἄρα καὶ οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπόλωντο (v.18)

(C7) εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἠλπικότεροι ἐσμὲν μόνον,  
ἐλεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν (v.19)

With this extensive list of repercussions that arise from the possibility that there is no resurrection of the dead,<sup>383</sup> we must challenge Bultmann’s desire to override this

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<sup>380</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 305.

<sup>381</sup> Against Bultmann’s assertion that Paul falls prey to the argumentative tactics of his opponents, Witherington argues that “Ch.15 provides an example of Paul at his argumentative best, ably using the tools of deliberative rhetoric including examples, analogies, logical consequences, rhetorical questions, and the like.” Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 292. Additionally, Thiselton argues: “The chapter is so well presented as a powerful discourse which unfolds distinct stages in a progressive argument” (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1177).

<sup>382</sup> As each apodosis represents a consequence from the preceding protasis, I have numbered these C1-C7.

objective component to faith. Is this simply the kerygma which Paul does not intend to root in an objective, historical resurrection? If Bultmann's proposition is correct, Paul certainly need not have gone to such great lengths to explicate the ramifications of not believing in the resurrection, as he does in this passage. Indeed, the way Paul argues here proves that he did intend to preach of an objective resurrection.

The first consequence (C3) that Paul pins explicitly to the Corinthians is that of a vain faith. Already, Paul has alluded to the possibility of their faith being in vain in verse two, and he reiterates this consequence twice more in the context of vv. 13-19.<sup>384</sup> If repetition is an indicator of emphasis, we note the gravity of his argument as he reiterates it using three different but related words: εἰκῆ (v.2), κενός (v.14), μάταιος (v.17). εἰκῆ is defined as pertaining to there being no cause, nor reason, nor purpose.<sup>385</sup> κενός can refer to something being materially or metaphorically empty.<sup>386</sup> μάταιος likewise means pertaining to being of no use, empty, fruitless.<sup>387</sup> Each word conveys the idea that belief in Christ with no objective basis in the resurrection is empty and futile. Such faith, as Wright explains with colloquial flare, would be “a waste of time” and “empty nonsense.”<sup>388</sup> For Bultmann, faith in the resurrection of Christ means that one proclaims the death of Christ, which cancels sin and encompasses a new self-understanding; it is existential but not grounded in objectifying propositions. However, Paul's repetition of the notion of “empty” faith eliminates a conception of faith which precludes the actual historical resurrection. For Paul, faith is grounded in and founded upon an objective basis—the historical Christ-event.

Secondly, we note Paul's utterance that if Christ has not been raised from the dead, “you are still in your sins” (C5: v.17b). This claim pairs with his creedal assertion in 15:3, “Christ died for our sins,” showing the unity of the cross and resurrection for salvation. For Bultmann, however, it is specifically in the preaching

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<sup>383</sup> This chapter certainly exhibits marks of rhetorical form. Witherington has identified verses 12-19 as the *propositio* (Witherington III, *Conflict and Community*, 292). So also Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1214. Wright identifies the basic argument as a *reductio ad absurdum*, showing that those who deny the future resurrection are “cutting off the branch they are sitting on” (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, vol. 3 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 332).

<sup>384</sup> Cf. Paul's use of κενός in 15:10 and 15:58.

<sup>385</sup> BDAG 2254; Thiselton suggests that to translate εἰκῆ as “in vain,” which has been the common English translation (NRSV, REB, NIV, NJB, AV/KJV, Collins), causes “needless difficulties” (Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1186).

<sup>386</sup> BDAG 4191. Cf. his use of the cognate verb, κενόω, in 1 Corinthians 1:17.

<sup>387</sup> BDAG 4737

<sup>388</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 3:332.

(*kerygma*) of this unity by which death and sin are defeated in the present.<sup>389</sup> On the contrary, relegating the release of sin simply to the *kerygma* falls far short of an accurate reading of Paul. In fact, such a reading is negated by Paul's emphatic declaration that if there is no resurrection of the dead, the apostles are found to be liars, bearing false witness about God (ψευδομάρτυρες – 1 Cor 15:15). There can be no other way to interpret the resurrection than by means of an objectively real resurrection. An objectively real crucified Christ without an objectively true resurrection bears no sin-cancelling power, thus believers remain in their sins (cf. 15:3, 17b).<sup>390</sup> Without an objectively true resurrection, there is no life "in Christ" as Paul states in 15:18: οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ ἀπόλωντο.

Finally, Paul plainly reveals the poignant implications of no resurrection: "We are of all people most to be pitied," he says, because they have sacrificed, they have suffered, they have staked everything in their lives upon the truth that just as Christ died and rose from the dead, they will too. If Christ has not risen, they have wasted their lives. They ought simply to revel in the temporal, as their neighbours do: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (15:32).

Truly, the gospel without the resurrection is not the gospel at all. Paul is not simply coerced into an attempt to verify the resurrection as Bultmann suggests. If that were the case, he certainly would not have been as emphatic and redundant about the absurdity of denying the resurrection. Rather, as Luther astutely notes, denying the resurrection requires denying "in a lump the Gospel and everything that is proclaimed of Christ and of God."<sup>391</sup> Barth likewise aptly expresses: "The message may bring me face to face with God and with myself as the one who hears it .... But how astonishing then and how incomprehensible I would find *myself*! How little should I be able to say about myself! Indeed, there is nothing I could say."<sup>392</sup> With Paul's exacting and repeated emphasis on the dire implications of the suggestion that there is no resurrection, it seems inconceivable to interpret this climactic chapter as anything

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<sup>389</sup> While Bultmann would agree that the death and resurrection of Christ must be understood as a unity, he argues that Christ's death alone is the means by which believers are released from the powers of this age, i.e., the Law, Sin, and Death (Bultmann, *ThNT*, 297–98).

<sup>390</sup> Cf. Rom 4:25.

<sup>391</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentaries on 1 Corinthians 7; 1 Corinthians 15; Lectures on 1 Timothy*, vol. 28 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1973), 94.

<sup>392</sup> Karl Barth, "Rudolf Bultmann—An Attempt to Understand Him," in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate: Vol. II*, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1972), 86.

but a defence of the objective reality of the resurrection. Without it, faith is empty, without substance or content, and thus meaningless.

### 2.3 *The Future Hope of Faith (15:19-23, 42-29, 52-53, 58)*

We saw how clearly Paul prioritised a faith that looks back to the historical Christ-event as the basis of one's present stability. Yet, faith is also future-focused; "hope is indissolubly bound up with faith ... by virtue of faith's focus on Christ."<sup>393</sup> Although the actual verb ἐλπίζω only appears once in chapter fifteen (v.19), the theme of hope is inextricably bound up with the theme of resurrection, and its imprint is evident in multiple ways.

Paul begins expounding this hope by describing two realms of existence: the realm of existence in Adam in which all die, and the realm of existence in Christ in which all are made alive (v.22). Christ, as the firstfruits (ἀπαρχή – vv.20, 23)<sup>394</sup> of those who have fallen asleep,<sup>395</sup> becomes our representative in the resurrection life.<sup>396</sup> Thus, contrasted with Adam in whom all died, "in Christ" all<sup>397</sup> will be made alive (v.22). But this resurrection does not occur within the same enslaved realm of Adam. Christ will destroy every form of opposition to God<sup>398</sup> and hand over the kingdom to the Father (v.24). All enemies will be subject to Christ, including death itself (v.25-28). Believers will be raised in power, in glory, transformed in an imperishable, immortal, spiritual body (vv.42-44, 52-54), bearing the image of Christ (v.49). Death and sin will be defeated (vv.54-57), and believers will share in the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul draws this resplendent picture of the future to a close, he synthesises this future hope in participatory terms as he reminds his readers that all of this will take place "through Christ" (v.57). This theme of participation opens this passage of hope: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who

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<sup>393</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 248.

<sup>394</sup> The term ἀπαρχή is often translated as "firstfruits," an image derived from the Old Testament, where it denotes the first of a crop (or flock) which is offered to God. Cf. Num 15:20; Delling, "ἄρχω, κτλ.," TDNT 1:485; BDAG, 813.

<sup>395</sup> We read τῶν κεκοιμημένων (15:20) in light of verse 18 where Paul more specifically refers to those who have fallen asleep "in Christ" (οἱ κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ).

<sup>396</sup> Holleman sees both a temporal and a representational logic within this verse: Christ both is the first to be raised from the dead and represents all those who belong to him (Holleman, *Resurrection and Parousia*, 49–51).

<sup>397</sup> The "all" (πάντες) of verse 22 should be read in light of "those of Christ" (οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) in verse 23.

<sup>398</sup> Cf. Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 1232.

have died.”<sup>399</sup> It also closes the chapter, forming an inclusio: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (15:57). In between, participation runs through every object of hope. In Christ, believers are freed from sins and made alive (15:17, 22). Indeed, the hope of a future, bodily resurrection (vv.42-56) is grounded in the historical resurrection of Christ, through which he conquered death (vv.54-57). Faith believes Christ was raised from the dead and has the confident hope of experiencing the same. The apex of Paul’s argument hinges on this crucial participatory element: faith is associated with the Christ event in such a way that what was true of Christ will be true of believers who will share in the eternal, resurrection life of Christ (15:49).

#### *2.4 Endurance in Faith (15:58)*

Paul concludes his letter providing two more exhortations that fortify our conception of faith as an ongoing mode of existence, a state that can either grow or wane. Following his exposition of the transformation believers look forward to in the *parousia*, Paul concludes his treatment of the resurrection with a final exhortation to “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (v.58). Paul uses the word “steadfast” (ἑδραῖος) here to follow a similar line of thought as his earlier depiction of “holding fast” (κατέχετε). BDAG defines ἑδραῖος as “pertaining to being firmly or solidly in place, firm, steadfast.”<sup>400</sup> ἀμετακίνητος, which is translated “immovable” in the NRSV, is the negative form of the verb μετακινέω, which means “to shift or to change.” In light of his earlier question, “how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?” (v.12), Paul is clearly urging them to be immovable in their faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as he has laid out the hope of future resurrection, he exhorts them to participate in faith right now and until the end.

### **3. Conclusion**

This survey of 1 Corinthians has shed some valuable light on the question of how Paul understands faith and how faith unites the believer to Christ. In chapters one and two we saw that Paul underscores a faith that is rooted solely in Christ, who is the

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<sup>399</sup> De Boer argues that verse 20 is the central thesis of this chapter; Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, JSNT 22 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 124. Indeed, participation has been evident from the introductory greeting of this letter.

<sup>400</sup> BDAG 2215

believer's only source of worth and dependence. Any external sense of personal achievement or source for boasting is stripped away because it is "in Christ" that believers find righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1:30). We explored the idea that boasting in Christ, and thus also faith in Christ, can be understood as viewing the cross as one's symbolic capital, the only thing that has any worth to the believer. In chapter two we saw that by faith, one connects oneself in a dependent relationship with God, identifying with the cross and participating in God's power through it. Faith is absolutely rooted in the power of God and demonstrates dependence while finding security and identity in Christ alone.

While chapters one and two focused primarily on the cross of Christ, in chapter fifteen we saw how central the resurrection is to faith. In focusing on the centrality of Christ's resurrection, this chapter demonstrated both the subjective and objective aspects of πίστις. Objectively, faith believes to be true that Christ died for the sins of believers and rose from the dead to raise them unto new life; subjectively, faith is self-involving through active dependence on the Christ-event. Through an examination of the four verbs Paul employs in 15:1-2 to describe the Corinthians' self-involving faith, we saw that faith involves an active response to and continuous dependence upon the message of the gospel. The Corinthian reception of this gospel indicates, on one level, their cognitive agreement with the propositional, creedal assertions regarding the Christ-event. On another level, it indicates a subjective sense of confidence such that they chose to stake their lives upon the veracity of Christ's death for their sins, his burial, and his resurrection on the third day. With the Christ-event symbolically understood as the ground upon which one stands through faith, Paul demonstrates his concern for a continued and intentionally expressed confidence through faith in Christ. This sense is deepened through the use of κατέχω, "holding fast," which demonstrated that faith is necessarily active and continuing. Furthermore, through the use of the present passive form of σῶζω, Paul presents salvation as a process that is orchestrated by God.

In considering the question of the objectivity of the resurrection, we saw that Paul did indeed intend to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection through his appeal to the verification of eyewitnesses. Further support was offered through a detailed analysis of the consequences Paul mentions. While Bultmann interprets the resurrection simply existentially and without an objective basis, Paul's repetition of the notion of "empty" faith eliminates such a rendering. In fact, the manner in which

Paul talks about “empty” faith bolsters support for belief based in an objective resurrection. Without an objective resurrection, Paul claims they are still in their sins and that the apostles are found to be misrepresenting God (1 Cor 15:15). Additionally, he suggests that if there is no resurrection, “We are of all people most to be pitied.” Finally, faith, while rooted in the objective past and lived out in the present, is future focused. Faith believes Christ was raised from the dead and has the confident hope of experiencing the same. Thus faith is associated with the Christ event in such a way that what was true of Christ will be true of believers who will share in the eternal resurrection life of Christ (15:49).

These various aspects present faith clearly as something subjective and self-involving in the Christ-mediated process of salvation. Faith believes in the historical Christ-event, is presently wrapped up in a consistent identification with the crucifixion as well as the resurrection, and has a confident hope of participating in the future resurrection when believers will live forever with Christ. While faith involves believing certain objective propositions about Christ, it is much more than simply cognitively assenting to historical claims about Christ; it is about staking oneself, one’s identity, and one’s sense of worth in Christ. Faith is believing that what is true of Christ is true of oneself, and in that sense it re-defines the self to take as the ground of its identity, hope, and value what is true of Christ.

## Chapter 4: Faith and Participation in 2 Corinthians

“Diese Zuversicht, welche der künftigen Theilnahme an der Lebensherrlichkeit Jesu gewiss ist, ergibt aber auch schon eine neue Lebensgestaltung für die Gegenwart.”<sup>401</sup>

In commencing the study of 2 Corinthians, one finds a recurring disclaimer in the majority of secondary literature identifying it as the most difficult of Pauline letters to interpret. Perhaps, however, where some interpreters find complexity, contradiction, or even incoherence, some of the richest and most profound truths may be discerned. Rather than plain didactic instruction, Paul employs profound paradoxes to permeate the surface level concerns that instigate his writing; such paradoxes provide the theological framework for addressing the apparent charges laid against him. In this way, Paul can speak of comfort experienced through suffering (ch.1), glory revealed through shame (ch.3), life working through death (ch.4), riches gained through poverty (ch.6, 8), and power manifested through weakness (ch.12–13). On the most fundamental level, Paul utilises these paradoxical themes to underscore the central and enduring role of faith in the life of the believer. At first glance, faith may not arise as an obvious leitmotif in a letter that serves as an *apologia* concerning the nature of his ministry.<sup>402</sup> Yet, undergirding Paul’s defence is his emphasis on unwavering confidence in God; Paul’s own faithfulness in ministry is firmly rooted in and reliant upon the faithfulness of God. Moreover, the letter does not serve solely as a personal defence. As Paul addresses the concerns of the Corinthians about his apostolic integrity, his pastoral heart shines through as he grounds the confidence his readers may have in him by redirecting their confidence to the sole reliable source, God.

Equally important in interpreting 2 Corinthians is the emphasis Paul places on a believer’s participation in Christ. Similar to the way he introduces his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul’s benediction is centred on the theological significance of his own participation in Christ. With a startling repetition of words such as *παράκλησις*,

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<sup>401</sup> Schlatter, *Glaube*, 356.

<sup>402</sup> From the opening of the letter, we understand the complaint to involve Paul’s change of plans (1:16-17) and his poor rhetorical ability (10:10; 11:6). Cf. Robert Harvey Strachan, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 15; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians: Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 32A (Garden City: Doubleday & Co, 1984), 479. The key texts for identifying Paul’s opponents are 1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:2-5; 2 Cor 11:22f.



οἰκτιρμός, and θλιῖντις in the opening of the letter,<sup>403</sup> it is clear that Paul will be addressing weighty matters.<sup>404</sup> As he abounds in the sufferings of Christ, so also does he abound in comfort through Christ (2 Cor 1:5). Yet, Paul is not content to simply relay his personal story. He conveys an unceasing concern for his readers, and thus he involves them in this dynamic of suffering and comfort; having received such comfort from the Lord, Paul is enabled to comfort others (2 Cor 1:5b-7).

Throughout 2 Corinthians, these two fundamental threads of participation and faith are profoundly woven together, elucidating faith as a wholly Christological phenomenon; faith begins in a recognition of self-impotence, and thus the believer identifies with the Christ-event, relying fully on the pneumatological, operative power therein. In 2 Corinthians in particular, the believer, through this Christologically shaped faith, actively participates in Christ's pattern of self-sacrifice that yields life in others.

## **1. Participation in Suffering *So That One Relies Upon God* (2 Cor 1–3)**

### *1.1 The Hermeneutical Key: Faith as Reliance (πεποιθήσις) on God (2 Cor 1:9)*

The first point of connection between faith and participation occurs early in Paul's opening approbation to God who has comforted him in his afflictions. By way of entry into our exegesis, we observe that πίστις and related cognates occur only nine times in the letter. Nonetheless, Paul uses a variety of terms and metaphors to elucidate what we generally have associated with the term "faith."<sup>405</sup> The first

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<sup>403</sup> Matera has emphasised that the repetition of these terms highlights major themes that will be developed throughout the letter. Frank J Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 41.

<sup>404</sup> For the history of the origins and development of partition theories for 2 Corinthians see Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 3–36; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 8–41.

The question of unity remains subject to debate, but I follow the growing list of commentators who support the view that 2 Corinthians is a unified letter, although the issue does not impede my argument either way. For a lengthy list of such commentators, cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 42, and George H. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 23–32. Of particular interest is the trend of defending the unity of 2 Corinthians from a rhetorical standpoint. Cf. Frances M. Young and David Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1987); Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); J. D. H. Amador, "Revisiting 2 Corinthians: Rhetoric and the Case for Unity," *NTS* 46 (2000): 92–111.

<sup>405</sup> Olson notes that this letter presents a concentration of confidence terms that is "unequaled in the New Testament." Some alternative expressions in 2 Corinthians include: ἐλπίζω, ἐλπίζω, θαρρέω, καυχάομαι, καύχησις, οὐκ ἐγκακέω, παρηρησία, πείθω, πεποιθήσις, ὑπόστασις, οἶδα, ἔχω, λογίζομαι,

expression is found in verse eight when Paul moves from general statements of suffering to share his own experience of θλίψις in Asia.<sup>406</sup> Such severity, he explains, was to redirect his<sup>407</sup> reliance toward God and away from himself (ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὧμεν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ – 2 Cor 1:9).<sup>408</sup> By commencing the letter with his own story of suffering, Paul presents himself as an example of the principle that believers’ sufferings in Christ are intended to bring them to a place of utter and complete reliance upon God.

The term that Paul uses to depict an appropriate disposition in the face of trial, πείθω,<sup>409</sup> generally means to convince, to persuade, or to appeal to.<sup>410</sup> In 2

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οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι. Stanley Norris Olson, “Confidence Expressions in Paul: Epistolary Conventions and the Purpose of 2 Corinthians” (Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, 1976), 1.

<sup>406</sup> Commentators have debated the specific nature of the affliction in Asia. Barnett takes it to refer to the commotion in Ephesus that concluded his ministry there. Cf. Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 83–84; Cf. Acts 19:8, 10; 20:31. Thrall casts doubt on this assumption since elsewhere Paul mentions Ephesus by name (1 Cor 15:32; 16:8). Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 114.

<sup>407</sup> The way Paul alternates between first-person singular verbs and pronouns and first-person plural verbs and pronouns in this letter has confounded many interpreters. The use of an epistolary or literary plural was on the rise in the Hellenistic period. Cf. George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding*, SBLDS 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 42–53. In this way the plural should be read: “I myself.” Paul seems to use the epistolary plural on occasion. Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 105. Many interpreters argue that is the best explanation for Paul’s use of the first-person plural in this letter, e.g., Christian Wolff, *Der zweite Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, THKNT 8 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1989, 10–11; Matera, *II Corinthians*, 70, n.12.

Others understand Paul to employ the first-person plural to convey himself as a representative of a larger group, either that of his ministry team or of all the believers to whom he is writing. Guthrie makes a strong case that the plural as representative of Paul and his ministry team is the default voice in this letter (Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 37). This is the position that I will take, following the pattern I have adopted thus far of referring only to Paul as the author and representative apostle for ease in prose. Where appropriate, I will indicate when Paul utilizes the first-person plural to be inclusive of his readers as well.

<sup>408</sup> Matera considers this the “divine purpose” (Matera, *II Corinthians*, 43).

<sup>409</sup> The only other uses of the verb πείθω in 2 Corinthians are 2:3, 5:11, and 10:7. In the first two, Paul is referring to confidence in human relationships. In 2 Cor 2:3, Paul uses the perfect active participle to refer to Paul’s “confidence” in the Corinthians, and in 2 Cor 5:11, with the verb in the present active indicative form, he refers to persuading others. We will explore the context of 2 Cor 5 in greater detail in section three of this chapter. 2 Cor 10:7 presents πείθω in an interesting way. Here Paul returns again to his defence and argues on the basis of the Corinthians’ own confidence in Christ. He writes: “εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς.” Scholars have varying opinions on what Paul means by Χριστοῦ εἶναι. For helpful overviews see: Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 618–623; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 688–91. Most scholars (e.g., Harris, *Second Epistle*, 690) conclude that the phrase refers to the person or persons within the Corinthian congregation who claimed to belong to Christ with distinctive authority. This interpretation is supported by the broader context of Paul’s addressing “false apostles” (11:13) who claimed to be “servants of Christ” (11:23).

The noun πεποίθησις occurs four times in 2 Cor 1:15; 3:4; 8:22; 10:2. In 2 Cor 3:4, Paul employs the noun to make explicit that one’s faith in God is through Christ. See below for more discussion on 3:4. In 1:15, 8:22, and 10:2 it is used in regards to human relationships, although his expressions of human confidence are in some instances rooted in confidence in God. For example, in 1:15 the confidence Paul speaks of looks back to his boast (καύχησις) of conducting himself in godly

Corinthians, Paul uses it primarily in the perfect tense (πέποιθα), conveying the idea of being “so convinced that one puts confidence in something; to depend on, trust in.”<sup>411</sup> The word has a close conceptual relationship to πιστεύω, as Bultmann has noted. He writes: “The confidence in God which characterizes the relation to Him is subsumed under faith. This also means, however, that confidence in God is taken in the radical sense in which it includes absolute surrender of one’s own assurance.”<sup>412</sup>

This concept of self-negating, resolute reliance upon God is precisely what Paul emphasises in 2 Corinthians 1:9<sup>413</sup> as he declares this to be the divinely ordained purpose for suffering: “Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead” (2 Cor 1:9). Yet, Paul does not convey reliance as self-contrived. The qualifying participial phrase, τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς, evidences the Christological foundation of this confident reliance; just as God raised Christ from the dead, so will he raise those who have placed their entire existential confidence in Christ. Christ’s resurrection is the basis of the hope that believers will experience the same.<sup>414</sup> In this way, faith conveys confidence in a future participation with Christ. This representative logic is developed in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: Christ is “the first fruits (ἀπαρχή) of those who have died” (1 Cor 15:20). However, Paul also conveys a present connection between faith and participation in 2 Corinthians 3 where he employs the noun, πεποίθησις, to make explicit that reliance upon God is possible through the mediatorial role of

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sincerity by the grace of God (1:12-14). This pairs with what we discussed in the previous chapter that Paul’s boasting in his ministry is not inconsistent with his prohibition of human boasting because he is aware that his apostolic work is grounded solely in what Christ does through him (1 Cor 15:10).

<sup>410</sup> BDAG, πείθω, 5754; R. Bultmann, “πείθω, πεποίθησις, κτλ.,” *TDNT* 1:1. Louw and Nida expand on this basic definition: “to convince someone to believe something and to act on the basis of what is recommended” (Louw-Nida, 33.301).

<sup>411</sup> BDAG, πείθω, 5754.

<sup>412</sup> R. Bultmann, “πείθω, πεποίθησις, κτλ.,” *TDNT* 1:7.

<sup>413</sup> In 2 Corinthians 1:9, Paul speaks of confidence in God rather than πέποιθα ἐν κυρίῳ, as he more commonly does (cf. Rom 14:14; Gal 5:10; Phil 1:14; 2:24; 2 Thess 3:4). We might thus question whether this passage contributes to our understanding of participation in Christ by faith. In answer to this, we note the Christological way in which he qualifies his confidence in God, who is “the one who raises the dead” (2 Cor 1:9). This is a clear allusion to the raising of Jesus Christ in which believers actively participate, as Paul will develop throughout his letter. 2 Cor 3:4 makes the connection explicit between confidence in God and the mediatorial role of Christ: Πεποίθησιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Benjamin Schliesser has noted that God’s act and Christ’s work cannot be separated, and therefore, “faith directed to God” and “faith directed to Christ” illuminate each other and are not conceivable independent of each other. Cf. *Abraham’s Faith in Romans 4: Paul’s Concept of Faith in Light of the History of Reception of Genesis 15:6*, WUNT 2: 224 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 415.

<sup>414</sup> By using the plural form of ὁ νεκρός, Paul is speaking gnominally, incorporating himself as well as all who believe in what God has done for Christ.

Christ: Πεποίθησιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν (2 Cor 3:4). Relying on God through Christ is Paul's present manner of living. Relying on God to share in Christ's resurrection is also Paul's confident hope.

Because of Christ, and based on previous experience of God's deliverance, Paul continues to hope (ἐλπίζω) against all devastating odds because he is confident that even should he die, he will be raised to new life in Christ. Thus Paul can confidently exclaim: Οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἐὰν ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκήνου καταλυθῆ, οἰκοδομῆν ἐκ θεοῦ ἔχομεν, οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (2 Cor 5:1). Paul is unequivocal; despite facing suffering of the worst imaginable kind, his confidence is directed to God and based on his prior saving activity, which includes both his own personal experience of deliverance and a firm trust rooted in resurrection past and future.

### 1.2 Confidence through Weakness and Incompetence (2:14–3:6)

The logical counterpart to Paul's emphasis on relying upon God is the insufficiency of humans to fulfil the works of God. In 2:16b, Paul poses a question that has central importance for the exegesis of the whole letter: καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα<sup>415</sup> τίς ἱκανός; (2 Cor 2:16).<sup>416</sup> Indeed, his readers have questioned the adequacy of his apostleship, and the letter serves as his answer to their doubts.<sup>417</sup> Nevertheless, interpreters have struggled to determine whether Paul intended an affirmative or negative answer to his own question. Georgi suggests that Paul's question implies the

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<sup>415</sup> The ταῦτα refers to the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel; cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 208.

<sup>416</sup> Some commentators have noted a possible parallel here to Joel 2:11 where Joel asks who is sufficient for the Day of the Lord: “καὶ τίς ἔσται ἱκανὸς αὐτῆ;” (cf. Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, KEK [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924], 100; Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 155). However, the context of judgment differs from Paul's own context of justifying his ministry. A more likely parallel is that Paul may be recalling Moses' response to God's calling in Exodus 4:10. At the burning bush, Moses replied that he was not sufficient (ἱκανός), but, as Farrer notes, Moses was “made sufficient by the All-sufficing (El Shaddai, interpreted as theos ho hikanos)” (Kenneth E. Farrer, “The Ministry in the New Testament,” in *The Apostolic Ministry: Essays on the History and the Doctrine of Episcopacy*, ed. Kenneth E. Kirk (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), 173). Hafemann argues that this is the antitype to Paul's statements in 2 Cor 2:16 and 3:4 (Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and the Spirit: An Exegetical Study of II Cor. 2:14–3:3 Within the Context of the Corinthian Correspondence*, WUNT 19 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 98). This parallel finds support in that Paul proceeds to compare his new covenant ministry with Moses' ministry (3:7–11). Cf. Matera, *II Corinthians*, 74.

<sup>417</sup> Georgi notes that the statement likely comes in response to the adversaries' assertion that they were sufficient. Dieter Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 233.

answer that no one is sufficient.<sup>418</sup> Others find support for this conclusion based on the fact that the majority of Paul’s τίς-questions elsewhere expect a negative answer.<sup>419</sup> Furthermore, in his previous letter to the Corinthians, Paul seems to deny outright his adequacy as an apostle (1 Cor 15:9). Other commentators reason that by contrasting himself with other preachers in v.17, it would be natural for Paul to state plainly that he is adequate for the apostolic task.<sup>420</sup>

When read in the broader context of 2:12–3:6, Paul’s answer does not appear as opaque as some interpreters have surmised. Paul’s response to the question of his sufficiency seems to suggest both “yes and no.”<sup>421</sup> This solution fits the underpinning argument we have put forth that in 2 Corinthians Paul urges confident reliance upon God while admonishing against any form of anthropocentric assurance. Given the concerns that force his pen, Paul must restore his readers’ confidence in his ministry. Yet, his solution to restoring their trust in him is to envelop his apostolic work within the power of Christ. Paul is sufficient only insofar as he has been approved by God and speaks in Christ:

ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐκ θεοῦ  
κατέναντι θεοῦ  
ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν (2 Cor 2:17)

Paul is consistently averse to self-promotion.<sup>422</sup> Thus, should his readers have misapprehended him, Paul states rather more assertively the divine origin of his sufficiency in 3:5:

οὐχ ὅτι ἀφ’ ἐαυτῶν ἱκανοὶ ἐσμεν λογίσασθαί τι ὡς ἐξ ἐαυτῶν,  
ἀλλ’ ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

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<sup>418</sup> Georgi, *Opponents*, 233. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1973), 102–103.

<sup>419</sup> Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 208 n. 136.

<sup>420</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 209. Many interpreters assume a positive answer based on verse 17a. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 72. Some use verse 17 to assume a negative answer, such as Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 155.

<sup>421</sup> Cf. Thrall, who suggests that Paul combines the negative and positive with the “fundamental qualification that becomes apparent in v. 17b” (*Second Epistle*, 209). Provence supports this dual reading and suggests that Paul answers his own question throughout chapter 3, with a summary following in 4:1-6. Thomas E. Provence, “Who is Sufficient for these Things? An Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 2:15–3:18,” *NovT* 24 (1982): 54–81.

<sup>422</sup> Cf. 2 Cor 11:16-22; 12:11 where Paul “boasts” in his own credentials after the manner which the Corinthians are seeking, but regards such boasting as foolish and not done with the Lord’s authority. He swiftly turns things around to boast in his weakness so that Christ’s power might dwell in him (11:23–12:10).

The question of his sufficiency requires an abnegation of the self that is superseded by Christ. This pattern of speech, “not us, but God,” is recurrent through the letter:

μη̄ πεποιθότες ὡ̄μεν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ (2 Cor 1:9)

Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν (2 Cor 4:7)

The broader context that expands to 3:6 provides additional commentary to Paul’s answer regarding his sufficiency. Concerned again not to be self-promoting (3:1), he draws attention to the instrumentality and source of his confidence (πεποιθήσις) and sufficiency (ικανός) in 3:4-6. His confidence in God is *through* Christ (διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ – 2 Cor 3:4). The *διὰ* here conveys Christ’s mediatorial role; such confidence is not possible apart from participating in the work of Christ.<sup>423</sup> Paul also says his sufficiency is from God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ – 3:5) who has qualified them to be ministers of a new covenant of the Spirit who makes alive.<sup>424</sup> Morgan notes that Paul could easily have used *πίστις* instead of *πεποιθήσις* in 3:4, but in using *πεποιθήσις* Paul adds another element to his argument. She writes: “His trust in God is a persuadedness by God, arising from the proofs God has given of his power and faithfulness both at Paul’s conversion and in their subsequent relationship.”<sup>425</sup> In this way, Paul is not persuasive in his own right, but insofar as God’s power has been evidenced in and through him.

In multiple ways, Paul is affirming the source of his adequacy as minister of the gospel. Paul’s distinction of speaking “in Christ” evokes again the Christological mould that shapes Paul’s understanding of his ministry; the pattern of suffering which shaped the ministry of Jesus is the same pattern that distinguishes Paul’s apostleship. It is this participation in the afflictions of Christ that qualifies him as God’s apostle, nothing of his own accord. All of this will be expounded upon in greater detail in 2 Corinthians 4, but at this point we see that as Paul repeatedly conveys his own confidence, or rather faith, in God through Christ, while sharing in the Christological dynamic of suffering, the Corinthians can have confidence in him.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 255–56.

<sup>424</sup> Morgan notes that 3:4 could also be taken with verses 1-3, but the point remains the same either way, that is, Paul’s confidence towards God is what allows him to bring others into the “new covenant.” Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 251.

<sup>425</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 251.

<sup>426</sup> See § 2 below.

### 1.3 Paul's Own Faithfulness Rooted in the Faithfulness of God

Paul's first reference in this letter to a πίστις cognate is found in 1:18, and interestingly it is not a human characterisation. Here Paul proclaims: πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός. Building upon the theme of confidence, Paul has appealed to the faithfulness of God as support for his own dependability. Commentators have debated about the nature of this phrase, whether it is a confessional formula or an oath formula. Some understand the phrase to be a simple description of God's character, as seen elsewhere in Paul's letters (1 Cor 1:9, 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3).<sup>427</sup> However, more commentators argue that it is an oath formula, signifying that he is reinforcing the truth of what he says in the ὅτι-clause.<sup>428</sup> Thrall articulates the basic sense of the passage to be: "As surely as God is faithful, Paul's word is reliable: it is not Yes and No."<sup>429</sup> Although Stählin understands the phrase to be a confessional formula ("religiöse Beteuerung"), he confirms the interpretation of Thrall: "Paulus weiß, daß jede Einzelheit seines Wirkens unter dem göttlichen θέλημα geschieht."<sup>430</sup> The implications of this reading are such that as Paul follows the trustworthy will of God in his life, he assures the Corinthians that he likewise is reliable. God's faithfulness undergirds the entire life and ministry of the apostle. In fact, the only way Paul is able to validate himself is to redirect his readers' attention away from himself and toward God.

Paul's theocentric answer is explicated Christologically in verses 19-20. In Jesus Christ, whom Paul proclaims, his word is always "Yes" (v.19). This claim is explained in verse 20 based on the logic that "in him every one of God's promises is a 'Yes'" and it is only on this basis they thus say "Amen." Lest we find ourselves lost in the somewhat cryptic language, Paul is suggesting that just as he preached the gospel to them in a way that the Corinthians trusted (v.19), so they can trust him in the more "trivial affairs" that seem to be the reason for the rift in the apostle's relationship with

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<sup>427</sup> Cf. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC 34 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915), 34–35.

<sup>428</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 144. Furnish likewise understands this to be an oath formula, as indicated by the ὅτι-clause, but notes other citations in which the phrase does not fit this formula. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB 32A (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 135. So also Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 199; Hans Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 66; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II*, HNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), 103; Morna Hooker, "From God's Faithfulness to Ours," in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall*, NovTSup 109 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 234.

<sup>429</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 144. Cf. Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief*, 247.

<sup>430</sup> G. Stählin, "Zum Gebrauch von Beteuerungsformeln im Neuen Testament," *NovT* 5 (1962): 131.

this church (vv.15-17).<sup>431</sup> As a way of implicating them, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they too are being established with the apostles in Christ (v.21).

#### *1.4 Faith: Self-Involving Dependence (1:24)*

At the conclusion of chapter one, Paul pauses to avoid coming across as overbearing: “I do not mean to imply that we lord it over your faith; rather we are workers with you for your joy.” (1:24). Paul has again implicated the Corinthians when he says, τῆ γὰρ πίστει ἐστήκατε (2 Cor 1:24). We have seen this relationship between “standing” and “faith” before in 1 Thessalonians 3:7-8 where Paul shows the parallel relationship of “standing in the Lord” (v.8) which explains the Thessalonians’ faith (v.7).<sup>432</sup> Thus, “standing in the Lord” may be understood as a metaphor to describe faith. We saw it again in 1 Corinthians when Paul reminded the believers of their standing in the gospel (15:1) and his final exhortation to stand in faith (16:13). In view of our previous discussion of this metaphor, we concluded that when Paul uses this in exhortation, he is urging his audience to persevere in faith. Furthermore, we emphasised the sense of total dependence upon Christ implied in the metaphor. We again note that in 2 Corinthians 1, Paul demonstrates that faith is self-involving; a believer places him or herself in a position of dependence by “standing in faith.” Yet, this self-involvement is at the same time based on something that is outside of oneself, as seen in his employment of the oath formula, πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός (1:18).

#### *1.5 Summary*

Thus far we have explored the idea of faith as reliance through an expanded range of concepts and terms. Taking 2 Corinthians 1:9 as our hermeneutical key, we concluded that faith, here explicated by the verb *πειθῶ*, is necessarily self-negating as one re-appropriates confidence in God. Moreover, such reliance is Christologically shaped, both in the sense of assurance that just as Christ rose from the dead, so will the believer in Christ, and in the sense that it is through Christ’s mediatorial role that the believer is re-positioned to place his or her confidence in God (3:4). In this way, faith is self-involving in the work of Christ, past, present, and future. Paul develops the idea of self-negating confidence through his concentration on the question of whether he is sufficient (*ικανός*). Consistently, Paul deflects the issue away from

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<sup>431</sup> Cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 204–205.

<sup>432</sup> Cf. Chapter two, § 1.5.2, and chapter three, § 2.1.2, which address 1 Thess 3:7-8 and 1 Cor 15:1 respectively. Cf. also Rom 11:20a; 1 Cor 16:13.



himself and back to God. Boldly he can say that he is not competent of himself, but by God's authority and enabling (3:5; 1:18). Paul's confidence then is mediated through Christ and directed toward God (3:4; 4:5). In brief summary of the first three chapters, we conclude that the Pauline conception of faith depicts a posture in which believers recognise their own impotence and thus their need to rely upon God. Taking upon himself the Christological pattern of suffering in order to bring knowledge of God to others, Paul exemplifies this self-negating and self-involving reliance upon God.

## **2. Faith: The Nexus of Anthropology and Christology (2 Cor 4:7-15)**

In chapter four, Paul reiterates and develops the themes of faith and participation. The pericope of 4:7-15 is an expansion of the more concise thesis of 1:9 with three clear points of connection. First, Paul references his own suffering as a "sentence of death" which in chapter four is specifically identified as embodying Jesus' death (4:8-10). Secondly, in 1:9 Paul states that the purpose and result of his sufferings were so that they would not rely on themselves but on God. The ἵνα clause in 4:7 communicates a similar purpose: "so that the greatness of the power may be from God and not from us." Thirdly, he roots his argument in the resurrection. In 1:9, Paul relies on the God "who raises from the dead" and in 4:14 Paul's "spirit of faith" is reiterated more specifically to be based on the one who raised Jesus and who will also raise believers with him. In this section we will see more clearly just how closely linked participation and faith are for Paul. We will first explore the theme of participation. We will then explore in greater detail how Paul develops the theme of human reliance upon God within a wholly Christological framework.

### *2.1 Participation through Christ*

The middle of chapter four presents the theme of participation in Christ with a profound and paradigmatic expression:

- v. 10) πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ.
- v. 11) ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.
- v.12) ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν.

In these verses, Paul expounds on his own participation in Christ's death (4:10a, 11a),<sup>433</sup> conveying the purpose to be revealing the life of Jesus in his mortal flesh (4:10b, 11b).<sup>434</sup> The theme of participation is conspicuous in this passage, but deciphering this seemingly incomprehensible theme has left many perplexed. Many sympathise with the exasperation evident in E. P. Sanders who, after concluding that participation in Christ is the true centre of Paul's theology, exclaims: "But what does this mean? How are we to understand it?"<sup>435</sup> The task of providing a thorough theological taxonomy of the theme of participation in Paul's letters is beyond the scope of this project, but we can offer a few exegetical points to clarify precisely what is meant by "participation in Christ" in this specific passage, which will lead us into our primary question of how faith connects a believer to Christ.<sup>436</sup> Three questions must be addressed. First, what does it mean to carry in the body the death of Jesus? Secondly, what specifically does Paul mean by the "life of Jesus"? Finally, how is it that carrying the death of Jesus leads to the life of Jesus in believers?

On the first point, most scholars agree that Paul speaks of "carrying in the body the death of Jesus" to refer to his own sufferings.<sup>437</sup> When Paul suffers, he shares at the same time in the sufferings of Christ. The choice to speak of carrying in the body the *νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* supports this interpretation. *νέκρωσις* can mean

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<sup>433</sup> Note specifically the parallels between 4:10a and 11a:

4:10a: πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες,  
 4:11a: αἰεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν,

Cf. Harvey and Lambrecht on the parallel structure between verses 10 and 11. A. E. Harvey, *Renewal through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 59–60; J. Lambrecht, "The Nekrōsis of Jesus: Ministry and Suffering in 2 Cor 4,7-15," in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, BETL 112 (Leuven: Leuven University Press: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1994), 312.

<sup>434</sup> Notice also the parallels between 4:10b and 11b.

4:10b: ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ  
 4:11b: ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.

<sup>435</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 522.

<sup>436</sup> As the primary aim of this thesis is to elucidate what Paul means by faith, our treatment of participation is primarily inductive. We will make observations along the way as they pertain to our primary task and a thorough interaction with the issues, questions, and literature related to participation will not be possible. A few recent works on the topic of participation, or union, with Christ are worth mentioning: A.J.M. Wedderburn, "Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrases 'In Christ' and 'With Christ,'" *JSNT* 25 (1985): 83–97; Richard B. Hays, "What Is 'Real Participation in Christ?' A Dialogue with E. P. Sanders on Pauline Soteriology," in *Redefining First-Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders*, ed. Fabian E. Udoh et al., Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 16 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008); Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*; Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>437</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 84; Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

either: 1) death as process, or 2) cessation of a state or activity, deadness, mortification.<sup>438</sup> When Paul speaks of bodily death he typically uses θάνατος.<sup>439</sup> His decision to use νέκρωσις here, which occurs only one other time in the New Testament (Rom 4:19),<sup>440</sup> suggests that he wants to convey something more than simply the cessation of life; rather he seeks to convey the idea of “dying” as a process,<sup>441</sup> or “wasting away.”<sup>442</sup> Gorman’s portrayal of cruciformity is apropos to this passage; Paul is certainly speaking here of a dynamic conformity to the crucified Christ. For Gorman, dying with Christ does not merely signify self-giving love or the termination of selfish desires but includes a “variety of concrete, physical pains suffered for the sake of the gospel of the crucified Christ.”<sup>443</sup> Most commentators agree that conformity with Christ’s death in this instance is not so much a matter of “inward mortification of the old, unregenerate personality” but rather the literal external peril Paul has endured.<sup>444</sup> Paul is continually brought to his limit point, and he portrays this tribulation as identifying with what Christ suffered.

Paul’s emphasis on dying with Christ is never separated from the hope and the glory of sharing in the “life of Jesus.” The idea of participating in Christ’s death and resurrection presented in verses 10-11 depends on verse 7; Paul’s suffering yields a manifestation of divine power, δύναμις,<sup>445</sup> a term he often connects to Jesus’ resurrection.<sup>446</sup> For example, in Philippians 3:10 Paul desires specifically to know the power of Christ’s resurrection: τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ. In 2 Corinthians 13:4, Paul remarks that Jesus himself was crucified in weakness but lives in the power

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<sup>438</sup> BDAG, νέκρωσις, 5062.

<sup>439</sup> 45 times including verses 11 and 12.

<sup>440</sup> The cognate verb, νεκρόω, occurs in Rom 4:19; Col 3:5; and Heb 11:12.

<sup>441</sup> Barrett concludes it is “reasonable to suppose that he does not simply mean death” but rather conveys the idea of a process (Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 139). Barrett distinguishes this process, analogous to the killing of Jesus, as being apostolic, rather than the normal Christ life (139–140). However, Tannehill observes that, although in this passage he speaks of his own experience as an apostle, Paul does speak elsewhere of participation in Christ’s death and resurrection as a continuing aspect of the existence of ordinary believers (Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 86–87. Cf. Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:4-7; 1 Thess 1:6-7).

<sup>442</sup> J. Lambrecht, “The Nekrōsis of Jesus,” 309–333. Gorman notes that on one occasion Paul’s reference to a “sentence of death” is specifically to the threat of physical death (2 Cor 1:8-9), but his metaphors of “being sentenced to death” and “carrying around the dying of Jesus” are “much more comprehensive and polyvalent than allusions to actual dying.” Instead, this expression of being in a constant process of dying “articulates Paul’s fundamental self-understanding as an apostle; ‘I die every day,’ he claims (1 Cor 15:31).” Cf. Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 285.

<sup>443</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity*, 288.

<sup>444</sup> Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 337; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 84.

<sup>445</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 84.

<sup>446</sup> Cf. Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 13:4; Phil 3:10; cf. 1 Cor 15:43.

of God. There, as in 4:10-11, Paul claims to operate by the power of this resurrection life of Jesus, which is both a present experience, insofar as it is outwardly focused on bringing life to others (4:12, 15), and a future hope (4:16–5:10).<sup>447</sup> Following Paul’s declaration of participation in 4:10-12, he mentions again the Holy Spirit (4:13), who enacts this divine power, and whom Paul has identified as the giver of life (3:6). Thus, when Paul speaks of the life of Jesus revealed in his body, he refers primarily to the resurrection power of God that is manifested by the Holy Spirit. Throughout this letter, Paul has set his hope on being raised with Christ. Although his persecution has been intense, he is confident that he will be raised with Jesus (4:14).

In verse twelve, Paul makes the perplexing claim that his carrying the death of Jesus leads to the life of Jesus in those to whom he ministers. The meaning of verse twelve hangs on verse eleven, where Paul explains that it is necessary that he is handed over unto death for Jesus’ sake (διὰ Ἰησοῦν). In other words, he is suffering for the advancement of the good news of new life in Christ. Paul’s ministry has been modelled after Christ’s self-giving love; as he suffers for the gospel, others receive the benefit of new life. This idea is developed in chapter five, particularly verses 14-15: ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς, κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι. Living for Christ means being an ambassador of the ministry of reconciliation (v.18) and thus Paul pleads again to the Corinthians: δεόμεθα ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, καταλλάγητε τῷ θεῷ (5:20). This reconciliation, which brings union with Christ, renders the believer as a new creation (5:17), one that is the righteousness of God (5:20). Thus, the Corinthians themselves have benefitted from his suffering for the gospel as they have gained this new life in Jesus even as death was at work in Paul.<sup>448</sup>

Our treatment of participation here has certainly not been exhaustive. But even cursory attention to this paradigmatic passage reveals that participation is about identifying with the suffering of Christ while operating at the same time in the power of the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. This divine power at work through human weakness is other-focused; the believer shares in the self-giving love of Christ

<sup>447</sup> Cf. J. Lambrecht, “*The Nekrōsis of Jesus*,” 315.

<sup>448</sup> Morna Hooker writes that Paul’s pattern of “death” working through him to yield life in others is “the pattern not for apostles alone, but for *all* Christian disciples.” Morna D. Hooker, “Be Holy As I Am Holy,” in *Holiness and Mission: Learning From the Early Church About Mission in the City* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 15.

that yields life in others. Yet, the question must be raised: How is it that believers are able to participate in this divine and miracle-working life of Christ? Paul presents that link in the following verse as he identifies with the faith of a spiritual forerunner. This passage portrays the vital link between faith and participation, the point to which we now turn.

## 2.2 Spirit of Faith

In the middle of this puissant passage, Paul quotes Psalm 115:1 (LXX). The reference to the “spirit of faith” may appear oddly placed in the midst of such strongly participatory language. However, the broader context reveals a close connection between Paul’s thought about participation and faith. Paul connects the citation of this “Spirit of faith” with his preceding thoughts about participation by the connective δέ of verse 13, and as Collange rightly suggests, the word πίστις is the key to the broader passage of 2:14–7:4.<sup>449</sup> The catalogue of hardships in verses 8-9 that is later detailed in 6:4-5 and 11:23-27 portrays circumstances under which one would naturally expect Paul to feel “crushed,” “despairing,” “forsaken,” or “destroyed.” Yet, it is precisely because he is relying upon the supernatural power of God that Paul is able to overcome. Through such hardships, Paul has confidence in the power of God declared in verse 7.<sup>450</sup> Surely under such crushing circumstances, one has the choice either to succumb or to draw upon a power beyond oneself to endure.<sup>451</sup> As we mentioned above, this pericope extrapolates the point Paul makes in 1:9; in fitting with that paradigm, Paul concludes this detailed account of his suffering with Christ by expressing his faith in the God who redeems suffering through resurrection.

### 2.2.1 The Spirit of Christ’s Faith?

All of our discussion up to this point has assumed that Paul is the subject of faith. However, a few interpreters have recently appealed to this citation in support of a subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Most of these appeals are mere suggestions that 2 Corinthians 4:13 *could* lend support to the subjective genitive

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<sup>449</sup> Jean-François Collange, *Enigmes de La Deuxième Épître de Paul Aux Corinthiens: Étude Exégétique de 2 Cor. 2:14–7:4*, SNTSMS 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

<sup>450</sup> The echo of 2 Cor 1:8-9 rings in this passage; Paul was “so utterly burdened beyond his strength” so that he would “rely on God who raises the dead.” Savage summarises the theological emphasis of this pericope: “If there is to be a demonstration of the surpassing power of God it will be in human self-negation” (Savage, *Power through Weakness*, 168–69).

<sup>451</sup> Thus Paul is able to say: “It is when I am weak that I am strong” (2 Cor 12:10).

reading.<sup>452</sup> However, Douglas Campbell has one of the most insistent arguments to date. Combating the claim made by objective genitive proponents that Christ is never the subject of the verbal forms of the πιστ- word group, Campbell suggests that 2 Corinthians 4:13 presents Christ as the “directly implicit subject of πιστεύω” twice, consequently drawing the cognate substantive into this range of meaning.<sup>453</sup> Campbell avers that his thesis, if it can be reasonably corroborated, not only provides bolstered support for the subjective genitive interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ but also has implications for how we understand Paul’s broader conception of faith.

Campbell begins his argument by exposing three unusual subordinate elements in verse 13 that need explicating:

- 1) the meaning of τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως [κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον κ.τ.λ.]
- 2) the reason for Paul’s citation from Psalm 115:1 LXX: ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα
- 3) the underlying causal relationship between believing and speaking that is denoted by the inferential conjunction διό<sup>454</sup>

In order to arrive at a coherent interpretation of these three points, Campbell proposes that it is necessary to see the implicit narrative dimension in Paul’s argument in which Paul identifies with the figure described in the Psalm.<sup>455</sup> This interpretative move follows Richard Hays who contends that Paul rereads Scripture with an imagination converted by the death and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>456</sup> Hays explores this narrative dimension in Romans 15:3, 8-9, arguing that in Paul’s reading of Psalms 69:9 and 18:49, it is Christ speaking to God in the first person through the words of the biblical text.<sup>457</sup> For both Hays and Campbell, the hermeneutical key for Paul’s citation of the

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<sup>452</sup> Cf. Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel’s Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Morna D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” in *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 165–86.

<sup>453</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 338.

<sup>454</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 340–341.

<sup>455</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 344.

<sup>456</sup> Hays, *Conversion*, xiv.

<sup>457</sup> Hays, *Conversion*, 102; Cf. his broader discussion on pp. 101–118. It is important to note here that Hays admits that although it is common in the rest of the New Testament corpus to apply Christological readings to Old Testament texts, it appears that the citations in Rom 15 are isolated cases of “Christological ventriloquism in Paul’s writing” with a possible exception of our key passage, 2 Cor 4:13. Hays lays the foundation for this claim through his analysis of Rom 15:3, 7 and argues this point on the following bases: 1) “the plot of the psalm is the typical lament movement from abasement to praise and reminiscent of the Christ hymn of Phil 2”; 2) “the language of verses 4-6 could readily be construed as a prefiguration of the Lord’s Supper as a means of proclaiming the Lord’s death: ‘I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord ...’ (108–109).

Psalms is that ὁ Χριστός is the “true and ultimate speaker of Israel’s laments and praises.”<sup>458</sup>

Campbell identifies at least five echoes between Paul and the Psalmist: 1) The Psalmist maintained his belief in God, speaking with integrity despite great suffering (v.1b LXX). 2) He was able to do so because he knows that the death of the Lord’s holy ones and servants is precious in God’s sight (vv.6-7). 3) Thus, the Lord gifted him with life and salvation (vv.3, 4a, 7c) and freed him from his bondage (v.7c). 4) He is able to thank God in the presence of his people (vv.3, 8-10). 5) He speaks optimistically of the fact that all people are liars (v.2). In general summary, he speaks despite his suffering because of his underlying belief that he will ultimately be vindicated by God, perhaps even beyond death.<sup>459</sup>

By drawing attention to these echoes, Campbell aims to demonstrate that there is more at stake in Paul’s citation of this Psalm than a simple resonance with the experience and faith of the Psalmist. Probing the question of why Paul echoes the Psalmist with “the same spirit of belief,” he presents two options: either Paul is speaking of an imitation of the Psalmist or of a participatory identification that anticipates Christ’s passion.<sup>460</sup> In seeking to resolve this question, Campbell simultaneously addresses the issue of whether the “shared spirit of belief” is simply metaphorical or a reference to a work of the Holy Spirit. The assumption is that if Paul’s reference to “spirit” is metaphorical, then the imitative interpretation is more likely; but if Paul means to reference the divine Spirit, then a Christological interpretation is more plausible.<sup>461</sup> After outlining several reasons factoring against a mimetic interpretation,<sup>462</sup> Campbell proceeds to argue for a participatory reading in which Christ is the voice speaking prophetically through the Psalm of his own suffering and resurrection.<sup>463</sup> Paul’s citation of the Psalm undergirds his own claims about believing and speaking.

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<sup>458</sup> Hays, *Conversion*, 108–109.

<sup>459</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 343–344.

<sup>460</sup> Campbell dismisses a third option, that of a “transmigration of souls,” straightaway (Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 344–345).

<sup>461</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 345.

<sup>462</sup> These reasons include: 1) this is not Paul’s typical language of mimesis; 2) Paul’s conception of mimesis is likely participatory anyway; 3) an identification with the Psalmist at this level is unparalleled in Paul; 4) Paul does not claim that he is specifically identifying fully with the life of the Psalmist; 5) the broader argument that results from this reading is weak – “I believe and speak because I identify or resonate with an OT figure who believed and spoke too”; 6) the language of “spirit” then becomes redundant (Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 345–346).

<sup>463</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 347.

Campbell's analysis of 2 Corinthians 4:13 represents a minority position, but one that is gaining support.<sup>464</sup> With a measure of scrutiny, it will be shown that although this proposal is possible, it is not incontrovertible, nor is it the most probable. Both Campbell and Hays find support for their theses based on the common early church practice of reading Psalms Christologically. Christological interpretation of the Psalms was an established tradition in early Christianity. Yet, these commentators have not accounted for the variety of Christological interpretations evident in the early church writings. For example, Justin Martyr typically understands the speaker of the Psalms to be Christ.<sup>465</sup> Clement, on the other hand, presents Jesus as ὁ λόγος, the eternal word, to be eternally present in the Psalms, but not in fact the speaker therein.<sup>466</sup> He understands the Psalms as "witnesses" to Christ rather than spoken by Christ himself.<sup>467</sup> Athanasius takes a diverse approach in his readings of various Psalms.<sup>468</sup> At times, he interprets the Psalms as functioning prophetically, foretelling the coming of the Saviour (e.g., Ps. 2), and at other times he understands the Psalmist to be Christ himself (e.g., Ps. 22). Nonetheless, in the few brief examples here surveyed, there is enough to suggest that a simple appeal to the authority of early church interpretation is not adequate to bolster support for Campbell's own very specific Christological reading of Psalm 115 (LXX). There simply is not adequate consensus on which of the Psalms are to be read Christologically, and those that are generally agreed to be Christological are shown to have diverse interpretations.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> In addition to Hays and Campbell, Goudge, Hanson, and Stegman have argued for a messianic reading of the Psalmic quotation in 2 Cor 4:13. H. L. Goudge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Methuen, 1927), 41–42; Anthony T. Hanson, *The Paradox of the Cross in the Thought of St. Paul*, JSOTSup 17 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 51–53; Thomas D. Stegman, *The Character of Jesus: The Linchpin to Paul's Argument in 2 Corinthians* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 2005); Thomas D. Stegman, "Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα (2 Corinthians 4:13): Paul's Christological Reading of Psalm 115:1a LXX," *CBQ* 69 (2007): 725–45.

<sup>465</sup> Cf. *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 33–34, 37–38; Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 35. Justin reads the Psalms as given to the Psalmist by the Holy Spirit, but referring to Christ. In his *The First Apology*, he treats Psalm 22 (21 LXX) as a prediction of the passion of Christ. (This is rather uncontroversial since Christ himself quotes this Psalm whilst on the cross: Mt. 27:46; Mark 15:34. Cf. Luke 2:25–31 in which the author of Acts attributes this as a prophetic word from David.) Commenting on the Psalmist's words, "They pierced My hands and My feet, and for My vesture they cast lots," Justin says: "And indeed David, the king and prophet, who uttered these things, suffered none of them; but Jesus Christ stretched forth His hands, being crucified by the Jews speaking against him, and denying that He was the Christ" (Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 35).

<sup>466</sup> S. E. Gillingham, *Psalms Through The Centuries*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 28.

<sup>467</sup> Gillingham, *Psalms*, 28.

<sup>468</sup> Cf. *Letter to Marcellinus* on the interpretation of the Psalms. He sees that all of the crucial aspects of Christ's life can be seen in the Psalms: that he would come in human form, his suffering, his death, and his resurrection.

<sup>469</sup> Furthermore, it is difficult to find a Christological reading applied to Ps 115 LXX.



Secondly, Campbell reasonably deduces various parallels between the Psalm and the passion of Christ. However, Scott has demonstrated that Campbell's metaleptic appeals to Psalm 115 fall short since he presents only selective elements of the Psalm that apply Christologically.<sup>470</sup> This critique cuts to the heart of Campbell's argument, since he understands that to share in both the believing and speaking of the Psalmist requires that Paul also share in the narrative of the Psalmist. Scott exposes some instances where the narratives do not align. For example, the Eucharistic language of verse 4, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD," seems to be spoken by someone who commemorates Christ's death but is not likely Christ speaking about his own.

Additionally, Psalm 115:6, which states, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones," may be about Christ in some way, but it is not spoken by him.<sup>471</sup> If we look for signs of the Psalmist in the Corinthian text, the traces are still minimal.<sup>472</sup> Instead of being able to attribute a Christological speaker for the whole Psalm, as Campbell would desire, Scott suggests that he ends up with a "casually drawn list of predicates" and concludes that "there is nothing compelling to suggest Christ as the speaker of the quotation."<sup>473</sup>

Alternatively, the echoes of Christ's passion present in the Psalm are easily accounted for by the more commonly accepted reading that understands the Psalmist as a prefiguring of Christ, or a type of Christ, a voice speaking prophetically of the Christ to come.<sup>474</sup> In prefiguring the Christ, the Psalmist was at the same time sharing in the hope of the coming Christ. This hermeneutic follows the interpretative pattern of fulfilment that is often found in the gospels. For example, John explains Christ's

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<sup>470</sup> Matthew Scott, *The Hermeneutics of Christological Psalmody in Paul: An Intertextual Enquiry*, SNTSMS 158 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 167–68, 174–76.

<sup>471</sup> Scott, *Christological Psalmody*, 174–76.

<sup>472</sup> Scott acknowledges that the Psalmist refers to himself as the Lord's servant, but this widely refers to all who are in Christ in addition to Christ himself. Moreover, this is the phrase Paul has just used to identify himself (2 Cor 4:5). There is no mention of payment of a vow, as is prominently represented in Psalm 115. Most significant perhaps is the fact that there is no mention of resurrection by the Psalmist, which figures so prominently in 2 Corinthians (Scott, *Christological Psalmody*, 176).

<sup>473</sup> Scott, *Christological Psalmody*, 175–76. Scott argues that Christ is not the speaker of this one Psalm but of "psalmody in its essence, a written voice represented as the 'spirit of faith'" (138).

<sup>474</sup> Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 340; Gillingham, *Psalms*, 14–15. An alternative view is that Paul understood the speaker as generally representative of the righteous sufferer throughout the Old Testament. Still, the majority of commentators understand Paul to be identifying with the faith of the Psalmist himself: Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 142; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 132–133; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 351–352; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 240–242; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 89.

citation of Psalm 69:22 to be a fulfilment of the Scripture rather than a re-citation of the same voice (John 19:28).

While in some instances in Paul's writings there may be more demonstrable cases for the voice of Christ heard through the Psalms,<sup>475</sup> the discussion thus far has cast reasonable doubt on such a reading of Paul's citation of Psalm 115. Certainly the evidence does not suggest decisively that Christ is the speaker of this Psalm, as Campbell would make it seem. This conclusion is disappointing for those who would seek a demonstrable case of Christ as the active agent of πιστεύω and thus gather support for the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. While we notice the theme of Christ's obedience elsewhere in Paul's letters,<sup>476</sup> this is not at all the clear focus in this letter. Rather, when we look at the broader context of Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians, a reading that places the locus of faith in the human who trusts in Christ fits more coherently. When Paul explicates participation in Christ so profoundly in 4:7-12, we can expect him to make the point of connection for this participation explicit, and so he does. In identifying with the Psalmist, whether that be Christ, David, or the Righteous Sufferer in general, Paul proclaims: καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν (2 Cor 4:13). Indeed, the express purpose of Paul's citation of the Psalm is his own identification with the speaker's faith and therefore appropriation of it. Paul is the univocal subject of πιστεύω and thus incorporated into God's continuous saving action in Christ by his faith.

### 2.2.2 Campbell's Conception of Faith

Having determined that the key interpretative issue at hand is that Paul is identifying with another's faith, we proceed with the question of how this citation helps us to understand what Paul means by faith. We will look first at the implications that Campbell suggests his participatory reading of 2 Corinthians 4:13 has for the whole Pauline notion of belief.<sup>477</sup> He distinguishes belief as "a post- rather than a pre-conversion phenomenon in the Christian"<sup>478</sup> and as a "marker of salvation present in those who have been appropriated by God, assuring believers that this salvation is real

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<sup>475</sup> E.g., Hays's discussion of Rom 15 in *Conversion*, 101–18.

<sup>476</sup> Most explicitly in Phil 2. Cf. Rom 5:19.

<sup>477</sup> Campbell, "2 Corinthians 4:13," 352.

<sup>478</sup> Campbell, "2 Corinthians 4:13," 354.

despite present suffering.”<sup>479</sup> In Campbell’s understanding, faith functions in terms of assurance more than appropriation.<sup>480</sup>

Campbell’s analysis is intriguing. However, upon closer examination it becomes clear that he has set up a false dichotomy. The context surrounding this verse emphasises Paul’s ministerial life. Thus Campbell rightly assesses that faith here is a “post-conversion” phenomenon. However, that does not preclude the presence of faith in the initial conversion experience. It is a mistake to draw conclusions about the role of faith prior to or at conversion in a passage for which this is not a concern. As we have seen in previous chapters, the Pauline conception of faith is very much an ongoing state of existence that involves a beginning as an affirming and submissive response to the gospel and continues as the life-sustaining mode of existence in Christ. For example, we noted Paul’s concern to retell the story of the Thessalonians’ response to the gospel; there “receiving” was demonstrated to be a correlate to faith, indicating that an active response is necessary in those who hear the message of Christ. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul painstakingly reiterates the ways in which the Corinthians had involved themselves in the gospel reality.<sup>481</sup> Therefore, looking beyond the immediate context of 2 Corinthians 4:13, it is clear that appropriation is a necessary component of faith.

### **2.2.3 The Pauline Conception of Faith**

#### **2.2.3.1 The “Spirit” of Faith: Divine Priority**

As with each exegetical observation made about faith thus far, it is vital that we again belabour the point about divine priority in faith. This is evident in 2 Corinthians 4 in the way that Paul speaks here of the “spirit” of faith. With Campbell, we take the “spirit of faith” to refer to the divine spirit.<sup>482</sup> Others have argued that this “spirit of faith” implies a “spiritual state,” “disposition,” or “quality” of faith.<sup>483</sup> Fee explains that “spirit of” is often reflective of a Semitism that expresses a periphrasis for an activity or attitude.<sup>484</sup> For example, Paul can speak about approaching the

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<sup>479</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 352.

<sup>480</sup> Campbell, “2 Corinthians 4:13,” 354.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. chapter two § 1.3 for the discussion on 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13 and chapter three § 2.1 for the discussion on 1 Cor 15. Of course, it has been repeatedly established that this response is preceded and effected by the power of God.

<sup>482</sup> Other commentators suggest Paul uses “spirit” as a way of characterising the human quality of faith.

<sup>483</sup> Cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 339; Hughes, *Second Epistle*, 147.

<sup>484</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 26.

Corinthians in a spirit of gentleness (πνεύματι τε πραΰτητος – 1 Cor 4:21).<sup>485</sup> Murphy-O'Connor understands the genitive here to be a genitive of content, explaining that he uses this frequently when πίστις in the genitive follows a substantive. Interpreted thus, the phrase would read: “The spirit which is faith.”<sup>486</sup> Morgan takes “the spirit of faith” to mean that πίστις is a spiritual gift: “the gift of letting the power of God shine through the heart to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God (4.6).”<sup>487</sup> However, the majority of Paul’s references to πνεῦμα point to the divine Spirit.<sup>488</sup> Moreover, 2 Corinthians is thoroughly rooted in pneumatology. In chapter three, Paul lays a strong pneumatological foundation in his excursus on the New Covenant enacted by the Spirit. The ministry of the Spirit that gives life is contrasted with the ministry of death and condemnation in 3:7-12. This is the same life-giving Spirit prophesied in Ezekiel 37:

δώσω πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ ζήσεσθε (Ez 37:6b)

εἰσηλθεν εἰς αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἔζησαν (Ez 37:10b)

καὶ δώσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς καὶ ζήσεσθε (Ez 37:14a)

When Paul evinces God as the source of his sufficiency, he simultaneously reveals that he is wholly reconstituted as an agent in God’s new covenant of the Spirit, who is the life-giving agent (3:6).<sup>489</sup> With this understanding of the Spirit, the reference in 4:13 conveys the integral link between the Spirit and faith; faith is pneumatologically inspired, thus divine agency is always prior to faith.

### 2.2.3.2 Faith Acts

Having seen once again that divine agency always precedes faith,<sup>490</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:13 also advances our previous observation that faith generates action, here specifically speech.<sup>491</sup> Paul often summarises his ministry in terms of his

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<sup>485</sup> Fee identifies eleven instances in which Paul uses πνεῦμα with a genitive modifier referring to some quality or attitude, asserting that it is not immediately clear in each case whether Paul intends something attitudinal or whether he in fact is referring to the Spirit who brings about the qualities mentioned (Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 26).

<sup>486</sup> Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Keys to Second Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 96.

<sup>487</sup> Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, 254.

<sup>488</sup> Cf. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 14.

<sup>489</sup> In this way, Paul can depict the Corinthians to be his own letter of recommendation, written by the Spirit of the living God (v.3).

<sup>490</sup> Cf. chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

<sup>491</sup> In view of the broader context in which Paul reveals a sensitivity about his speech (1 Cor 1–2; 2 Cor 10:9-10), it becomes evident that Paul’s incorporation of this Psalm about faith and speaking continues the persistent thread of his defence. Although his ministry does not meet the standards of Corinthian converts, he has defended his own ministry on the basis of his God-given

speaking, preaching, or proclamation of the gospel (λαλέω, κηρύσσω, εὐαγγελίζω, καταγγέλλω, παρακαλέω, μαρτυρέω, νοουθετέω).<sup>492</sup> Thus, the presence of λαλέω in 2 Corinthians 4:13 may be understood as a brachylogy for his ministry of preaching the gospel in general. Paul’s ministry of proclamation has been a point of discussion since the opening description of his travels to Asia, presumably to proclaim the gospel (2 Cor 1:9). In 2 Corinthians 2:12-17, Paul refers to his aim to preach the gospel of Christ in Troas. Thus when Paul writes ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν (4:13), we see that his ministry of preaching is the direct result of his faith.

With this emphasis on active faith, we note that the action engendered in the believer is wholly Christological. In response to the question of who is sufficient for such a ministry, we have already noted that Paul declares the authority and basis of his preaching: it is *from God, before God, and in Christ* (2 Cor 2:17b). Furthermore, the activity is Christological insofar as Paul summarises the content of his preaching in Jesus Christ (1:19). Throughout the letter as Paul repeatedly defends himself and his preaching, he habitually refers back to the focus of his preaching: “Jesus Christ as Lord” (4:5). The apostolic preaching engendered by Paul’s faith is a self-negating and Christ-exalting act. Moreover, Paul distinguishes the sincerity and truth of his preaching from the false proclamation of others: εἰ μὲν γὰρ ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν κηρύσσει ὃν οὐκ ἐκηρύξαμεν (11:4). Considering the repeated mention of speaking and preaching in this letter, Paul’s citation of Psalm 115 about believing and speaking is thus best understood in relation to his situational objective of defending his apostolic integrity. In this patently participatory pericope, Paul interjects his self-involvement by this reference to faith and preaching. As is consistently portrayed throughout his writings, Paul’s actions are never justified in and of themselves; that is to say, where Paul speaks of his own activity, it is never without the qualification of both divine approval and empowerment. Thus he can say that he speaks, but it is Christ who speaks in him (13:3).

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authority and participation in Christ’s suffering. Here, then, he cites this Psalm to authenticate the basis of his continued ministry. Such faith engenders proclamation of the gospel.

<sup>492</sup> Cf. 5:18-19 where Paul depicts his role as an ambassador with the message of reconciliation. Hubbard describes the whole of 2:14–7:4 as a “thoughtful and carefully elaborated statement of his apostolic calling which focuses on the nature of his spoken message” (Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS 119 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 143.

### **2.2.3.3 Self-giving Faith: Ministry for the Other**

Paul's self-involvement in the "spirit of faith" that leads to the practical ministry of preaching also best accounts for the transition from verse twelve, where Paul has just conveyed the purpose of his participation in Christ's suffering; such afflictions result in life abounding in the Corinthians, just as the suffering and death of Christ results in life for those who believe.<sup>493</sup> As Paul explicates his ministry through the lens of Christ's sufferings, his participation involves the same outward projection of giving life to others that Christ's death and resurrection accomplished. This theme of other-centredness had been established in the opening doxology, where Paul discloses that the comfort he receives from the Father is for the purpose of being able to comfort others with that same comfort he received (2 Cor 1:4, 6-7). This pattern is repeated in chapter four when Paul proclaims Jesus as Lord and himself as a servant for the benefit of the Corinthians (4:5). In the immediate context, Paul reiterates that all of this suffering is for the sake of the Corinthians and to the glory of God (4:12, 15).<sup>494</sup> This thread reveals an interesting and crucial point about agency. Paul is an active agent, but here we see that agency can be understood in terms of instrumentality. As Paul suffers with Christ, he becomes the instrument through which God works to strengthen other believers (12:19). Yet we have seen that his suffering is intended to yield faith. Thus through his participatory faith he consistently exhibits the intention to bless and serve others.

### **2.2.4 Summary**

As we have engaged with one of Paul's most profound expressions of participation in Christ in 4:7–15, we have uncovered that faith is vital to understanding precisely how believers participate in the dynamic of Christ's death and resurrection. Participation and faith were connected in these verses first of all through Paul's own confidence that what is true of Christ will be true of himself—he will be raised with Jesus (4:10, 14). Even more, Paul understands his own participation in Christ as somehow sharing in the life-giving death and resurrection of Christ. Participation in Christ by faith is not solely for the sake of his own future hope, but bringing others into this Christ-mediated process of salvation as well. While

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<sup>493</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 15:22; Gal 2:19-20.

<sup>494</sup> Paul habitually implicates the Corinthians in his defence. With him, they are confirmed (βεβαίωω) in Christ (1:21). They are his letter of recommendation from Christ (3:2-3). His authority is for the sake of building up the Corinthians (10:8). In a final summary, Paul exclaims that it has been for the purpose of building them up that he has spoken in Christ (12:19).

Campbell understands the “Spirit of faith” to refer to Christ’s faith, we have argued that it is more tenable that Paul understands this faith to be the point of connection within the human where participation happens. More specifically, faith is the mode of dependence on Christ that manifests his life-giving ministry.

### 2.3 Faith: Confident Knowing

Thus far, we have argued that Paul’s reference to πίστις in 4:13 is not simply an aside to his detailed exposition on sharing in the sufferings of Christ. Rather it is central to and integrated with this theme of participation in Christ. The centrality of faith to participation in Christ is supported by the fact that the context of this passage is couched in confidence terms. In 4:14, Paul qualifies his statement of faith (4:13) with a participial phrase. Dependent on the main verb, πιστεύω (4:13), οἶδα qualifies faith in concrete cognitive terms: εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν. The perfect participle εἰδότες is functioning causally here, explaining the content of his faith and the basis of his ministry. Paul’s faith produced action, that of proclaiming the gospel, and he can continue preaching in adverse situations because he *knows* that even should he die, he will be raised with Jesus. Thus Paul does not lose heart (ἐγκακέω – 4:16)<sup>495</sup> because the spiritual reality that he looks forward to far outweighs the light and temporal suffering (4:16-18).

In the opening verses of chapter five, Paul conveys his confidence, alternating between the words οἶδα (vv.1, 6) and θαρρέω (vv.6, 8), with a quintessential proclamation concerning πίστις in 5:7: διὰ πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους. This is the first occurrence of θαρρέω in this letter.<sup>496</sup> This verb is understood generally to mean: “to have certainty in a matter, *be confident*, be courageous.”<sup>497</sup> The content of his confidence, while being rooted in having the Spirit as an ἀρραβών

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<sup>495</sup> Cf. 4:1. The verb ἐγκακέω is used by Paul only in 2 Cor 4:1, 16; Gal 6:9. In the disputed letters it occurs in Eph 3:13; 2 Thess 3:13, and in the Gospels, it occurs only in Luke 18:1. BDAG offers two definitions for the verb: 1) To lose one’s motivation in continuing a desirable pattern of conduct or activity, lose enthusiasm, be discouraged; 2) To be afraid in the face of a great difficulty (BDAG, ἐγκακέω, 2178).

<sup>496</sup> In fact, Paul does not employ θαρρέω in any of his other letters. Besides these two instances in chapter 5, the word occurs later in 2 Cor 7:16; 10:1, 2, but with the emphasis directed to having confidence before humanity, rather than as a kind of commentary on faith in God as it is here. The only other New Testament occurrence of this verb is in Hebrews 13:6. In the Gospels and Acts, a variant form of the verb, θαρσέω, is used on occasion and carries the same lexical connotations as θαρρέω (cf. Mt. 9:22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; 10:49; John 16:33; Acts 23:11; 28:15).

<sup>497</sup> BDAG, θαρρέω, 3499

(5:5), is that he will be with the Lord. After the earlier emphasis on his present experience of Christ's death and life working through him (4:10-11), the future experience of presence with Christ is emphasised in this passage (5:6-8) as he began to suggest in 4:14. Bounded by his two expressions of confidence (5:6, 8), Paul contrasts living by faith and living by sight:

5:6 Θαρροῦντες οὖν πάντοτε καὶ εἰδότες  
 5:6b ὅτι ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου·  
 5:7 διὰ<sup>498</sup> πίστεως γὰρ περιπατοῦμεν, οὐ διὰ εἶδους·  
 5:8 θαρροῦμεν δὲ καὶ  
     εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος  
     καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον.

Thus we understand the three expressions οἶδα, θαρρέω, and πίστις to be descriptive of one another. The metaphorical depiction of an earthly house compared with a heavenly, eternal dwelling with God relates to the affliction Paul delineated in 4:7-18. The central themes of “life operating through death” and “glory arising through suffering” are continued in 5:1-10. As Paul here ponders his own death prior to the Parousia of Christ,<sup>499</sup> he finds comfort in knowing (οἶδα) that his future, heavenly dwelling is secure, and even far superior to his earthly dwelling. It is indeed this confidence, this knowledge, this faith that carries him through the darkest nights of this present life.

#### 2.4 New Creation and Reconciliation in Christ

After expounding on this mode of courageous faith while awaiting a future of glorious and holistic union with the Lord, Paul transitions again to defend and to explicate his ministry of reconciliation (5:11-21). As he proceeds, he ties in the theme of participation: ὅτι εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον· καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν, ἵνα οἱ ζῶντες μηκέτι ἑαυτοῖς ζῶσιν ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι (5:14b-15). Christ's death becomes the representative death in which all believers participate. Yet such death yields new life. Paul states explicitly that the purpose of Christ's death was to revivify believers in a self-negating and Christ-glorifying way of life (5:15). In the next verse, Paul articulates this state of existence as “new creation”: ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα

<sup>498</sup> Harris explains that the prepositional phrases here that begin with a parallel use of διὰ (v.7) are examples of accompanying circumstance. This interpretation gives the sense therefore of walking “in the realm of faith, not [in the realm] of sight.” (Harris, *Second Epistle*, 365–66).

<sup>499</sup> Cf. Harris, *Second Epistle*, 365–66.



παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά (5:17).<sup>500</sup> Whether this καινὴ κτίσις refers to renewal of the whole cosmos or more specifically to human transformation has been widely debated.<sup>501</sup> However, there are a couple of key indications that Paul has human transformation primarily in view. First, Harris and Thrall note that the conditional and individual cast of the sentence, εἴ τις, leans in favour of the view that καινὴ κτίσις relates to an individual's union with Christ by faith.<sup>502</sup> Secondly, the theme of human transformation and “newness” has been recurrent through the letter. This is evident in Paul's frequent use of ζωή, πνεῦμα, δόξα, εικόν,<sup>503</sup> and in the context of Paul's discussion of new creation, which follows on his discussion of the new covenant ministry. One of the key features of the new covenant ministry is the life-giving Spirit (3:6, 9) who is at work on human hearts (3:3), transforming believers into the image of the glory of the Lord (3:18; 4:6, 16-17).<sup>504</sup>

The passage concludes with another significant passage about participation: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21).<sup>505</sup> Morna Hooker has famously depicted this passage as an example of “interchange.” By interchange, Hooker means to distinguish that Paul is not speaking of a simple exchange of status, but rather, Christ enters our experience and we then enter his by sharing in his death and resurrection.<sup>506</sup> As Paul is dealing with the theme of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5, it follows that the interchange involves Christ entering into the human struggle of sin

<sup>500</sup> Guthrie points out that the ὅστε clause that begins verse 17 stands in parallel with the ὅστε clause in verse 16. The two phrases flow from the idea of verse fifteen that those who are alive in Christ no longer live for themselves (Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, 307).

<sup>501</sup> In the New Testament, the phrase occurs only one other time—in Galatians 6:15. This citation will be dealt with in more detail in chapter six of this thesis. It finds a background in three related passages in Isaiah: Isa 43:18-19; 65:17; 66:22. The first speaks of a new order with the terms τὰ ἀρχαῖα, ἰδοὺ, and καινά parallel to 2 Cor 5:17. The latter two detail a new cosmos that the Lord is creating (οὐρανός καινός and γῆ καινή). The phrase is noted in the Qumran literature as well. Cf. Peter Stuhlmacher, “Erwägungen zum Ontologischen Charakter der καινὴ κτίσις bei Paulus,” *EvT* 27 (1967): 1–35; Ulrich Mell, *Neue Schöpfung: Eine Traditionsgeschichtliche und Exegetische Studie zu einem Soteriologischen Grundsatz Paulinischer Theologie*, BZNW 56 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989).

<sup>502</sup> Harris, *Second Epistle*, 432; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 427. Thrall notes that the new world and new age are already objective realities in principle through the Christ-event.

<sup>503</sup> Cf. Hubbard, *New Creation*, 154.

<sup>504</sup> Some take it as a reference to the church in general. Ferdinand Hahn, “Siehe, Jetzt Ist der Tag des Heils: Neuschöpfung und Versöhnung nach 2 Korinther 5:14–6:2,” *EvT* 33 (1973): 250.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. Gal 3:13 which will be dealt with in more detail in chapter six.

<sup>506</sup> Morna D. Hooker, “Interchange in Christ,” in *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 16. It must be noted that in her proposal of “interchange,” Hooker takes a strong stance against substitutionary atonement. See Gathercole for a solid critique of Hooker's stance against substitution. Indeed, the idea of interchange which emphasises participation is integral to Paul's soteriology but not exclusive of other important metaphors for salvation. Simon Gathercole, *Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul*, ASBT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 38–42.

and therefore that humans are enabled to share in the righteousness of Christ. Hooker writes: “In some unfathomable way Christ is identified with what is opposed to God, in order that man should be reconciled to him.”<sup>507</sup>

That this passage on participation in 5:11-21 follows upon the emphasis on faith leading up to it (4:13-5:10) presents us with an interesting juxtaposition. In 5:1-10 especially, Paul presents faith with a future focus. There he emphasises the intense waiting and longing to be in the presence of the Lord (5:8), unhindered anymore by mortal flesh and dwelling finally in the fullness of eternal glory. Earthly existence is a matter of faith and not of sight (5:7). In other words, faith is presented here in such a way as to inspire hope when the mortal life weighs heavily on the believer. In bodies that are decaying, believers do groan for the eternal weight of glory that is beyond all comparison (4:17). Yet, 5:11-21 presents clearly that the promise of participation in Christ is not just for the future, but an inaugurated reality in the present.<sup>508</sup> Having been reconciled to God, the believer is now a new creation in Christ (5:17)—sharing in his very life for the purpose of exemplifying his self-giving love (5:15) and reconciling sinners to him (5:19-20). In Christ, believers even become the very righteousness of God (5:21). The flow of the passage is significant. Paul has moved back and forth between the two themes of participation and faith. Such movement shows that they cannot be separated. Participation in Christ is absolutely a matter of faith as believers identify with the Christ-event in daily dependence upon him while awaiting a future of full fellowship with him.<sup>509</sup>

### *2.5. Summary: Participation by Faith*

Our exegesis of 2 Corinthians 4:7–5:21 has been lengthy and detailed, so we pause to tie together some of our conclusions. We first began by exploring the theme of participation in Christ and discovered that Paul’s life and ministry are centred in a dynamic conformity to Christ crucified so that as Paul suffers, he somehow shares in the very death of Christ. At the same time, Paul’s life and ministry operate in the resurrection life of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is both a future hope of being raised with Jesus and a present experience of yielding new life in others. Paul’s

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<sup>507</sup> Hooker, “Interchange in Christ,” 17.

<sup>508</sup> Cf. 5:5 in which the Spirit is given as a guarantee.

<sup>509</sup> Harris notes that “In 5:17 ἐν Χριστῷ may be paraphrased ‘united in faith to the risen Christ.’” Harris, *Second Epistle*, 432.

participation in this dynamic of Christ's death and resurrection exemplifies the self-giving love of Christ.

Closely linked with Paul's discussion of participation is his reference to the "spirit of faith." First we noticed how Campbell uses this verse in an attempt to bolster a case for the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Contra Campbell, we observed Paul's intention to cite this verse in the context of his *apologia* and thus to provide additional justification to his own ministry. Paul is precisely emphasising his own appropriation of faith; indeed, this faith is Christologically shaped, but it is in no way evident that he intends to suggest that he is participating in Christ's faith. Rather, he places emphasis on himself as the subject of faith.

Faith was seen to be pneumatologically inspired. By the power of the life-giving Spirit, Paul is reconstituted as an agent in God's new covenant. Paul's ministry of proclaiming the gospel revealed faith to be active and self-involving in the word and work of Christ. Christological participation is evident by the outward trajectory of Paul's ministry; he suffers in serving for the sake of the gospel, but his confident trust motivates him to carry on, knowing his own ministry yields life in the Corinthians (4:12, 15) and that he will experience future resurrection with Christ (4:14).

Upon closer examination of these two themes presented in 4:7-15, an important thread of our argument comes into clearer focus. The flow of the passage is such that Paul first expounds on this sharing in the sufferings of Christ in 4:7-12 but then connects this discussion about participation to the quotation about the spirit of faith with a connective δέ, showing that this mode of participatory existence is experienced by faith. In verses 7-12, Paul clearly demonstrates that his weakness and suffering, insofar as they are sharing in the death of Christ, reflect the glory of God and yield life in others (4:12).<sup>510</sup> But verse thirteen embodies this work of God in the πίστις of the human. Indeed, without faith, the idea of sharing in the gruesome crucifixion and miraculous resurrection of the Christ seems rather nebulous and abstract. But when linked together with the way Paul presents this relationship of confident reliance upon God, the idea of participation becomes less perplexing. Faith is indeed the mode of existence in which the believer shares in the continuous reality of the self-giving love and life-creating power of Christ. They represent two sides of the same coin; on the face of one is the Christological frame and priority, on the other

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<sup>510</sup> Note the similarity to Gal 2:19. In both, Paul writes of sharing in the sufferings of Christ, which manifests self-giving love and yields life in others.

side is the face of a transformed anthropology. The metaphor falls short in that the human side exhibits full dependence on and absolute confidence in the divine. The human recognises his or her impotence and insignificance without Christ and thus operates in a self-negating and self-involving way in the life of Christ.

Realising faith as the point of convergence for the life of Christ to be enacted in the believer fits with the broader underpinning of the whole letter. We recall Paul's assertion in 2 Corinthians 1:9: "Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead." Throughout the letter, Paul places great theological emphasis on the fact of human insufficiency and thus the need for absolute reliance upon the Christ-event.

Finally, we observe that interpreting faith in this way does not eliminate the Christocentric focus of the passage, which seems to be the concern of writers such as Campbell and Hays. Rather, reading faith as a Christologically shaped human act bolsters its Christo-centricity. The context, both in the pericope in which this verse lies and the letter as a whole, leaves no room for one to doubt that Paul is absolutely concerned to portray a Christological focus. Placing faith in Christ is precisely self-negating and simultaneously deems him worthy of a posture of full dependence. Furthermore, the Christological focus of this passage is obvious through Paul's appeal to Jesus' representative death and resurrection as well as believers' participation through "carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus." The Christological focus is still present as Paul directs his faith to the one whose death justifies all believers (2 Cor 3:9) and whose resurrection raises believers to new life (4:14).

### **3. A Confident Boast (2 Cor 10–13)<sup>511</sup>**

#### *3.1 Boasting in Weakness*

As a final point of exegesis, we revisit the theme that opened our study of 1 Corinthians—boasting. This motif arises in chapters 10–13 with an unprecedented number of recurrences of *καυχάομαι* and cognates as Paul draws his apologia to a forceful close.<sup>512</sup> Returning once more to the question of his sufficiency, first posed in

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<sup>511</sup> One of the more popular partition theories takes 2 Cor 10–13 as the "painful letter" and 2 Cor 1–9 as one subsequent letter. Cf. Francis Watson, "2 COR. X–XIII and Paul's Painful Letter to the Corinthians," *JTS* 35 (1984): 324–46. However, I follow Harris, who details several plausible reasons for the alternation of mood at 10:1 (Harris, *Second Epistle*, 34–42, 43–44).

<sup>512</sup> Some form of *καυχάομαι* occurs 19 times in 2 Cor 10–13.

2:16, Paul's response in these final chapters forms an *inclusio*, reinforcing his purpose to reflect his own posture of reliance as he adjures his readers to exhibit the same faith.

The same paradoxical framework that is consistent throughout the letter shapes the way Paul speaks of boasting.<sup>513</sup> Condescending to the level of his critics, at times he is willing to boast with unabashed assertions of his precedence over against the false apostles (11:4-9; 12:11-12). He can produce impressive credentials if necessary: he is a Hebrew, an Israelite, offspring of Abraham, and servant of Christ (11:22-23), and he has been caught up to the third heaven (12:1-6). Yet, he qualifies this boasting as that of a fool, according to human standards; he is not speaking with the Lord's authority (11:17, 18, 21). Moreover, this human boasting is paradoxical when he exclaims: εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι (2 Cor 11:30),<sup>514</sup> for it is in human weakness that the power of God is made manifest. Paul explicates this truth when he testifies of the thorn in his flesh, given in order to keep him from exalting himself (12:7-8) and to reveal the power of Christ as he relies on his grace:

καὶ εἰρηκέν μοι· ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.  
Ἦδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι (2 Cor 12:9-10).

Boasting in weakness becomes the way Paul reiterates his self-negating, Christ-affirming disposition of reliance. The same paradoxical “not I, but Christ” shapes the way he expresses his sense of worth and sufficiency before the Corinthians.

### 3.2 *Boasting in the Lord*

Although he claims it is necessary to boast (12:1), as if he has been driven to it against his better judgment by the deception that has held his readers captive, Paul is insistent that he will not boast on his own behalf (12:5). Instead, he affirms again

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<sup>513</sup> In 1 Corinthians, we noted that Paul speaks of boasting in a way that explicates faith (1 Cor 1:31; 2:5). There we looked at the Corinthians' zeal for σοφία, δύναμις, and εὐγένεια, with Paul's exhortation to reorient their sense of worth in Christ alone. The correlation between boasting and faith involved a knowledge that what is true of Christ is true of oneself, thus re-defining the self to take as the ground of its identity, hope, and value what is true of Christ. In 2 Corinthians, boasting is almost entirely absorbed within Paul's apologia.

<sup>514</sup> Cf. 12:5, 9. 12:7 conveys the same idea with different terminology: καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων. διὸ ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατανᾶ, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

the prophet's words, ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω (2 Cor 10:17; cf. Jer 9:22 LXX).<sup>515</sup> Whereas in 1 Corinthians, Paul directly challenged those who inappropriately boast in wisdom, power, or nobility, Paul is specifically concerned here with the false apostles who have been commending themselves and thus beguiling the Corinthians away from their true source of worth, security, and identity in Christ. In this way, he warns them: "For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends" (2 Cor 10:18). Paul knows ultimately that self-commendation bears no value; Christ's commendation alone validates him as an apostle.

Recalling from our study of 1 Corinthians that πιστεύω and καυχάομαι bear a parallel relationship, we see that the way Paul speaks of boasting in these chapters is consistent with our observations on the Pauline conception of faith. The alteration between "boasting in weakness" and "boasting in the Lord" represent two sides of the same coin, just as faith carries the dual notion of self-negation and dependence on Christ. Paradoxically, Paul boasts in his weakness, conveying the same self-renouncing disposition apparent from the beginning of the letter. καυχάομαι has now ironically become a way of self-renunciation. As Paul speaks of καυχάομαι to reflect his weakness, he concurrently diminishes himself to magnify a proper boast in Christ. Paul has transposed the self-praise of the Corinthians into a melody of adulation to the Lord.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The best exegesis is able to examine the minutia while maintaining perspective on the broader themes that weave together a text. 2 Corinthians surely weaves together multiple theological threads, often with seemingly conflicting ideas that Paul holds together in order to present a deeper truth. Amidst the many paradoxical themes, this letter articulates some of the most profound conceptions of participation in Christ. Yet, participation in Christ cannot be understood apart from believers's self-involvement in the Christ-event by faith. In the first portion of this chapter, we concluded that Paul conceives of faith as a self-negating and Christologically shaped reliance upon God (2 Cor 1:9). Faith is presented Christologically in two ways in the beginning of this letter: 1) the believer has

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<sup>515</sup> Cf. discussion of Paul's citation of Jer 9:22 LXX in chapter three § 1.1.

assurance that he or she will rise from the dead just as Christ did; 2) it is through Christ's mediatorial role that one is re-positioned to place his or her confidence in God (3:4). Additionally, Paul expounds on the idea of self-negating confidence through his concentration on the question of his sufficiency (ικανός). Consistently, Paul deflects his defence away from himself to focus on the faithfulness of God; he is incompetent on his own, but in Christ and before God he is sufficient to be a minister of the gospel (3:4-5; 1:18). In the first three chapters, we concluded that the Pauline conception of faith depicts a posture in which believers recognise their own impotence and thus their need to rely upon God. Taking upon himself the Christological pattern of suffering in order to bring knowledge of God to others, Paul exemplifies this self-negating reliance upon God.

In the second section, we observed that Paul developed the theme of a Christological reliance upon God within the context of a poignant discussion of participation in 4:7-15. We noted particularly the citation of "the Spirit of faith" that Paul appropriates for himself in his continued defence. Faith is shown in this pericope to be the nexus of anthropology and Christology, the point of connection in which the life of Christ is enacted in the believer, following his pattern of suffering so that another may live. Paul shows himself to become an instrument, pneumatologically inspired and empowered to serve. Finally, faith as participation is essentially rooted in the resurrection. This grounding in the resurrection is observed in two ways. First, resurrection is manifested in the sense that as he carries the dying of Christ in his body, life is engendered in those for whom he suffers and serves. Secondly, despite the severity of his daily afflictions, Paul has confidence that he will ultimately be raised with Jesus. Such hope in the eternal empowers him to endure the most extreme distress in his present circumstances.

Finally, we looked at Paul's language of boasting, suggesting that the final chapters of this letter reinforce the Pauline conception of faith as we have developed in this survey. The alteration between "boasting in weakness" and "boasting in the Lord" represents the dual aspects of self-negation and dependence on Christ in the Pauline notion of faith. As Paul speaks of *καυχάομαι* to reflect his weakness, he concurrently diminishes himself to amplify the true object of boasting in Christ.

With the unique concentration of terms centred around the notion of confidence in 2 Corinthians, Paul has used the accusations against him as an opportunity to present the higher theological claim that properly placed confidence

cannot be directed toward humans; rather, human weakness is what necessitates and motivates reliance upon God. It is imperative that Paul's readers understand him to place the locus of faith in humans, yet at the same time he portrays this human act of faith very distinctively as the simultaneous act of renouncing self-confidence and exercising full dependence on Christ. Consistently, Paul reveals that faith is always preceded by the power of God, but with equal emphasis, Paul shows that faith responds to that power and consistently relies upon it. Faith then is understood as a posture in which believers recognise their own impotence and thus their need to rely upon God. Contra Campbell, faith is a human appropriation of divine enablement; it operates precisely at the limit point of human self-reliance. Faith is not a human achievement; it is precisely a renunciation of self-worth and sufficiency. Thus, by faith, one participates in Christ, in the reality of the saving event of his crucifixion and resurrection, and one endures a toilsome life because of the future hope of resurrection with him.



## Chapter 5: Galatians 2:15-21

*“Faith is the decisive and most distinctive note of Paul’s spirituality.”*<sup>516</sup>

Paul’s letter to the Galatians has long been at the centre of heated debate on how to understand his gospel. As we discussed in the introduction, three debates have stood out in recent years: on the centre of Pauline theology, on the relation between human and divine agency, and on the interpretation of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ. It is the contention of this thesis that the solution to these debates hinges, in large measure, upon a comprehensive understanding of what Paul means by faith.<sup>517</sup>

To set the stage for the present discussion, we will first present an overview of the works of J. Louis Martyn and Martinus de Boer, both of whom have contributed substantially to scholarship on Galatians. Specifically, these apocalyptic interpreters have underscored the predominance of the Christ-event and thus also a strong theological focus on divine priority. The “divine inbreaking” of God in Christ truly eclipses, even annuls, the significance of all other events. However, one significant lacuna can be found in their exegesis—that is, an absence, avoidance, or even alteration in explicating what Paul means by faith—and this lacuna ultimately contributes to an erroneous understanding of this key Pauline concept. Examining the questions and the misconceptions about faith from these two interpreters will serve as a launching pad for our exploration in Galatians. Then, on the basis of the framework we have established in our exegesis of 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians for elucidating Paul’s understanding of faith, we will test these conclusions to determine their coherence in Galatians. We should then be positioned well to seek clarification to the three aforementioned Pauline debates.

### 1. Recent Apocalyptic Readings of Galatians 2:15-21

#### 1.1 J. Louis Martyn’s Apocalyptic Framework

As apocalyptic interpretation gained ground in Pauline scholarship, it was the

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<sup>516</sup> W. K. Grossouw, *Spirituality of the New Testament*, trans. Martin W. Schoenberg (St. Louis: Herder, 1961), 135.

<sup>517</sup> The order in which we have proceeded with our study is not dependent upon a particular dating of Galatians. In viewing 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, the aim has been simply to get a larger conspectus of the Pauline view of faith before coming to the controversial questions usually discussed in Galatians. For discussions on the various views for dating Galatians see Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 2-18.

letter to Galatians that seemed to challenge the universality of this hermeneutical paradigm in Paul's letters.<sup>518</sup> However, J. Louis Martyn seemed to find the key to unlocking the dominating apocalyptic hermeneutic in this extraordinary, polemical letter. His commentary presents a refreshing innovation, reading much more like a dramatic novel than a technical commentary. Indeed, drama is the very manner after which he seeks to present the letter to Galatians, and with great success he opens the world of this mysterious and irascible letter with fresh and penetrating insights. Martyn is particularly focused on the apocalyptic motif of divine invasion, capitalising on the cosmic elements of the letter. With actors on the stage of a cosmic drama, Paul repeats the phrase "to be under (the power of) something" as one reflection of his conviction that all humans are subject to powers beyond their control.<sup>519</sup> For Martyn, the central question of Galatians is: "What time is it?" His answer is simple and straightforward; it is the time after the "apocalypse of the faith of Christ (3:23-25)." This shorthand phrase is employed to depict an epoch dictated by the cosmic event in Christ which has set forth the pattern of things now being set right by Christ's faith.<sup>520</sup> Martyn understands Paul to follow the understanding of his day that the fundamental building blocks of the world are pairs of opposites.<sup>521</sup> Thus, the structuring framework for his reading of Galatians is a set of mutually reinforcing contrasts: between "new creation" and "cosmos," between "apocalypse" and "religion," between divine grace and human act. For Paul, argues Martyn, "the cosmic antinomy"<sup>522</sup> between religion and the apocalyptic act in Christ is *the* issue of Galatians, marking the end of all forms of opposition among religions.<sup>523</sup> By using the term "religion" to refer to the ways in which humans seek to relate to God or to gods,<sup>524</sup> Martyn depicts religion as a fully human endeavour; thus it is the "polar opposite" of God's apocalyptic act in Christ.<sup>525</sup> This antinomy, which establishes the

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<sup>518</sup> J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 58.

<sup>519</sup> Cf. Gal 3:10, 22, 23, 24-25; 4:2, 3, 4, 5, 21a; 5:18. J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, AB 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 23, 370-73.

<sup>520</sup> "Apocalyptic Antinomies," in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 122.

<sup>521</sup> Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 116-117.

<sup>522</sup> Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies," 115, n.13; *Galatians*, 570-74. Martyn admits to using "antinomy" in an idiosyncratic way to refer to the way the ancients referred to "a pair of opposites that inheres in the *cosmos*." He offers a sample of examples: limited and unlimited, odd and even, unity and plurality, right and left, male and female (p.570, n.79).

<sup>523</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 38.

<sup>524</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 37, n.67.

<sup>525</sup> Cf. comments 10, 13, 43, 48 in Martyn, *Galatians*.

fundamental distinction between acts of humans and acts of God, is the primary driving force behind Martyn's great work, influencing many of his interpretative moves, which we shall see in the following analysis of his work.

### 1.1.1 δικαίω

Central to Martyn's understanding of the theology of Galatians 2:15-21 is the way he interprets δικαίω. Martyn argues that "to rectify" is the better translation of δικαίω because the verb and noun come from one linguistic family,<sup>526</sup> just as the Greek verb and noun do. This eliminates the confusion created by the fact that the English language does not have a corresponding verb to the noun, "righteous." Additionally, the verb, "to rectify," and its corresponding noun, "rectification," take the definition outside of the legal and religious or moral realms, realms that Martyn contends Paul never intended to suggest.<sup>527</sup>

Martyn interprets Paul's understanding of δικαιοσύνη alongside of his reconstruction of a shared Jewish-Christian tradition of rectification and also the false teaching being presented in Galatia.<sup>528</sup> This "Jewish-Christian tradition" of rectification proclaims God's rectification through the death of Jesus, who accomplished the forgiveness of sins for Israel. Significantly, there is no mention of the Law in this rectification tradition because it remains valid and is thus taken for granted. While it does not play a role in rectification, the Law is the context in which God's act of rectification in Christ is understood to play out.<sup>529</sup>

For the most part, the false teachers and Paul are in agreement with the shared Jewish-Christian tradition with one essential difference – their deductions about the role of the Law.<sup>530</sup> For the false teachers, the absence of explicit mention of the Law implies that its ongoing role is taken for granted, thus they teach continued observance of it. For Paul, on the other hand, this silence in fact indicates that humans are not rectified by observance of the Law. Martyn notes: "Silent with regard to the Law, this Jewish-Christian tradition is eloquent with regard to Christ; and Paul is as sensitive to the eloquence as he is to the silence. ... he now hears God's voice formulating a new antinomy that links the verb 'to be rectified' both to a negative

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<sup>526</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 250.

<sup>527</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 250.

<sup>528</sup> For the points that Martyn pulls out from these verses about this Jewish-Christian tradition, see *Galatians*, 264–69.

<sup>529</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 267–68.

<sup>530</sup> Martyn finds remnants of this shared Jewish-Christian tradition in Paul's writings (Romans 3:25, 4:35, and 1 Corinthians 6:11).

statement and to a positive one.”<sup>531</sup> Thus, Paul emphatically articulates this antithesis to the Galatians: a human is “not rectified by observance of the Law,” “but rather by *pistis Christou Iêsou*.”<sup>532</sup> In this way, rectification is understood simply and distinctively as an act of God by which *he makes right what has gone wrong*.

While Galatians 2:16-21 offers five references to rectification, Martyn notes that Paul only refers to its source without giving a clear definition of what rectification is. The real meaning of rectification, Martyn avers, is found in Galatians 3:6–4:7 where Paul presents additional actors in God’s great drama; in addition to humans, Christ, and God, Paul introduces anti-God powers.<sup>533</sup> Now the real need is depicted to be deliverance in the cosmic battlefield.<sup>534</sup> Specifically, humans need deliverance from the slavery that includes the Law. The language of deliverance then notes a shift from the teachers’ forensic apocalyptic theology to his own cosmological apocalyptic theology. This shift had already been alluded to in Galatians 1:4b when Paul changes the frame of reference from that of Christ giving his life for believers’ sins to an apocalyptic deliverance from the grip of the present evil age.<sup>535</sup>

### 1.1.2 ἔργα νόμου

With Martyn’s definition of δικαιοῶ in view, we look to the two features of the famous Pauline antithesis: ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Χριστοῦ. Taking the first, ἔργα νόμου, Martyn states that it simply refers to observance of God’s Law.<sup>536</sup> He offers Exodus 18:20 as a parallel from the Septuagint. Here Jethro counsels Moses: καὶ διαμαρτυρῆ αὐτοῖς τὰ προστάγματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸν νόμον αὐτοῦ καὶ σημανεῖς αὐτοῖς τὰς ὁδοὺς, ἐν αἷς πορεύσονται ἐν αὐταῖς, καὶ τὰ ἔργα, ἃ ποιήσουσιν (Ex 18:20 LXX). Martyn understands the three phrases, τὸν νόμον αὐτοῦ, ἐν αἷς πορεύσονται ἐν αὐταῖς, and τὰ ἔργα, ἃ ποιήσουσιν, to be equivalents of one another: “To be taught God’s Law is to know the way in which one is to walk, and that, in turn, is to know the works (*erga*) one is to do.”<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 270.

<sup>532</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 270. See § 2.2.3 for discussion on the interpretation of this highly contested phrase.

<sup>533</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 272.

<sup>534</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 272–73.

<sup>535</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 273.

<sup>536</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 261. Martyn understands the Hebrew equivalent in the Dead Sea Scrolls to have the same meaning. See §2.2.2 for brief interaction with other interpretations of the phrase in the DSS.

<sup>537</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 261.

Martyn speculates that the Galatians would not have heard the phrase prior to their interaction with the false teachers. Thus they assumed when it was newly introduced to them that observance of the Law was a positive contribution to what they had received from Paul.<sup>538</sup> His emotive letter, then, would have been received with a shock as Paul criticises Law observance as a “merely human enterprise” while denying that it is “God’s elected means of setting things right, of supplying the Spirit, and of effecting wonders.”<sup>539</sup> This brings Martyn back to his primary concern of underscoring the “cosmic antinomy” between religion and the apocalyptic act in Christ; his interpretation of ἔργα νόμου emphasises Law observance as merely a human act, whereas πίστις Χριστοῦ is a deed of God.<sup>540</sup>

### 1.1.3 πίστις Χριστοῦ

As we have just noted, the idea of this cosmic antinomy drives Martyn’s exegesis of Galatians, and this moves him to challenge the traditional reading of the antithesis as two alternative human modes of existence, faith or works, as the right path to God. Rather than understanding Paul to have set one human alternative against another, Martyn avers that human acts, specifically observance of the Law, are juxtaposed with acts done by God through the faith of Christ (cf. 1:1; 6:15).<sup>541</sup> By God’s liberating invasion through Christ there are now two different worlds, an old world from which believers have been separated, and the new creation (Gal 6:14b-15).<sup>542</sup>

An essential component of Martyn’s argument is his classification of the infamously difficult genitive construction, πίστις Χριστοῦ, as an authorial genitive,<sup>543</sup> by which he means: “Christ accomplishes faith, in that he communicates himself.... And then he remains active behind our faith, so that the redeeming power of faith lies in the fact that the living Christ is both the one who originates it and the one who consistently carries it along.”<sup>544</sup> πίστις Χριστοῦ, Martyn avers, arises as Paul’s way of

<sup>538</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 262.

<sup>539</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 263.

<sup>540</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 251.

<sup>541</sup> J. L. Martyn, “The Apocalyptic Gospel in Galatians,” *Interpretation*, 2000, 250.

<sup>542</sup> Martyn, “Apocalyptic Antinomies,” 114.

<sup>543</sup> Martyn’s authorial genitive interpretation is essentially related to the subjective genitive reading.

<sup>544</sup> J. Louis Martyn, “God’s Way of Making Right What is Wrong,” in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 122.150, n.16. Martyn follows Haussleiter for this definition, who writes: “Christus wirkt den Glauben, indem er sich mitteilt .... Und nun bleibt er wirksam hinter dem Glauben stehen, dessen rettende Kraft darin liegt, dass der lebendige Christus wie sein Urheber, so sein Träger ist”; Johannes Haussleiter, “Was Versteht Paulus unter christlichem

reflecting Christ's role in God's deed of rectification.<sup>545</sup> Christ is understood to be the exemplar of human faith and thus the author and enabler of human faith. Martyn concludes that the antithesis that Paul presents in Galatians 2:16 is whether God has chosen to make things right through human observance of the Law or the "faith of Christ." In other words, the antithesis is between human works and the divine apocalyptic event in Christ.

Martyn finds support for his subjective genitive rendering of πίστις Χριστοῦ in a comparison of Galatians 2:16 with 2:21, the two verses that function as the beginning and end of Paul's first "rectification" passage. For Martyn, Galatians 2:21 represents a return to the vocabulary of verse 16, that is, to the antinomy of God's rectification through Christ's faithful death instead of rectification through the Law. Martyn claims that his authorial genitive interpretation is firmly supported by a comparison of Galatians 2:16 with 2:21. Both are succinct references to God's act of rectification, and both are antinomous in form. Thus, Martyn understands πίστις Χριστοῦ to be an expression Paul uses to refer to "Christ's atoning faithfulness, as, on the cross, he died faithfully for human beings while looking faithfully to God."<sup>546</sup> The result of this interpretation is crucial to Martyn's understanding of Galatians and to the whole of Paul's theology. Specifically, there is no prior condition for humans. Rectification is not God's response to human acts of faith in Christ any more than it might be a response to human observance of the Law. He writes: "God's rectification is not God's response at all. It is the *first* move; it is God's initiative, carried out by him in Christ's faithful death."<sup>547</sup> The antinomy of 2:16 then is not one human alternative set against another, but rather an act of God set against a human act.

#### 1.1.4 Human Faith

In Martyn's authorial genitive interpretation, the human being is displaced as the subject of the faith in the πίστις Χριστοῦ construction. The question then remains: Is there any level at which human faith operates within Paul's letter to the Galatians? Martyn does concede to some level of human trust,<sup>548</sup> but swiftly relegates it to a

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Glauben? Eine Untersuchung der Formel πίστις Χριστοῦ," in *Greifswalder Studien: Theologische Abhandlungen*, ed. Hermann Cremer (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1895), 159–82, cf. pp 77–78.

<sup>545</sup> Martyn, "God's Way," 150.

<sup>546</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

<sup>547</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

<sup>548</sup> Martyn notes that the use of the verb πιστεῦω in 2:16 with the preposition εἰς plus a name in the accusative case is taken to mean "believe in someone," in the sense of placing trust in that person (Martyn, *Galatians*, 252). Martyn frequently opts for the translation "trust" when addressing human

secondary role after Christ's faithful death.<sup>549</sup> This relegation has had the unfortunate effect of obfuscating human faith. Instead of a thorough exegetical analysis, Martyn depicts three "accents" that Paul has in mind when he speaks of human faith. First, the placing of trust is a human deed that involves obedience and hope.<sup>550</sup> Secondly, Martyn clarifies that trust is also more than a human act. Christ's faith precedes human faith and is causative of it. Again he asserts that "Paul is serious when he allows human beings to be the subject of the verb 'to place one's trust,'" and those who believe are not puppets.<sup>551</sup> Yet, equally important for Martyn is that faith does not arise as an act of one's autonomous will or decision. Thirdly, he places stress on the fact that trust is directed toward God, who is active in the gospel.<sup>552</sup> Essentially, Martyn argues that everything that can be said about humans is understood as having already been said about God in Christ.

Turning back to Galatians 2:16, the unambiguous reference to human faith, ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, is followed by a purpose clause that effectively points back again to the source of faith: "in order that the source of our rectification might be the faith of Christ and not observance of the Law."<sup>553</sup> Thus, Martyn is deliberate about underscoring divine agency. Human faith is circumscribed by the divine act of deliverance in Christ's death.

### 1.1.5 Critique of Martyn

In analysing Martyn's reading of Galatians 2:16, there is much to be commended and much to preserve. The Christological emphasis of his apocalyptic interpretation must remain the primary focus in any reading of Galatians. However, his work is subject to two fundamental points of critique. First, Martyn's framing of the antithesis of 2:16 in terms of agency is debatable. On Martyn's reading, the antithesis as it is presented in 2:16 is a divine act set against a human act: justification is either the result of πίστις Χριστοῦ (divine) or ἔργα νόμου (human). This interpretative move flows from his conviction of the centrality of the antinomy of

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πίστις or πιστεῖω, although he assumes a "fluidity of reference" between faith, trust, and belief in the three occurrences of the verb in Galatians (Martyn, *Galatians*, 275).

<sup>549</sup> Martyn, "God's Way," 151. He does acknowledge that although secondary, it is "no less significant" (*Galatians*, 252).

<sup>550</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 275.

<sup>551</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 276.

<sup>552</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 276–77.

<sup>553</sup> Martyn, "God's Way," 151.

apocalypse and religion in Galatians.<sup>554</sup> What happens in his exegesis, then, is that the themes are subjugated to fit with this broader reading. One chief example of this is the way he applies this “central” antinomy in interpreting δικαιοῦ. By defining δικαιοῦ as rectification, or making things right, Martyn slants the discussion in his favour so that the ἐκ and διὰ from 2:16 are taken in an instrumental sense. Thus the resulting question becomes: how does God rectify the world? With the question posed in this way, any answer involving human faith must be rejected on the basis that it would give faith the instrumental role in “rectification.” Thus, the way in which he frames the antithesis suggests a kind of contest between divine and human agency.

Construing agency as the primary issue in the antinomy is rather dubious. As Matlock has observed, if such a contrast between human and divine agency were intended here, why did Paul not articulate the antithesis in terms of ἔργον Χριστοῦ and ἔργα νόμου?<sup>555</sup> Certainly, this antinomy underlies the whole letter as has been helpfully clarified in Martyn’s reading of key verses such as 1:4, 12. Although foundational to Paul’s antithetical declaration, it is not necessarily the distinctive emphasis of the antithesis. Below we will offer an alternative interpretation of both δικαιοῦ and ἔργα νόμου that results in a better reading of Paul’s central antithesis in Galatians 2:16. For now, we simply call in to question the interpretative lenses through which Martyn chooses to portray these elements of the antithesis.

As a second point of critique, Martyn’s authorial genitive interpretation of the highly contested phrase διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ also seems to arise primarily from this theological concern that divine agency takes priority over human agency. However, as we have seen, this theological concern has already been validated in the surrounding context. It does not logically follow that πίστις Χριστοῦ is an expression referring to Christ’s faith.

Martyn primarily relies on the foundation laid by Hays in adopting his authorial genitive reading but provides two additional observations.<sup>556</sup> The first observation relies on his re-identification of traditional justification language with his preference for rectification. His interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ specifically refers to God’s rectifying act, or making things right, *in Christ*.<sup>557</sup> As noted before, Martyn

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<sup>554</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 39.

<sup>555</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 12.

<sup>556</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*. Hays will be interacted with briefly later in this chapter and in more depth in chapter six.

<sup>557</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 270.



frames his language of rectification such that a conclusion of this sort becomes necessary. Yet, this is not the obvious, nor the only, interpretative option. Secondly, he observes a correspondence between Galatians 2:16 and 2:21 such that Paul is referring to an opposition between rectification by Law observance and rectification by the deed of God in Christ. On this basis, Martyn contends that πίστις Χριστοῦ is an expression by which Paul speaks of Christ's atoning faithfulness.<sup>558</sup>

In the first of his two observations regarding the authorial genitive reading, Martyn has simply restated this theologoumenon rather than offering a rigorous exegetical case to support it. In our exegesis below, we will demonstrate a close analysis of the structure of Galatians 2:16, something that Martyn neglects, to support the objective genitive reading.

In his second observation, Martyn has rightly noted that God's justification is accomplished through Christ. However, such a reading does not delimit the interpretation of πίστις Χριστοῦ solely to the authorial genitive construction.<sup>559</sup> It must be reiterated that Martyn's emphasis on the priority of God's act and a Christological focus is absolutely fundamental to an accurate reading of the letter in general and of the phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ in particular. However, it does not follow that interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ as an objective genitive renders an anthropocentric reading. As we have repeatedly seen in our exegesis thus far, human faith in Christ is an expression of dependence and thus absolutely Christologically focused. Human faith is a sign of one's recognition of the priority and effectiveness of the Christ-event. Thus, πίστις Χριστοῦ can refer to human dependence on the salvation accomplished in Christ. Πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to that salvation in Christ but does not re-express it.

## *1.2 Martinus de Boer's Apocalyptic Framework*

### **1.2.1 δικαίω**

Martinus de Boer has followed the apocalyptic interpretation of his mentor, J. Louis Martyn, whereby God has initiated the eschatological act of cosmic rectification in the person and work of Christ that will reach its culmination in Christ's Parousia.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 271.

<sup>559</sup> Moreover, this interpretation does not imply that justification is rooted in Christ's faith. Rather, God's act in Christ is focused on his atoning death. This point will be more fully defended below.

<sup>560</sup> Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 34.

De Boer takes Galatians 1:11-12 as Paul's thesis statement for the letter: Γνωρίζω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου παρέλαβον αὐτὸ οὔτε ἐδιδάχθην, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In the same vein as Martyn, de Boer asserts that two aspects of the gospel are exemplified in these verses: "its origin in God and its divine truth."<sup>561</sup> This thesis concerning the gospel is summarised, according to de Boer, in five additional passages in Galatians, the first of which occurs in 2:15-16. De Boer understands Paul to be citing known and shared traditions in verse 16a.<sup>562</sup> The *forensic-eschatological* meaning of δικαιοῶ, "to justify, declare right, vindicate, approve," is attributed to the new teachers in Galatia.<sup>563</sup> However, and perhaps more significantly, de Boer suggests that Paul understands the word to acquire an additional *cosmological-eschatological* nuance, "to rectify," make right, put straight.<sup>564</sup> In this way, Paul separates "justification" from law observance and attaches it exclusively to Christ.<sup>565</sup> Thus, similarly to Martyn, de Boer concludes: "God's justifying act is interpreted by Paul as God's act of cosmic rectification involving a 'rescue from the present evil age' (1:4), liberation from the malevolent cosmic powers that hold sway there (3:13, 22-23; 4:3-5; 5:1, 16-24)."<sup>566</sup> The problem Paul addresses is not so much *sins* humans commit against God, but *Sin* as a "malevolent enslaving and godlike power" to which all humans are in bondage.<sup>567</sup> Paul can still speak of sins (1:4), but these are not the actions of autonomous humans but rather of slaves who are serving their master, Sin.

### 1.2.2 ἔργα νόμου

De Boer, like Martyn, understands the phrase ἔργα νόμου to refer to observance of the Law, to doing the specific deeds that it requires. In this reading, De Boer puts forth two points of clarification. First, he addresses the issue of legalism, identifying three forms: 1) the Law is observed in order to achieve salvation; 2) the Law is observed in such a way as to lead to self-righteousness; 3) the Law is observed

<sup>561</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 16.

<sup>562</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 143.

<sup>563</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 34.

<sup>564</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 34. Martyn indicates that the two ideas contrast.

<sup>565</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 155. De Boer also prefers "rectification," being made right, as the best translation of δικαιοῶ. However, he retains the term "justification" in his commentary to indicate "that the meaning Paul attaches to the term is not inherent in the term itself but is a consequence of the argumentative and theological contexts in which he places and uses it" (166).

<sup>566</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 35.

<sup>567</sup> Cf. Gal 3:22; De Boer, *Galatians*, 35.

in a purely formal and external way. De Boer distinctively concludes that there is no evidence that legalism of any form is the issue in Galatians.<sup>568</sup> Secondly, de Boer addresses the view that Paul has only select laws in mind when he rejects ἔργα νόμου. In this discussion, de Boer notes two primary variations: 1) Paul rejects the cultic, ceremonial portions of the law, such as circumcision and food laws, but embraces the moral law; or 2) Paul rejects the portions of the law that distinguish Jews from Gentiles (e.g., circumcision, food laws, and special feast days).<sup>569</sup> In this view, works of the Law are the “badges” of Jewish identity.<sup>570</sup> De Boer rejects the notion that Paul is only referring to specific laws because, in Galatians 5:3, Paul warns the Galatians that everyone who practises circumcision is “obligated to do the whole law.”<sup>571</sup> Furthermore, in 4:5, Paul asserts that those to whom Christ was sent to redeem were “under the Law,” not under some portion of it.<sup>572</sup> Thus, “works of the Law,” in de Boer’s reading of Paul, refers to any and all deeds commanded by the Law.

### 1.2.3 πίστις Χριστοῦ

For de Boer, πίστις Χριστοῦ is the interpretative crux in Galatians 2:16.<sup>573</sup> De Boer gives the interpretation of the highly debated genitive construction a fuller treatment than does Martyn. In favour of the subjective genitive reading, de Boer suggests that 2:16a should be read in light of 3:22ff. The two verses include the same phrase: πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Yet in the verses following, 3:23-25, Paul speaks of “Faith” in a personified way, which de Boer suggests represents a virtual synonym for Christ (3:24): “Faith ‘came’ onto the world stage at a certain juncture in time (3:23, 25), as Christ himself did (3:19).”<sup>574</sup> De Boer claims that faith is not here “an intrinsic human possibility nor even a human activity.” Rather, faith is a metonym for Christ: “‘faith’ is something that belongs to or defines Christ himself.”<sup>575</sup> In light of this context in chapter three, de Boer is convinced that the phrase ought to be similarly understood in 2:16.

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<sup>568</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 147. Note that he leaves aside the question of whether this conclusion also counts for Romans.

<sup>569</sup> Cf. especially James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (London: SPCK, 1990), 191–96.

<sup>570</sup> Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 194, 220–24.

<sup>571</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 147, 312.

<sup>572</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 148.

<sup>573</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 139.

<sup>574</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 149.

<sup>575</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 149.

De Boer finds additional support for his subjective genitive reading in Romans 4:16: πίστις Ἀβραάμ is seen as a parallel construction to πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. πίστις Ἀβραάμ “undoubtedly” means “the faith of Abraham,” supporting a similar interpretation for πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>576</sup> Secondly, in Galatians 1:1 and 1:11-12, Paul posits an antinomy between human activity and God’s action in Christ and thus probably also in 2:16. Thirdly, in Romans 1:5, Paul describes faith as obedience and in Romans 5:19 he refers to “the obedience” of Christ, which can also be described as his πίστις. De Boer suggests this to be the case in Romans 1:17, which he translates: “from [Christ’s] faith to [our] faith.”<sup>577</sup> Fourthly, the parallel of Galatians 2:16 with Galatians 2:21 indicates that πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ must refer to Christ’s death. De Boer clarifies that Christ’s πίστις does not refer so much to a “subjective attitude on the part of Christ as to an objective event: his atoning death on a cross.”<sup>578</sup> After this wide-ranging analysis, de Boer concludes that it is highly probable that πίστις Χριστοῦ is a “summary description of Christ’s faithful death.”<sup>579</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Human Faith

While Martyn is to be commended for at least conceding that there is a Pauline conception of human faith, it is perhaps the lacuna in his interpretation of it that has allowed for the more thoroughgoing interpretation adopted by his student, Martinus de Boer. De Boer takes the conclusions of Martyn to their logical next step, eliminating (almost) entirely the role of human faith. In de Boer’s analysis, every occurrence of πίστις in Galatians refers to the faith of Christ himself.<sup>580</sup> When addressing the verbal construction in 2:16, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, he concedes that the sense here is trust or reliance upon Jesus.<sup>581</sup> Even if we were to accept de Boer’s argument that the three phrases ἔργα νόμου, πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, and δικαιοῦ are formulae that Paul adopted, we may assume that this unambiguous verbal reference to human faith is clearly a Pauline concept. Nonetheless, de Boer relegates any significance of a human subject of faith since the verb occurs only three times in the letter (2:16; 3:6, 22).

<sup>576</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 149

<sup>577</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 150.

<sup>578</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 150.

<sup>579</sup> Here de Boer adopts Hays’s referential meaning. Cf. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 287; De Boer, *Galatians*, 150.

<sup>580</sup> De Boer lists Gal 5:22 as the only exception (192).

<sup>581</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 142.

Outside of Galatians, de Boer reads Paul as sometimes employing πίστις in reference to human subjects believing in Christ (e.g., Rom 1:5). However, in Galatians, de Boer argues, “Paul appears to use the term πίστις consistently as shorthand for πίστις Χριστοῦ.”<sup>582</sup> He concludes then: “The primary *referential meaning of πίστις* in Galatians, therefore, is (apart from 5:22) always the faith of Christ himself: his faithful death on the cross, not human faith in Christ, which is but a secondary, subordinate implication of the phrase.”<sup>583</sup> De Boer understands Paul to use the verb, not the noun, in Galatians, to refer to human faith, and this he employs sparingly (2:16; 3:6, 22). De Boer’s conclusion is that humans who do believe in Christ are justified “not on the basis of their own believing response but ‘on the basis of [*ek*] the faith of Christ.’”<sup>584</sup>

### 1.2.5 Critique of de Boer

For de Boer, like Martyn, divine priority is the primary point of focus in the Pauline doctrine of justification and thus in the interpretation of the antithesis. While he does allow for a *forensic*-eschatological meaning of δικαιόω, his interpretation emphasises the *cosmological*-eschatological nuance in which God’s justifying act of cosmic rectification rescues humans from the powers of the present evil age. Because he sees the problem as a malevolent force of Sin, rather than individual acts of sin by humans, it is misleading to speak of “justification *by* works” or “justification *by* faith,”<sup>585</sup> as if the human effects justification by one or the other. Rather, justification is an act of God accomplished through Christ’s saving death. Certainly, divine priority is the essential basis of Paul’s theology. However, de Boer, in a similar manner to Martyn, presents a revisionist interpretation of justification. Justification has historically been understood to involve the judgment of a holy God in a context of culpable sinners. While de Boer concedes that there is a forensic sense, he sidelines its significance and fails to adequately address the role of human sins, a problem that Paul presents in conjunction with the plight of humanity’s slavery to malevolent cosmic forces (1:4). Indeed, de Boer’s interpretation requires more substantial evidence than he provides for the idea that Paul may be employing a common verb in a unique way.

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<sup>582</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 192.

<sup>583</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 192

<sup>584</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 192.

<sup>585</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 151.

While de Boer provides a more comprehensive exegesis in his treatment of πίστις Χριστοῦ than Martyn, he makes some questionable interpretative moves. First, to claim synonymy between πίστις and Christ on the basis of such a common verb as ἐλθεῖν is dubious (3:23–25). Using πίστις in a personified way does not necessarily suggest it should be personified as Christ. Paul utilises personification in a variety of ways (e.g., σάρξ, σῶμα.). In some instances these are closely related to Christ but do not refer to Christ himself (e.g., σῶμα). More support must be provided before applying metaphor or personification to Christ. Additionally, De Boer attempts to minimise the significance of Paul’s presentation of a human subject of faith in 2:16 based on the fact the verb occurs only three times in the letter (2:16; 3:6, 22). Yet, frequency alone cannot be determinative of significance. Each citation is highly significant, and if combined with a proper understanding of the noun, that significance is intensified. To assert that faith is not an intrinsic human possibility does not indicate that faith is not a human activity in any respect. Indeed, as has been argued, faith is the human mode of dependence which has been enabled by Christ.

De Boer is correct to highlight the divine/human antinomy that Paul sets up as being foundational to the logic of the letter. However, his application of this antinomy is subject to critique. First, presenting one example in which πίστις is used with a clear subjective genitive is not sufficient enough to be determinative of all πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations. We could offer the counter example of Mark 11:22: ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. It is unlikely anyone could take this to mean, “Have (the) faith of God.”<sup>586</sup> Secondly, that there is an antinomy presented in Galatians 1 that holds throughout the letter does not lead to interpreting the specific πίστις Χριστοῦ construction in Galatians 2:16 as a subjective genitive. Grammar, context, and lexical semantics must be given appropriate weight in determining the best interpretation of the difficult phrase. As to de Boer’s third point, Paul does speak of Christ’s obedience (ὑπακοή) in two critical passages (Rom 5:19, Phil 2:8). It is true that some overlap can be observed between the concept of ὑπακοή and πίστις. However, one wonders why Paul did not opt to employ πίστις in either of these two paradigmatic passages if he has more broadly intended it as a metonym for Christ’s faithfulness, as de Boer and other subjective genitive proponents claim. In Philippians 2, one may argue that Paul did not employ πίστις because he was citing a pre-Pauline hymn. Yet, the Romans 5

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<sup>586</sup> Cf. Acts 3:16; Rom 10:2; Phil 3:8-9; 2 Thess 2:13.

passage, which is central to apocalyptic interpretation, would then prove anomalous in that Paul does not use πίστις here to speak of Christ's faithful atoning death. Finally, de Boer makes a broad leap in his portrayal of a parallel between 2:16 and 2:21. Indeed, Christ's atoning death is the basis of justification. Yet, his atoning death is not the same thing as πίστις. The story of Christ's atoning death and resurrection is inherent in the very mention of Christ and is relevant as the basis for faith; it is at that level that the parallel can be observed between 2:16 and 2:21.

As we have seen in both Martyn and de Boer, the absence of a full exposition of the Pauline concept of faith has created a circular pattern of reasoning to support their conception of Christological priority. Yet, it is evident that neither can fully eliminate human faith.

## **2. Exegesis of Galatians 2:15-18**

Having just explored two influential readings of Galatians, we will now proceed to offer a reading of Galatians 2:15–18 with special attention to our key question of what Paul means by faith. Perhaps filling this lacuna from Martyn and de Boer's readings will offer fresh insight into the heart of Paul's theology.

### *2.1 Context*

Before we work through the key terms and concepts, some attention to the context surrounding Galatians 2:15-18 is in order. Establishing the background of Galatians has been no simple task for interpreters in the letter's reception history. The letter begins in a rather explosive manner unseen in any other Pauline epistle. The precise circumstances that served as the impetus for Paul's response are unknown. Yet, enough clues are given to provide a basic framework for this epistle. Paul is writing to a group of primarily Gentile Christians (4:8) who have encountered "false teachers" who are presenting a distorted version of the gospel (1:6-9). Paul is clear that these false teachers have hindered the Galatians from obeying the truth (5:7). They desire to make a "good showing in the flesh" to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ (6:12). Though the specific references to those who are disturbing the

Galatians are disparate, it is clear enough that Torah-observance is their prescription for holy living, with a strong emphasis on circumcision.<sup>587</sup>

## 2.2 Exegesis of 2:16

### 2.2.1 δικαίω

As we noted in the introduction and in our reading of Martyn and de Boer, Paul's soteriology has often been delineated in two separate realms, one juristic and the other participatory. Indeed, many interpreters have subsumed the role of justification under the theme of participation.<sup>588</sup> However, there is reason enough to understand the two as being held together. Indeed, Galatians 2:15-21 presents an excellent framework from which to view the union of justification and participation. To begin, it will be helpful to analyse the sense in which δικαίω would have been understood to Paul's readers.

In support of a juristic sense to the δικ- word group, Stuhlmacher has restated what has been taken for granted for many generations of Biblical scholarship: "If we wish to understand the Pauline doctrine of justification, we must first consider that justification involves an act of judgment."<sup>589</sup> Inquiry within the standard lexicons and theological dictionaries affirms a legal realm as the basis for understanding the δικ- word group.<sup>590</sup> For example, BDAG lists the first definition as: "to take up a legal cause, show justice, do justice, take up a cause."<sup>591</sup> This view of justification follows upon an understanding of the human plight of sin and guilt. In this way, δικαίω is understood to mean: "to find righteous, or innocent of wrongdoing." It can have the sense of "acquit" or "clearing of a charge of wrongdoing."<sup>592</sup>

This forensic aspect of justification is clearly illustrated in the Septuagint in passages such as Zechariah 14, Joel 3, and the Isaiah Apocalypse (Is 24-27), which show that Israel and the nations will face a final judgment of God's wrath. Knowledge

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<sup>587</sup> The full list of references to the false teachers in Galatia is: 1:6-9; 3:1-2, 5; 4:17; 5:7-12; 6:12-14.

<sup>588</sup> Cf. chapter 1 § 2.

Douglas A. Campbell has developed a lengthy argument against "Justification Theory," which holds to a God of retributive justice, while developing a "rhetorical and apocalyptic rereading" of justification that he refers to as pneumatologically participatory martyrological eschatology. *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); *The Quest for Paul's Gospel: A Suggested Strategy* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

<sup>589</sup> Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 2001), 14.

<sup>590</sup> Including δικαίω, δίκη, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, δικαιοκρισία.

<sup>591</sup> BDAG, δικαίω, 2005.

<sup>592</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 261–84; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 375–78.



of such judgment served to comfort the nation of Israel in the midst of her afflictions, for through this judgment, “He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth” (Is 25:8). Only the righteous who keep faith will receive salvation (Is 26:1-2). In these passages, the forensic sense of δικαίω from the LXX translation corresponds to the causative hiphil form of the Hebrew קָדַשׁ. TWOT defines the root to “connote conformity to an ethical or moral standard.”<sup>593</sup> In the LXX, the verb is used primarily in the positive sense of “to pronounce righteous,” “to justify,” “to vindicate.”<sup>594</sup> Israel, as well as the Gentile nations, will face an end-time judgment, and only those who are considered righteous by God will be saved from his wrath.

In the New Testament, δικαίω is likewise usually depicted with some legal connotation, revealing the influence of the LXX.<sup>595</sup> Often this is represented with the basic sense of wanting to be considered in the right. For example, in Matthew 11:19, wisdom is justified by her deeds: ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς.<sup>596</sup> In Luke 10:29, the lawyer asking what he must do to merit eternal life is said to want to justify himself: ὁ δὲ θέλων δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν.

Paul’s letters retain this legal sense, evidenced in the way that righteousness is frequently contrasted with sin.<sup>597</sup> Righteousness is conveyed in terms of doing what is right, as is most evident in Romans 1:16-32 where Paul writes that God’s wrath is revealed against all of humanity’s unrighteousness. This unrighteousness causes humanity to suppress the truth about God and thus act rebelliously against him. Westerholm summarises this passage well: “Such obligations are clearly not a matter of living up to some abstract ideal of rightness; rather, they amount to living in recognition of and in harmony with the reality of creation’s God-given order and of

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<sup>593</sup> TWOT 1879. Snaith confirms this understanding, asserting that the original significance of the root of קָדַשׁ was “to be straight.” Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1947), 73.

<sup>594</sup> TDNT, 212.

<sup>595</sup> Geoffrey William Bromiley et al., eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 214.

<sup>596</sup> Cf. Luke 7:35.

<sup>597</sup> For example, he writes in Romans 3:9 that all are under sin, both Jews and Greeks: Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως· προητiasάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι. This is immediately paralleled with his citation of Ecclesiastes 7:20 in Romans 3:10 that none are righteous: καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς. Sin offends God, who is Judge of the world (Rom 3:6). The contrasts between sin and righteousness continue through 3:10-20, as Paul strings together various citations from the Septuagint that support his point that all are under sin (Rom 3:9). Cf. Gal 3:22.

one's place within it."<sup>598</sup> Indeed, Paul is explicit that humans are born into a world that has a divine order; righteous living accords with that divine order and unrighteous living is that which rebels against it. Thus, God's wrath is poured out against all unrighteousness (1:18), and humans are subject to his judgment (Rom 2:5; 3:5-10). Paul's letter to the Romans makes it clear that human beings are *moral* beings who are required to do good and refrain from evil. Westerholm writes: "God holds humans responsible for their actions and judges them accordingly.... Sin represents a departure from what ought to be done (Rom. 1:20, 32; 3:19)."<sup>599</sup> Because of this sin, the world is accountable to a just God (Rom 3:19) who offers redemption as a gift of grace through Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21-26).

Westerholm classifies this conception of righteousness as "ordinary righteousness."<sup>600</sup> Yet, Paul has explicitly stated that all humans are guilty before God (Rom 3:9-23) and therefore "achievement" of this ordinary righteousness is deemed impossible. Thus, Paul goes beyond this concept of "ordinary righteousness" to preach of what Westerholm refers to as "extraordinary righteousness" that is available in Christ. This is evident in Romans 5:7-8 where the logical human disposition is stated in verse 7: μόλις γὰρ ὑπὲρ δικαίου τις ἀποθανεῖται· ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τάχα τις καὶ τολμᾷ ἀποθανεῖν. What follows is one of the most significant rebuttals in Scripture: συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός, ὅτι ἔτι ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν (Rom 5:8).

For Westerholm, the necessary point of connection between Paul's extraordinary and ordinary uses of the δικ- word group is found in the verb which means "treat as one ought to treat the dikaios," "acquit."<sup>601</sup> This meaning takes it beyond the level of rectitude and into the realm of acquittal of the sinful. He summarises his point thus: "we may speak of acquitting (δικαιοῦν) the wicked, thereby granting them the gift of acquittal (δικαιοσύνη) and thus making them the acquitted (δίκαιοι)."<sup>602</sup>

Yet, is this extraordinary righteousness a miscarriage of justice? Several passages in the Septuagint make plain that it is wrong to justify the ungodly (e.g., Ex 23:7; Isa 5:23; Deut 25:1; Sir 9:12). However, Romans 3:24-26 states that God's

<sup>598</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 266.

<sup>599</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 283.

<sup>600</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 263–273.

<sup>601</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 276–77.

<sup>602</sup> Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 277.

justifying of sinners is, in fact, a demonstration of his divine righteousness (Rom 3:24-26).<sup>603</sup> In Romans 3, God's exculpating guilty sinners is not a miscarriage of justice precisely because of the vicarious atoning death of Christ.<sup>604</sup> Jesus became the ἱλαστήριον which links his death and God's righteousness to the Day of Atonement tradition of Leviticus 16.<sup>605</sup>

The result of Christ's atoning death is that there are now two realms of existence: the realm of existing in Adam's sin and the realm of grace in Christ Jesus (Rom 5). In the first, humans stand in condemnation; in the latter, humans are given righteousness in Christ (Rom 5:21). Romans 6 then expounds on the way this righteousness and eternal life through Christ in fact reign in believers. Having been baptised in his death (Rom 6:3), believers experience the crucifixion of the old self that existed in a body of sin, ending their slavery to sin (Rom 6:6-7).<sup>606</sup>

In view of this brief exploration in Romans we observe that righteousness has both legal and participatory components, and thus it is unnecessary to draw a sharp distinction between the two. Stuhlmacher aptly notes: "Believers in Jesus Christ already participate in Jesus' death and new life through their baptism, but they remain filled with the hope of righteousness because they walk not by sight, but at first only by faith."<sup>607</sup> Righteousness is absolutely a gift to believers through the vicarious atoning death of Jesus,<sup>608</sup> appropriated and experienced by virtue of believers being in Christ: εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ (2:17).<sup>609</sup>

Returning to Galatians, we note that 2:16 is the first time Paul employs the δικ-word group in this letter. Yet, Paul has ushered in this axiomatic contrast of righteousness and works of the Law with the preceding context; the issues he addresses, circumcision and food laws,<sup>610</sup> are precisely the issues that a first-century

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<sup>603</sup> Romans 3:26 is one of seven references in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate which will be treated in more detail in § 2.2.3.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 274. See also Otfried Hofius for a defence of the idea that justification of the ungodly was a theme already present in the Old Testament ("Rechtfertigung des Gottlosen" als Thema biblischer Theologie," in *Paulusstudien*, WUNT 51 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 121–47).

<sup>605</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*, 22. Cf. 2 Cor 5:21.

<sup>606</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21 presents this identification with the dual implication that as Christ became sin on behalf of humans, believers become the righteousness of God in Christ. Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:30. Hooker refers to this as "interchange." Hooker, "Interchange in Christ," 13–25.

<sup>607</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting*, 29–30.

<sup>608</sup> Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 3:25-26.

<sup>609</sup> See § 2.3 below for more discussion on Gal 2:17.

<sup>610</sup> In Galatians 4:10-11, Paul will also speak of observing "special days, and months, and seasons, and years."

Jew would consider to be matters of righteousness. From the outset of the letter, Paul has contrasted the true gospel with the false one (1:6-9). Paul provides the background information that James, Cephas, and John verified this circumcision-free gospel (2:1-10). Paul also relays his confrontation of Peter’s hypocrisy for not eating with Gentiles, behaviour that is not consistent with the truth of the gospel (2:14). Then, importantly, he mentions sinners, ἁμαρτωλοί (Gal 2:15, 17), before and in the midst of his ardent reiteration of how one is justified. When Paul introduces the verb δικαίω in 2:16, it is in the passive voice. Thus the question addressed in this verse is: on what basis is someone considered δίκαιος?<sup>611</sup> In answer to this question, Paul asserts that one is considered righteous on the basis of πίστις Χριστοῦ and not on the basis of ἔργα νόμου.

### 2.2.2 ἔργα νόμου

The precise point of concern behind Paul’s rejection of ἔργα νόμου has come to be understood in a variety of ways. Luther interprets ἔργα νόμου in the broadest sense, representing works of the entire law with no distinguishing between the Decalogue and ceremonial laws.<sup>612</sup> Whatever is opposed to grace can be said to be ἔργα νόμου.<sup>613</sup> Flowing from this comes his understanding of works of the Law as the human endeavour of meriting favour before God, a form of legalism. In this way, “works of the Law” denotes an attitudinal error in which human effort attempts to merit divine favour. This notion of legalism became the dominant view for years to come.<sup>614</sup>

In 1977, a great shift was made in New Testament studies when E. P. Sanders challenged the Reformation view that the Pauline phrase “works of the Law” spoke to a specific attitude of self-righteousness, or human effort to achieve favour before God. Rather, Sanders suggests that Paul’s rejection is of the Torah specifically. He writes: “Paul’s own reason for maintaining that ‘man shall not, must not, be ‘rightwised’ by

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<sup>611</sup> Barclay clarifies that a causative meaning of the verb, “to be *made* righteous,” is impossible to justify from Greek usage, Jewish or non-Jewish. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 377, n.71. Pace Martyn, *Galatians*, 265.

<sup>612</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:122.

<sup>613</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:122.

<sup>614</sup> Cranfield notes that Paul had no word to denote “legalism” which is why he simply referred to the “Law” or “works of the Law” (55). C. E. B. Cranfield, “St. Paul and the Law,” *SJT* 17 (1964): 43–68. Cf. Bultmann, *ThNT*, 261–69. Bertram, *TDNT*, 2:651; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 137.

works of the Law' is not that man must not think of procuring his own salvation, but that if the law could save, Christ died in vain (Gal. 2.21)."<sup>615</sup>

An alternate reading is offered by James Dunn, who suggests that Paul was in fact not rejecting the Law (Sanders's view), nor rejecting works righteousness (Lutheran view), but was in fact countering a Jewish ethnocentrism by which certain laws, namely circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath-keeping, were understood as boundary markers that distinguished them from Gentiles.<sup>616</sup> The primary issue that Paul is addressing is that Gentile Christians do not need to practise these Jewish laws in order to belong to the people of God.

With these varied understandings, it is helpful to look at the context in which Paul was writing. The precise expression, ἔργα νόμου, which occurs eight times in Paul's letters (Gal 2:16 [3x], 3:2, 5, 10; Rom 3:20, 28), does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament or the LXX.<sup>617</sup> One precise parallel has been found in 4QMMT: מעשי התורה.<sup>618</sup> Bachmann has suggested the phrase here seems to refer specifically to the precepts, commandments, or regulations of the Law, as opposed to the Lutheran emphasis on *doing* the deeds of the Law.<sup>619</sup> He asserts that ἔργα νόμου has this meaning in Paul's letters as well. J. C. R. de Roo, on the other hand, argues that the phrase refers to "deeds" as distinct from "precepts."<sup>620</sup>

When Paul uses the phrase in Galatians, it is difficult to justify Bachmann's understanding that it refers only to the precepts of the Law, for Paul is very concerned about the active response the Galatians had to the false teachers. As Barclay has noted, "the term ἔργα reflects the fact that the Law requires observance in practice, but what is significant is not the bare fact of practices (and thus not 'works' as such)

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<sup>615</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 482.

<sup>616</sup> Dunn has expressed this view a number of times and with a variety of expression. Although he has acknowledged that the phrase refers to Torah-observance in general (James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 354–59), he fairly consistently insists that Paul was primarily referring in this letter to the specific practises that separate Jew and Gentile. Cf. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 194–95; Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), 134–141; Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 23–28, 213–15.

<sup>617</sup> Barclay notes, however, that this Pauline shorthand "echoes" the scriptural commands to "do" or "practise" the Torah (e.g., LXX Ex 18:20). Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 373–74.

<sup>618</sup> Cf. 4Q398 frg. 14-17 2.2-4 in Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell, eds., *Qumran Cave 4. 5, Miqṣat Ma'āse Ha-Torah*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 10 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 37.

<sup>619</sup> Michael Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology*, trans. Robert L. Brawley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 19–31.

<sup>620</sup> Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, "The Concept of 'Works of the Law' in Jewish and Christian Literature," in *Christian-Jewish Relations Through the Centuries*, ed. S. E. Porter and Pearson, JSNTS 192 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 116–47.

but that they derive from, and are oriented to, the Torah.”<sup>621</sup> In general, the broad consensus today is that the Pauline phrase ἔργα νόμου refers to general practice of the Torah.<sup>622</sup> When he speaks of “works of the Law” and “righteousness of the Law,” these do not seem to be limited to particular practices. This is supported by the way Paul uses the term νόμος (2:21; 3:11; 5:4) as a synonym for ἔργα νόμου (2:16).<sup>623</sup>

### 2.2.3 Πίστις Χριστοῦ

On the positive side of the antithesis, Paul insists that what is effective for justification is πίστις Χριστοῦ. In the introduction, we outlined a handful of the most influential interpreters on both sides of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. In this section we will review some of the primary objections against the objective genitive reading, also holding in view the readings of Martyn and de Boer. As we proceed, we will present some of the most persuasive arguments for the objective genitive interpretation, concluding with a synopsis of our reading of the Pauline conception of faith and how it comports with the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate.

#### 2.2.3.1 Subjective Genitive Arguments

##### a) The “Lutheran” reading

It has become common for subjective genitive proponents to refer to the objective genitive reading as the “Lutheran view,” suggesting that the Reformation was likely the determinative period for the shift from subjective to objective genitive interpretation.<sup>624</sup> Ian Wallis contends: “there are no unambiguous cases of πίστις with the objective genitive of person in the Septuagint, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Josephus or Philo.”<sup>625</sup> Additionally, he states that the objective genitive is an abnormal Greek construction. Paul could have used πίστις plus a dative or one of the prepositions that he typically uses with the verbal form πιστεύω (εἰς, ἐν).<sup>626</sup> Thus,

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<sup>621</sup> Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 374.

<sup>622</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 261; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 158; De Boer, *Galatians*, 148; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 373–75; Peter Oakes, *Galatians*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 84–85.

<sup>623</sup> So also De Boer, *Galatians*, 148; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 374.

<sup>624</sup> Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions*, SNTSMS 84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 66, n. 12.

<sup>625</sup> Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 66. Cf. Howard, “Faith of Christ,” 214.

<sup>626</sup> Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 70. Matlock asserts that such claims “suggest confusion about what is meant by an ‘objective genitive’; a failure to distinguish adequately between Greek and the English idiom; and an unwitting and unsustainable reaction against the objective genitive as such.” R. B. Matlock, “‘Even the Demons Believe’: Paul and πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *CBQ* 64 (2002): 302. We will interact with grammatical, lexical, and rhetorical issues below.

Wallis contends that it is questionable whether early interpretative traditions support the objective genitive reading.

b) The objective genitive redundancy

One common critique of the objective genitive interpretation is that rendering it thus creates an unnecessary redundancy since in four of the seven cases of πίστις Χριστοῦ (Gal 2:16; 3:22; Rom 3:22; Phil 3:9), the verbal form, πιστεύω, occurs in close proximity.<sup>627</sup> In Galatians 2:16 Paul sandwiches the verbal expression between two phrases containing the disputed genitive:

2:16a οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

2:16b καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν,

2:16c ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,

Subjective genitive advocates claim that the nominal phrases become superfluous if taken as an objective genitive. Instead, by differentiating his phraseology, Paul presents the πίστις of believers as following from the πίστις of Christ.

c) A narrative framework

As we observed in the introduction, one of the chief driving forces behind the subjective genitive reading is the desire to unlock the narrative substructure of Paul's epistles.<sup>628</sup> For Richard Hays, πίστις Χριστοῦ refers to Jesus' faith, which serves as the basis upon which "the promise" of Abraham is given to believers. Christians are justified, not by virtue of their own faith, but because they participate in Christ, who lives by faith. Likewise, Hooker, finds in the πίστις Χριστοῦ expression the narrative of Christ as the obedient and faithful second Adam in whose faith Christians share.

d) The objective genitive is anthropocentric

Another common allegation regarding the objective genitive reading has been that it is anthropocentric. In this way, faith comes to be understood as just another work, the very point Paul is arguing against in the surrounding context of each πίστις Χριστοῦ passage. As we observed above, J. Louis Martyn is among the increasing

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<sup>627</sup> So Markus Barth, "The Faith of the Messiah," *HeyJ* 10 (1969): 368. Sam K Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans," *JBL* 99 (1980): 273–74; Luke Timothy Johnson, "Rom 3:21–26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 79; Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 166, 173; L. E. Keck, "Jesus' in Romans," *JBL* 108 (1989): 454–56; Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 1995, 71; Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 142.

<sup>628</sup> Cf. chapter 1 § 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 on Hays, Campbell and Hooker.

number of New Testament scholars who argue along these lines. A subjective genitive rendering of the phrase becomes vital to his central thesis that Paul's argument in Galatians hinges on a cosmic antinomy of human versus divine activity. In seeking to emphasise theological priority, Martyn classifies πίστις Χριστοῦ, "the faith of Christ," as the saving act of God in Christ. In this way, Martyn writes, "God's means of rectification is solely the divine act of Christ's faith,"<sup>629</sup> with human faith decidedly secondary. Read in this way, the phrase supports Martyn's overarching apocalyptic emphasis that divine activity supersedes all else. De Boer argues similarly, emphasising that "the question at issue is justification *by God*" through the faithful death of Christ.<sup>630</sup> Hence, the subjective genitive rendition has been coined the "Christocentric approach," and those who support it are the "Christological advocates" and "Christological interpreters."<sup>631</sup> Along these lines, it is argued that objective genitive proponents portray πίστις as functioning conditionally or contractually in salvation and thus as something that is humanly manageable and anthropocentric.<sup>632</sup>

### 2.2.3.2 "Objective Genitive" Reading

Having examined some of the key arguments in favour of the subjective genitive reading, we will examine some of the most significant contributions to the objective genitive reading.

#### a) Traditional reading

Contrary to Wallis's claims, it has been demonstrated that the objective genitive reading of πίστις was prominent long before Martin Luther came onto the scene. Roy Harrisville has shown that πίστις plus the objective genitive formed a common construction in pre-Christian Greek authors.<sup>633</sup> While in general, ancient Greek authors used the dative of the object when desiring to indicate faith or reliance in someone or something, Harrisville uncovered a number of examples in which the objective genitive is used with the nominal and verbal forms of πίστις, demonstrating that the construction was a common and suitable use in Greek, one that Greek

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<sup>629</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 252.

<sup>630</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 151. Italics original to the author.

<sup>631</sup> D. A. Campbell, "False Presuppositions in the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate: A Response to Brian Dodd," *JBL* 116 (1997): 715.

<sup>632</sup> Campbell, "False Presuppositions," 715.

<sup>633</sup> Harrisville, "Before ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 353–58.



speakers would have been familiar with.<sup>634</sup> Matlock has also argued that the objective genitive was reasonably common, offering several examples from Polybius, Strabo, and Plutarch.<sup>635</sup> Matlock attributes the increase of the objective genitive in early Christianity to its being an early Christian idiom.<sup>636</sup>

Building upon Harrisville's study, Mark Elliott has provided additional support that the objective genitive reading was common prior to the Reformation while also casting doubt on a number of examples Wallis uses to support his thesis that the idea of "the faith of Jesus Christ" was alive and well in the patristic era.<sup>637</sup> In short, he concludes after examining a wide range of sources, including the Latin Vulgate and Sahidic, that the tendency to translate "the faith of Christ" (*fides Iesu Christi* – at Rom 3:2 and Gal 3) was simply a matter of a safe, literal translation and nothing more significant than that.<sup>638</sup>

Particularly helpful are Elliot's insights into medieval developments, noting that most medieval theologians thought that to attribute faith to Christ was to speak unworthily of him. For Thomas and the tradition following his school of thought, Jesus' obedience is understood to flow from his knowledge rather than his faith.<sup>639</sup> On Hebrews 12:2, Aquinas understands Jesus to be the author of believers' faith both by teaching it in words and by impressing faith in their hearts.<sup>640</sup> He did not need faith himself because faith infers a deficiency.<sup>641</sup> As for Romans 1:17, Aquinas understands "from faith to faith" to describe the faith of those before and those after Christ.<sup>642</sup> It is not a matter of Christ's faith as many subjective genitive advocates suggest.

#### b) A rhetorical answer to the argument of redundancy

In response to the argument that the objective genitive interpretation is redundant, it is important to note that Galatians 2:16 is highly repetitive on either

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<sup>634</sup> Harrisville acknowledges that the subjective genitive was also found but argues that his findings demonstrate the need to allow context to determine the reading of a phrase. Harrisville, "Before ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," 354.

<sup>635</sup> Matlock, "Detheologizing," 19, n.59.

<sup>636</sup> Matlock, "Detheologizing," 20.

<sup>637</sup> Mark W. Elliott, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ in the Church Fathers and Beyond," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody: Baker Academic, 2010), 277–89. Cf. pp 277–82 for his critical engagement with Wallis.

<sup>638</sup> Elliott, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 282.

<sup>639</sup> Elliott, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 283.

<sup>640</sup> Elliott, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 283.

<sup>641</sup> Elliott, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 284.

<sup>642</sup> Elliott, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," 285.

interpretation. To hastily dismiss one interpretation on the basis of redundancy, is to miss the significant point that Paul is using repetition for good reason. It has been well argued that repetition serves the rhetorical purpose of emphasis.<sup>643</sup> Barry Matlock has given breadth to this argument by pointing out that in Galatians 2:16 there is a threefold repetition of the πίστις/πιστεύω phrases representing human faith directed toward Christ, which fits perfectly with the threefold repetition of ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.<sup>644</sup> Matlock has presented a sophisticated rhetorical analysis of Galatians 2:16 that is based on antithesis, parallelism, and repetition.<sup>645</sup> He outlines a two-part structure that is built around two antitheses, Ia and IIa:<sup>646</sup>

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Ia</b>	οὐδὲ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος <u>ἐξ ἔργων νόμου</u> ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,	
	<b>B</b>	
<b>Ib</b>	καὶ ἡμεῖς <u>εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν,</u>	
	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>IIa</b>	ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν <u>ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ</u> καὶ οὐκ <u>ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,</u>	
	<b>A</b>	
<b>IIb</b>	ὅτι <u>ἐξ ἔργων νόμου</u> οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.	

In each representation of the antitheses, Matlock demonstrates that the final element is repeated in an amplifying clause, Ib and IIb.<sup>647</sup> Thus, the pattern is ABB/BAA, where II is the inverse of I.<sup>648</sup> If Matlock's analysis is correct, then the objective genitive reading is the most natural interpretation because Ib expands and elucidates B in Ia.

As added support, Matlock demonstrates another inversion of the order of repetition. He notes that the first antithesis (Ia) is presented in generic terms with the impersonal subject, ἄνθρωπος. Ib represents the same idea amplified more specifically with the personal subject, ἡμεῖς. The second antithesis (IIa) begins with the personal subject ἡμεῖς and is amplified in IIb with the generic subject πᾶσα σὰρξ.

<sup>643</sup> L. Ann Jervis, *Galatians*, NIBC 9 (Peabody: Carlisle: Hendrickson, Paternoster Press, 1999), 21. James D. G. Dunn, "Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2 edition. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 256. Even the subjective genitive proponent Douglas Campbell agrees that the argument about redundancy is ultimately unhelpful and recommends that this argument be abandoned. Campbell, *Quest for Paul's Gospel*, 221–22, n.19; Campbell, *The Deliverance of God*, 1093 n.15.

<sup>644</sup> R Barry Matlock, "The Rhetoric of πίστις in Paul: Galatians 2:16, 3:22, Romans 3:22, and Philippians 3:9," *JSNT* 30 (2007): 193–199.; cf. Matlock, "Detheologizing," 14, n.44. Matlock demonstrates his case in Gal 3:22, Rom 3:22 and Phil 3:9 as well, but we focus here on Gal 2:16 which bears directly on our present discussion.

<sup>645</sup> Matlock, "Rhetoric," 196.

<sup>646</sup> Matlock, "Rhetoric," 197.

<sup>647</sup> Matlock, "Rhetoric," 198.

<sup>648</sup> Matlock, "Rhetoric," 198.

Matlock claims that “every piece is integral to the complete thought; and thus contextual pressure is simultaneously exerted from a number of directions to read the objective genitive.”<sup>649</sup>

Matlock’s incisive rhetorical analysis has contributed substantially to this fraught debate, demonstrating that the argument from redundancy really has little ground to stand upon. Yet, Matlock advances his argument in noting that the repetition serves an even greater purpose than amplification and emphasis. Matlock claims that this structure helps to identify the “actual argumentative movement” of 2:16: “here the Jewish Christian experience of the gospel is placed within a common human narrative.”<sup>650</sup> Matlock’s observation clarifies the function of verse 16 within the surrounding context. After Paul’s lengthy address concerning the veracity and authenticity of his gospel (2:2) that defies the boundary markers of the former way of Judaism,<sup>651</sup> he here shows rhetorically that the Jews<sup>652</sup> are placed between ἄνθρωπος and πᾶσα σὰρξ, not above the Gentiles.

c) Rhetorical: the antithesis of “faith in Christ” and “works of law”

Objective genitive proponents have also noted the rhetorical force that is evident in the antithesis between πίστις Χριστοῦ and ἔργα νόμου. Matlock astutely suggests that perhaps ἔργον Χριστοῦ would have been the more fitting alternative to ἔργα νόμου if Paul truly did intend to convey the faithful death of Christ in the “allusive” phrase.<sup>653</sup> Dunn highlights another antithetical parallel in the phrases πνεῦμα δουλείας and πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας in Romans 8:15, where the spirit of slavery is contrasted with the spirit of adoption, as a supporting example of how Paul uses antithesis.<sup>654</sup>

d) Lexical semantics

In the introduction, we traced Barry Matlock’s contribution in the area of lexical semantics; the heart of the matter for the subjective genitive is getting πίστις to

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<sup>649</sup> Matlock, “Rhetoric,” 199.

<sup>650</sup> Matlock, “Rhetoric,” 199.

<sup>651</sup> Specifically here: circumcision (2:3) and separation from Gentiles (2:11-14).

<sup>652</sup> Looking back to verse 15, which connects the logic of verses 1-14 with that of verses 16-21.

<sup>653</sup> Matlock, “Detheologizing,” 12.

<sup>654</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.), 261, n.51.

mean what subjective genitive proponents suggest Paul means, that is the death of Jesus.<sup>655</sup> Based on his taxonomy of πίστις which demarcates two senses of the word, that of belief and that of faithfulness, Matlock exposes that subjective genitive proponents have assumed the active sense of πίστις as faithfulness in Galatians 2:16 without clarifying what it is that connects Paul's use of πίστις with Jesus' death. Thus it is unclear in what particular sense πίστις can rightly be regarded as faithfulness. Furthermore, subjective genitive proponents have fallen short of determining the particular relation of πίστις to Χριστοῦ as the subject.<sup>656</sup> Even if that lack is filled, however, he observes that it seems inexplicable why Paul would have needed to be so indirect. After tracing examples in which Paul alternates between the use of πιστεύω and πίστις in the case of Abraham, Matlock observes that when Paul needs a verb, he uses a verb, and when a noun is stylistically or otherwise more appropriate, he uses a noun. Thus, Paul has not craftily limited his use of πίστις to Christ and πιστεύω to humans, as some subjective genitive proponents contend.

e) A narrative substructure in Galatians?

In contrast to those who seek a narrative framework to support their reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, Peter Oakes notes that in Galatians, Paul does not teach about Christ's obedience as he does in Romans 5 or Philippians 2. Christ is not described as acting toward God. He writes: "although there is a great theological attractiveness in Hays's reading of Christ's obedience to God as the centre point of the soteriology of Galatians, that does not fit the shape of Paul's Christological narrative in the soteriology of the letter."<sup>657</sup> Oakes points out that what Galatians does draw our attention to is Christ's love for us (2:20) and his "many-faceted action on our behalf."<sup>658</sup> A better reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ that fits with the soteriology of Galatians is one that places the expression "in the interface between people and Christ" rather than in the interface between Christ and God as Hays does.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> See Introduction § 3.5. Barry Matlock, "Detheologizing," 11.

<sup>656</sup> Matlock, "Detheologizing," 12.

<sup>657</sup> Oakes, *Galatians*, 89.

<sup>658</sup> Oakes, *Galatians*, 89.

<sup>659</sup> Oakes, *Galatians*, 89.

f) Intertextual evidence

Francis Watson has contributed to the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate by demonstrating that Paul is engaged in scriptural exegesis and hermeneutics in his discussion of faith and Law. Specifically, he argues that all of Paul’s “by faith of Christ” formulations derive from Habakkuk 2:4.<sup>660</sup> Watson observes that Paul never speaks of “*the* faith of Christ,” as he speaks of “the faith of our father Abraham” (Rom 4:12), but instead he substitutes the definite article for a preposition (ἐκ, διά). Therefore, insists Watson, “if we are to understand Paul’s language, we must not neglect his prepositions.”<sup>661</sup>

Watson begins by examining Galatians 2:16, the first occurrence of the “by faith of Christ” formulation. Here two variations are represented, one with διὰ and the other with ἐκ, each of which balance the phrase οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. From here, he expands to analyse the various modifications of the phrases throughout the epistle. At times, the phrase is condensed, such as ἐκ νόμου (3:18, 21), διὰ νόμου (2:19, 21), or διὰ τῆς πίστεως (3:14) or διὰ πίστεως (3:26). However, ἐκ/ἐξ is the preferred preposition, occurring nineteen times, while διά occurs only five times.<sup>662</sup> Thus, he argues that the short version of the faith-phrase in its ἐκ-form, ἐκ πίστεως, “underlies and generates” the longer forms (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως) and balances ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.<sup>663</sup> Thus, the longer expressions may elaborate the shorter, but they do not mean anything very different than “by faith” (ἐκ πίστεως).

The essential question then becomes: what does Paul mean by the shortened phrase? The premise of Watson’s answer is that where Paul’s terminology coincides with Scripture, it is because his own assertions derive from the texts he cites.<sup>664</sup>

Watson argues that ἐκ πίστεως is derived from Habakkuk 2:4b, which Paul cites in Galatians 3:11, and pairs also with the pervasive righteousness terminology. Although some have suggested that Paul reads Habakkuk 2:4 messianically, that is, that ὁ δίκαιος is a Christological title, Watson argues convincingly that Paul understands Habakkuk to refer to a generic person.

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<sup>660</sup> Francis Watson, “By Faith (of Christ): An Exegetical Dilemma and Its Scriptural Solution,” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, ed. Bird and Sprinkle, 147–63.

<sup>661</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 148.

<sup>662</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 151–52.

<sup>663</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 151. See his expanded reasoning on pp.152–53.

<sup>664</sup> Noting that Genesis 15:6 is also a key source for Paul’s righteousness-by-faith language, Watson argues that Paul relies on Habakkuk’s ἐκ πίστεως formulation to even interpret the Genesis text (Gal 3:7, 8, 9). Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 153.

The ambiguity stems from Paul's omission of the pronoun that occurs in all other early versions of this text. For example, the Masoretic text reads: "the righteous one by *his* faith/faithfulness will live." Most Septuagint manuscripts read: "the righteous one by *my* faith/faithfulness will live."<sup>665</sup> When a pronoun is present, the prepositional phrase must be connected to the verb rather than to the subject. However, with the pronoun absent, the alternative is possible. Thus, Paul may intend either:

- 1) The Righteous One will live by faith. (or)
- 2) The one who is righteous by faith will live.

In order to determine which is correct, Watson investigates whether: 1) there is evidence that ὁ δίκαιος as a Christological title derives from Habakkuk 2:4, and 2) whether Paul connects ἐκ πίστεως to ζήσεται or to ὁ δίκαιος.

After surveying the main passages that are frequently connected to "the Righteous One" as a Christological title (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 Peter 3:18; and 1 John 2:1), Watson observes that allusions to the Fourth Servant Song (Is 52:13-53:12) occur in close proximity. This suggests that "the Righteous One" as a Christological title derives from Isaiah 53:11 LXX. Paul often draws lexical items from Isaiah 53, and therefore it is conceivable that this would prove to be the source of identifying Jesus as the δίκαιος as well. Watson concludes that no non-Pauline evidence has been found that Habakkuk 2:4 was read Christologically, as a reference to "the Righteous One."

Yet, is it possible that Paul was the first to read Habakkuk 2:4 Christologically? To answer this question, it must be determined precisely how Paul divides the Habakkuk citation. Does ἐκ πίστεως point back to δίκαιος or forward to ζήσεται? Again, the decisive means of determining the answer to this question depends on examining Paul's broader patterns, whether he associates ἐκ πίστεως and its derivatives with righteousness or with life. Watson concludes that ἐκ πίστεως is *never* associated with life, but is *repeatedly* associated with righteousness.<sup>666</sup> Therefore, the evidence suggests that Paul read Habakkuk 2:4 as "the one who is righteous by faith will live."

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<sup>665</sup> Watson, "By Faith (of Christ)," 154. Cf. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 86–87.

<sup>666</sup> Watson, "By Faith (of Christ)," 159–62. Watson notes that one might appeal to Gal 2:20 or Gal 3:12, but these present only weak support for the reading "will live by faith" (161).

Additional support is found in the way Paul pairs his citation with its antithetical parallel in Galatians 3:11. Watson observes that Paul’s own negative formulation is constructed on the basis of the positive scriptural formulation.

ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδείς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ δῆλον, ὅτι

ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται

Watson asserts that ὁ δίκαιος corresponds to οὐδείς δικαιοῦται and ἐκ πίστεως corresponds to ἐν νόμῳ. The precision of this construction is found in Paul’s initial statement of the antithesis, and Watson perspicaciously notes that the alternative translation, “the Righteous One will live by faith,” loses this precision.<sup>667</sup>

After tracing this threefold line of argumentation, the evidence suggests that Paul does not argue that believers are justified by Christ’s faith or faithfulness. Watson concludes that there is “no room” for the subjective genitive interpretation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations.

### ***2.2.3.3 Re-theologising the Objective Genitive***

Thus far we have surveyed a number of arguments in the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, with favour weighing on the side of the objective genitive. At this point, we must grapple with what is likely the most significant aspect of the debate—theology. For both Martyn and de Boer the primary issue of concern is one of agency—humans in no way effect salvation. Justification occurs entirely by the act of God through Christ’s faith with no conditions on humans. Yet, does their presentation of faith as a form of human work or a condition for salvation match what we have discovered thus far about the Pauline conception of faith? On the contrary! We have consistently seen that faith is not a condition or human accomplishment in Paul’s view. Nor does faith disparage the priority of divine action. Here we endeavour to contribute to the πίστις Χριστοῦ discussion by incorporating our conclusions about what Paul means by πίστις in the broader scope of his writings. In this way, we believe we can “re-theologise” the objective genitive reading.

- a) The priority of divine grace in the divine/human dynamic

Foundational to all of our previous observations about faith in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians is that Paul consistently demonstrates that the power of God

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<sup>667</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 162.

precedes the πίστις of humans.<sup>668</sup> In Galatians, the priority of God’s action has been emphasised through our interaction with J. Louis Martyn’s apocalyptic interpretation, in which the central antinomy of the letter is between human work and divine.<sup>669</sup> The act of rescuing and restoring the world from the power of evil rests decisively with God and is demonstrated by the advent, crucifixion, and resurrection of His Son (1:4).<sup>670</sup>

Few would deny that Paul consistently portrays the prior act of God in salvation. However, contrary to some interpretations, divine priority does not preclude the human response of faith to God’s efficacious gift of grace. Galatians 2:16 combines the relevant divine and human aspects of agency; the gospel is a divine revelation and at the same time something that is received by humans. We recall how Paul connects the concept of faith with receiving (παραλαμβάνω) in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians. Taking παραλαμβάνω to be a conceptual cognate of faith, we saw that faith is a subjective self-involvement through an active response of dependence upon the Christ-event (1 Thess 1:6; 2:13; 1 Cor 15:1-4).<sup>671</sup> In Galatians 1:9, Paul warns the Galatians about those preaching a different gospel than the one they received: εἴ τις ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζεταί παρ’ ὃ παρελάβετε (Gal 1:9). Just as when Paul, after re-summarising the gospel to the Corinthians, implicated them with a reminder that they had actively responded to his preaching of the gospel message,<sup>672</sup> so he implicates the Galatians here with the truth that they had already received the gospel that he preached to them. In Galatians 1:12, Paul connects his own reception (παρέλαβον) of the gospel with the prior act of God in the ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal 1:12).<sup>673</sup> The letter is replete with the interplay between the prior revelation and calling of God in grace with the active response of the Galatians by παραλαμβάνειν or πίστις.

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<sup>668</sup> In the previous chapters of this thesis we have highlighted this point in the following verses: 1 Thess 1:5; 2:13; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 1:18; 4:13.

<sup>669</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 39. cf. “Apocalyptic Antinomies,” 111–23.

<sup>670</sup> Cf. de Boer, who has demonstrated that Rom 1:16-17 reveals that ἀποκαλύπτω is directly related to the notion of “the power of God” (*Galatians*, 81).

<sup>671</sup> Contra de Boer, who understands παραλαμβάνω to mean “was given” in Gal 1:12 (*Galatians*, 82). No argumentation is provided. For the argument that the verb entails an active response, see chapters two and three of this thesis. Of fundamental importance to our understanding of the verb is the self-involvement in the gospel that Paul prioritizes most particularly in connection with a handful of active, self-involving terms in 1 Cor 15:1-2.

<sup>672</sup> Paul employs four active verbs to describe the Corinthians’ reception of the gospel in 1 Cor 15:1–2 παραλαμβάνω (v.1), in which they have stood (ἵστημι– v.1), to which they hold fast (κατέχω – v.2), and in which they believed (πιστεύω – v.2).

<sup>673</sup> See above § 1.2.



When Paul presents the antithesis of Galatians 2:16, the theological groundwork has already been laid that the power of God is foundational to his claims regarding faith. Lest there be any confusion, Paul defines justification solely in terms of its source: δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. “In Christ” the power of God was demonstrated on the cross (1 Cor 1:18, 24; 2:5). There is no theological contradiction between wholly crediting God for the rescue of humanity and describing the human response of faith, for the power of God precedes and elicits such faith. To omit any discussion of human agency for fear that emphasis is being given to human works is to misunderstand what Paul means and to misrepresent one of the chief concerns in his writings, that of Christ-empowered human behaviour.<sup>674</sup> Indeed, human agency must be understood as a response to and an absolute dependence upon divine agency.

b) Confident reliance

The theological resonance of divine priority and human faith is elucidated when we unpack what Paul means when he speaks of human faith. In 2 Corinthians we observed that Paul conceives of faith as a self-negating and Christologically shaped reliance upon God. For example, it was demonstrated in 2 Corinthians 1:9 that Paul employs πείθομαι as a conceptual cognate for πιστεύω. Understanding πείθομαι to convey a confident reliance, the theme of the letter centres on Paul’s own experience of relying upon God in adverse circumstances, followed by his exhortation to his readers to do the same. Indeed, Paul explicitly denies self-reliance (2 Cor 1:9) at the same time that he expresses reliance on the divine. For Paul, πείθομαι is entirely a Christological phenomenon, finding grounding in the mediatorial role of Christ (2 Cor 3:4) and ultimately in his resurrection (1:9, 4:13-14).

In Galatians 2:16, this conception of faith as confident reliance upon God must be held in view. Commentators do not dispute a human subject for the verb πιστεύω in Galatians 2:16. This faith is focused on Christ, indicated by the directional preposition, εἰς, with the indicative form of πιστεύω: καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. However, as we observed in Barry Matlock’s rhetorical demonstration, the verbal clause amplifies the preceding clause, διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Thus, the noun πίστις retains this sense of human reliance upon Christ and is fundamental to the interpretation of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations.

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<sup>674</sup> A full treatment of Paul’s concern for ethics will be addressed in chapter 6.

c) Self-negating confidence

Of further import to this confident reliance upon Christ is its corollary that humans are impotent in and of themselves to operate in God's realm of grace and power. In 2 Corinthians, the question of Paul's own sufficiency is raised in light of the challenge of defending himself as a minister of the gospel (2 Cor 2:16). Paul's answer is that he is sufficient only insofar as he has been approved by God and speaks in Christ (2 Cor 2:17). Paul will not promote himself; in fact, he emphatically denies that he is sufficient in himself. Rather, his sufficiency is from God (2 Cor 3:5), and his confidence toward God is *through* Christ (2 Cor 3:4). Here the conception of faith is understood to be an abnegation of self that is superseded by Christ.<sup>675</sup>

In Galatians 2:16, the antithesis "not by works of the law but through faith in Christ" demonstrates that it is not a human or religious system that justifies, but Christ alone. Paul is clear that it is only Christ who is worthy of one's trust, which is explicit in the phrase καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν. In exercising faith in Christ, there is an implicit sense of the powerlessness of humans to effect their own justification. The two additional πίστις Χριστοῦ clauses amplify the explicit πιστεύω clause. When conceived of as an acknowledgement of one's own impotence, faith as a human mode of existence can be understood as participation in the justifying work of Christ.<sup>676</sup>

#### **2.2.3.4 Agency Clarified**

In view of this conception of faith as a self-negating, confident reliance upon Christ, it is clear that the objective genitive reading preserves the theological priorities held by subjective genitive proponents without obscuring the significance of human faith that is so evident in the broader scope of Paul's theology. Because the heart of the matter for interpreters like Martyn and de Boer is the issue of agency, it is beneficial at this point to address the mysterious interplay between God and humans.

Martyn's concern that faith should not be presented as a work or condition is an issue that Bultmann faced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: If faith is a condition for grace to become effective in the believer, is not faith then a work? Bultmann answers by explicating the meaning of faith as well as the relationship between faith and grace and between faith and works. Faith, as Bultmann defines it, is an attitude that opposes

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<sup>675</sup> In Galatians, this idea is most cogently expressed in 2:19-20 and will be unpacked in greater detail in § 3 below.

<sup>676</sup> This point will be made more explicit in our exegesis of Gal 2:17.

the human urge for recognition: “the radical abandonment of self-glorification, of the desire for recognition by one’s own strength and achievement.”<sup>677</sup> Faith relates to God’s grace in “simple surrender.”<sup>678</sup> In light of this conception of faith as the renunciation of self-glorification and a simple surrender to God’s grace, Bultmann equates faith with obedience because it represents the breakdown of human pride and submission to God.<sup>679</sup> In this way faith is not the exercise of self-control to achieve a work, but “the abandonment of all power, submission to God, and readiness to receive from him every power as a gift.”<sup>680</sup> It is not a simple trust that God will help the believer out on occasion, but a radical surrender to God’s will.<sup>681</sup> When faith is understood as true obedience, it is “freed from the suspicion of being an accomplishment, a ‘work.’”<sup>682</sup> If faith were an accomplishment it would not be obedience, “since in an accomplishment the will does not surrender but asserts itself.”<sup>683</sup>

Progressing from the idea of faith as obedience and surrender, Bultmann depicts faith then as an act (*Tat*): “Such faith, embracing obedience and trust, is therefore man’s *decision* against himself and for God, and as such, faith is an act.”<sup>684</sup> Here Bultmann distinguishes between a work and an act, or *Werk und Tat*.<sup>685</sup> Faith is a human action but not human work. “In the case of the ‘work,’ I remain the man I am; I place it outside myself, I go along beside it, I can assess it, condemn it or be proud of it. But in the act I *become* something for the first time: I find my being in it, live in it and do not stand alongside it.”<sup>686</sup> Faith in this way can be understood to enliven the human agent to respond in surrender to the divine agent. The distinction Bultmann makes between accomplishment and *Tat* connotes the bare notion of doing versus achieving. Righteousness is not dependent upon human achievement, but that is not to say there is no human action. Action is inherent but not self-derived; rather the activity of the believer in faith is the very activity of a divinely enlivened agent.

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<sup>677</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” in *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, trans. James C. G. Greig (London: SCM Press, 1955), 171; trans. of *Glauben und Verstehen: gesammelte Aufsätze II* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955).

<sup>678</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 173.

<sup>679</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 174.

<sup>680</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 175.

<sup>681</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 175.

<sup>682</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 315.

<sup>683</sup> Bultmann, *ThNT*, 316.

<sup>684</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 175.

<sup>685</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 175.

<sup>686</sup> Bultmann, “Grace and Freedom,” 175. Cf. *ThNT*, 316.

### **2.2.3.5 Πίστις Χριστοῦ Summary**

In both our introduction and in this protracted discussion of πίστις Χριστοῦ, we have identified a few key problems with the subjective genitive rendering. First, there is disagreement about whether the genitive, if subjective, refers to the faith possessed by Jesus or the faithfulness he displayed. Along these lines, subjective genitive proponents fail to clarify why πίστις should be the descriptive word Paul uses to describe Christ's atoning death. Most significantly, however, there has been a lacuna in defining human faith and thus this central way that Paul depicts the human mode of existence has been obfuscated.

After surveying several important contributions to the objective genitive reading, we took a closer look at how our exegesis of faith sheds light on this particular debate. We found that when Paul speaks of human faith it is an expression of dependence upon a prior act of God in Christ. Thus, understanding faith in terms of human agency is entirely coherent with the apocalyptic emphasis on the divine saving act of God. Human faith as reliance upon Christ is self-negating and self-involving in his work so that, as one recognises one's own impotence, the believer identifies him or herself with Christ, who becomes the source of divine approval. To borrow Bultmann's favoured phrase, "self-understanding" was vitally important to Paul's theology. But self-understanding for believers is always only depicted in terms of "being-in-Christ." Faith and "being-in-Christ" are in some sense two sides of the same coin. In this way, faith is entirely Christological.

To assert that the πίστις of which Paul speaks in Galatians 2:16 is that of the believer is not to say that Paul is suggesting an alternative "work" or independent effort on behalf of the believer. The divine/human antinomy is pervasive in Paul's thought and reflected in this letter (Gal 1:4, 11-12), and indeed it undergirds the very antithesis that Paul presents between ἔργα νομοῦ and πίστις Χριστοῦ. Yet, this undergirding principle of divine initiative does not eliminate the agency of humans in faith. Rather, the basis of divine initiative illuminates human faith as something that is responsive to the effective work of Christ on the cross. Faith itself is not effective, but it appropriates that which is.

### **2.2.4 Defining the Antithesis**

With the key exegetical points in place, we are positioned now to address the precise antithesis that Paul is making. Our study thus far has called into question Martyn and de Boer's understanding of the antithesis in terms of agency. Matlock's

observation that the question must be posed within the context of οὐ ἄνθρωπος and πᾶσα σὰρξ is apropos in interpreting this verse (2:16). The antithesis juxtaposes the former Jewish way of life which entailed keeping the Law with the mode of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Following Matlock's analysis that the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases serve to amplify the clause, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, we can rightly deduce that the antithesis sets in contrast two alternative modes of dependence, one that displays dependence upon human effort in obeying the Law, the other displaying dependence upon the saving work of Jesus Christ.

With the antithesis expressed in this way, we reiterate that this does not suggest that human faith is salvific, or that one mode of human effort is replaced with another mode of human effort. Human faith is emphatically the denial of self-worth and self-effort. As a self-negating mode of existence, faith identifies the one person, the one act that has saving power and depends on him for the grace to be considered righteous by God. This self-negating and self-involving faith underscores the divine/human antinomy that Martyn and de Boer depict. However, contra de Boer and Martyn, we observe that underscoring divine agency in 2:16 cannot result in a reading that eliminates human agency for fear that emphasis is being given to human works. Rather, human faith is a response to and an absolute dependence upon the divine.

It may be helpful to conceive of Paul's logic in terms of a two level antithesis: the first level serves as the soteriological basis of one's trust, and the second level describes human self-involvement. The first level can correctly be identified as the "larger antithesis,"<sup>687</sup> but the second level of the antithesis is no less significant and in fact bears directly on the reason for which Paul is writing.<sup>688</sup> Paul's concern is primarily to refocus the Galatians' reliance upon Christ, the true base for salvation. Indeed, he must remind his readers of the sole efficacy of Christ's work; even attempting to add works to a foundation of salvation in Christ results in exclusion from him (Gal 5:4). Paul must convince his readers that salvation is only appropriated through self-negating, self-involving reliance upon Christ.

Our exegesis of Galatians 2:16 has involved treading through the deep waters of defining such terms as δικαίω, ἔργα νόμου, πίστις Χριστοῦ, as well as addressing

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<sup>687</sup> This term borrowed from Hung-Sik Choi, "ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 5:5-6: Neglected Evidence for the Faithfulness of Christ," *JBL* 124 (2005): 467-90, 481.

<sup>688</sup> Thus Paul asks whether his readers are in fact "standing firm" (5:1), rejecting a basis which would sever them from Christ (5:2-4) and walking in the truth of the gospel (5:7)?

questions of agency. What we have uncovered will serve as the foundation to our continued exegesis through Galatians 2, and the letter as a whole.

### 2.3 Galatians 2:17-18

Following Paul's emphatic declaration of 2:16, Paul states either a hypothetical or an actual accusation by the adversaries: if, as Paul is ardently asserting, one trusts that justification is in Christ alone apart from works of the Law, and is still found to be a sinner, would that not imply that Christ is a servant of sin?<sup>689</sup> Two questions seem to arise in relation to this elusive verse. First, are those seeking justification in Christ found to be sinners after their conversion or before? Secondly, in what way are they considered sinners?

#### 2.3.1 Exegesis of 2:17-18

As to the first question, interpreters are divided, but the best reading follows when the phrase is taken to refer to a post-conversion state.<sup>690</sup> Paul's reference to sinners in verse 17, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ, recalls his mention of Gentile sinners, ἐξ ἔθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοὶ, in 2:15.<sup>691</sup> Moo avers that Paul's use of ἁμαρτωλοὶ here is the strongest point in favour of a post-conversional state of sin since it reflects his use in verse 15, which focuses on the way the Torah has excluded Gentiles from incorporation within the people of God.<sup>692</sup> Thus, in answer to our second question, Paul suggests that they could be considered sinners because, not having to fulfil Torah on the basis of their justification in Christ, they find themselves to have the same status as the Gentile sinners who do not uphold God's Law (cf. 2:13-14). Having no apparent legal parameters, Christ becomes responsible for their apparent moral failure. This status of sin, however, is based on the standards of those who look to the Law in order to be made righteous, thus *Christ* is not a servant of sin. The whole scenario of verse 17, and the question of whether Christ is a minister of sin, functions

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<sup>689</sup> The majority of commentators understand this clause to reflect an actual accusation by the false teachers that Paul must defend. So Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 114, 119–120; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 165; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 90; Jan Lambrecht, "Line of Thought in Gal 2:14b-21," *NTS* 24 (1978): 495; De Boer, *Galatians*, 140; Dunn, *Galatians*, 141; Martyn, *Galatians*, 255.

<sup>690</sup> See Lambrecht for an argument defending a pre-conversional status of sin; Lambrecht, "Line of Thought," 484–95.

<sup>691</sup> So Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 89.

<sup>692</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 165. Although it could be argued that the aorist of εὐρέθημεν indicates a past experience, Porter has argued that it may be wrong to find any temporal force in the aorist when it occurs in a protasis as it does here (Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood*, Studies in Biblical Greek 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 298).

as a *reductio ad absurdum* for Paul,<sup>693</sup> and he answers this preposterous idea with an emphatic μὴ γένοιτο.

Verses 18-20 represent Paul's own challenge of the Torah's definition of sin. Switching to the first person singular, Paul presents himself as an example, essentially saying: "For if I reestablish the authority of the Law, then yes, I am a transgressor on the basis of not living by its standards" (v.18). Such a hypothesis however is discredited because, having accepted the veracity of 2:16, Jewish Christians now recognise that the Law is not the means of justification; justification takes place instead by faith "in Christ" alone. This verse opens the way to demonstrate how the implications of one's justification matter not simply as a one-off decision or experience, but become demonstrative of a whole way of life. Paul will go on to say: "through the Law I died to the Law" so that he "might live to God" (2:19), which, again, is living in the mode of dependent faith in Christ.<sup>694</sup> We will explore this mode of existence after first addressing a couple of key points related to Gal 2:17.

### **2.3.2 Justification: Through Human or Divine Agency?**

In view of the exegesis above, we now look at some of the broader interpretative questions that relate to this thesis. That πίστις is not explicitly stated in verses 17-18 has provided fodder for subjective genitive proponents and various caricatures of faith. For example, L. E. Keck avers that the result of the objective genitive reading in 2:16 is that it "separates Christ from justification, which now depends solely on human believing, a separation which conflicts with what v. 17 emphasizes—that justification is ἐν Χριστῷ."<sup>695</sup> Indeed, verse 17 synthesises the concepts of justification and participation; the former must be conceived of in light of the latter. However, is Keck correct to suggest that the rendering "faith in Christ" separates Christ from justification, giving salvific efficacy to human faith? Or does this fact of justification in Christ, which is so explicitly stated in verse 17, supersede human agency in faith? Are the two necessarily distinct so that human faith disallows Christocentricity or, vice versa, that Christocentricity discredits human faith?

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<sup>693</sup> J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, SNTSMS 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 173.

<sup>694</sup> Barclay points out that this announcement does not entail the cessation of the Law but the end of its claim of final authority in the life of believers (Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 385). Cf. Gal 3:25; 5:18.

<sup>695</sup> Keck, "'Jesus' in Romans," 454.

As an initial point of observation, the surrounding context of the decisive phrase δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ has already given place to human agency through the verb ζητέω. Paul and the Jewish Christians are in fact *seeking* justification: ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι. While it is the πιστ-word group that depicts human appropriation of justification in verse 16, the human component is evident in the verb ζητέω in verse 17. Betz connects the thought of these two verbal ideas and contends that “seeking to be justified” is the same as “believing Christ Jesus” (v.16b).<sup>696</sup> Whether they are “the same” may be up for debate, but the correspondence between the two verbs is strong. In both verses 16 and 17 there is a human and divine point of connection in Paul’s doctrine of justification. The act of faith, or of seeking, finds a way of relating to the soteriologically efficacious act of God in Christ.

The next point of consideration must be the varying ways that Paul depicts the doctrine of justification. In verse 16, Paul writes that humans are justified διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ or ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Verse 17 presents justification in condensed form: humans are justified “ἐν Χριστῷ.” The preposition ἐν makes it clear that Christ is the agent who brings about justification.<sup>697</sup> Yet, the correspondence between humans’ seeking (v.17) and believing (v.16) demonstrates that there is a consistent logic flowing from verse 16. While Christ is indisputedly the source of justification, Paul also has in mind a contrast between two ways by which humans seek it, either through Christ or through the Law. Faith in Christ is absolutely Christocentric while seeking justification through works of the Law results in being severed from Christ (2:21; cf. 5:4).

### **2.3.3 Justification or Participation? Is That the Question?**

Galatians 2:17 also provides helpful clues to our question of whether justification or participation is more central to Paul’s theology, for here he combines the two concepts. This verse locates justification within the sphere of participation in Christ, using the very phrase, ἐν Χριστῷ, that permeates theological discussion of participation. There is no purer nor simpler way to depict this doctrine than Paul’s expression here: “Justification is in Christ.” In essence, verse 17 is stating two distinct points in one succinct phrase: 1) Justification is accomplished solely through Christ’s

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<sup>696</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 119.

<sup>697</sup> Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 115. The only other instance in which Paul uses the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ with justification is Rom 3:24.



efficacious death and resurrection; 2) Justification is experienced through participation in Christ.

After presenting the doctrine of justification in fullest measure in verse 16, Paul restates it in verse 17 in the most fundamental terms. The two verses must be read together; it is by participating in Christ's justifying act by faith that God considers the believer in the right.<sup>698</sup> Here we rely once again on our previous exegetical work to unveil the primary aspects of participatory faith in Christ for justification. One central component of faith is the confidence that what is true of Christ is, or will be, true of believers; in this way faith is understood to be participation in Christ (cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:6-8). Faith is the means by which the Christ-event envelops believers as his life attaches to those who trust in him. In Galatians 2:17, Paul connects justification specifically to the "in Christ" relationship. Yet, verse 16 makes plain that this relationship to Christ for justification is experienced through the faith of the believer. Ziesler has clarified that "life in Christ is the life of faith: to believe is to be in Christ."<sup>699</sup> In Ziesler's study of the meaning of righteousness, he uncovers in Jewish literature that δικαιοσύνη is a relational word, "not in the sense that it denotes a relationship, but in that it denotes activity within a relationship."<sup>700</sup> He points out that in 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Philippians 1:11; 3:9, δικαιοσύνη is not a moral quality inherent in the believer, nor a possession, but exists "only in the 'in Christ', faith relationship."<sup>701</sup> There is no question that righteousness is sourced through Christ. Yet, Paul is able to depict justification in terms of both faith and participation, signifying a close conception of both aspects of Christian life; it is also indicative of the fact that a relationship is formed in union with Christ. Indeed, the believer expresses faith as self-involving dependence on Christ just as God looks at believers and, insofar as they are "in Christ," declares them righteous (cf. 1 Cor 1:30).

Luther understood well the integration of participation and justification with faith. For Luther, faith justifies precisely because "it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ."<sup>702</sup> Again he says, "Faith takes hold of Christ and has him present enclosing him as the ring encloses the gem. And whoever is found having this

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<sup>698</sup> Note again the backdrop of verse 16. This "being justified in Christ" is in explicit contrast to participating in the work of the Law (cf. Rom 3:19: τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ).

<sup>699</sup> Ziesler, *Righteousness*, 165.

<sup>700</sup> Ziesler, *Righteousness*, 162.

<sup>701</sup> Ziesler notes also Eph 4:24 and probably 5:9 and 6:14 (162).

<sup>702</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:130.

faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous.”<sup>703</sup> The human problem of sin is overcome when God overlooks these sins and for Luther this is accomplished “by imputation on account of the faith by which I begin to take hold of Christ; And on His account God reckons imperfect righteousness as perfect righteousness and sin as not sin, even though it really is sin.”<sup>704</sup> In this “joyous exchange,” Christ takes on the sins of the world and offers his righteousness to believers. It is precisely because we participate “in Christ” by faith that we are justified.

Justification as participation is particularly explicit in 2 Corinthians 5:21 where Christ is said to become sin in order to make righteous those who believe.<sup>705</sup> In the previous chapter we explored the participatory context of 2 Corinthians 4–5 in which sharing in the death of Jesus is necessary so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in believers’ bodies (2 Cor 4:7-12). Paul is confident that God, who raised the Lord, will also raise believers with Jesus (2 Cor 4:14). There is a consistent confidence of present participation in Christ’s death and life, which are at work in him (4:10-11). Paul also expresses hope for future participation in Christ (2 Cor 4:14; 5:1-10). In these ways, participation is thoroughly a matter of faith (2 Cor 4:13; 5:1-10). Together, Paul’s thought on participation and faith lead into his discussion on reconciliation and righteousness, showing there is far more integration between Paul’s concepts of righteousness, participation, and faith than some interpreters have noted. Thus, we see that both 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 2:17 show a direct relationship between righteousness and participation. Righteousness becomes the new reality for the believer by participating in Christ.

#### **2.3.4 Hermeneutical Key: Faith**

Interpreting justification through the lens of participation remains ambiguous until we see that both are appropriated through the faith of the believer. The justifying work is that of Christ; the appropriation for participation is human. This point is helpfully depicted in Philippians 3, where righteousness by faith is shown to derive from one’s relationship of faith in Christ and being “found in him” (Phil 3:8b-9). Being in Christ then means participating in God’s righteousness through Christ by faith. As Gathercole succinctly states: “To be in Christ, then, means to be

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<sup>703</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:132.

<sup>704</sup> Luther, *LW*, 26:232.

<sup>705</sup> Note also Galatians 3:13, where Christ redeemed believers from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse himself. See chapter 6 § 1.2.3 for more discussion on this verse.

righteous.”<sup>706</sup> In other words, participation is justification; justification, being considered righteous in God’s eyes, is participation, and faith is the necessary explicator of the human experience of both.

The theme of participating in Christ by faith has been a point to which we have continued to return. In our previous examinations of 1 Thessalonians (4:13-18 and 5:1-11) and 2 Corinthians (4:14; 5:6-8) we observed that what was true of Christ is true of believers. Specifically, just as Jesus died and rose, so will believers who participate with him in this life by faith. The same application is made as we synthesise the points of Galatians 2:16-17, that the righteousness that belongs to Christ is reckoned to those who participate in Christ by faith. Faith is the means by which the Christ-event envelops those of faith as his very life attaches to those who believe he died and rose for them. The believer does not *achieve* righteousness by the act of faith; the believer *experiences* righteousness through his or her participatory faith in, or dependence upon, Christ.

### **2.3.5 Galatians 2:17-18 Conclusions**

Christological priority is unambiguous in Galatians 2:17. Here, instead of justification διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Paul speaks of δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ. Christ is unmistakably the source of a believer’s justification, yet Paul can still speak of human agency, this time with the verb ζητέω. With the priority of divine agency established, Paul persistently and carefully demonstrates how it is that humans relate to that divine action.

Our reading of Galatians 2:17 also contributes to the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Here, Paul explicitly locates justification in Christ, drawing out the Christological foundation many interpreters seek to find in the subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ. Yet, such Christological priority is observed apart from a subjective genitive interpretation. Faith must be understood to be the crucial human expression of living and operating out of this new life in Christ. Paul will develop this idea of faith as a mode of existence in verse 20, but in verses 16-17 it is already evident that somehow these two concepts of participation in Christ and faith in Christ go hand in hand.

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<sup>706</sup> Simon Gathercole, “The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond: Some Proposals,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 222.

As to the question about the centre of Paul's gospel, this verse reveals that Paul understood justification precisely in terms of participation in Christ. Therefore it would seem that the question presents an unnecessary bifurcation, creating a chasm that is not present in the apostle's thought. In our exegesis of Galatians 2:16, we understood δικαιώω to mean "to declare or consider someone righteous." Galatians 2:17 reveals that it is by participating in Christ's work that the believer is found righteous and no longer a sinner. Here we see that justification and participation are not equated. Yet, there is a crucial point of connection between the two doctrines—both are experienced by the dependent identification and self-involving faith of the believer. The two doctrines remain abstract without this vital link. Participating in Christ's righteousness necessitates human appropriation through faith just as much as being declared righteous by God necessitates the human disposition of faith. Because Christ is righteous, and because he died on behalf of humanity, the one who trusts in Christ and not in him or herself, may be considered righteous as well. The very status of the human is at stake and only reconciled by participation in Christ. Thus, justification by faith is participation in Christ; specifically it is participation in his saving work on the cross such that when God looks at the believer who has faith "in Christ," he considers that believer to have the righteousness of Christ.

#### *2.4 Galatians 2:16-18 Conclusions*

In our exegesis of these pivotal verses, we have explored a number of debated interpretative issues. By incorporating our study of a broader theology of faith taken from 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, we were able to navigate our way through some otherwise treacherous exegetical waters. Our developing definition of faith is: the mode of existence by which the believer participates in the Christ-event and appropriates all the benefits thereof; as such it is necessarily self-negating and thus self-involving in the person and work of Christ.

In Galatians 2:16-18 we observed that πίστις depicts the human grasping hold of all that Christ accomplished to justify believers and to enable a continuing manner of living to God. Faith renounces all forms of worth apart from Christ. Faith is an active, self-involving dependence on Christ that is common to both justification and participation in Christ. Thus, pitting one against the other as being the centre of Paul's theology creates a bifurcation where Paul sees unity.

This definition of faith also sheds light on the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate. With human faith defined as simultaneously self-negating and Christ-affirming, the objective genitive rendering maintains a Christological focus and divine priority. Arguably, the objective genitive reading is the more Christocentric reading as the subject of faith acknowledges his or her own helplessness and finds sole worth in Christ.

Our understanding of faith also elucidates the apparent quandary of agency. Paul consistently emphasises divine initiative; the divine act in Christ is prior to and causative of human faith. However, Paul has a strong view of human agency in that the believer is empowered to have faith and thus act. Faith is not merely an anthropological term; it is never an act of an autonomous human will but of a human will that has been reconstituted as a result of the Christ-event. Through participation in—or in other words, through self-involving dependence on—the Christ-event, humans are revived and empowered as agents; faith simply indicates the mode through which this happens.

This framework of faith and how it impacts our understanding of key Pauline doctrines will be developed even more in Galatians 2:19-21.

### **3. Exegesis of Galatians 2:19-21: Participation by Faith**

In the following section, we will proceed initially by addressing appropriate exegetical issues verse by verse. We should then be positioned to determine if our unfolding understanding of the Pauline conception of faith coheres with how Paul talks about faith here, while also addressing the three broader interpretative questions that this thesis seeks to elucidate.

#### *3.1 Dying to Live (Gal 2:19a)*

Verse 19 carries forward the implications of the antithesis that begins this concise theological summary (2:15-21); the outcome of how one seeks justification is now a matter of life and death. As we observed in verses 17-18, Paul addresses the hypothetical problem that seeking justification in Christ without Law observance leaves believers still in the status of sinners. Paul responds to this hypothesis with an emphatic μὴ γένοιτο and two different metaphors to illustrate his point (vv.18-19).

Having shifted to the first person singular, ἐγώ,<sup>707</sup> verse 19 accentuates the force of Paul’s logic; the metaphor of tearing down (v.18) has now become a death unto the Law. It is no longer in effect because Paul has died with Christ, making all other modes of living and seeking righteousness irrelevant, here specifically, the system of living under the Law’s authority.<sup>708</sup> Dying with Christ and dying to the Law is the only way to live unto God. Later on, Paul will clarify that the Law was unable to make alive (Gal 3:21). It was never able to give to humans what it demands of them.<sup>709</sup> Rather it imprisoned all things under the power of sin (Gal 3:22-23) and served as a temporary “disciplinarian” (παιδαγωγός) until the coming of Christ (3:24).<sup>710</sup> The flow of logic leading up to verse 19, along with this brief survey of how Paul depicts the function of the Law in the letter, has thus confirmed our reading of the antithesis as two alternative modes of human existence. Living to God through faith in Christ means the Law is no longer operative; living in the sphere of Christ’s death and resurrection is the only meaningful existence now.

The difficult phrase “For through the Law I died to the Law” is best understood in light of Galatians 3:13, which discloses that Christ’s identification with humanity brought him under the curse of the Law (quoting Deut 21:23) becoming a curse himself (cf. Gal 4:3-5).<sup>711</sup> Martyn explicates: “Paul’s participation in Christ’s crucifixion was thus a participation in the event in which the Law acted against God’s Christ!”<sup>712</sup> Tannehill agrees, noting also that because the Law plays the role of cursing Christ in his crucifixion, which was the act that delivered humanity from that curse, it

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<sup>707</sup> This change occurs after beginning with the first person plural in verse 15 and shifting to the third person, ἄνθρωπος, in verse 16. This “I” is best understood as a paradigmatic “I,” representative of humanity in general (Martyn, *Galatians*, 255, 258). The “I” in verses 19-21 does not represent a personal mystical experience (Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 57). Cf. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 103 n.31); Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 384.

<sup>708</sup> Cf. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 57.

<sup>709</sup> Ridderbos, *Epistle*, 104.

<sup>710</sup> The παιδαγωγός here has been taken in two different senses: 1) the positive, educating role that brings people to Christ (cf. the KJV “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ”); or 2) a strictly negative, restrictive and oppressive role (cf. de Boer, *Galatians*, 241). Regardless, the primary point evident in this context is that Paul understands the Law as having a temporary role, one that is now past with the coming of Christ. For a helpful summary of ancient descriptions of the παιδαγωγός see Longenecker, *Galatians*, 146–48.

<sup>711</sup> An alternative interpretation is that Paul had to come to the realisation that he could not fulfil the Law and thus must die to it. Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (Andover: W. F. Draper, 1870), 245; E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 133–134.

<sup>712</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 257.

likewise indirectly plays a role in delivering believers from its own curse.<sup>713</sup> For Paul this deliverance is not only release from guilt before the Law but it also means release from its confining and enslaving power (Gal 3:22-4:7).

This release from the enslaving power of the Law through participation in Christ's crucifixion involves a complete re-identification; in essence, it entails transferring from one sphere of existence into another, from the Law to new life in Christ. Tannehill has argued that the dative in verse 19, νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω, is used in connection with one's "release from one lordship and entry into another."<sup>714</sup> Specifically, the dative identifies the lord in question, the Law or God. The Law is the power of the old age, closely connected to sin and death, but believers have experienced "eschatological change through God's action."<sup>715</sup> Much of Tannehill's argumentation in this way follows upon his exegesis of Romans 6, which has many parallels to Galatians 2. In Romans, Paul speaks specifically of death to sin (6:2, 6) as a consequence of one's being baptised in Christ's death (6:3, 6), which results in the believer's walking in newness of life (6:4) and ultimately living to God (6:11). Here the dative constructions, ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ (Rom 6:2) and ζῆ τῷ θεῷ (Rom 6:11), are typically interpreted as datives of advantage and disadvantage,<sup>716</sup> but Blass and DeBrunner have noted that the dative expresses more the idea of the possessor.<sup>717</sup> This implication is clear in the context of Romans 6, "where sin and God, to whose advantage or disadvantage one dies or lives, are not beings of the same level as the one who dies or lives, but are slave masters who rule over men."<sup>718</sup> Furthermore, this dative construction occurs in all the Pauline passages that refer to dying with Christ as a "decisive past event" that involves death to sin, Law, and flesh, "the masters which rule over the old world."<sup>719</sup> This "formal consistency" demonstrates that "for Paul dying with Christ means a change of lordship."<sup>720</sup>

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<sup>713</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 58.

<sup>714</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 57. Tannehill argues that dying to it is not merely a matter of being "conscious of one's bondage."

<sup>715</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 58.

<sup>716</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 18. Cf. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), 33.

<sup>717</sup> F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 101.

<sup>718</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 18. We see the same idea in Romans 14:7-9, where believers live or die "to the Lord."

<sup>719</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 18.

<sup>720</sup> Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 18

In Galatians, this power of two dominions is a dominant motif. Indeed for Martyn and de Boer it is the controlling metaphor. Galatians 3:22–4:7 develops the idea of humans living under the captivity of the Law before the apocalyptic event of Christ’s deliverance. The idea of two powers is also shown in the language of being justified “in Law” (Gal 3:11 ἐν νόμῳ) or “in Christ” (Gal 2:17 ἐν Χριστῷ). Tannehill argues that these instances of being either “in Law” or “in Christ” have more than an instrumental sense; it is those who are in the Law whose existence is determined by the Law.<sup>721</sup> Therefore, when Paul speaks of tearing down what he has destroyed (Gal 2:18) and dying to the Law (Gal 2:19), there is a break from the power of that old realm and a re-identification with the new realm in Christ. The existence of the believer in Christ is now determined by this new lordship.

### 3.2 *The Interpretative Crux: The Revivified “I” (2:19b-20)*

#### 3.2.1 **Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι (2:19b)**

At the heart of Paul’s dramatic exclamation of his death to the Law is his astonishing declaration of co-crucifixion with Christ: Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι. In this climactic identification with Christ, Paul transitions from the particular to the general. He has just countered the false teaching that the Law is required for justification by claiming his own death to the Law. But justification in Christ, and therefore identification with him, requires crucifixion with respect to everything else, including the flesh and the world (Gal 5:24; 6:14). Gorman writes that this co-crucifixion with Christ is “parallel to and inclusive of the reality of death to the Law that is applicable only to Jews. For both Jews and Gentiles, faith means death.”<sup>722</sup> Most fundamentally there is a death of the self that results in the believer finding life only in identification with the crucifixion of Christ.

This concise declaration of Paul’s participation in Christ’s suffering and death begins his exposition of the believer’s new mode of existence. This phrase depicts first and foremost the centrality of the Christ-event itself for life and justification. At the same time, the σύν prefix underscores the believer’s participation with Christ in the crucifixion event.<sup>723</sup> This participation is both a matter of self-identification and self-involvement in the crucifixion of Christ. Paul’s employment of the perfect tense

<sup>721</sup> Tannehill demonstrates this point in Romans 3:19 (19).

<sup>722</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 67. n.73.

<sup>723</sup> Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92.



of συνεσταύρωμαι emphasises the ongoing nature of this participation in Christ.<sup>724</sup> It is not a one-time experience but a continuing self-involvement in the event that fundamentally alters the existence of the believer. Nor is being crucified with Christ merely metaphorical, but believers are actually reckoned by God as having shared in his death.<sup>725</sup> Thus, this profound statement builds upon the thought of being transferred from one realm of lordship to another; the believer is transferred from the sphere of the Law to the sphere of God through being co-crucified with Christ, which now defines the believer's entire existential reality.<sup>726</sup>

We pause here to underscore the similarities between participation in Christ's crucifixion and the nature of faith as we have thus far seen it depicted in the broader scope of Paul's writings. It seems then, that this very declaration of co-crucifixion with Christ, Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι, is perhaps the most cogent expression of self-negating reliance that we have thus far seen, and thus explicates further the Pauline understanding of faith. Co-crucifixion with Christ forms the basis for and describes the ongoing nature of this new life in Christ.<sup>727</sup> The believer experiences crucifixion with Christ through faith<sup>728</sup> so that all else is crucified to the believer and life is found in Christ alone.<sup>729</sup> Gorman has noted this connection between faith and participation in Galatians 2:19b: "It is hard to resist the conclusion that faith is, for Paul, a death experience, a death *to* the Law (and/or to the 'flesh') and a death *with* Christ."<sup>730</sup> Identification with Christ in his death is now the way of living righteously, of living to God. Thus, participation and faith are really commentary on each other.

With this conception of faith as participation in view, we are better positioned to make sense of verse 20, the interpretative crux for the whole theological summary of Galatians 2:15-21. To this we now turn.

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<sup>724</sup> Bruce, *Galatians*, 144; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92; Moo, *Galatians*, 171.

<sup>725</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 171; Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*; Ridderbos, *Epistle*, 57–62; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 92.

<sup>726</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 171.

<sup>727</sup> The connection between participation and faith comes into sharper focus in verse 20. Yet, it remains evident enough here that the way that Paul speaks of participation in Christ and faith shows great conceptual overlap.

<sup>728</sup> Faith is implicit in this verse by way of connection especially to verse 20: ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ (v.20) and what follows is clearly an expansion and explanation of Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι (v.19).

<sup>729</sup> Such crucifixion can be understood similarly to how Paul describes baptism into Jesus' death in Romans 6:3-4.

<sup>730</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting*, 67. So also Schnackenburg, *Baptism*, 63.

### 3.2.2 The Revivified I Lives in the Mode of Faith (Gal 2:20)

Galatians 2:19 has established the entry into a new form of existence through co-crucifixion that is now expounded in verse 20, where the “I” is revived, redefined, and resourced by Christ: “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” This passage on one level seems to articulate clearly the denial of human agency. Yet, human agency is not eradicated. Paul can still speak of his subsequent manner of life in the flesh. Here the language of faith comes into focus as Paul describes this new mode of living in faith in the Son of God: ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. The key to understanding the back and forth language in the phrases “I, but not I,” and “I have died, but the life I live” is the implicit subtext of resurrection. The new “I” that he speaks of here has been revived. Thus Paul can speak of “living to God” and “Christ living in me” as the outcome of being co-crucified with Christ. Gorman highlights the obvious implication of the resurrection in Paul’s logic: “The ‘I’ has been crucified but also lives as a new ‘I’; the logical and implicit missing link between death and new life is, of course, resurrection. Justification by faith means resurrection from the dead.”<sup>731</sup> Gorman is correct to note the correspondence between resurrection and faith here.<sup>732</sup> This connection has been underscored in previous chapters, in which we observed the close connection between faith and the hope of future resurrection.<sup>733</sup> In the next chapter we will demonstrate how Paul grounds this point of an implicit resurrection; the gift of the Spirit is in fact the gift of life (Gal 3). Yet, already in Galatians 2 Paul presents the life-giving significance of Jesus’ death. While many might be tempted to find the apex of Paul’s argument in his declaration of co-crucifixion, Paul shows that it is not the final word and helpfully expands his argument with this implicit, but crucial, claim of co-resurrection with Christ.<sup>734</sup>

The revived “I” is not resurrected in the same self-form that previously existed but is reconstituted and redefined “in Christ.” In Miroslav Volf’s quest to define the centre of the self, he looks to Galatians 2:19-20 for interpretative guidance. Volf states that Paul “presumes a centered self, more precisely a *wrongly* centered self

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<sup>731</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting*, 67–68.

<sup>732</sup> His point may be expanded upon, however, if the question is asked as to why Paul does not use the word resurrection here. That the believer is revived as a new subject is evident, but the culmination of resurrection does include a new body. Even though in this context, Paul does not mention the resurrection or *Parousia*, this future hope can be assumed. In Galatians 3:4, Paul’s question about suffering so many things in vain, *τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ*, assumes a future resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 15:19). The revived life that is conformed to Christ will be raised on the last day.

<sup>733</sup> Cf. the discussions on 1 Thess 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 1:9; 4:7-15.

<sup>734</sup> While this is more overtly stated in Romans 6:4, Paul seems content to address the concept more implicitly in Galatians.

that needs to be de-centered by being nailed to the cross.”<sup>735</sup> Yet, this decentered, crucified self is not annihilated. It is “both ‘de-centered’ and ‘re-centered’ by one and the same process, by participating in the death and resurrection of Christ through faith and baptism.”<sup>736</sup> Crucifixion with Christ results in a new centre for the believer: “the Christ who lives in it and with whom it lives.”<sup>737</sup> In being de-centred, the self did not lose its own centre, but rather received a new centre that “both transformed and reinforced the old one. Re-centering entails no self-obliterating denial of the self that dissolves the self in Christ and therefore legitimizes other such dissolutions.”<sup>738</sup> This transformed centre is now redefined so that, by faith, Jesus’ life attaches to those who believe he died and rose for them.

Having been revived and redefined, the believer is also newly resourced in Christ. Human agency is expounded so that, having been crucified with Christ, the “I” is no longer the operative power in a believer’s life. Instead, Christ lives in and empowers the believer: ζῆν δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός.<sup>739</sup> The human and the divine are represented together in a relationship by which the former is utterly dependent on the latter.

In the following phrase, we see the centrality of faith as the manner by which the believer relates to God:<sup>740</sup> ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. This phrase is the interpretative crux to the whole passage and exemplifies Paul’s integration of faith and participation in Christ; the two are seen together as two sides of the same coin to depict the mode of existence by which a believer now lives. Here faith is not presented as something one does, but a way of being.

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<sup>735</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 69.

<sup>736</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 70.

<sup>737</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 70.

<sup>738</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, 71.

<sup>739</sup> Whereas the majority of participatory references place the believer in Christ, this verse demonstrates the seemingly interchangeable notion of Christ living in and empowering the believer.

<sup>740</sup> The relational components of the gospel are manifest in Galatians, beginning with Paul’s concern that the Galatians are “deserting the one who called you” (Gal 1:6). It is notable that Paul does not regard them as having deserted a teaching, but God Himself. In his own ministry, Paul’s concern is to please God and not human beings (v.10), and this is expressed through being a servant of Christ. God set him apart and called him, revealing not a truth, but His very Son to Paul (1:15-16). Chapter three establishes a strong filial relationship between believers and God through their faith in Christ depicting them as “sons of God” (3:26), “heirs” (3:29), “adopted” (4:3-5), who through the Spirit cry out to God: “Abba! Father!” (4:6). Their status has been changed; no longer are the believers slaves, but sons and heirs (4:7) and children of promise (4:21-31). This sonship is expounded through Paul’s digression on knowing God (4:8), and even more, “being known by God” (4:9). In this way, the new age can be defined by πίστις (1:23; 3:23, 25). Faith is understood as the way by which one identifies oneself, specifically identifying oneself with the salvific work of Christ. With such identification, faith affirms divine priority in salvation and life in Christ while simultaneously rejecting self-initiative.

### *3.3 The Mode of Faith: Incorporating a Pauline Theology of Participatory Faith*

In previous chapters we explored the notion that faith is the mode of existence by which a believer participates in Christ, being both self-negating and self-involving in his crucifixion and resurrection. We now turn to draw upon parallels from passages we have previously examined to determine how they cohere with Paul's statement of participatory faith in 2:19-20.

#### **3.3.1 Self-involving Dependence**

The frequently recurring aspect of faith that has emerged in the three other epistles thus far examined is that of self-involving dependence. In a few instances, we observed how Paul utilises the metaphor of "standing" to depict the quality of dependence of the one exercising faith. Sometimes this was seen in clear participatory expression, "standing in the Lord" (1 Thess 3:8), and sometimes directly corresponding to πίστις, "standing in faith" (1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24). This idea of "standing in the Lord" or "standing in faith" suggests that one places oneself in a position of dependence on Christ.

This same picture of self-involving dependence is evident in Galatians 2:19-20. As we argued in Galatians 2:16, Paul presents two modes of human existence, both of which look to something outside of the self for justification: works of the Law, or Christ. Having forcefully argued that the only reliable source for justification is Christ, Paul depicts this sense of dependence in 2:19-20 through the intimate connection of being co-crucified with Christ: Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι. The revived believer is then reconstituted in a new state of existence defined by faith in Christ: ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Faith expounded as self-involving dependence clarifies that, although a human mode of existence, it is without life, definition, and resource apart from the one upon whom the dependence is demonstrated. Christological priority is exemplified in this reading because there is no dependence without the source of dependence, Christ, and by involving oneself in his act of deliverance on the cross, the believer has rejected all other forms of worth, identity, and security. Christ alone supplies what the believer needs for justification, for life, for everything.

#### **3.3.2 Self-negating Dependence**

The necessary corollary to self-involving dependence is self-negation. Confidence directed toward Christ is only explicable when humans recognise their

own impotence in and of themselves for justification (Gal 2:16) that results in living unto God (Gal 2:19). In 2 Corinthians, we observed that the discovery Paul made concerning the purpose of his own suffering, that is, so that he would rely not upon himself but on God (2 Cor 1:9), became a prominent theme developed throughout the letter. This self-negating reliance was shown in the repeated expression: “not us, but God” (2 Cor 2:17; 3:5). The Christological framework for this reliance was evident in that this confidence toward God occurs precisely *through* Christ: Πεποιθήσιν δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχομεν διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν (2 Cor 3:4). Taking *πεποιθήσις* as a conceptual cognate for *πίστις*, faith is understood as self-negating as well as self-involving. There is no more explicit statement of this self-negating dependence than Paul’s exclamation in Galatians 2:19b: Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι. Although co-crucified, the believer continues to live, now in the mode of “faith in the Son of God.” Dying with Christ means dying with respect to all else: the Law (2:19), the flesh (5:24), the world (6:14), the self (2:19b-20a; 5:13). Yet, after death the believer is resurrected to a new realm in which Christ is Lord over all. In co-crucifixion with Christ, the believer’s identity, worth, and security become wrapped up in this new Lord. The new mode is “in faith,” that is, in self-negating dependence on this new Lord who lives in and empowers the believer.

### 3.3.3 Endurance

Additionally, faith as the mode of existence that describes the human life in Christ has been elsewhere understood through the idea of endurance. In 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians we saw that Paul was concerned that the faith of his readers be an ongoing expression of their new life in Christ. News of the afflictions of the Thessalonian church stirred in Paul a concern about the present and continuing state of their faith (3:1-10). Timothy was sent with the purpose to establish (*στηρίζω*) and to encourage (*παρακαλέω*) the Thessalonians “on behalf of” their faith (*ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν* 3:2) lest they be disturbed (*σαίνω* 3:3) by their afflictions or tempted by the tempter (3:5). As an extension of his understanding of enduring faith, Paul speaks of growing in faith. In 1 Thessalonians 3:10, Paul’s concern is “to *put in order*” the “imperfections” in their faith, which suggests that faith has varying degrees that Paul and his fellow workers hope to bolster (3:10).<sup>741</sup>

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<sup>741</sup> Cf. Gal 1:6 where Paul conveys a concern that his readers are turning away from the one who called them: *Θαυμάζω ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως μετατίθεσθε ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς ἐν χάριτι*

In 1 Corinthians, Paul likewise expresses faith as necessarily having an enduring quality. In his climactic chapter on the resurrection, he utilises a variety of verbs to explicate the subjective aspects of faith: παραλαμβάνω (1 Cor 15:1), ἵστημι (15:1), σφίζω (15:2), and κατέχω (15:2). Paul deliberately reminds the Corinthians of their existential response, their own subjective, continuous acceptance and active dependence upon the objective Christ-event. As a confident, continuous standing upon Christ, which holds fast through life while awaiting the culmination of our future salvation (vv.19-58), faith is shown to be self-involving in Christ's very death and resurrection. Paul's concluding exhortation in 1 Corinthians 15 is to "be steadfast (ἑδραῖος), immovable (ἀμετακίνητος), always abounding in the work of the Lord" (v.58). The combination of ideas associated with ἑδραῖος and ἀμετακίνητος follows a similar line of thought as his earlier depiction in 1 Corinthians 15 of "holding fast" (κατέχω). Just as the Corinthians seemed to be wavering in their faith in terms of questioning a resurrection from the dead, so the Galatians are suspect to wavering in their attempt to reappropriate the Law for salvific purposes. Living in faith involves unwavering, immovable, and steadfast identification with Christ alone.

In these instances, Paul is concerned that the Christians to whom he is writing endure steadfastly in faith. We can understand this mode of faith of Galatians 2:20 in a similar way. Paul has deliberately chosen to depict co-crucifixion with Christ with the perfect tense to underscore the continuing effect of having been crucified with Christ. The following explication of his revived life ἐν πίστει utilises the present tense of ζάω to carry forward the idea that participatory faith is necessarily an enduring state of being.

### **3.3.4 Faith as Participation in Christ's Death and Resurrection**

The idea that faith is the means or mode of participating in Christ has been a developing theme throughout our study and has taken shape in a variety of ways. On the most basic level, we saw that faith is a confidence that what is true of Christ will be true of believers. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 5:1-11, Paul assures the Thessalonians that those who trusted Christ in life are assured life with Christ in the future. The same notion of faith was evident in 1 Corinthians 15:1-20 where we observed that faith in the resurrection is a subjective trust in an objective, past event that has bearing on one's hope of personal participation in a future bodily

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[Χριστοῦ] εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον. The implication is that faith involves a choice of steadfast and enduring faithfulness.

resurrection. Believers depend on the promise that just as Christ rose from the dead, so will believers in him. The unifying thread is that faith brings believers into participatory experience in Christ that begins first by trusting in the truth of Jesus' own death and resurrection and culminates in future bodily resurrection with him. In Galatians 2, the idea of a future resurrection is not overt. Yet resurrection is *indubitably* implicit and logically necessary in the way that Paul alternates between the ideas of co-crucifixion and a continuing existence in Christ. That continuing mode of existence is participation in Christ through faith as the believer experiences resurrection of the self that is redefined and resourced by Christ.

Some of the most profound aspects of faith as participation were uncovered in the salient pericope in 2 Corinthians 4:7-15, in which Paul explicates not only the idea of a future resurrection but also a present experience of dying and rising with Christ. Indeed, this passage has many parallels with Galatians 2:19-20. In 2 Corinthians, Paul identifies with the death of Christ in his sufferings, which has the result of the life of Jesus being manifested in Paul's mortal flesh (4:10-11). This identification with Christ's death through suffering could be endured because of his faith in the one who raises from the dead. As Paul details his hardship, he is grounded in confidence in this power of God (4:7, 13; cf. 1:8-9).

In Galatians, Paul articulates this phenomenon of dying with Christ more concisely as being co-crucified with Christ—Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι (Gal 2:19). He then expands his point in Galatians 2:20—he no longer lives but Christ lives in him. In both 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 and Galatians 2:19-20 there is close correspondence between this mode of human action by faith and participation in the self-giving love of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul depicts this self-giving love<sup>742</sup> as death that is at work in him in order to produce life in those to whom he ministers (ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν – 2 Cor 4:12). In Galatians 2:20, Paul's faith is rooted in the One who gave himself on behalf of those who believe. Both pericopes conclude with a reminder that the whole story of believers' participation in the death and resurrection of Christ by faith is emphatically rooted in the grace of God (Gal 2:21; 2 Cor 4:15).

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<sup>742</sup> Note that the experience of death working in Paul that produces life in others (4:12) is rooted in his participation in Christ (4:10-11).

### 3.3.5 Faith as the Nexus of Anthropology and Christology

In each of our previous passages, faith is the key anthropological descriptor. We see this particularly in 2 Corinthians 4:7-15, where Paul expands his initial thesis regarding human reliance upon God into a complex depiction of human weakness that participates in the suffering and death of Christ. Faith is the point of connection whereby the resurrection power of God is realised. This conception of faith carries well into Galatians 2 when faith is understood as reliance upon the self-sacrificial Christ in whose death and resurrection believers participate. This continuous experience of the Christ-event becomes the power by which the believer lives. Through it, the believer experiences death to the Law as death to the old age (1:4) in order to be empowered to live to God (2:19). This kind of living is only possible when a believer attaches him or herself to the Christ-event and thus naturally involves a kind of death to self in addition to death to the Law. Yet, this death of self is not an annihilation of human agency but rather yields a revived human agent. Paul's climactic conclusion in 2:20 expounds the antithesis of 2:16, in which Paul juxtaposes two ways of human existence. Human agency is now expounded in verse 20 so that, having been crucified with Christ, the "I" is no longer the operative power in a believer's life. Instead, Christ lives in, redefines, and resources the believer. This is a reality that is experienced in the mode of faith, a mode that is wholly Christ-focused and empowered by divine agency. As self-involving dependence, faith is the very mode of existence by which believers participate in Christ.

A point we have highlighted repeatedly is that through Paul's poignant expressions of participation in Christ, the human agent does not cease to exist. In Galatians 2:20 he specifies that his continued existence is lived in the flesh, and in 2 Corinthians 4:11 he writes about "we who live." Human agency is clearly present, and Paul elucidates it very specifically in terms of a life in the mode of faith in Christ: ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ (Gal 2:20). To the Corinthians, Paul explicates his own ministry of preaching in terms of faith: Ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως (2 Cor 4:13). Human action is exhorted, expected, and described in all of Paul's letters. Yet, human action is not independent of God's empowerment, and these two important passages clarify that Paul understands human agency precisely in terms of faith. Faith is the only acceptable mode of human existence, and that from which Christian action is produced, because it is the mode of dependence upon God. In this way, faith is the nexus of anthropology and Christology.



### 3.4 Participation in Christ's Faithfulness?

#### 3.4.1 Richard Hays's Thesis

At this juncture, a key point of clarification needs to be made about the precise nature of the believer's participation. We have just argued for an integration of the Pauline conceptions of faith and participation in Christ such that they are seen as two sides of the same coin. The conclusion is that participatory faith depicts the human mode of existence for those justified in Christ. However, Galatians 2:20 has been used, along with the seven πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases, to defend the notion that believers participate specifically in the faith *of* Christ. In Martyn's interpretation of Galatians 2:19-20, he understands this co-crucifixion to mean that the old "I" has not been merely renewed but replaced by the risen Christ himself. This eradication of the old "I" means that the individual now lives in a different sphere, "the faith of Christ."<sup>743</sup> De Boer likewise demarcates the faith that Paul speaks of in Galatians 2:20 to be Christ's own and not that of Paul or the paradigmatic believer whom Paul represents.<sup>744</sup>

While Martyn and de Boer more or less assume this interpretation, Richard Hays offers some attempt to provide exegetical support. He argues that in Galatians 2:20 "Paul is provocatively denying his own role as the acting 'subject' of his own life and claiming that he has been supplanted in this capacity by Christ." By this Hays means: "'the faith of the Son of God' is now the governing power in Paul's existence."<sup>745</sup> We have already argued extensively for the objective genitive reading, but let us scrutinise these claims a bit further in this context.

In support of his construal, Hays compares Galatians 2:20 to Romans 5:15 to display a similar syntactical structure:

Rom 5:15	ἐν χάριτι τῆ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
Gal 2:20	ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ

Both verses employ the preposition ἐν followed by a noun, χάρις or πίστις, and a genitive clause. Hays avers that it would "never occur to anyone to translate τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ here as an objective genitive."<sup>746</sup> For Hays, the only real difference is that the phrase is a modifier of χάρις instead of πίστις in Galatians 2:20.

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<sup>743</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 258.

<sup>744</sup> De Boer more specifically takes this to mean Christ's faithful death (*Galatians*, 162).

<sup>745</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 154.

<sup>746</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 154.

Yet, this “only difference” is not merely a matter of lexical differentiation, replacing one noun with another. One would expect the two words to function differently because χάρις is not a verbal noun like πίστις is. Additionally, we note that Paul roots χάρις essentially and unambiguously in the activity of God. Thus Paul can offer an opening blessing and a closing benediction of grace from God, the theme that brackets and grounds the whole letter (1:3; 6:18). Paul is thoroughly and primarily concerned with the gift of God in Christ and with God’s calling of believers into this realm of grace (Gal 1:6, 15; 2:9, 21; 5:4). Our exegetical survey of πίστις, on the other hand, has revealed it to be primarily an anthropological characteristic of those who respond to the call of grace. As has been demonstrated, πίστις is the chief description for the human mode of existence for those “in Christ.”

Hays purports to find support for his claim that the Son of God is the acting subject of the “faith” not only in the preceding claim but also in the following participial modifier: τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ. He asserts that “the whole context portrays Christ as the active agent and Paul as the instrument through which and/or for whom Christ’s activity comes to expression.”<sup>747</sup> Furthermore, Hays asserts that the “unrelenting emphasis on the priority of Christ’s (or God’s) willing and doing over any human will or action is the theological keynote of the whole letter.”<sup>748</sup> At this point, Hays makes a couple of debatable moves. First, Hays seems to conflate Christological priority with the idea of Christ as agent. Secondly, the role of Christ as an active agent in the two participial phrases does not necessarily mean the same idea ought to be read implicitly into Paul’s use of πίστις. As we have repeatedly seen, Paul clearly portrays the human mode of existence as one of dependence upon the efficacious activity of God in Christ. To simply demonstrate the priority of the divine agent does not support a reading that eliminates human agency. Rather, Paul seeks to communicate very specifically how the human relates to the Christ-event—that is, in the mode of faith. In both self-negating and self-involving dependence, the believer now participates in the very Christ-event by faith.

Hays finds additional support for this reading in his observation of the threefold repetition of the conjunction δέ in verse 20. He argues that each should be treated as connectives while pointing out that the final δέ in 2:20b is typically

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<sup>747</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 155.

<sup>748</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 155.

translated in an adversative sense. Hays suggests that if Paul had intended a dialectical correction to the first half of the verse, he would have more likely employed the strong adversative, ἀλλά. Thus, the final δέ should be read as a continuation of the thought that flows from Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι (Gal 2:19b).<sup>749</sup> However, rather than a simple continuation or a strong adversative, it would seem that the final δέ clause introduces clarification and amplification to the ideas immediately preceding. If we look back on the flow of thought from verses 19-20, we do see a continuative line of logic, with each point building upon the preceding clause. Paul explicates his death to the Law (v.19a) with his profound declaration of co-crucifixion with Christ (v.19b). Yet the logic of this short clause is expounded in verse 20 so that co-crucifixion is more explicitly stated: “it is not I who live (v.20a) but Christ lives in me (v.20b).” Clearly, Paul does not mean to suggest that he has literally, physically died. Thus he clarifies the former “hyperbolic” statement that he is “no longer living” in the next clause: “and the life that I now live in the flesh I live in faith in the Son of God” (v.20c). There the notions of faith and participation in Christ are fully integrated. Yet, not in the way that Martyn, de Boer, and Hays suggest. The idea of participating specifically in the faith(fulness) of Christ seems to be entirely read into the text and in fact obfuscates both that which is truly efficacious, that is, the Christ-event itself, and the essential place of human dependence on that efficacious gift of grace.

Rather than conveying the idea of participating in Christ’s faith, it is best to understand that human faith is the mode of existence that appropriates this new life in Christ; faith is participation in Christ, who determines and resources the newly revived life. The continuous experience of the Christ-event becomes the power in the believer’s life.

### **3.4.2 The Indicative/Imperative Paradigm**

As we have seen, Galatians 2:20 presents a conjoined human/divine dynamic. Foundational to Paul’s presentation of human agency is that believers are enabled and empowered by God because of the Christ-event. In the introduction, we discussed Bultmann’s paradigm for understanding some of the difficult imperatives in Paul’s writings; the commands of God are always grounded in divine enablement for Paul. This indicative/imperative paradigm may shed light on how we understand agency in Galatians. Here Paul describes his own co-crucifixion with Christ, which results in

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<sup>749</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 154–55.

Christ living in him. Yet, human agency has not been eradicated; Paul can still speak of the life he lives in the flesh. Barclay clarifies: “This participation means also the first subject of the new life is emphatically declared to be Christ, not ‘I.’”<sup>750</sup> Yet the “I” remains and while having its focus entirely on Christ.

This indicative/imperative paradigm is helpful in showing that human agency is clearly not eradicated, nor is it to be understood as an autonomous act of human will but rather as actions fulfilled in light of and response to the empowering agency of Christ. Within this indicative/imperative paradigm, the relationship between divine and human agency is elucidated by the role of faith. Galatians 2:20 reveals that new life in Christ is explicitly lived *in faith* directed to Christ.

### 3.5 *The Grace of God: Grounding Paul’s Theology*

Galatians 2:21 grounds the theological prelude that comprises these six verses: “I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing.” This final declaration reveals the grounds upon which the whole argument of the preceding verses lies, the grace of God.<sup>751</sup> In fact, grace is what brackets and grounds the contents of the entire letter (cf. 1:3 and 6:18). Barclay notes that by bracketing the letter in this way, “Paul situates its contents within a movement of grace from God (and Christ) to the Galatians: All its arguments and appeals are intended not just to inform its recipients about this grace, but to place them within its transformative dynamic.”<sup>752</sup>

For Paul, the grace of God is patently demonstrated in Christ’s death, apart from the Law (cf. 5:4). To understand this death rightly is, according to Barclay, “to grasp the grace of God; the alternative is to misconstrue both Christ and grace.”<sup>753</sup> Context reveals that this gift of grace in Christ’s death signifies his self-giving love. This is evident in the letter’s prescript in which the χάρις of God and Christ is followed by the participial phrase that describes Christ’s character and mission: τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (1:4). The same connection between grace and Christ’s self-giving love carries from 2:20 into his declaration of grace in 2:21:

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<sup>750</sup> John M. G. Barclay, “‘By the Grace of God I Am What I Am’: Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul,” in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. Simon J. Gathercole and John M. G. Barclay, LNTS 335 (London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 152.

<sup>751</sup> Cf. Moo, who concludes that this is Paul’s final argument for the veracity of what he has been saying in this pericope (Moo, *Galatians*, 172).

<sup>752</sup> Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 331.

<sup>753</sup> Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 79.

τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ (2:20). This self-giving death of Christ excludes righteousness based on the Law. Those who continue to seek righteousness by the Law in fact do nullify God's grace.

As Martyn and de Boer have argued, verse 21 does represent a return, in a sense, to the language of Galatians 2:16.<sup>754</sup> The two verses present Paul's antithesis of justification on the basis of works of the law or of Christ's atoning death. The point of focus is precisely God's work carried out in Christ's death, the manifestation of God's grace. Yet, this does not preclude the necessary human response of faith that Paul so ardently emphasises. Nor does this human response infringe on the priority of divine grace. With Dunn, we concur that the most natural reading throughout Galatians may be summarised in the classic formulation—"justified by grace through faith."<sup>755</sup>

### *3.6 Galatians 2:19-21 Summary*

Our exegesis of 2:19-21 demonstrates that, for Paul, the Christ-event signalled a transfer of lordship from the authority of the Law to Christ himself. Faith in Christ is the appropriation of the gift that enables transference into the new sphere of existence in Christ. It is also the way Paul describes the new mode of existence within that sphere. Paul's climactic declaration Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι demonstrates that participation in the Christ-event is a continuous dying to all other systems of lordship within the world and a continuing self-involvement that alters the existence of the believer. In Christ, the believer is revived, redefined, and resourced to live in the mode of faith. This mode entails self-involving dependence on the deliverance and new life provided for by the cross of Christ. It also involves endurance in faith as the new mode of existence.

In comparison to 2 Corinthians 4, we saw that identifying with Christ's death results in his life being manifested in the one who has faith. This pericope, which shows many parallels to Galatians 2:19-21, reveals a close correspondence between faith and participation, supporting the arising conception of a participatory faith. Yet, participatory faith does not imply participation in the faith of Christ but rather human dependence upon Christ that is simultaneously self-negating and self-involving because of his efficacious work on the cross and the resulting new life in him. Christ

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<sup>754</sup> Although not a return in the sense that they argue. We have already demonstrated that their conclusion that Galatians 2:21 affirms a subjective, or authorial, genitive reading of πίστεως Χριστοῦ in 2:16 is untenable.

<sup>755</sup> Dunn, "Once More," 263.

now defines what the believer lives for and by whose power the believer lives because it is by his death that the human is revived.

The phrase ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ in 2:20 represents an interpretative crux by which to understand the whole pericope. In verses 16-18, πίστις involved grasping all that Christ accomplished to justify believers, and verse 20 expands that idea to convey a continuing manner of living to God. Faith is shown to be the mode of existence that is simultaneously self-negating and Christ-affirming, from which all other human activity flows. It is the active, self-involving mode of existence by which a believer lives to God through dependence upon Christ.

#### **4. Conclusions from Galatians 2:15-21**

A correct interpretation of Paul's language of faith drastically impacts how we understand the letter to the Galatians as a whole. Our study of Galatians 2:15-21 has revealed that faith is integrally linked to participation in Christ in that faith is the believer's life-sustaining mode of existence in Christ (Gal 2:20). In this way, faith can even be understood as participation in Christ. This understanding of faith powerfully portrays the necessity of the death of self so that Christ's life may be manifest. This dynamic is one in which a believer lives in a new reality which draws from another, from the one who died to give the one who believes new life. We have also seen that faith is active in the letter of Galatians; faith is the locus in which action is generated in the believer. However, faith is not self-generated; faith is elicited and empowered by the Spirit of the Son. Paul's detailed discussion of the Spirit in Galatians 3 provides this clarification and will be dealt with in the next chapter; yet it is evident already in Galatians 2 with Paul's depiction of co-crucifixion (2:19), his affirmation that Christ lives in the believer (2:20), and his basic summation of everything he has expounded in terms of the grace of God (2:21).

In light of our analysis of faith in Galatians, we observed that the objective genitive is the best interpretation of the debated phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ and is largely consonant with the underlying theological emphases of Hays, Martyn, and de Boer. Grasping Paul's fundamental concern for divine initiative is crucial. Yet, Paul equally displays emphasis on faith as the explicit response of humans to that divine initiative. The objective genitive rendering does not signify a human solution but rather specifies the appropriation of the solution provided by God in Christ. To understand

faith as a work is to misapprehend the idea that faith is self-renouncing, self-negating, and the act of participating in Christ to receive the benefits that are available because of his work. In fact, the objective genitive reading is the logical extension of divine priority in God's justification through Christ as the believer participates in God's act by faith. Re-identifying the key anthropological term to refer to the faithfulness of Christ, as the subjective genitive advocates do, obfuscates the Pauline ideas of participation and of faith. The key to understanding the objective genitive is that the focal point (the object) of faith is the very one upon whom the believer is relying.

In regard to the issue of agency, we have seen that Paul does not reject human activity. An important qualification, however, is that when Paul writes of human agency affirmatively, it is always qualified by divine agency. Here we saw that the indicative/imperative paradigm helps to decode the commonly construed sense of active and passive agents. Rather, Paul presents a mysterious partnership in which the divine agent enables the activity of the human. In the multiple examples of Paul's exhortation to believers to act in a certain way, he consistently envelops that command with the theological underpinning that makes it possible. Active human engagement with the work of Christ is necessary but never solitary and never self-generated.

We also observed that the debate about the centre of Paul's theology separates two essential doctrines that Paul holds together. It is by participating in Christ that believers are justified. The two doctrines are not one and the same. Paul uses δικαίωω to refer to God's declaring humans righteous, and he can speak of both "righteousness by faith in Christ" (2:16) and "righteousness by participating in Christ" (2:17). Yet, both justification and participation depend on faith, the mode of dependence on Christ.

Once faith has been clarified, the primary concerns that shadow the interpretative moves of Martyn and de Boer may be alleviated. Divine priority loses no pre-eminence because faith is recognition of self-impotence that identifies with the Christ-event, relying fully on its pneumatological, operative power. When Paul speaks of πίστις, he is referring to a believer's disposition of active, self-involving dependence upon Christ. As such, faith is wholly Christological; faith is never to be understood merely as an anthropological term; it is never an act of autonomous human will. As a marker of identity of the new life enacted by the Christ-event, faith is simultaneously self-negation and Christ-glorifying. As a self-negating mode, faith

draws on someone outside of and beyond oneself. This faith recognises Christ alone as worthy of one's dependence; in this way faith elevates the Christocentricity inherent in Paul's theology.

As we continue through the letter, we will see that Paul addresses human agency in a variety of ways, but faith is revealed as the foundational believer act because it is principally about recognising one's own dependence on the prior act of God. Faith is the mode in which all believer acts take place (Gal 2:20).



## Chapter 6: Galatians 3–6

*“As faith is indivisible, there is no distinction of that faith which is a response to God’s action in Christ (i.e. justifying faith) from that which is the Christian’s continuing life.”<sup>756</sup>*

### 1. The Human Reception of the Divine Gift

The basic theological summary that Paul composes in Galatians 2:15-21 focuses the seminal points at issue in Paul’s confrontation of the false gospel presented to the Galatians. Chapter three can be understood as the expansion of and argumentation for these seminal points. As we argued in the previous chapter that the basic antithesis of Galatians 2:16 sets two modes of human existence against each other, we will see that the same juxtaposition frames his expanded argument in chapter three. Essentially, there are two fundamental threads to Paul’s argument: the soteriological basis for salvation in Christ alone, and the human appropriation of this salvation. If either of these threads is eliminated or under-emphasised, the heart of Paul’s gospel will be misconstrued. In this chapter, once again, we will demonstrate that Paul presents faith as the only appropriate manner of relating to God precisely because it is the human posture of self-negation and dependence upon Christ. In this way, faith is the constitutive element of a Christocentric anthropology; in this relationship of complete dependence, the sole soteriological basis of salvation in Christ is realised within the believer.

#### 1.1 *The Spirit and Faith (3:1–5)*

##### 1.1.1 **Receiving the Life-Giving Spirit**

As we begin our exploration of faith in Galatians 3, it is immediately apparent that the Spirit is intricately and intimately connected to human faith. Having just delineated the relationship between justification in Christ and human faith in Galatians 2:16-21, Paul’s transition to the Spirit in chapter three marks an important development in his argument.<sup>757</sup> In these verses Paul rearticulates the antithesis of 2:16. That which he is arguing against remains the same—the benefits of the Christ-gift are not received ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. The positive force of his argument, however, is

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<sup>756</sup> Ziesler, *Righteousness*, 165.

<sup>757</sup> Betz has identified 3:1-5 as the introduction to the *probatio* section of the epistle (3:1–4:31) which contains the “proofs” for Paul’s argument. Betz, *Galatians*, 128.

this time articulated in terms of receiving the Spirit.<sup>758</sup> This portion of the letter carries Paul’s argument forward: receiving the Spirit is the evidence of their justification, reflected in the signs and miracles that Paul mentions in Galatians 3:5.<sup>759</sup> More significantly is how Paul connects the presence of Christ (2:19–20) in Paul to the presence of the Spirit.<sup>760</sup>

The gift of new life is a central component of the singular gift of God in Christ and it is evident that, for Paul, new life results from the work of the Spirit. In the previous chapter we discussed the new life that arises when the crucified self is reconstituted to live anew in the mode of faith in Christ (ἐν πίστει – 2:20). This new life is wholly defined in Christ and experienced by complete dependence upon him. What in chapter two was more implicit regarding the role of the Spirit in revivifying the believer, begins to be more explicit in chapter three. Here, Paul clarifies that this Spirit begins (ἐνάρχομαι 3:3) and completes (ἐπιτελέω 3:3) the Christian. The very righteousness that has been conferred to the believer (2:16) results in new life (Gal 3:11).<sup>761</sup> In this verse, the Spirit is not explicitly referred to as the one who makes alive, but this can be inferred by Paul’s extended argument that contrasts the Law, which cannot make alive (3:21), and faith, by which the believer receives the Spirit. By the end of the letter, the role of the Spirit as life-giver is made explicit: εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν (in Gal 5:25). Πνεύματι is best interpreted as a dative of means so that the phrase gives the sense, “if we live by means of the Spirit.”<sup>762</sup> The clause is a first class conditional statement in which the protasis is

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<sup>758</sup> Central to the way Paul argues throughout this letter is to call attention to the various benefits and outcomes of the gift received in the posture of faith. In chapter two, Paul began his argument by referring primarily to the gracious bestowal of righteousness upon the believer (2:16), gaining new life (2:18-20), and the indwelling of Christ (2:20). In chapter three, he expands to focus on receipt of the Spirit (3:2-5), and being part of Abraham’s family (3:7-9). Indeed, each of these benefits are interconnected so that when Paul refers to one, the others are implied and necessary in order to grasp the fullness of God’s grace. With each point Paul displays a single facet of one unified gift.

<sup>759</sup> So de Boer, *Galatians*, 130–136; Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 378; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 112; 383–384.

<sup>760</sup> Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, 221.

<sup>761</sup> An argument will be made below that Paul’s citation of Hab 2:4 in Gal 3:11 is best read: “The one who is righteous by faith will live.” In this way, new life is the result of being declared righteous. Cf. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 494; Moisés Silva, “Abraham, Faith, and Works: Paul’s Use of Scripture in Galatians 3:6-14,” *WTJ* 63 (2001): 261, n.28; De Boer, *Galatians*, 233; Campbell, *Deliverance*, 863.

<sup>762</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 162.

assumed true for the sake of argument;<sup>763</sup> Paul takes it as a fact that life is derived from the Spirit.<sup>764</sup>

Paul draws out the explicit connection between the Spirit and new life at several key points in his letters.<sup>765</sup> In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul explains that the Spirit is the cause of resurrection life (1 Cor 15:44).<sup>766</sup> Paul continues in 15:45 to speak of the last Adam who became a life-giving Spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν). This passage draws out the inseparability of the work of Christ and the role of the Spirit in re-creating life in believers.<sup>767</sup> In his resurrection, Christ, through the power of the Spirit, is the giver of life both now and in the future to all who follow him. 2 Corinthians 3:6 is Paul's most explicit statement about the life-giving role of the Spirit: ὁς καὶ ἰκάνωσεν ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος, τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείνει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ. The immediate context conveys a contrast between old and new covenant and this passage bears many similarities to our text in Galatians. Both contrast the Law, which leads to death, with the Spirit who gives life. The new life given by the Spirit is in fact new creation life which Paul expounds in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15.<sup>768</sup>

Romans 8 provides some of the clearest exposition on the Spirit as life-giver. The chapter opens by referring to the Spirit as the “Spirit of life” (Rom 8:2), which is taken to mean “the life-giving Spirit.”<sup>769</sup> Because God's Spirit dwells in believers (8:9), their human spirits are made alive (8:10).<sup>770</sup> The resurrection power of the Spirit

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<sup>763</sup> Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 450. See the discussion of the indicative/imperative paradigm in chapter 5 § 3.4.2.

<sup>764</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 429.

<sup>765</sup> The role of the Spirit as life-giver is a prevalent theme in Genesis and Ezekiel, and would have formed the basis of Paul's own conviction about the enlivening work of the Spirit Cf. especially Gen 2:7; 6:3; Ez 36:26-27; 37:1-14.

<sup>766</sup> Louw-Nida 12.21. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1968), 372.

<sup>767</sup> Dodd expounds on the relationship between Christ and the Spirit: “The race of Adam is doomed to death; life must be the gift of God; and life God gives, by giving his Spirit to those who are in Christ. The critical moment is not the moment of bodily death in hope of a blessed resurrection; it is the moment at which the man came to be in Christ. From that moment he is immortal, not, so to speak, in his own right, but because Christ lives in him.” C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), 126.

<sup>768</sup> Cf. Yates who notes that it is likely that Paul echoes his description from 1 Cor 15:45 as well as the new creation text of Ezekiel 36–37 here in 2 Cor 3:6. John W. Yates, *The Spirit and Creation in Paul*, WUNT 2: 251 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 110–13, 124.

<sup>769</sup> C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1962), 155.

<sup>770</sup> The reference here to πνεῦμα begs the question of whether it is the human or divine Spirit. Morris has argued that it is best to take it as the divine Spirit since every other reference does in the context of vv 9-11 (Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 309). However, the immediate context is referring to the impact the

that is revealed in the body of Christ results in a future resurrection for believers (Rom 8:11).

In Galatians, Paul acutely portrays the contrast between the life bestowed by the divine gift and the curse that leads to destruction for those who are of the Law (Gal 3:10, 23; 4:3; 6:8). The role of the Spirit as life-giver is crucial to his argument as a whole. Not only does it serve to expand and explicate the gift of justification that is received through faith. It will also become the central line of argumentation in the “ethical” section of the letter that culminates in Paul’s argument that only “new creation” counts for anything (Gal 6:15). With this background of the role of the Spirit as life-giver and the link between Paul’s emphasis on this aspect of the divine gift and the justification in Christ (2:16), we move on to address the connection between faith and the Spirit.

### **1.1.2 The Reciprocal Relationship of Faith and the Spirit**

The opening of Galatians 3 introduces the important connection between faith and the Spirit. In previous chapters we have argued that faith is pneumatologically inspired and enabled.<sup>771</sup> Yet here, faith seems to be prior to the gift of the Spirit: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; (Gal 3:2). Does this suggest that faith is causative of receiving the Spirit? In some sense, the answer to this question must be affirmative. Watson avers: “Faith precedes and conditions the giving of the Spirit just as it precedes and conditions the bestowal of righteousness. Validation and vindication are necessarily responsive acts.”<sup>772</sup> Yet the broader context of Galatians, and Paul’s writings as a whole, reveals that the answer to this question cannot be simply reduced to a yes or a no. Watson notes: “the faith that is validated and vindicated is itself preceded by and comprehended within the overarching divine saving act that Paul calls ‘the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (3:24). The divine righteousness consequent on faith has its prior ‘sign’ (ἔνδειξις) in the blood of the crucified Christ (3:25, 26).”<sup>773</sup> Perhaps focusing on a sequential process of which agency comes first, faith or the activity of the Spirit, is the wrong way to approach Paul’s thought on the divine-human dynamic.

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Spirit has on the human. Thus, it is best to understand verse 10 as contrasting the dead body with the human spirit that is made alive by the life-giving Spirit mentioned in 8:9.

<sup>771</sup> Cf. previous chapters, noting specifically the discussions on 1 Thess 1:5; 2:13; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4-5; 2 Cor 4:13.

<sup>772</sup> Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 238.

<sup>773</sup> Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles*, 238.

We have seen repeatedly that the Spirit elicits faith;<sup>774</sup> the Spirit is the action and presence of God that helps faith come into being. At the same time, humans respond to this activity of the Spirit. Thus, while Paul focuses here on the question of how the Galatian believers received the Spirit, there is already at work the notion that the Spirit enables that faith. This axiom should be carried into our understanding of the way Paul talks about faith here; it is assumed on the basis of the general and overarching emphasis on divine priority in the letter as a whole (e.g., Gal 1:4, 15-16). Later on in the letter, Paul will reveal that it is only by the Spirit that faith can articulate itself (Gal 4:6).<sup>775</sup>

Thus, rather than a sequential process, Paul presents a sort of reciprocal relationship between faith and the Spirit. The nature of this divine–human relationship is interactive and asymmetrical. One aspect or the other can be underscored at different times for different purposes. On one occasion, Paul can highlight the prior act of the Spirit (1 Thess 1:5; 2:13; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4-5; 2 Cor 4:13), and elsewhere, he can emphasise the role of faith (e.g., Gal 3; Rom 10:9-10). Yet, foundational to this reciprocal relationship is that the Spirit is the presupposition of correct human agency, and the one who reconstitutes right human agency as the Spirit is received by faith. The human act of faith is always one of response. In this way, this activity is also asymmetrical. In the context of Galatians 3, Paul is stressing the mode of being in which the Spirit is received in contrast to a life lived ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Faith is the mode of relating to God and this mode presupposes that there is an active God to whom one is responding.

This reciprocal relationship is also revealed in the way that receiving the Spirit is not depicted as a punctiliar event but rather as the continuing mode of existence by which the believer experiences the empowering of the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:4-5). Paul begins Galatians 3 with reference to the past: ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; (3:2). In using the aorist of λαμβάνω, Paul underscores that the Galatians' past act of receiving the Spirit took place on the basis of faith. Then Paul transitions to question their present status: οὕτως ἀνόητοί ἐστε, ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε; (3:3). The verb ἐπιτελέω is here in the present middle, reflecting that the activity of the Spirit is both ongoing and, in fact, it is the Spirit of the Son who effects the transformative work in the one who believes. In 3:5, Paul

<sup>774</sup> See chapter two § 1.3; 1.4; chapter three § 1.2; chapter four § 2.2; chapter five § 3.2.

<sup>775</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 12:1-3.

employs the present tense again in depicting the activity of God in supplying the Spirit and working miracles: ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν. In both, we see the interactive relationship of faith and the activity of the Spirit. Specifically, faith is the human mode of reception of the Spirit, both past and ongoing.<sup>776</sup>

At this point an important qualification must be made. To say that faith is the basis for receiving the Spirit does not suggest that faith is a form of achievement. Rather, faith is the mode of being in which the gift is received. Furthermore, it is by receipt of this Spirit that this new way of being comes into existence.<sup>777</sup> Receiving the Spirit ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως does not convey a prior human act that is required before God will act on behalf of the believer. Rather, faith is the point of connection in which the gift is received; in the very receipt the human is divinely recreated.

### 1.1.3 Receiving the Spirit ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως (3:2, 5)

The phrase ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως has been variously translated. The possible translations are generally divided into two groups based on whether ἀκοή is taken to mean “hearing” or “proclamation,” and whether πίστις is understood to refer to the act of human believing or the gospel message that is believed.<sup>778</sup> If ἀκοή means “hearing,” the phrase can be interpreted as:

- (a) “By hearing with faith” or “By believing what you heard”<sup>779</sup>
- (b) “By hearing ‘the faith’” or “By hearing the gospel”<sup>780</sup>

If ἀκοή means “message” or “proclamation,” the phrase may be interpreted:

- (a) “from the message that enables faith” or “by the proclamation that has the power to elicit faith”<sup>781</sup>
- (b) “from the message/proclamation of ‘the faith’” or “by the proclamation of the gospel”<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>776</sup> Paul will go on to depict life in the Spirit in Gal 5 and how human faith is integrally connected to the activity of the Spirit in the ongoing Christian life. Cf. § 2.

<sup>777</sup> The Spirit enables people to make a confession of faith, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12:3).

<sup>778</sup> Cf. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 124–32; De Boer, *Galatians*, 174–175.

<sup>779</sup> This translation is seen in the RSV, NRSV, and NIV. Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 103; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 149; James D. G. Dunn, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), 152. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (Andover: W. F. Draper, 1870), 134; Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 147; Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, 113.

<sup>780</sup> Jean Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, CCS 10 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), 46–48.

<sup>781</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 131; Martyn, *Galatians*, 288–89.

<sup>782</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 132–33; Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 129–31.

Many interpreters adopt the meaning of “message” or “proclamation of the gospel” for ἀκοή in Galatians 3:2 and 5 based on how Paul employs the word in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 and Romans 10:16-17.<sup>783</sup> However, do these passages really secure the translation, “message”?

Romans 10:16 offers the strongest case for interpreting ἀκοή as “the message” for here the noun stands alone: Κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν. However, Sam Williams has demonstrated that the tendency to translate ἀκοή as “message” here is not incontrovertible. The translation, “message,” assumes that the noun stresses the origin of what is heard. Conversely, Williams argues that the word ἀκοή never loses a sense of focus on the receiving aspect of what is heard.<sup>784</sup> This is demonstrated in the context of Romans 10:5-21, especially verses 14-18. In verse 17, the key point of emphasis in verses 14-15 is summarised. Specifically, ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς (v.17) reiterates the essence of Paul’s question in 14c: πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος, and thus ἀκοή retains the sense of hearing on the part of the recipient. In view of the parallelism between these two verses, Williams argues that it becomes impossible to take ἀκοή as the Christian proclamation or message.<sup>785</sup> As further evidence, Williams maintains that when Paul cites Isaiah 53:1 in verse 16, he immediately picks up the core thought of verses 14-15, that is, that faith depends on hearing and hearing depends on preaching. Indeed, Williams presents a valid case that the broader context of Romans 10:14-18 underscores the verbal idea of hearing, and however ἀκοή is translated, this sense must be taken into consideration.<sup>786</sup>

Several other key passages provide support that Paul intends to highlight the verbal idea of hearing in his use of ἀκοή. Taking 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we note that most English translations render παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ’ ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ as: “having received the word of God that you heard from us.”<sup>787</sup> The focus on the “message” that some interpreters desire to pull out of ἀκοή is actually found in the preceding noun λόγος. As Paul proceeds to contrast a “message from humans” (λόγον

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<sup>783</sup> E.g., de Boer, *Galatians*, 175.

<sup>784</sup> S. K. Williams, “The Hearing of Faith: ΑΚΟΗ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Galatians 3,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 82–93. Cf. p. 84.

<sup>785</sup> Williams, “The Hearing of Faith,” 85.

<sup>786</sup> The broader context of Romans 10 as well places a strong emphasis on the verbal idea of hearing. Some form of the noun or verb is repeated 5 times in 5 verses. Note that because Paul is quoting the LXX, the wording is not his own choice, but he has made clear that human reception is important to the thrust of his argument.

<sup>787</sup> NRSV, KJV, CEB, NET, NASB, ESV.

ἀνθρώπων) with a “message from God” (λόγον θεοῦ), it is not ἀκοή, but λογός that he employs. Secondly, we note the emphasis on the self-involving component to the gospel that is already apparent in the participle of παραλαμβάνω.<sup>788</sup> Translating ἀκοή as hearing complements the activity of receiving, demonstrating a reception and dependence upon a prior action—a word or message that is spoken. 1 Corinthians 12:17 is another case in which the noun clearly means hearing: εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἢ ἀκοή; εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἢ ὄσφρησις?

But what of Galatians 3? We have seen that outside references do not necessarily support a reading of “message” in this text. The passage must be interpreted in light of its own context. There is enough evidence to suggest that when Paul writes, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, he likely has in mind an exegetical genitive which would be translated as “the hearing that consists in faith.”<sup>789</sup> Dunn depicts it as “the hearing which stimulated and expressed itself in the faith.”<sup>790</sup> In fact, the combination of these two words conveys an important nuance in Paul’s thought, namely the type of human activity that Paul is referring to when he speaks of faith.<sup>791</sup> Lightfoot notes that “a hearing” is a better translation than “a report” because it conveys the part taken by the Galatians.<sup>792</sup> In this way, ἀκοή portrays a similar self-involving dimension to πίστις. Just as the hearer manifests the active response of hearing as a passive recipient of that which is heard, so the one who has faith exercises an active dependence as a passive recipient of the Spirit; both hearing and faith reflect an active passivity. The two words mutually reinforce the idea of self-negating and self-involving reception of the Gift.<sup>793</sup> Williams writes: “In Gal 3.2, 5 Paul suggests that faith is somehow like hearing. Indeed, faith is a *kind* of hearing. Ἀκοῆ πίστεως

<sup>788</sup> Cf. our previous discussion of παραλαμβάνω in chapter 2 § 1.3 and chapter 3 § 2.1.1.

<sup>789</sup> Another valid translation is “hearing with faith” (so ESV, NASB, HCSB), however, we regard there to be an even closer relationship between the two words that the exegetical genitive better captures.

<sup>790</sup> Dunn, *Galatians*, 154. Dunn compares the phrase to the way Paul elsewhere speaks of the Hebrew understanding of obedient hearing (Rom 1:5; 15:18; 2 Cor 10:5). He notes that ὑπακοή and ἀκοή come from the same root – ἀκούω.

<sup>791</sup> Contra Campbell who argues that “nothing decisive turns” on whether ἀκοή should be “report”/“proclamation” or the act of “hearing.” Campbell, *Deliverance*, 853.

<sup>792</sup> Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 135. Lightfoot also argues that “a hearing” rather than “a report” is the better contrast to ἔργον. This follows the line of argumentation defended in the previous chapter that Paul is contrasting two manners of human being.

<sup>793</sup> Williams also contends that the parallel between Abraham and his heirs is obscured if ἀκοή πίστεως is rendered as the proclamation about faith or the proclamation that evokes faith. Rather, each πίστις cognate (vv 2,5,6,7,8,9) refers to the same thing: “trusting accepting of God’s word and obedient compliance with the divine purpose it expresses.” (Williams, “The Hearing of Faith,” 87.)



therefore means ‘the hearing of faith’, that ‘hearing’ which Christians call *faith*.<sup>794</sup> In this way, ἀκοή serves as a metaphor for faith. In the Hebrew Scriptures, hearing is indeed “*par excellence* the mode of apprehending God in the Hebrew scriptures.”<sup>795</sup> Note, for example, the common refrain: “Hear the Word of Yahweh.” But, as Williams explains, “The counterpart to God’s speaking, the hearing of his people, is not simply an act of the ear. It is, more consequentially, a response of the self.”<sup>796</sup> Thus, hearing really is an excellent metaphor for faith for it too involves the active response of the subject to an initiative taken by another.

We have demonstrated that in the context of Galatians 3, it is best to retain the sense of “hearing that consists in faith” or “hearing that results in faith” in the translation of ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως. This rendering underscores the essential self-involving dimension of faith in Paul’s thought. The alternative interpretation as “the proclamation of faith,” or similar variants, does not necessarily cast a shadow over the core meaning of faith, but it does lose the nuanced, rhetorical emphasis on this self-involving dimension to Paul’s thought. With the close parallel between the two words, it can be argued that ἀκοή πίστεως is best understood to convey the same idea that πίστις does on its own in 3:14b:<sup>797</sup> ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως. The promise of the Spirit is received through active, self-involving dependence.

### 1.2 Scriptural Proofs for the Pattern of Faith (Gal 3:6-14)

In Galatians 3:6-14, Paul provides scriptural proofs for the pattern of faith that he has thus far described. The proofs offered here rely on the example of Abraham as well as five scriptural citations. As we trace our exegesis of the Abraham narrative and the scriptural proofs that follow, we will see once again that Paul’s argument follows the same logic that he began in Galatians 2:16: the only human mode of existence that results in justification and new life in the Spirit is the life lived by Christocentric faith.

In the section that follows, we will examine first the reason for and nature of the Abraham paradigm. Specifically, we will address the question of whether Abraham is actually an example of faith for humans to follow, or whether he was a

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<sup>794</sup> Williams, “The Hearing of Faith,” 90.

<sup>795</sup> Williams, “The Hearing of Faith,” 91.

<sup>796</sup> Williams, “The Hearing of Faith,” 91. Cf. Schliesser, *Abraham’s Faith*, 138.

<sup>797</sup> Williams, “The Hearing of Faith,” 88.

foreshadowing of “the faith of Christ.” We will then discuss the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως and its significance in terms of identifying followers of Christ. From here we will discuss the interpretation and function of Habakkuk 2:4 within the context of Paul’s argument and whether or not the faith spoken of in this verse is that of the Messiah or of believers.

### **1.2.1 The Function of the Abraham Narrative: The Paradigm of Faith (3:6-9)**

The first example that Paul appeals to is Abraham, the Patriarch of Israel and the father of faith. To appeal to Abraham was not an innovative exegetical ploy on Paul’s part. Jewish tradition had long before referred to Abraham as “our Father” beginning in many key Old Testament and Intertestamental texts (e.g., Psalm 106, Nehemiah 9, Sirach 44, Jubilees 14, 4QPseudo-Jubilees, 4QMMT, 1 Maccabees, and Philo). Paul’s contemporary, Philo, also presents Abraham as the prototype of the “men of faith” in Judaism.<sup>798</sup> However, as Käsemann has noted, Paul moves beyond its traditional context when he makes Abraham “the prototype of Christian faith.”<sup>799</sup> The history of interpretation of Genesis 15:6, which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:6, is vast<sup>800</sup> and the verse had the “character of a catchphrase.”<sup>801</sup> In short, when Paul employs Genesis 15:6 in Galatians 3, he does so to support his argument for justification and receipt of the Spirit on the basis of faith.<sup>802</sup> His immediately preceding question of whether God supplied the Galatians with the Spirit by works of the Law or by faith is answered through his appeal to the paradigmatic father of faith, Abraham: καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. Here, Abraham is used to support Paul’s claim that the only right response to God is, and always has been, humble trust.

Despite what seems to be clearly a human example of faith, some interpreters have proposed that this faith of Abraham in Genesis 15:6 is actually a foreshadowing of the “faith of Christ” and not intended as an example for humans to follow. Richard Hays has been one such proponent of this hypothesis, reasoning that: “Abraham’s

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<sup>798</sup> Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 143.

<sup>799</sup> Käsemann, “Faith of Abraham,” 79.

<sup>800</sup> For a comprehensive examination of the history of interpretation of Gen 15:6, see Schliesser, *Abraham’s Faith*, 79–220.

<sup>801</sup> Schliesser, *Abraham’s Faith*, 220. See chapters 3–4 of Schliesser’s work for a comprehensive examination of the history of interpretation of Gen 15:6.

<sup>802</sup> After Paul presents his argument in 2:16-21 that believers are considered righteous on the basis of faith, and then proceeds to speak about receiving the Spirit on the same basis in 3:1-5, he returns in 3:6-9 to the topic of justification on the basis of faith.

faith is the model for Christ's faith since the latter was also directed to God."<sup>803</sup> Hays bases his interpretation upon his claim that ἐκ πίστεως in verses 7 and 9 represents an allusion to Habakkuk 2:4, which Hays also interprets messianically.<sup>804</sup> This latter point will be better addressed below as we interact with Paul's citation of Habakkuk in Galatians 3:11. Here we will focus on the textual clues in support of the reading that Paul exploits the Abraham narrative as an example of human faith.

First, incorporating Abraham into the discussion as the active subject of the verb πιστεύω<sup>805</sup> supports the reading that human faith is Paul's primary concern in the broader context of Galatians 3. Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, so humans who trust in Christ are justified before God. If, as we have argued, chapter three is an extrapolation of Paul's argument from Galatians 2:15-21, Paul's providing an example from Scripture of human faith as reception of justification is the exegetical support he needs to counter his opponents' claim about the Law.

A second textual clue that supports our understanding that Abraham is an example of human, and not messianic faith, is found through addressing the question of how the καθώς functions to connect verse five with verse six. While some commentators take it as an "abbreviated introductory formula" introducing the quotation of Genesis 15:6,<sup>806</sup> Longenecker argues that it is better to take the καθώς as an *exemplum* reference.<sup>807</sup> Paul has just posed a rhetorical question in verse five regarding how God supplies the Spirit and works miracles among the Galatians. Thus, the opening phrase of verse six would read: "take Abraham for example." Again was it by ἔργα νόμου or ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως? Indeed, the καθώς in verse six looks back upon the question of verse five and forward to the introduction of the Abraham example.<sup>808</sup> Observing this connection between the two verses is imperative for grasping the flow of Paul's logic and specifically what his purpose is for appealing to Abraham. By

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<sup>803</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 173.

<sup>804</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 173.

<sup>805</sup> The second of two occurrences of the verb in this letter (cf. 2:16). See also the participle in 3:22.

<sup>806</sup> Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, KEK 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 127; Dunn, *Galatians*, 160.

<sup>807</sup> Longenecker, *Galatians*, 112.

<sup>808</sup> So John M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005), 78, n.8; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 187; Oakes, *Galatians*, 104.

incorporating the example of Abraham, Paul shows that God's plan has always been to deliver humanity through Christ by faith.

Hays reasons that Abraham's faith is the model for Christ's faith since both were directed to God. However, when Paul refers to Abraham's faith, he alludes that in some sense it shared a similar dynamic as Christian faith: ἡ γραφή ... προευηγγελίσατο τῷ Ἀβραάμ (Gal 3:8). In Romans 4, where Paul interacts with the Abraham narrative in greater detail, he writes of Abraham's faith: "... in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom 4:17b). This dynamic of faith found its ultimate fulfillment in Christ, and similarly expresses the hope that Christians have of new life in Christ (Rom 4:24). Abraham's faith was unique in that it preceded the age of deliverance through Christ, but it was nevertheless rooted in a promise that was to find its fulfillment in Christ just as those to whom Paul is writing have a faith rooted in the same promise. Abraham's faith was in a sense proleptically expressed. The vantage point may have been different for Abraham, but the focal point was the same.

### **1.2.2 Faith is the Chief Identifier of Christians: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (3:7, 9)**

Before we launch into a discussion of Habakkuk 2:4, one more valuable exegetical point is worth underlining. We have observed in previous chapters that Paul frequently uses the substantival participle of πιστεύω as a way of identifying those who follow Christ.<sup>809</sup> Here in Galatians three, we see Paul employ πίστις again to refer to those who are the children of Abraham: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. This way of identifying believers with a prepositional phrase and the article occurs only twice in this letter, in Galatians 3:7 and 9. However, similar expressions may be found in the broader Pauline corpus. In Romans, there are two occurrences of the preposition ἐκ followed by the genitive form of πίστις and preceded by a singular article.

Romans 3:26 τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ

Romans 4:16 τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ

All throughout Galatians three Paul contrasts those who are ἐκ πίστεως with those who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Although Paul more frequently opts to leave out the article, the two alternative expressions seem to indicate from whom or what someone derives his or her identity and on whom or what someone relies, whether that be Christ or the Law. Burton explains that in 3:7 and 9, the preposition ἐκ describes

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<sup>809</sup> Cf. chapter two § 1.1.

source. But he clarifies that this is not a source of being, that is, the Galatian believers “do not owe their existence to faith.”<sup>810</sup> Clearly, the believers owe their existence to Christ and to the Spirit (cf. Gal 2:17, 20; 3:5ff; 5:25). Rather, the preposition refers to “source of character and standing, existence after a certain manner.”<sup>811</sup> Therefore, Burton understands the expression οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to mean: “those who believe and whose standing and character are determined by that faith.”<sup>812</sup> Dunn likewise argues that “those ἐκ πίστεως” appears to be one of Paul’s defining phrases and the noun-phrase equivalent to οἱ πιστεύσαντες.<sup>813</sup> Similarly, Schlier remarks: “Οἱ ἐκ πίστεως hat einen umfassenden Sinn: es sind die Menschen, die in der πίστις die Grundweise ihres Lebens haben, deren Lebensprinzip die Pistis ist.”<sup>814</sup> Indeed, we have consistently seen that Paul speaks of πίστις to refer to the manner of living of the Christian, a manner defined by dependence upon Christ.

Employing the phrases οἱ ἐκ πίστεως and ἐκ πίστεως to refer to those who draw their identity from faith in Christ is a fitting contrast to those who derive their identity ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. We note that there is not necessarily a fixed formula (e.g., οἱ ἐκ πίστεως contrasted with οἱ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), but by similar, varied expressions, Paul makes clear throughout his exposition on Abraham and other Scriptural citations that the antitheses first expressed in 2:16 are ultimately definitive of one’s way of life and thus one’s identity. In this way, Paul can apply the relative pronoun in 3:10 to refer to the contrasting group who identify themselves with the Law: Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν (3:10). Similarly, earlier in the letter he referred more specifically to οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς (2:12). Thus, these varying forms of the antithetical statements are shown to be ways of identifying two contrasting forms of identity.

Richard Hays is unsatisfied with reading this phrase in anthropological terms, contending that it is “not entirely clear what role Christ might play in relation to this

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<sup>810</sup> Burton, *Galatians*, 155.

<sup>811</sup> Burton, *Galatians*, 155.

<sup>812</sup> Burton, *Galatians*, 155. Burton explains that πίστις here is not specifically faith in Christ alone. Rather, πίστις here refers to both the broader sense of faith in God and faith in Christ; this verse, as Rom 3:31ff does as well, “distinctly implies the essential oneness of faith, towards whatever expression or revelation of God it is directed.” This is indicated by, 1) the absence of the article, and 2) both the context of Abraham’s faith in God and the context of the faith of believers in Jesus.

<sup>813</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ: A Key to the Meaning of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 360.

<sup>814</sup> Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 128.

justifying faith.”<sup>815</sup> For Hays, the solution lies in that the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in verses 7-9 “anticipates,” and is based upon, Paul’s citation of Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 3:11. Because Hays interprets Habakkuk 2:4 as referring to the Messiah (ὁ δίκαιος) who will live by faith,<sup>816</sup> he argues that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως connotes “those who are given life on the basis of [Christ’s] faith” and not simply “those who have faith.”<sup>817</sup> Hence, for Hays, the Galatians share in Abraham’s blessing not because their faith imitates the patriarch’s, but because they participate in Christ, Abraham’s seed.<sup>818</sup> This reading, according to Hays, enables better discernment of the coherence of the Christological focus of the chapter.

A fuller interaction with the messianic interpretation of Habakkuk 2:4 will be provided below. At this point, it is worth questioning how tenable it is that Paul’s first readers would have thought to read Habakkuk 2:4 into Paul’s first mention of οἱ ἐκ πίστεως in 3:7 and 9, or to look ahead to his citation in 3:11. Perhaps the best response to Hays’ interpretation comes by answering his own question about the role Christ plays if one translates οἱ ἐκ πίστεως as “those who believe.”<sup>819</sup> The answer is really rather conspicuous. Our study has uncovered that human faith is an expression of complete dependence, identification with, and participation in the saving work of Christ; at the same time faith is a rejection of self-confidence. In this way, understanding the phrase οἱ ἐκ πίστεως to simply refer to “those who believe” *assumes* christocentricity. In Paul’s view, faith always means “faith in Christ.” Paul has clearly articulated the Christward focus of faith in Galatians 2:16 “ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν.” Additionally, we have argued that the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases convey the same human reliance upon Christ. We can thus conclude that Paul essentially redefines anthropology in the way that he speaks about faith, conveying a truly Christocentric anthropology. Such a Christocentric anthropology begins with knowing who Christ is and what he has done, but for Paul the apostle and missionary, he is entirely concerned with how this Christology impacts humans and hence how humans must properly relate to God through Christ. Thus, in referring to οἱ

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<sup>815</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 171.

<sup>816</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 172. See the discussion of his interpretation of Hab 2:4 in § 1.2.3 below.

<sup>817</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 172. Cf. Martyn, *Galatians*, 299; de Boer, *Galatians*, 191–192; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP 9 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 118.

<sup>818</sup> See Boers, who reads Gal 3:6-9 in light of 3:16-18 and 26-29. Hendrikus Boers, *Theology Out of the Ghetto: A New Testament Exegetical Study Concerning Religious Exclusiveness* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 78–82. Cf. Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 172.

<sup>819</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 171.

ἐκ πίστεως, it is assumed that the basis of the dependence that identifies this group of believers is the Christ-gift.<sup>820</sup>

### 1.2.3 The Function of the Habakkuk Citation (3:11)

As we argued in reference to Galatians 2:16, Paul is presenting to his readers two types of human existence: one that relies upon a Christological foundation and the other that looks to the Law. In Galatians 3:10-14, Paul provides a series of scriptural citations to support his argument thus far. Faith again takes centre stage in both his quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 and in his concluding summary in Galatians 3:14 that the promise of the Spirit is received through faith. Here we will examine how the Habakkuk citation functions within his argument as well as how it sheds light upon his understanding of faith.

To begin, it is helpful to address the question of translation. Does ἐκ πίστεως modify ὁ δίκαιος or ζήσεται? The “traditional” interpretation has been to take ἐκ πίστεως as modifying ζήσεται, as is seen in most English translations (cf. KJV, NKJV, NRSV, CEB, ESV, and the NIV).<sup>821</sup> However, it seems better to take ἐκ πίστεως to modify ὁ δίκαιος. Thus the full phrase, ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, would be translated: “The one who is righteous by faith will live.” This translation can be justified on simple contextual grounds. First, modifying ὁ δίκαιος with ἐκ πίστεως follows the logic of Galatians 2:16 which presents the seminal argument of the letter. There, the point quite clearly is that a person is justified by faith. Secondly, Paul has strung together a series of scriptural citations to bolster the case he began in 2:16: righteousness and life result from the work of Christ on the cross (3:13) and are appropriated by faith. The positive citation from Habakkuk (3:11b) follows the negative formulation that no one is justified by the Law (3:11a). ὁ δίκαιος corresponds to οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται, and ἐκ πίστεως corresponds to ἐν νόμῳ. The alternative translation “the righteous will live by faith” loses this symmetry.<sup>822</sup> Watson supports this reading by demonstrating that ἐκ πίστεως is never associated

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<sup>820</sup> It should be noted that Hays himself concedes that οἱ ἐκ πίστεως does include the sense of human trust in Christ (Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 172).

<sup>821</sup> So also Anthony Tyrrell Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (London: SPCK, 1974), 42. Cf. Cavallin for a discussion of various arguments in support of both interpretative options: H. C. C. Cavallin, “‘The Righteous Shall Live by Faith’: A Decisive Argument for the Traditional Interpretation,” *ST* 32 (1978): 33–43.

<sup>822</sup> Translating the verse in this way does not negate the implication that we have repeatedly argued for, that faith is the continuing mode of existence, the continuing life of dependence upon Christ. Ultimately, the soteriological and moral context should not be separated.

with life, but frequently associated with righteousness.<sup>823</sup> In light of these exegetical points, the translation, “the one who is righteous by faith will live,” renders best what Paul means by a new existence that is continuously defined by this faith.

This context surrounding this quotation (3:10-14), with its several citations of Old Testament scriptures, has confounded interpreters. Let us attempt to identify the logic by which Paul strings together the various citations. In each case, he presents a claim that he immediately backs up with a verse. In Galatians 3:10, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 to establish the point that humans are incapable of fulfilling the whole of Torah, and thus all are under a curse.<sup>824</sup>

Paul’s Claim (Gal 3:10a):

For as many as are of works of the Law are under a curse.<sup>825</sup>

Ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν εἰσὶν

OT Support (Gal 3:10b; Deut 27:26):

Cursed are all who do not remain in all that is written in the book of the Law to do them.

Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει πᾶσιν τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά.

Here Paul appeals to the authority of Scripture to support the antithesis of 2:16 that no human is justified by works of the Law.

Verse 11 continues in the same vein, beginning with a ὅτι that connects it to the claim of verse 10. That all are under a curse because no one has fulfilled all of the Law (v.10) is restated in verse 11 to show that no one is justified by the Law.

Paul’s claim (3:11a):

*because* no one is justified before God in the Law.

ὅτι δὲ ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ θεῷ

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<sup>823</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 163.

<sup>824</sup> More recent interpretations have attempted to argue that these verses do not suggest the impossibility of fulfilling the Law and thereby the ensuing consequence that all are cursed. For example, Stendahl contends that statements of Paul that suggest the impossibility of fulfilling the law, ought to be placed “side by side” with Phil 3:6 where Paul proclaims of himself: “as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” Yet, Stendahl’s interpretative move here presents a classic case of taking a statement out of its context. In fact, Paul is making the same argument in Phil 3 as he is in Galatians. In Phil 3:2-3 he argues against having confidence in the flesh. Phil 3:4-6 presents himself as the closest possible case of being able to have confidence in the flesh. Yet, he entirely dismisses his “gains” (κέρδος – 3:7), regarding them as loss (ζημία – 3:8) and refuse (σκύβαλον – 3:8). Matlock has rightly questioned: “Can we really read Paul as saying *only* that all these things – including his former persecuting zeal – are fine of themselves, but that he has simply found something even better?” (R. Barry Matlock, “Helping Paul’s Argument Work? The Curse of Galatians 3.10-14,” in *The Torah in the New Testament: Papers Delivered at the Manchester-Lausanne Seminar of June 2008*, ed. Michael Tait and Peter Oakes (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 156). He proceeds through verse 11 to argue a similar point as he does in Galatians. Phil 3:9 states it most clearly: καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. In Galatians, the impossibility of fulfilling the law is again underscored in 3:22 and 5:3.

<sup>825</sup> The following translation is my own.



OT Support (Gal 3:11b; Hab 2:4):

It is clear that the one who is righteous by faith will live.  
δῆλον ὅτι Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται,

The most natural translation takes δῆλον to modify the clause that it precedes so that it reads: “it is clear that the person that is righteous by faith will live.”<sup>826</sup> We have argued that justification and life are closely associated in Paul’s thought. Verse 12 then carries forth an explanation as to why the Law cannot give life or justify—the Law is not ἐκ πίστεως.

Paul’s claim (3:12a): but the law is not from faith,

ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως,

OT Support (Gal 3:12b; Lev 18:5): but “The one having done these things will live in them.”

ἀλλ’ Ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

Paul then employs Leviticus 18:5, a citation that in many regards seems contradictory to what he states immediately before.<sup>827</sup> Why would Paul quote two apparently contradictory scriptural texts back to back, with seemingly little explanation as to the logic? J. Louis Martyn offers an interesting rhetorical solution, suggesting that the two texts are representative of the two opposing assertions, that of Paul and that of his opponents.<sup>828</sup> Schoeps seems nearer to a reasonable solution in the way he applies the thirteenth hermeneutical rule of Rabbi Ishmael, that is when two verses contradict each other, a third should be employed that will overcome the contradiction.<sup>829</sup> In this case, Schoeps suggests that Genesis 15:6, which has already been cited in Galatians 3:6, resolves the apparent contradiction in Galatians 3:11-12. Indeed, this principle of faith does control the line of argumentation that Paul takes throughout the text, but Schoeps’ suggestion still does not explain the contradiction. Avemarie helps ease the

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<sup>826</sup> Against the more frequent tendency to translate the verse with δῆλον modifying the first ὅτι, it has been noted that it best modifies the second ὅτι. In this way, the flow from verse ten is smoother so that the second clause is understood to explain why there is a curse on everyone under the law. Cf. Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul’s Thought*, ed. John Riches, trans. James C. G. Greig, *Studies of the New Testament and Its World* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 39; de Boer, *Galatians*, 202–03; Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 406, n.40; Andrew H. Wakefield, *Where to Live: The Hermeneutical Significance of Paul’s Citations from Scripture in Galatians 3:1-14*, *AcBib 14* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 162–67, 207–14.

<sup>827</sup> There is wide disagreement on how Paul intends to incorporate this citation. For a nice summary of interpretations, see Friedrich Avemarie, “Paul and the Claim of the Law according to the Scripture: Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12 and Romans 10:5,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity: A Collection of Articles*, ed. Jack Pastor and Menachem Mor (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005), 125–37.

<sup>828</sup> J. Louis Martyn, “The Textual Contradiction Between Habakkuk 2:4 and Leviticus 18:5,” in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 183–90.

<sup>829</sup> Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Paulus: Die Theologie des Apostels im Lichte der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959), 185–86.

tension between the two verses by explaining that Paul must be employing this citation as a proof text of the thesis he states in 10a, 11a, and 12a that “those who are from works of the law” are “under a curse.”<sup>830</sup> Because verse 13 returns to the idea of the curse of the Law first mentioned in verse 10, Avemarie suggests that verses 11 and 12 are best understood as an elaboration and substantiation of verse 10 that “interrupts the thrust of the argument, but which Paul nevertheless deemed necessary to add.”<sup>831</sup> Avemarie argues that the ἀλλά that links the quotation and the thesis (3:12b) establishes a relation of reciprocal convertibility between them. He writes: “For Paul’s present purpose, the two statements are equivalent, the latter claiming positively what the former says in negative words.”<sup>832</sup> Fee argues similarly, stating that Paul’s concern is expressed in the introductory clause “the law is not based *on faith*.” Paul’s point here, “and it is the crucial point in his entire argument with the Galatians, is that one cannot *add* ‘works of the law’ to faith as a basis of ‘living’ before God. To the contrary, the law itself is quite plain on this matter.”<sup>833</sup> Fee understands ζῆσεται therefore to refer to living in “an ongoing way” rather than “coming to life.” Paul is thus not concerned with a promise of life in this verse. Rather he is concerned primarily with its negative implication, that is, that the Law, which calls for doing, does not lead to faith. Paul would have been aware of the traditional Jewish understanding of Leviticus 18:5 as soteriological, and demonstrates that awareness later in the chapter through his contradiction of the claim that the Law could give life in Galatians 3:21.<sup>834</sup> In Galatians 3:11, Paul provides a formal distinction between faith and doing works of the Law; here, his point is simply to emphasise that righteousness does not come from the works of the Law, but from faith. The material support for this distinction is deferred until Galatians 3:21-22; the Law was never purposed to give life.

Verse 13 forms the “pivotal thesis”<sup>835</sup> that the solution to the problem of the human curse is redemption in Christ.

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<sup>830</sup> Avemarie, “Claim of the Law,” 138.

<sup>831</sup> Avemarie, “Claim of the Law,” 138–39.

<sup>832</sup> Avemarie, “Claim of the Law,” 138.

<sup>833</sup> Gordon D. Fee, “Paul’s Use of Locative ἐν in Galatians: On Text and Meaning in Galatians in 1.6; 1.16; 2.20; 3.11-12, and 3.26,” in *The Impartial God: Essays in Biblical Studies in Honor of Jouette M. Bassler* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 181–82.

<sup>834</sup> Avemarie, “Claim of the Law,” 141.

<sup>835</sup> Avemarie, “Claim of the Law,” 140.

Paul's claim (3:13a):

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law becoming a curse on our behalf

Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα,

OT Support (Gal 3:13b; Deut 21:23):

Because it has been written: "Cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree"  
ὅτι γέγραπται· Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμιάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου

Verse 14 draws the whole argument from 3:1-13 together into a climactic conclusion: "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Once again, Paul underscores faith as the appropriation of the solution in Christ (3:13). Although the absence of the disputed phrase, πίστις Χριστοῦ, points unambiguously to human faith, De Boer sees this as a reference to the faith of Jesus Christ, arguing that the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως refers back to 2:16a.<sup>836</sup> However, as we have already argued, the πίστις Χριστοῦ phrases in 2:16 are best read as referring to human faith. Again we underscore the Christocentricity of this faith which is assumed and encouraged by the preceding ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

### **A Messianic Reading of Habakkuk 2:4?**

Against this interpretation stands one whereby ὁ δίκαιος is understood to refer to the Messiah. In this way, one would translate the Habakkuk citation: "the Righteous One will live by faith," rather than "the one who is righteous by faith will live." Again, Hays stands as a chief proponent of this interpretation with forerunners such as J. Haussleiter, A. T. Hanson, and C. H. Dodd.<sup>837</sup> Hays suggests that there are at least three possible interpretations of πίστις in Habakkuk 2:4: 1) God's faithfulness; 2) the faith(fulness) of the Messiah; 3) the faith of people in God. Following from this then are three possible interpretations of Paul's citation of Habakkuk 2:4 as employed by Paul in Galatians 3:11: 1) The Messiah will live by (his own) faith(fulness); 2) The

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<sup>836</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 215.

<sup>837</sup> Richard B. Hays, "'The Righteous One' as Eschatological Deliverer: A Case Study in Paul's Apocalyptic Hermeneutic," in *Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, ed. Joel Marcus and Marion L. Soards, JSNTSup 24 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 191–215; Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 134–41. See also the reprinted version of this essay: Richard B. Hays, "Apocalyptic Hermeneutics: Habakkuk Proclaims 'The Righteous One,'" in *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 119–42. Cf also Johannes Haussleiter, "Der Glaube Jesu Christi und der Christliche Glaube," *NKZ* 2 (1891): 212–13; Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*, 42–45; C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1953), 51.

righteous person will live as a result of the Messiah's faith(fulness); 3) The righteous person will live by (his own) faith (in the Messiah). For Hays, Paul's thought is only intelligible if these three interpretations are held together.<sup>838</sup> He writes: "Paul's gospel is founded upon the story of a Messiah who is vindicated (= 'justified') by God through faith. This Messiah (Jesus Christ) is not, however, a solitary individual whose triumph accrues only to his own benefit; he is a representative figure in whom the destiny of all God's elect is embodied."<sup>839</sup> Thus, Hays contends that all are justified through HIS faith; at the same time, their response to him is also one of faith.

Arguing as well for a messianic interpretation of "the Righteous One" in Galatians 3:11, Campbell contends that the phrase ἐκ πίστεως in the Habakkuk citation refers primarily to Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>840</sup> He asserts: "It is difficult to supply any profundity or even coherence to Paul's claims concerning life ἐκ πίστεως here without linking that phrase to Christ."<sup>841</sup> For Campbell this indicates that faith cannot refer to human decision making, for then it is "not obvious *why* this mode of life *overrides* law observance."<sup>842</sup> Campbell's reasoning here exposes a profound misconception of the Pauline portrayal of human πίστις. We have argued that πίστις does include cognitive agreement with the truth claims of the gospel,<sup>843</sup> but it entails so much more than mere decision making. Faith for Paul is precisely attaching oneself to Christ so that what is true of Christ is true for the believer. In this way, Campbell is correct to say that ἐκ πίστεως is inconceivable apart from linking the phrase to Christ. However, what Campbell means to suggest is that the phrase ought to be equated with, or to refer specifically to, Christ's faithful death, and not to human faith, and this is where he and other interpreters err. Christ's death is the very reason and evocation of human faith, and thus linked to ἐκ πίστεως in this way. But human faith is not delimited to "human decision making." Faith is the human point of connection which has as its reference point Christ's death and resurrection. Thus ἐκ πίστεως is linked to Christ by way of dependent faith.

Francis Watson has effectively countered the Messianic interpretation of Galatians 3:11 in his piece: "By Faith (of Christ): An Exegetical Dilemma and its Scriptural Solution." In this article, Watson's broader purpose is to interact with the

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<sup>838</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 140.

<sup>839</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 140–141.

<sup>840</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 863.

<sup>841</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 863.

<sup>842</sup> Campbell, *Deliverance*, 863.

<sup>843</sup> Cf. Chapter 3 § 2.2.

subjective genitive renderings of πίστις Χριστοῦ, as we have already explored in the previous chapter.<sup>844</sup> In support of his thesis that all of Paul’s “by faith of Christ” formulations derive from Habakkuk 2:4, Watson argues that no non-Pauline evidence has been found that this text was read Christologically, as a reference to “the Righteous One.” This point is confirmed by Paul who utilises this text as an assertion, not about Christ as “The Righteous One,” but about individuals in general who are made righteous by faith. In pushing back on the contention that “the Righteous One” as a messianic title is actually derived from Habakkuk 2:4,<sup>845</sup> Watson finds that the main passages in connection with “the Righteous One” as a Christological title (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:1) actually occur in close proximity to allusions to the “Fourth Servant Song” of Isaiah 52:13–53:12. Thus, Watson suggests that “the Righteous One” as a Christological title may derive from Isaiah 52:13–53:12.<sup>846</sup> He finds no evidence that ὁ δίκαιος as a Christological title derives from or is influenced in any way by Habakkuk 2:4. Rather, it makes better sense that Paul employed the Habakkuk citation to refer to individuals who are made righteous by faith.<sup>847</sup> With Watson we affirm that the faith Paul speaks of in the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations “has to do with human participation intended in the divine reconciling act, which does not reduce its objects to passivity but reconstitutes them as agents and subjects within the overarching, all-embracing sphere of grace.”<sup>848</sup> At this point we recall our previous question of whether Abraham is an example of human or messianic faith in 3:6. In view of the fact that most exegetes rely upon a messianic interpretation of Habakkuk 2:4 to come to this conclusion, and that this view has effectively been called into question, we conclude that the Abraham narrative is also best understood to be utilised in support of Paul’s concern to convey the role of human faith, rather than the faith of Christ.

Finally, we must ask for what purpose Paul is employing the Habakkuk citation and how it fits within his argument. As we argued above, the phrase is best

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<sup>844</sup> Cf. Chapter 5 § 2.2.3.2.

<sup>845</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 155–56.

<sup>846</sup> Cf. especially Acts 3:14; 7:52; 1 Peter 3:18

<sup>847</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 158.

<sup>848</sup> Watson, “By Faith (of Christ),” 163. Moo argues that the righteous one cannot refer to the Messiah based on the fact that the righteous person is contrasted with the “puffed-up” person and Habakkuk’s other uses of צדק/δικαιος (1:4, 13) “show that he is referring to the person within the covenant community who remains loyal to Yahweh.” Furthermore, the verb “live” in this citation most likely has a theological sense. This is supported by the use of חָיָה in the Book of the Twelve. The verb occurs 16 times, with most occurrences referring to “true life,” “life before God,” or “blessing” (Hosea 6:2; 14:7; Amos 5:4,6,14; Zech 10:9) (Moo, *Galatians*, 220).

translated as “the one who is righteous by faith will live.” Yet subjective genitive proponents tend to interpret the phrase as “the Righteous One will live by faith” to support their reading that Paul’s gospel is founded upon the story of a Messiah, representative of all God’s elect, who is justified by God through faith.<sup>849</sup> Hays suggests that Jesus was justified and believers are justified *in* him as a result of his faith(fulness).<sup>850</sup> However, how accurately does this represent Paul’s Christology? Is there room to suggest that Paul intended to portray Jesus as justified? Hays turns to Romans 5:1-2 and Romans 5:19 which speaks of the obedience (ὕπακοή) of Christ. Following Bultmann’s insistence that obedience and faith belong “in the closest possible relation to one another,”<sup>851</sup> Hays thus insists that it is logical to extend the saving significance and representative action of Christ’s obedience to Christ’s faith. While this interpretation may have some bearing on a representative christology, this hardly supports the idea that Jesus was justified. Hooker, another subjective genitive proponent, asserts that it was not necessary for Jesus to be reckoned righteous since he *was* righteous.<sup>852</sup> Furthermore, this reading does not fit within Paul’s steadfastly focused argument about the justification of believers in chapters 2-3. Rather, a better reading understands Paul to include this citation in answer to the questions which dominate this letter: How are humans justified (2:16)? How do humans receive the Spirit (3:2)? There are only two alternatives posed: ἔργα νόμου or πίστις. As we have been arguing, the Christological backdrop of this πίστις is the atoning death of Christ who is the focus of believers’ faith. But the issue concerning human appropriation has not changed. Again, the contrast of the works of the Law and faith does not present two human means of *achieving* righteousness, but presents the human self-positioning that expresses its dependence on one or the other for salvation. Positioning oneself in relation to the Law requires rigid adherence to its entirety (Gal 5:3). Positioning oneself in relation to Christ expresses holistic dependence upon his salvific act. Paul’s point is comprehensively summarised in the final verse of this pericope: It is διὰ τῆς πίστεως that the promise of the Spirit is received (3:14). This faith is dependent, self-positioning in relation to Christ.

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<sup>849</sup> Cf. especially Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 140–141.

<sup>850</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 151.

<sup>851</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 152.

<sup>852</sup> Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 169.

### 1.2.4 Conclusions from the Scriptural Proofs

In this section, we have explored three Scriptural proofs that Paul utilises to support his argument that faith is the human connection for appropriation of the singularly efficacious gift in Christ. Specifically, the example of Abraham and the citation of Habakkuk both portray a human mode of dependence, as opposed to an increasing scholarly tendency to find in them an example of messianic faithfulness. Rather, Paul can utilise these examples and adapt the scriptural reference to identify the children of God primarily as people of faith: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. This mode of being stands in stark contrast to those who seek to add works of the law to their religious practice.

#### 1.3 *The Disambiguation of the Genitive (3:22)*

In Galatians 3:22, we come to the third of three πίστις Χριστοῦ passages in this letter. In the context of discussing the purpose of the Law and the culmination of the promise, Paul writes: ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. For Richard Hays, to translate πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as “faith in Christ” is to create a redundancy with the participial phrase, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.<sup>853</sup>

We have already addressed that the argument of redundancy can be countered by the argument that repetition serves the rhetorical purpose of emphasis. Yet, even more than seeking to emphasise the role of faith, the repetition in this case serves to clarify what Paul means. The participial phrase that concludes Paul’s sentence serves to indicate what kind of genitive Paul intends in the elusive phrase. In the previous chapter we discussed Watson’s claim that all of Paul’s “by faith of Christ” formulations derive from Habakkuk 2:4.<sup>854</sup> ἐκ πίστεως most clearly derives from the Habakkuk citation, and thus Paul adopts the prophet’s wording in Galatians 3:22. However, because the genitive is potentially ambiguous, Paul helpfully disambiguated what he means by adding the participle, οἱ πιστεύοντες. In this way, 3:22 would read: “But the scripture imprisoned all things under sin, in order that what was promised

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<sup>853</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 142. Hays also argues that it does not make sense for Paul to present a Christocentric human faith analogously to Abraham’s theocentric faith. Rather, it makes better sense if Jesus Christ, like Abraham, is justified ἐκ πίστεως and believers are justified *in* him (151). We have addressed this point above in § 1.2. Paul writes that the gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham (Gal 3:8), thus Abraham’s faith in some sense shared a similar dynamic as Christian faith. Cf. Matlock’s interaction with Hays on this verse in Matlock, “Rhetoric,” 187–93.

<sup>854</sup> Cf. chapter five § 2.2.3.2.

might be given on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ, that is to those who believe.”<sup>855</sup> A similar clarifying move was made in Galatians 3:6, where Paul disambiguates what he means by ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως and its variations (3:2, 5, 7, 9) with the indicative verb πίστευω: those who are “of faith” are precisely those who exercise faith. Just as he used the indicative to clarify the genitive earlier in the chapter, so in 3:22, Paul uses the participle to clarify what he means by ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

#### 1.4 Faith Personified: “Faith Came” and “Faith Revealed” (3:23, 25)

At the end of Galatians 3, Paul employs πίστις uniquely in an objectified or personified form. Here faith is said to have come: Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἐλθεῖν τὴν πίστιν (3:23) and again ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως (3:25).<sup>856</sup> Interpreters have understood this particular expression in a variety of ways. Many understand that πίστις here refers to the faith in the sense of “Christianity,”<sup>857</sup> or an era or even “dispensation of faith.”<sup>858</sup> De Boer once again stands out by reading every instance of πίστις in Galatians as a reference to Christ. “‘Faith’ and ‘Christ’ are interchangeable in this passage: Faith ‘came’ onto the world stage at a certain juncture in time (vv.23a, 25a), just as Christ himself did (3:19).”<sup>859</sup> Thus, he understands πίστις to be a metonym for Christ; it refers, for de Boer, to “Christ’s faithful death on the cross, on the basis of which someone is justified.”<sup>860</sup> This argument hinges on his concern lest human faith be construed as an “innate or natural human capacity.”<sup>861</sup>

<sup>855</sup> Cf. Harris who lists “basis” as one of the main figurative uses of ἐκ. Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 103.

<sup>856</sup> Note also the similar form in Gal 1:23: Ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει.

Schliesser writes: “Es kann angenommen werden, dass die frühchristliche Vorstellung einer personifizierten pistis beeinflusst wurde von Elementen jüdischer Weisheitslehre, da beide Metaphern mit vergleichbaren Bildfeldern assoziiert werden und als von Gott gesetzte Realitäten wirklichkeitsbestimmend und soteriologisch relevant sind” (Benjamin Schliesser, *Was Ist Glaube?: Paulinische Perspektiven*, ThSt 3 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2011), 40.

Additionally, a personification of pistis can be found in pagan Greek literature. Cf. Schliesser, *Glaube*, 40.

<sup>857</sup> Hans D. Lietzmann, *An die Galater*, HNT10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1932), 23. Wilhelm Mundle, *Der Glaubensbegriff des Paulus: Eine Untersuchung zu Dogmengeschichte des Ältesten Christentums* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977), 93.

<sup>858</sup> Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 148; Betz, *Galatians*, 176, n.120; M. Winger, “From Grace to Sin: Names and Abstractions in Paul’s Letters,” *NovT* 41 (1999): 158.

<sup>859</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 238. So also Campbell, *Deliverance*, 868–9; Richard B. Hays, “The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” vol. 11 of *NIB* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 269–70.

<sup>860</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 239.

<sup>861</sup> De Boer, *Galatians*, 239. Other interpreters, such as Hays, understand the definite article to refer back to the faith mentioned in the previous sentence, that is, the faith of Jesus Christ. Hays, “Galatians,” 11:270.



Indeed, faith, for Paul, always refers to Christ. Thus, in a sense, faith and Christ are interchangeable, but not in the way that de Boer means. The difference hinges on how we understand the object and subject of which Paul is speaking. When Paul speaks of faith, there is always present the notion that Christ is the object, the focus, the content of that faith. This verse does not, however, seem to be referring to Christ's own faithfulness. It is more likely that Paul uses πίστις here to indicate who Christ is for us.

There are good reasons to understand πίστις here to refer to the era in which Christians are characterised by their faith in Christ. First, contextually, we note that Paul has just referred to the people of faith, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν (3:22). Thus, we should assume that “the coming of faith” is about the coming of the people who believe.<sup>862</sup> This statement opens the way for Paul to make some of his most explicit declarations concerning the oneness of the people of God (vv 26-28). In Christ, the people who express faith in him are united as heirs of the promise. Thus, context alone indicates that “the coming of faith” refers to the coming of the people of faith in Christ.

Yet, we have additional clues which help us understand why Paul could use πίστις as a shorthand reference in the way that he does. The first reason follows from the fact that Paul often utilised the ancient rhetorical technique of synecdoche to allude to the whole gospel in shorthand by referring to one aspect of it. Margaret Mitchell has highlighted several examples in the Corinthian letters.<sup>863</sup> For example, Paul can write about the cross to stand in for the whole gospel: ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ (“the word of the cross”).<sup>864</sup> Mitchell notes that Paul is not preaching a gospel without resurrection in these cases, but rather demonstrating that “the whole gospel can be alluded to by reference to one of its parts.”<sup>865</sup> Furthermore, the choice of which part is emphasised depends on the particular argument Paul puts forward in each case.<sup>866</sup> In the case of the Corinthian problem of boasting, Paul focuses on the humility of the cross which appears to be folly to the world (1 Cor 1:18). Christ crucified presents a new kind of σοφία (1:30). Paul also alludes to the gospel synecdochically through

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<sup>862</sup> Likewise, it is about the coming of the household of faith, the identity marker Paul employs towards the end of the letter (οἱ οἰκεῖοι τῆς πίστεως 6:10).

<sup>863</sup> Margaret M. Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand in Pauline Argumentation: The Functions of ‘The Gospel’ In the Corinthians Correspondence,” in *Gospel in Paul: Studies in Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker*, ed. L. Ann Jervis and Peter Richardson, JSNTSup 108 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 67.

<sup>864</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 1:23 and 2:2.

<sup>865</sup> Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand,” 70–71.

<sup>866</sup> Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand,” 71.

reference to the resurrection. In the context of discussing the earthly body, he writes in 1 Corinthians 6:14, ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἤγειρεν. Just as God raised Jesus, he will also raise believers. 2 Corinthians as well reveals several instances of synecdoche for the gospel including: 1) the down payment of the Spirit (2 Cor 4:5), 2) future judgment of human deeds (2 Cor 5:10), 3) comfort (2 Cor 1:5), 4) the Son of God (2 Cor 1:19). Paul can even refer to himself as a “rhetorical abbreviation”<sup>867</sup> of the gospel (4:10).<sup>868</sup> Mitchell clarifies that “Once the contextual meaning of ‘the gospel’ was fully established, as by Paul’s missionary teaching, it was then possible at a second and later stage of reflection to invoke that known quantity in shorthand, either by a brief phrase, a synecdochical reference, or a metaphorical allusion.”<sup>869</sup> In consideration of the chief emphasis on faith versus works of the Law in Galatians, it makes perfect sense that Paul would use faith as a shorthand reference to the gospel.

Secondly, πίστις had already become a shorthand reference in early Christianity both for what they believed and the defining characteristic of Christians. Already in 1:23, Paul referred to his proclaiming ἡ πίστις he once tried to destroy. Most understand the reference here to refer primarily to the content of “The Gospel.”<sup>870</sup> Ernst Bammel understands this to be a quotation from the Judean churches and one of the oldest Christian statements, reflecting a pre-Pauline provenance.<sup>871</sup> We have already seen that οἱ πιστεύοντες was a primary way of characterising Christians in 1 Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:7, 2:10, 13). Trebilco notes that in each case, Paul uses the term “absolutely, without explaining the object of ‘belief’, and thus in a form which suggests it was *already* a technical abbreviation.”<sup>872</sup> Additional evidence that πίστις terms were commonly known designations for Christians can be found in Romans, where Paul uses οἱ πιστεύοντες without explanation of the term to a community that he had not founded. Trebilco concludes that the use of ‘the believers’ as a self-designation “was an established term in Paul’s time.”<sup>873</sup> Dunn seems to capture Paul’s use here the best: “‘Faith’ had become so characteristic of the new movement to which he now belonged, that it could function as an identity marker, an

<sup>867</sup> Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand,” 78.

<sup>868</sup> Cf. Gal 1:16; 2:20; 3:1; 6:17; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10.

<sup>869</sup> Mitchell, “Rhetorical Shorthand,” 69. Some additional synecdochical references to the gospel that Mitchell highlights include: 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2, 8; 5:7; 6:14, 20; 7:23; 8:11; 11:3, 26; 15:15.

<sup>870</sup> BDAG, πίστις, 5941.3; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 42; Moo, *Galatians*, 114.

<sup>871</sup> Ernst Bammel, “Galater 1.23,” *ZNW* 59 (1968): 108–12.

<sup>872</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 90.

<sup>873</sup> Trebilco, *Self-Designations*, 90.

identification which was sufficiently distinct to denote and define the movement itself – as equally the talk of ‘preaching Christ’ (2 Cor. i.19; iv.5; Phil. i.15; Gal. i.16).”<sup>874</sup> Later on in the letter, Paul will use πίστις again as a primary identifier of the Christian community when he refers to οἱ οἰκεῖοι τῆς πίστεως (6:10). The reference here seems to convey the same characterization as οἱ πιστεύοντες.

A third reason to explain the use of πίστις as a shorthand reference in Galatians 3 is that Paul has pared down longer phrases from chapter two into shorter phrases. For example, where in chapter two Paul refers to ἔργα νόμου and πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (2:16), in chapter three he can simply refer to νόμος (e.g., 3:11ff.) and πίστις (e.g., 3:8, 11, 12, 14).

Considering the three points we have just explored, it follows that Paul is utilising the term in Galatians 3:23 and 3:25<sup>875</sup> to refer to the era in which Christians are characterised by their faith. While some may be concerned again that this conveys too strongly an anthropological emphasis, the surrounding context makes certain the Christocentricity of this faith. In Galatians 3:22 and 3:26, this πίστις is clearly directed toward Christ: ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22) and πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (3:26). Paul has not suddenly begun to refer to faith in some general sense in 3:23 and 25, but he has pared the language down for rhetorical purposes. He has personified the concept into a single phenomenon in contrast to νόμος. In doing so, Paul has portrayed a new, rightly ordered Christocentric anthropology.

Indeed in this letter, πίστις becomes an appropriate alternative description of the gospel as Paul seeks to emphasise the true connection point in the believer to the Christ-event. With Paul’s underlying emphasis on justification and the new life that is produced in believers, depicting this new era in terms of this abstract sense of faith serves as a reminder of the essential self-involving nature of the gospel call; this faith is never separated from its Christological origin, focus and substance. It makes sense that Paul would characterise the new age by this Christocentric faith, since that has been his primary argument from the outset of the letter and the point taken up again in his contrast to the age in which Jews were held captive under the Law (ὕπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι Gal 3:23); the antithesis of Law and faith is present here again. Thus it is fitting to view this apocalyptic event of Christ’s invasion to

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<sup>874</sup> Dunn, *Galatians*, 84.

<sup>875</sup> Also Gal 1:23.

deliver humanity at times in terms of the source (Χριστός) and at times in terms of the point of connection within the recipient of the change (πίστις).

### 1.5 Participatory Faith (Gal 3:26)

As a fitting conclusion to chapter three, Paul once again incorporates the concepts of faith and participation in Christ. Paul sees fit to reiterate the essential underlying argument that all of the benefits of the new life that the Galatian believers have been given, this time communicated as their being υἱοὶ θεοῦ, are appropriated through faith, διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (3:26), and manifested through participation in Christ, ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε (3:27). Faith and participation go hand in hand for Paul. But an important interpretative decision must be made regarding how to translate verse 26. Does ἐν Χριστῷ modify πίστις and therefore convey the object toward which faith is directed? Fee notes that ἐν Χριστῷ is placed at the end in Greek for emphasis.<sup>876</sup> Yet the context conveys an emphasis on union with Christ and other believers which would suggest the verse should be read: “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.”<sup>877</sup> Hays supports this reading by demonstrating the parallelism between 3:26 and 3:28d.<sup>878</sup>

3:26 πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

3:28 πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἰς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

An additional parallel can be noted between 3:14 and 3:26.

3:14 ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,  
ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

3:26 πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

In 3:14 the blessing of Abraham is clearly connected syntactically to ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ and demarcated from διὰ τῆς πίστεως by ἵνα which introduces a new clause. The ἐν should be taken as the dative of instrumentality – Christ is the means through which God has poured out the blessing of Abraham to the Gentiles.<sup>879</sup> Taking these

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<sup>876</sup> Fee, “Locative ἐν,” 183.

<sup>877</sup> So NRSV, NAB, GNT, NET, ESV.

<sup>878</sup> Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 155.

<sup>879</sup> Equally plausible is dative of agency in that Christ is the agent through whom the blessing of Abraham is poured out to the Gentiles. However, Campbell has noted that agency seems to be connoted in 3:8 where Paul writes: “that God would justify the Gentiles by faith.” The promise finds its

two verses in parallel gathers more support for reading ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ to modify υἱοὶ θεοῦ instead of διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

This reading supports the centrality of the participatory motif for Paul, but it does not relegate faith to a lesser place. Ultimately being ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is the blessing given to believers, appropriated through (διὰ) faith. Additionally, this reading does not suggest that this πίστις is Christ's faith. In commenting on 3:26, both Hays and de Boer rely on their prior defenses of πίστις Χριστοῦ as Christ's faith, a debate we have belaboured enough by this point.<sup>880</sup> What is worth highlighting here is how Paul exposes the interrelationship between baptism into Christ and faith. Betz has noted that διὰ τῆς πίστεως might be an interpretative addition by Paul to a pre-existing baptismal formula.<sup>881</sup> Martyn agrees noting its similarity especially to 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 3:9-11.<sup>882</sup> Of these three passages, only Galatians 3:26-28 includes the phrase διὰ τῆς πίστεως. The addition of this phrase makes sense in light of his focus on faith in the context of the whole letter. Through such faith believers receive a new identity as children of God, sharing in the identity of the Son of God through being baptised into him. Paul also depicts this new identity as putting Christ on as an article of clothing. Christ now defines the believer inside and out. Sharing in this identity διὰ τῆς πίστεως means the focus is always Christ. Yet the entry into Christ is always by faith.

### 1.6 Summary

As we come to the end of Galatians 3, Paul concludes the main portion of his argument. We first observed the interrelationship between the Spirit and human faith. In Galatians 3, Paul fills in some of the missing links of Galatians 2; the new life that is lived in the mode of faith is made possible by receiving the life-giving Spirit. We discussed again the kind of reciprocal relationship between the Spirit and human faith; the Spirit is the action and presence of God that elicits human faith and the presupposition of right human agency. Yet, Paul is emphatic that the correct human

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fulfillment in 3:14 “ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.” Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 82.

<sup>880</sup> De Boer suggests that the verse would then be read, “you are all sons of God through this faith, that is, in Christ Jesus” (*Galatians*, 242). This falls in line with his exegesis of 2:16b and 3:22d, which we have already addressed (cf. chapter 5 § 1.2.3; 2.2.3; and chapter 6 § 1.3). Hays finds support for this by reading 3:26 in light of 3:23 and 25 in which he reads ἡ πίστις as a new principle that has come (Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 155–56.).

<sup>881</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 181.

<sup>882</sup> Martyn, *Galatians*, 378.

response is one of faith. Furthermore, receiving the Spirit was not a punctiliar event; believers both receive and continue to live in the Spirit by faith. With all that we have uncovered about the meaning of faith, this human response is clearly not an act of autonomy. Nor is faith a form of achievement, but an active dependence upon and participation in Christ and the Spirit. In this way, the expression ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως reflects the active passivity of faith—the human self is active insofar as it relies wholly on the action of God.

As we looked at the Scriptural proofs that Paul utilises from the story of Abraham and the citation of Habakkuk 2:4 we observed that Paul contrasts two understandings of the divine/human relationship: one which relies on a Christological foundation and another which relies on the Law. By appealing to the Jewish Scriptures, Paul demonstrates that it was always God’s plan to justify by faith. In chapter four, Paul will develop his appeal to the Galatians that they should not turn back to the slavery in which they once existed; they are now children of the promise. We now transition to the concluding chapters in which this life lived in the mode of faith is demonstrated.

## **2. Participatory Faith: The Primary Believer Act**

At one time, chapters five and six seemed a quandary to many interpreters. In a polemic against works of the Law, how does Paul go on now to speak of a Christian ethic? But of course Paul is concerned that his converts reflect their new transformed life in Christ and thus there are inevitable ethical implications to living by faith and walking in the Spirit.<sup>883</sup> Indeed, life in faith is not passive; rather through this new relationship of dependence, the believer actively participates in the self-giving love of Christ. In Galatians 5:5-6, Paul summarises the main argument first stated in 2:15-21 and defended in 3:1–4:11.<sup>884</sup> In this way, these verses serve as a sort of bookend to

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<sup>883</sup> On the relationship between the paraenetic material in Gal 5:13–6:10 and the earlier chapters concerning Law and faith see Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*.

<sup>884</sup> Barclay notes that Paul, having just dismissed the significance of circumcision, presents in these verses the “far-reaching redefinition of the identity-markers of the people of God: what is decisive now is being in Christ, possessing the Spirit and having a faith which works through love” (Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 94). Longenecker refers to these two verses as “a series of brief positive statements that are a sort of précis of what he said in the *propositio* (2:15-21) and *probatio* (3:1–4:11)” (Longenecker, *Galatians*, 228). He sees the following logic in the verses: 1) Πνεύματι (‘by the Spirit’) – where he began his argument in 3:2-5; 2) ἐκ πίστεως (“through faith”), what he discusses with Abraham as the example, in his exegesis of scripture, and in developing his theological arguments in 3:6-18; 3) ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης (“the hope of righteousness”) that Christians eagerly await, which

the main argument of the letter as well as the entryway into that argument's implications. Here Paul brings to the fore the centrality of participation in the Spirit (πνεύματι), the promise of righteousness (δικαιοσύνης),<sup>885</sup> and participation in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), all of which are experienced through active human faith (πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη). In this section we will explore the intricacies and interrelationship of these central Pauline themes.

### 2.1 Faith is the Believer Act from Which All Christian Activity Flows (5:5-6, 16-25)

The short phrase, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, forms the vital basis for how the ethical section is to be properly understood in light of all that Paul has thus far propounded.<sup>886</sup> Faith is the mode of existence in which new life is inaugurated in Christ; likewise, faith is the mode of existence in which the transformed life of Christ is carried out.<sup>887</sup> As such, faith is necessarily active, which is evident here through the participial form of ἐνεργέω. ἐνεργουμένη can be either passive or middle. If passive, it would be interpreted as “faith that is activated by love,” placing love in the more prominent role. However, most commentators translate the participle with the middle

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undergirds all of Paul's thought; 4) ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, which comes to most dramatic expression in 3:26-29; and 5) οὔτε περιτομή ... οὔτε ἀκροβυστία (“neither circumcision ... nor uncircumcision”), which linguistically parallels “neither Jew nor Greek” of 3:28 and conceptually summarizes all that Paul proclaimed” (229.). Betz refers to the verses as “a series of dogmatic abbreviations which had been used before in the letter” (Betz, *Galatians*, 262).

<sup>885</sup> When Paul talks about justification here it is with a future focus. Whether this righteousness refers to their present status or something believers await in the future depends on the interpretation of the relationship between the words ἐλπίδα and δικαιοσύνης. If the genitive is interpreted as genitive of source, then the phrase would be translated: “a hope based on righteousness.” This point is supported by the fact that Paul generally does present righteousness as given at the moment of conversion (Moo, *Galatians*, 327). Alternatively, if the genitive is exegetical or appositional, then it would be translated as “the hope that is righteousness.” This seems to make the best sense given that Paul is speaking of something eagerly awaited for. Furthermore, the very word “hope” (ἐλπίς) points to something future.

A future righteousness also fits well in light of the context in which Paul encourages the Galatians to hold on to faith in Christ. We note, however, that Paul can refer to a present justification, as he does earlier in the letter (Gal 2:16-17), the place where eschatological life meets the present.

<sup>886</sup> Following Galatians 5:6, specific reference to πίστις occurs only twice in 5:22 and 6:10. If faith truly is the central point of focus, one might question why there is a decline in πίστις vocabulary in these final chapters. To answer that question, we must take into consideration the logical flow of the letter. Paul begins the letter by confronting the false teaching that works of the Law must be added to faith in Christ. By Galatians 5:6, Paul has completed that portion of his argument and he now shifts his focus to the agency of the Spirit in the section that follows (5:13–6:10). Because faith has already been established as an active form of participation and dependence, these final chapters focus primarily on the enabler of this new life, the Spirit.

<sup>887</sup> A couple of commentators have recently argued that the faith here spoken of is the faith of Christ (Hung-Sik Choi, “ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Galatians 5:5-6: Neglected Evidence for the Faithfulness of Christ,” *JBL* 124 (2005): 467–90; De Boer, *Galatians*, 317–319). This however, is a minority view even among subjective genitive proponents.

voice, rendering the phrase as: “faith that is actively expressing itself through love.”<sup>888</sup> Schlier argues that every occurrence in the New Testament (i.e., Paul and James) of a middle/passive form of ἐνεργέω is best interpreted with the middle voice.<sup>889</sup> Indeed, the middle voice here supports our understanding of active faith. As a dynamic and energising manner of being, faith is the believer act from which all Christian activity flows; here and elsewhere that activity is expressed and summarised as love (Gal 5:6, 13-14).

Crucial to rightly comprehending this active faith is recognising the interrelationship of divine and human agency in the compact expressions: to be “in Christ,” “in the Spirit,” and to live “by faith.” As we noted in our introduction, divine and human agencies can be related in a variety of ways.<sup>890</sup> John Barclay presented three models: 1) the competitive model in which divine and human operate in “inverse proportion;”<sup>891</sup> 2) the kinship model in which human freedom is not freedom from God, but it is a freedom expressed by “acting in accordance with God;” 3) the “non-contrastive transcendence” model in which divine and human agencies are in direct, rather than inverse proportion. In this third model, God’s sovereignty grounds and enables human freedom, rather than limiting or reducing it. This model of non-contrastive transcendence seems to best explain the way that Paul depicts the relationship between divine and human agencies in Galatians. By collaborating the three expressions, “in Christ,” “in the Spirit,” and to live “by faith,” in Galatians 5:5–6, Paul interweaves human and divine agency. The human subjects, ἡμεῖς, connect themselves to the Spirit by faith (ἐκ πίστεως)—they are not passive as becomes clear in his continuing exhortation: Ἐτρέχετε καλῶς· τίς ὑμᾶς ἐνέκοψεν [τῆ] ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πείθεσθαι; (Gal 5:7). But faith does not act independently—it is self-involving dependence on the work of the Spirit and participation in Christ.<sup>892</sup>

<sup>888</sup> Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 235; Bruce, *Galatians*, 232; Betz, *Galatians*, 263, n.97; Martyn, *Galatians*, 474; Moo, *Galatians*, 330–31. For a defense of a passive reading see: Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (London: T&T Clark, 1998), 370; J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1903), 246.

<sup>889</sup> Schlier, *Der Brief an die Galater*, 235. So also Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 204–05; Bruce, *Galatians*, 232. See Rom 7:5; 2 Cor 1:6; 4:12; Eph 3:20; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:7; James 5:16.

<sup>890</sup> Cf. Chapter 1 § 4.1.

<sup>891</sup> Cf. David John Lull, *The Spirit in Galatia: Paul’s Interpretation of Pneuma As Divine Power*, SBLDS 49 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 119).

<sup>892</sup> In many ways, these verses expound Galatians 2:19-20 where we observed that Paul conveys a new mode of existence through co-crucifixion with Christ, Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμα. Participation in Christ’s crucifixion portrays the same self-negating reliance that is depicted in the way



This same pattern of divine enablement underlies the ethical commands that follow in the remainder of the letter. What follows in chapter 5 exemplifies the indicative/imperative paradigm that we described in our introduction. In Galatians 5:16, for example, Paul commands the Galatians to “walk by the Spirit.” Yet this command is followed by the passive, indicative status of being “led by the Spirit” (5:18). In Galatians 5:25 the indicative is stated before the imperative: Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν. These examples support well the view that divine agency grounds and enables human agency, and thus human freedom.

Volker Rabens has expanded the indicative/imperative paradigm in order to convey the relational dynamic involved.<sup>893</sup> Attempting to grasp more fully how it is that the ethical life is empowered by the Spirit, Rabens explores the wider context in which the role of the Spirit in forming relationships becomes more apparent (3:1–5; 4:1–11). Specifically, the Spirit’s empowering work draws people to God as their Father, which is contrasted with their former life of bondage (Gal 4:1–11), and thus through the “transformation and empowering that derives from these intimate relationships,” believers are enabled to live according to the values of the Spirit (cf. 5:16–25).<sup>894</sup> This filial intimacy with God, experienced through the Spirit of adoption is “the fundamental formative force” in the believers’ lives, empowering them for the ethical life that is demanded in 5:25b and the rest of the letter.<sup>895</sup>

As we look over our expanded discussion of agency throughout Galatians, we have discovered that the Spirit reconstitutes the believer to be a fully functioning agent. When the relational language is appreciated, it becomes evident that human agency can only be fully realised in its divinely intended form through this dynamic of dependence—of participatory faith. The divinity of God and the authenticity of the creature are preserved. Articulated in a variety of ways, whether through Bultmann’s

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that Paul speaks of πίστις—the new self abides through participatory faith. What was implicit in 2:20 about the resurrection is here made explicit by the mention of the Spirit who is the giver of life (Gal 3:21). Furthermore, as we argued in 2:20, the “I” is redefined “in Christ,” a truth Paul underscores in 5:6 with the preceding prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Just as Paul could say that he lives in the mode of faith in the Son of God who loved and gave himself on behalf of believers in 2:20, so he can say in 5:6 that in Christ the only thing that matters is “faith working through love.” In this way, Paul presents faith to be the very way in which the life and love of Christ is demonstrated.

<sup>893</sup> Volker Rabens, “‘Indicative and Imperative’ as the Substructure of Paul’s Theology-and-Ethics in Galatians? A Discussion of Divine and Human Agency in Paul,” in *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul’s Letter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 285–305.

<sup>894</sup> Rabens, “Indicative and Imperative,” 301.

<sup>895</sup> Rabens, “Indicative and Imperative,” 301. Cf. the parallel in Rom 8:12–17 where Paul provides greater detail of the ethical aspect of the empowering of the Spirit in relational terms.

indicative/imperative paradigm, Barth's language of covenant partnership, Barclay's distinction of non-contrastive transcendence, we have uncovered the vital link in how these agencies operate through our elucidation of faith; faith is the responsive act of self-negating dependence, even participation in Christ. Galatians 5–6 reveal that God has elected humans to a particular kind of life, but it is always a life that postures itself in dependence on Christ.

## 2.2 Πίστις as the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)

Our argument thus far has stressed that faith is the mode of dependent participation in Christ and the Spirit from which all believer activity stems and as such, our primary translation of πίστις has been faith. However, in Galatians 5:22 most English translations render πίστις as “faithfulness.” Is this a deviation from the norm? As we have observed in our study thus far, faith necessarily entails faithfulness.<sup>896</sup> Often, when Paul speaks of πίστις it carries a continuative aspect.<sup>897</sup> Faith is first expressed in a response of trust in the gospel, but it is continually exercised through active dependence upon Christ and the Spirit. Furthermore, faith engenders activity that produces good works.

## 2.3 Summary

This new way of life described as “faith in Christ” is the central message that Paul wants to convey to his readers: their new life in Christ operates out of faith, by the Spirit, continuously participating in and manifesting the self-giving love of Christ.<sup>898</sup> Truly, Galatians 5:5-6 summarise in concise but comprehensive form the chief features of Paul's theology in Galatians, and arguably throughout the Pauline corpus.<sup>899</sup> In this light, this concluding ethical section makes perfect sense. The kind of virtuous living that he portrays as fruit of the Spirit cannot be experienced apart from faith in Christ. Neither can the abstention from works of the flesh be

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<sup>896</sup> Dunn notes that Paul would “presumably see no great distinction between the two or insist on some strict order of salvation” (Dunn, *Galatians*, 311–12).

<sup>897</sup> See especially chapter two § 1.2; 1.5. See also chapter three §2.1, 2.3; chapter four § 1.4, 2.1, 2.2; chapter five § 3.2.

<sup>898</sup> In this way Paul can speak of “the law of Christ” being fulfilled when believers bear one another's burdens, reflecting the self-giving love of Christ (6:2; 2:20). Hays also notes that freedom is the necessary precondition that enables believers to become “active subjects who fulfill God's original purpose by loving one another” (Hays, *Faith of Jesus Christ*, 223).

<sup>899</sup> Burton goes so far as to say: “For the disclosure of the apostle's fundamental idea of the nature of religion, there is no more important sentence in the whole epistle, if, indeed, in any of Paul's epistles. Each term and construction of the sentence is significant” (Burton, *Galatians*, 279).

experienced apart from this life in the Spirit, which Paul expressed in conjunction with faith in Galatians 5:5. Thus, the way forward to understanding Paul's logic depends on understanding that faith is the believer act from which all other believer acts follow because faith is an active form of participation and dependence upon the divine.

### 3. True Christian Identity in Christ

The conclusion to this letter, Galatians 6:12-18, has been described by many interpreters as the "hermeneutical key," the *recapitulatio*, recalling many of the main issues that have been addressed throughout the letter.<sup>900</sup> Here the cross of Christ is once again Paul's single boast, demonstrating its centrality to the theology of the letter.<sup>901</sup> Yet, Paul simultaneously conveys an impassioned ecclesial concern that his readers not only grasp this theological truth, but that it fundamentally alters their whole existential reality. We have persistently argued that self-involving faith is key to understanding the anthropological appropriation of the theological axiom of salvation in Christ alone. In this final section we will see once again, that although πίστις is not specifically represented here, the same notion of dependent participation in Christ underlies Paul's concluding points.

In Galatians 6:12-15, Paul sets up two alternative boasts: boasting in the flesh and boasting in the cross. Paul's boast in the cross in Galatians 6:14 encapsulates the expression of reliance upon Christ that is so pervasive elsewhere in his writings. In 1 and 2 Corinthians we explored Paul's use of καυχᾶμαι and its close conceptual overlap with πίστις. "Boasting in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31) was presented as a corollary to "faith in the power of God" (1 Cor 2:5). The manner in which the two concepts are interrelated revealed that boasting and faith are key ways of talking about how the self finds its identity and symbolic capital. Specifically, Christ is the only object of a believer's symbolic capital and the only ground for dependence. All other worldly values become bankrupt to the believer who finds sole, incalculable worth in Christ and his cross. Likewise in 2 Corinthians 10-13, having been put on the seat of defence, Paul is compelled to boast of his authority and authenticity as apostle. Yet,

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<sup>900</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 312–13; Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "Gal. 6:11-18: A Hermeneutical Key to the Galatian Letter," *CTJ* 28 (1993): 93. So also Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 220; Burton, *Galatians*, 348; Dunn, *Galatians*, 334–35.

<sup>901</sup> Weima, "Gal. 6:11-18."

his boast is always directed away from self-glorification and focused instead on the Lord (2 Cor 10:17). When he does “boast” in himself, it is a paradoxical focus on his weaknesses (2 Cor 12:5), because in this way the power of Christ may dwell in him (2 Cor 12:9). Here Paul ties together the self-negating and self-involving components of faith; in his boast, he expresses his confidence in Christ and not in himself as seen in his frequent reiteration: “not I, but Christ” (2 Cor 1:9; 2:17; 3:5; 4:7).

Although the word πίστις is not featured in this concluding paragraph of Galatians, the related concepts of self-involving reliance upon Christ, self-abnegation, and full identification in the salvific act of Christ are evident again through the language of boasting. Paul’s boast in the cross (6:14), is in explicit contrast to his opponents who seek to make a good showing, and boast in the flesh (Gal 6:12,13). In fact, Paul brings his argument full circle here in exposing that the opponents’ boast in the flesh is directly related to the Galatians’ acts of circumcision (cf. Gal 2:16-21; 6:13). For Paul, however, to be circumcised is to act in opposition to the cross. To boast in the flesh is the opposite of relying upon Christ. The language parallels his earlier warning that accepting circumcision severs the Galatians from Christ (5:2-4).

In contrast to his opponents, Paul’s boast, his dependence upon and identification with Christ are the basis of his own life. Just as his boast is paradoxical in the Corinthian correspondence, so is it here. By boasting in the cross, Paul counters all other systems of value and focuses on something he himself has not done. Paul boasts in a work that was entirely accomplished by Christ and which completely altered his own existence. Through boasting only in the cross of Christ, Paul draws together the central focus of this letter—faith relativises all things under Christ. From beginning to end, Paul is talking about people who live ἐκ πίστεως; indeed, this newly created people of God are οἱ οἰκεῖοι τῆς πίστεως (Gal 6:10).

Finally, Paul concludes that all that matters is new creation (καινὴ κτίσις). Just as Paul talks about boasting in a way that is reflective of how the self finds its identity and symbolic capital, this passage draws our attention to the new identity of the believer. The way in which Paul portrays the new mode of dependent participation in Christ is determined by what Paul means by the phrase καινὴ κτίσις. This expression can be interpreted anthropologically, to refer to a “new beginning in life,”<sup>902</sup> as we have argued in 2 Corinthians 5:17. It can also be interpreted cosmologically to refer to

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<sup>902</sup> Ekik Sjöberg, “Wiedergeburt und Neuschöpfung im palästinischen Judentum,” *STh* 4 (1950): 44–85.

the age to come.<sup>903</sup> Interpreters who take the latter view find support in the immediately preceding context of 6:14 where Paul refers to his crucifixion to the world and vice versa. However, Hubbard has posed an important question: “why should *καινή κτίσις* correspond to *κόσμος* in verse 14 and not to *ἐγώ*?”<sup>904</sup> He points out that Paul’s personal pronouns in verse 14 are placed in the emphatic position (*ἐμοί ... ἐμοί ... καὶ γώ*), while in verse 15 it is new creation that receives emphasis. Thus it would seem logical to relate the two. This is supported by the fact that Paul emphasises the *self* in his declaration of the world’s being crucified to him and vice versa. Additionally, the context of these two verses reveals that the *self* is underscored as he identifies his boast in, and thus identification with, the cross of Christ.

Highlighting the anthropological dimension of new creation here does not preclude a cosmological dimension. Jackson has even argued that it is inappropriate to make a sharp distinction between *anthropo-* and *cosmo-* soteriology.<sup>905</sup> Yet Paul can emphasise characteristics of one or the other at various occasions. In the context of Galatians 6, it seems best to take *καινή κτίσις* as referring primarily to an anthropo-soteriology, to new human identity; one that fits within a cosmo-soteriology. Indeed, this reading comports well with other passages in which the believer is revived out of death.<sup>906</sup> Galatians 2:19, especially, shares many parallels with Galatians 6:14-15. First, Paul speaks of the world being crucified to him and he to the world (6:14), a lucid parallel to and explication of the wider ramifications of his earlier declaration: *Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι* (2:19). Secondly, Paul’s death to the Law in Galatians 2:19 is recapitulated in his declaration that there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision (Gal 6:15). Finally, where we observed an implicit resurrected self in Galatians 2:20, *ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί*, Paul writes specifically about new creation, *καινή κτίσις*. In both passages, the old self is co-crucified with Christ, meaning all else is dead to the believer, yet the individual lives as a new creature in Christ.

In view of the many anthropological elements in the immediate context, along with the close parallel to Galatians 2:19-20, it seems best to read *καινή κτίσις* primarily as an illumination of a new way of being in Christ. This reading falls in line with our enduring argument that faith is the chief way that Paul depicts one’s mode of

<sup>903</sup> Cf. Rom 8:19-22. So Dunn, *Galatians*, 342–43.

<sup>904</sup> Hubbard, *New Creation*, 223.

<sup>905</sup> T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters*, WUNT 2: 272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

<sup>906</sup> Betz, *Galatians*, 313; Hubbard, *New Creation*, 190.

being in Christ: The new mode of existence ἐν πίστει (2:20) is “new creation.” The underlying dimension of faith in this final paragraph can be found in the similar syntactical structure that Paul employs in Galatians 5:6 and 6:15:

Galatians 5:6

- a) οὔτε περιτομή
- b) τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία
- c) ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.

Galatians 6:15

- a) οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή
- b) τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία,
- c) ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.<sup>907</sup>

In these two passages, the echo of the negating phrase, οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, unveils a parallel relationship between the positive phrases, πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, and καινὴ κτίσις. This parallel would suggest that new creation is manifested by faith working through love.

#### 4. Conclusion

As we ventured through Galatians 3-6, we have observed how central faith is to Paul’s primary argument in the letter. From the outset in chapter three, Paul portrays the relationship between the Spirit and human faith as reciprocal. In this way, the Spirit elicits and enables human faith. As the giver of life, the Spirit in fact recreates and continuously enlivens and empowers the human subject. Yet, receiving the Spirit is not a punctiliar event, but a continuous phenomenon of being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Faith is that mode of being in which the believer experiences this continuous empowerment by the Spirit. In the context of Paul’s discussion of the Spirit and faith, we addressed the meaning of the nuanced phrase, ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως, observing that it conveys the active passivity of faith. In this way, faith is necessarily self-involving action in the activity of another, but not the source of that activity.

In tracing the centrality of faith to Paul’s argument in Galatians, we also covered extensive terrain in which the very nature of the Pauline conception of faith has been debated, misconstrued, and re-identified. In part two of this chapter, we

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<sup>907</sup> Note the similar structure in 1 Cor 7:19:

- a) ἡ περιτομή οὐδὲν ἐστὶν
- b) καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστὶν
- c) ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ.

explored three Scriptural proofs that Paul utilises to support his argument that faith is the human connection point for appropriation of the singularly efficacious gift in Christ. Specifically, the examples of Abraham and the citation of Habakkuk both portray a human mode of dependence, as opposed to a recent tendency to find in them an example of messianic faithfulness. Rather, Paul can utilise these examples and adapt the scriptural reference to identify the children of God primarily as people of faith: οἱ ἐκ πίστεως. This mode of being stands in stark contrast to those who seek to add works of the Law to their religious practice.

In our exegesis of Galatians 3:22, we observed that the repetition of πίστις serves to disambiguate the possibly confusing genitive construction. Where genitives are notoriously difficult to translate, Paul clarifies what he means by adding a substantival participle to ensure his readers that they know whose faith he is referring to—the faith of his readers and not that of Christ. Furthermore, because faith is so central to his argument, he can refer to the present age as the age of faith in Galatians 3:23,25. Πίστις becomes a form of shorthand for the self-involving aspect of the gospel that Paul wants his readers to comprehend. Through this nominalisation of faith, we observe that the gospel can be referred to in terms reflective of both the instrument of grace, that is Christ, and the beneficiaries of grace, that is trusting humans. Indeed, the emphasis on human trust serves to explain why he would use this shorthand in the context of writing to the Galatians.

In the final chapters of Galatians, we observed that 5:5-6 indicate that faith is the human mode of existence from which all Christian activity flows. We discussed many of the tensions that arise in attempting to explain human and divine agencies, concluding that these cannot be reduced to that of a competitive relationship. Rather, God's sovereignty grounds and enables human activity as the believer unites himself or herself to God in a dependent relationship of faith. It is in this relationship that faith is expressed through love (Gal 5:6) and it is on the basis of this relationship that the ethical commands of Galatians 5-6 are understood. Faith then, is the believer act from which all Christian activity flows.

Having explored such a wide array of debates and exegetical nuances, it has been necessary to articulate clearly what Paul means when he speaks of faith. A clearly elucidated concept of faith should clarify many of the interpretative debates addressed in this thesis. One such debate relates to what is the primary theological concern that Paul is addressing in this letter. While many interpreters have challenged

the notion that there is a strong emphasis on human faith in Galatians while seeking to focus on the centrality of the Christ-event for Paul's theology, we have observed that in fact there is a two level antithesis present in the text. On the first level, Paul must remind his readers of the soteriological basis of one's trust: the Christ-gift alone is efficacious for divinely created new life. This is indisputably the "larger antithesis," and indeed the centre of Paul's gospel. Yet, this point does not seem to really be debated amongst the Galatians. Rather, the chief problem in Galatia relates to the second-level antithesis, which is how the human appropriates and continues to live within that soteriological basis; how do humans obey the truth? This second-level relates primarily to human self-involvement in the Christ-gift. Thus, faith truly is the central point of correction Paul seeks to make for his Galatian readers. Throughout this aggressive letter, it is evident that Paul has a human subject of faith in mind. Yet, a human subject of faith does not promote a form of human self-achievement because faith is precisely a posture of self-denial and a positioning of oneself in a dependent relationship upon the divine work of God through Christ and by the Spirit. This mode of being comes into existence by the Spirit and is continuously carried out by the work of the Spirit. Moreover, the emphasis on human faith does not exemplify anthropocentrism. Rather, faith, properly understood, depicts most fully a Christocentric anthropology. People cannot be removed from the equation; it is precisely humans that Christ came to redeem. Faith is the point of connection in the human by which the benefits of Christ's work are appropriated. Faith is the only appropriate manner of relating to God because it is the human posture of self-negation and dependence upon Christ. In this relationship of complete dependence, the sole soteriological basis of salvation in Christ is realised within the believer because, ultimately, faith is participation in Christ.



## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 1. The Aim of This Thesis

This thesis has set out to explore the question of what Paul means by faith. Indeed, this is no small or even new task. However, this study makes two unique contributions. First, I have chosen to explore the Pauline conception of faith by looking beyond simply the word πίστις to explore conceptual cognates as well. Where I do examine πίστις, careful exegetical work is done in the surrounding context to see what other language and ideas can be found that may elucidate what he means by faith. This exploration is not simply a word study but a study of Paul's concept of faith in general. Secondly, I have chosen to take this discussion outside of the classic passages in Galatians and Romans. Most scholars have given almost exclusive attention to Galatians and Romans, but I have chosen to begin with 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, which represent letters written in the early years of Paul's ministry, before studying Galatians. This methodology makes a hermeneutical advance as it widens the Pauline frame of discussion and provides a larger context for the study of disputed passages in Galatians.

After summarising the findings of this thesis and presenting the implications of our reading for some of the broader debates in Pauline studies, I will include some brief observations about how my findings might apply to Romans and Philippians below.

### 2. Summary of the Thesis

#### 2.1 A Multi-faceted Mode of Existence

Our study has traversed significant terrain in our quest to discover what Paul means by faith. In contrast to the way that Teresa Morgan separates Paul's focus on the founding of faith (in Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon) from faith as a continuing way of life (in 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians), we have observed a more unified logic in Paul's letters. Thus, at this juncture we shall tie together the various threads to offer a synthesised portrait of the Pauline conception of faith. First, we have understood Paul to describe faith primarily as a **human mode of existence**. For example, in 1 Thessalonians, we observed that Paul clearly identifies his readers as the ones exercising faith in every case. Whether πίστις is preceded by a

pronoun (1 Thess 1:3, 8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 5:8), or implied in the verbal form (1 Thess 4:14), it is clear that humans are the subject of the faith he is talking about.

At a foundational level, **faith is knowledge**. There is a content, an objective basis, to faith (*fides quae*). Faith is founded on an event that it believes truly to have happened: that Jesus died for the sins of humanity, was buried, and rose again on the third day (1 Thess 4:14; 1 Cor 15:3-4). At times, Paul also employs synonyms for faith that explicate it as a confident knowing. For example, οἶδα (2 Cor 4:14) qualifies πιστεῶ (4:13) in concrete cognitive terms. At times, Paul expresses his faith by saying that he *knows* that should he die, he will be raised with Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 5, the expressions οἶδα, θαρρέω, and πίστις are descriptive of one another. In the context of contrasting living by sight with living by faith, Paul utilises these confidence terms to expound what it means to live by faith (5:7) as believers look forward to being fully present with the Lord (5:6) in their heavenly dwelling (5:2).

Faith is **self-involving in the Christ-mediated process of salvation**. Faith believes in the historical Christ-event, is presently wrapped up in a consistent identification with the crucifixion and resurrection, and has a confident hope of participating in the future resurrection when believers will live forever with Christ. Anchored in the past and dynamically active in the present, faith looks forward to that which is still to be attained—participation in the future resurrection of Christ (1 Thess 4:14; 5:1-11). Faith believes that what was true of Christ will also be true for the believer; faith and hope are thus integrally related to one another (1 Cor 15:19-23, 42-49, 52-53, 58).

Faith expresses **self-identity**. Acceptance of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον is not just acceptance of new information; it is self-involving, an acceptance of a new self that has been reconstituted by Christ. Faith was crucial to early Christian identity and became the chief way of identifying followers of Christ. As a primary identity marker, faith is fundamentally a re-identification with the Christ-event. Turning to Christ from pagan worship (e.g., the Thessalonian believers) or renouncing previous symbolic capital of human wisdom, social status, and power (e.g., the Corinthians) carry consequences such as social dislocation and even harassment. Yet the new symbolic capital of Christ, and sharing in his cross, outweighs, even displaces, all other forms of worth, security, and identity.

In both of his letters to the Corinthians and in his letter to the Galatians, Paul uses language of **boasting** to explicate the human disposition towards God. This took

shape in two primary ways. First, Paul spoke of a self-negating boast, in which he highlighted his weakness (2 Cor 11:30; 12:9-10). In Galatians 6, he condemns boasting in the flesh (Gal 6:13), a clear allusion to the matter of circumcision that incited Paul to write this letter (Gal 6:15). Self-boasting of any kind before the Lord is rejected (1 Cor 1:29). Instead, the only acceptable boast is a Christ-affirming disposition of reliance (2 Cor 12:5; 10:17). This boast is counter-cultural in its focus on the cross of Christ (Gal 6:14) and encapsulates the expression of reliance upon Christ so pervasive in his writings. Christ is the only object of a believer's worth and the only ground for dependence (1 Cor 1-2).

The correlation between faith and new identity was also evident in the way Paul talks about **new creation** (καινή κτίσις). In 2 Corinthians 5:17, we observed that καινή κτίσις relates to a believer's union with Christ by faith. Believers are made new by the facts of Christ's entering the experience of humanity and of humans entering into his by sharing in his death and resurrection (2 Cor 5:21).

Faith is **dynamic and active**. The believer is dynamically involved in the Christ-mediated process of salvation. Grammatically, we observed a number of points that support our understanding of faith as a **continuing mode of existence**. For example, the present tense participle οἱ πιστεύοντες has the aspectual force of continual belief (1 Thess 1:7; 2:10, 13). Various metaphors bolstered this reading as well. For example, "standing in the Lord" (1 Thess 5:8), "standing in the gospel" (1 Cor 15:1), and "standing in faith" (1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24) represented perseverance in faith. Supporting terms provided additional reinforcement of this idea of continuously holding fast (e.g., κατέχω – 1 Cor 15:12) and being steadfast (e.g., ἑδραῖος – 1 Cor 15:58).

This dynamic and active faith is also **productive**—it is the locus within the believer from which good works are produced. Paul could praise the Thessalonians for their ἔργον τῆς πίστεως (1 Thess 1:4). Paul's own ministry of proclamation flows out of his faith (2 Cor 4:13). The necessary point for rightly understanding why it is that works produced from faith are accepted over against works of the Law is that they flow precisely from a relationship of dependence upon Christ. Furthermore, the kind of works produced from faith represents Christological activity—Jesus is the focus and source of Paul's preaching (2 Cor 4:5). His ministry is endowed with divine approval and empowerment—Paul speaks, but it is Christ who speaks in him (2 Cor 13:3).

As a dynamic phenomenon, faith has the **potential to grow or to wane**. Paul urgently sends Timothy to strengthen and to encourage the Thessalonians in their faith (1 Thess 3:2). He is also concerned to restore what is lacking in their faith (1 Thess 3:10), which we took to involve both moral and theological understanding as well as the practical outworking of their faith.

Faith is **confident dependence** on God. In 2 Corinthians in particular, we traced the theme of relying on God and not oneself throughout the letter, taking the verb *πέποιθα* as a close conceptual cognate to *πίστις*. The Christological basis for this reliance is evident from the start of the letter when Paul writes about trusting in God, the one who raises from the dead (1:9), and it is reiterated throughout the letter (3:4; 4:7-15).

Finally, faith is just as much, if not more, **a statement about God** as it is about the self. Faith arises in the believer only on the basis of a prior divine act (1 Thess 1:5), is rooted in the power of God in Christ crucified (1 Cor 2:1-5), and remains as an active mode of existence by the energising activity of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 2:13; 2 Cor 4:13; Gal 3:2-5; 5:5, 22-25). Paul can defend his own ministry on the basis of God's faithfulness (2 Cor 1:18). Indeed, the call to faith in Christ is entirely grounded in the grace of God (Gal 2:16-21).

In this way, faith is ultimately **surrender** to God's prior gracious act. We noted that the verbs *δέχομαι* (1 Thess 1:6; 2:13) and *παραλαμβάνω* (1 Thess 2:13) reflect an act of response to the gospel. The act of receiving reflects an active passivity—it is passive in that it requires the prior action of another and is dependent on the giver, but it must actively choose to accept or reject the gift. As a responsive, and not an autonomous, act, faith is a continuous surrender to and dependence on the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-2).

## *2.2 A Synthesised Pauline Conception of Faith: Self-negating and Self-involving*

Two common threads have arisen in our analysis of Paul's presentation of faith: faith is at once both self-negating and self-involving dependence on Christ. Faith is self-negating when the believer looks away from the self, discovering his or her insufficiency, weakness, and neediness. Luther, Schlatter, and Bultmann each emphasised self-denial, a radical renunciation of sin and of self, in faith. Indeed, Paul is unequivocal in this regard; humans are insufficient to fulfil the works of God (2 Cor 2:16b). However, humans do find sufficiency in Christ (2 Cor 2:17). The adage "not I,

but Christ” reverberates throughout 2 Corinthians (e.g., 1:9; 3:5; 4:7), and it becomes clear that it is participating in the pattern of Christ’s self-giving love and service that qualifies Paul’s own ministry. The language of co-crucifixion in Galatians 2:19 proved paradigmatic for this pattern of participating in Christ by faith; death with Christ necessitates death with respect to everything else. It rejects all other lordships, whether that be the Law, the flesh, the world, boasting in human achievements such as wisdom, power, and nobility, or social relations.

At the same time, faith is a participation in Christ. Neugebauer was right to highlight that πίστις should always be understood in relationship to the ἐν Χριστῷ reality. Von Dobbeler underscored that πίστις enables participation, Hay articulated faith as the mode of participation, and Campbell emphasised that faith and participation are intimately connected through the duration of the Christian life. In our investigation of Galatians, we highlighted Galatians 2:19b-20 as the *crux interpretum* for this idea of faith as participation. In declaring Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι, the believer now finds life only in identification with the crucifixion of Christ. This life occurs in the mode of πίστις, which combines a subjective experience with the objective event; πίστις is a self-involving statement—it is participation in Christ. The self-involving nature of faith reflects a relationship of confidence and trust that is established by divine initiative. Yet, this dependence is not ultimately and only for the sake of the salvation of the one who trusts but also participating in the self-giving love of Christ. This participatory faith shares in the life-giving ministry of Christ for others. In this way, Paul writes that death was at work in him, but life was being produced in those whom he was called to serve (2 Cor 1:4, 6-7; 4:5, 12-15). This concept of self-negating and participatory faith conveys, for Paul, the primary believer act from which all Christian activity flows. The concise statement πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη conveys the basis for how to understand a Christian ethic. The kind of activity that proceeds from faith is expressed and summarised as love (Gal 5:6, 13-14).

### 2.3 Clarifications about Faith

The phrase “not I, but Christ” was recurrent throughout 2 Corinthians, and the concept was replete throughout our examination of the Pauline conception of faith. As a statement that is both self-negating and self-involving, this phrase serves as one of the most fundamental expressions of faith. In line with this, it is helpful here to offer

some key points of clarification against common caricatures of faith. First, faith is not a condition for but rather the means through which one participates in the Christ-event. Nor is faith self-achievement; rather it is a posture of self-denial and a positioning of oneself in a dependent relationship to Christ by the Spirit. Faith itself is not effective for salvation, but it is the means of appropriating that which is. Furthermore, faith is not autonomous; it is not the replacement of one form of human effort with another form of human effort. Rather, it is a response to and an absolute dependence upon the divine. Finally, faith is not anthropocentric. Anthropology is important to Paul and ought not be sidelined out of concern for divine priority. Rather, the Pauline conception of faith is the only way to reflect a Christocentric anthropology because it is a posture of self-negation and dependence upon Christ. In this relationship of complete dependence, the efficacious basis of salvation in Christ is realised within the believer.

### **3. Implications of This Reading**

Our reading of faith has intersected with a number of primary Pauline debates, and it is our contention that this close reading of what Paul means by faith illuminates these discussions. Three debates in particular have been in the background of our query: how to interpret πίστις Χριστοῦ, how to understand the relationship between divine and human agency, and the question of the centre of Paul's theology. We will take each of these in turn.

#### *3.1 Centre of Paul's Theology*

In our introduction, we traced the thought of interpreters such as Wrede, Schweitzer, and Sanders who deemed participatory soteriology of greater theological import than the doctrine of justification by faith. For these interpreters, justification is significant only insofar as it distinguishes Christianity from Judaism, while participation portrays a more "Christological" centre. Moreover, these interpreters suggested that faith is only important in the context of the doctrine of justification, and since justification primarily occurs only in Romans and Galatians, their discussion of faith disappears almost entirely outside of these contexts.

Our study has benefitted by traversing outside the boundary of key justification texts in Romans and Galatians, revealing a crucial, but often neglected,

point: Paul connects faith to both the concept of participation and the doctrine of justification. In 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians, we observed that Paul speaks repeatedly about the πίστις of believers as an ongoing state of dependence on Christ. Faith is not simply the entry point to justification, but is descriptive of a believer's entire life in Christ. Faith expresses one's new identity in Christ and becomes self-involving in the Christ-mediated process of salvation. While Schweitzer saw union with Christ as the all-encompassing expression for every spiritual blessing, we have observed that faith is the necessary point of connection in which union occurs between the believer and Christ. We could just as easily speak of "participation by faith" as we commonly speak of "justification by faith."

Secondly, we observed that justification cannot so easily be bifurcated from participation. To elevate one doctrine over the other is to separate two themes that Paul holds together. With Käsemann, we observed that Paul speaks of righteousness with both juristic and participatory categories. Particularly instructive on this point is the fluid way in which Paul writes about justification by faith (Gal 2:16) and justification in Christ (Gal 2:17); participation is the inner reality of justification. Paul's portrayal of participation is primarily about identifying with the death of Christ and trusting that what was true of Christ will also be true of believers. It is precisely by participating in Christ's work that the believer is found righteous and no longer a sinner. Paul utilises a variety of terms to describe the impact that God's grace through Christ has on those who trust in him, and the Christological axiom undergirds all that Paul says about salvation. We cannot, however, eliminate or relegate the primary way Paul refers to the human response to what God has done in Christ—this is concisely summed up in the way Paul talks about faith, the mode of involving oneself in the life and work of Christ.

### *3.2 Πίστις Χριστοῦ*

As we observed in our introduction, the idea that, for Paul, it is Christ's faith that saves believers has become widely accepted in New Testament scholarship. After tracing a handful of the primary arguments on the subjective genitive side, we highlighted several important contributions in favour of the objective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, including grammatical analysis, lexical semantics, rhetorical analysis, intertextual evidence, and its longevity as a viable reading through the ages. Most significantly, we underscored the Christocentricity inherent within the objective

genitive reading. Our theology of faith revealed that the essential undergirding principle of all of Paul's theology is the priority of divine grace within the divine/human dynamic: the power of God precedes and elicits the πίστις of humans. Yet, Paul at the same time reflects pastoral concern for his readers: How do his readers relate to the gospel? What does their ongoing life in Christ look like? The emphasis on faith reflects the importance of placing oneself in a posture of humility, dependence, and self-involvement in the Christ-event.

In the context of Galatians, each πίστις Χριστοῦ phrase must naturally be understood in its context of patent theological priority, the basis of the faith being spoken of. Yet this does not mean that πίστις reflects the narrative of Christ; that narrative is evident enough in every mention of the divine Son. When read as a self-negating and self-involving dependence upon the divine act in Christ, human faith in no way implies human achievement. Rather, it is the renunciation of self-achievement and a dependence upon the divine work of Christ. Human faith is thoroughly Christocentric for Paul; it is the chief way for humans to express that Christ alone has accomplished everything for salvation. The human has nothing to contribute but is simply called to step into a posture of dependence on and participation in Christ.

When the element of human faith is lost, human agency becomes obfuscated; the very nature of human participation in Christ is left undefined. The objective genitive reading preserves the theological priorities held by those who advocate the subjective genitive reading while also conveying the vital role of human faith that pervades the Pauline corpus. Indeed the very phrase πίστις Χριστοῦ reflects in concise form the heart of Paul's theology as it brings together the giver, the gift, and the receiver.

### *3.3 Agency*

With both the question of the centre of Paul's theology and the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, the issue of agency plays a significant role in determining on which side one lands. In the course of our study we examined a handful of helpful models for understanding the difficult question of how divine and human agency relate. With John Barclay, we observed that divine and human agency cannot be reduced to a competitive relationship. God's activity grounds and enables human activity as the believer unites himself or herself in a dependent relationship of faith. Often depicted as being in Christ, faith is equally an act of involving oneself with the activity of the



Spirit. Because divine action is prior, the divinity of God and the authenticity of the human are both established. The grace of God determines human action, which corresponds and conforms to God's action. Although faith can be regarded as an act of free human will, that does not mean that the human is independent or autonomous. Nor is faith as a voluntary act wholly self-initiated. Because God's agency can be understood in various ways, there is space to conceive of a human agent that is enabled and empowered by a divine agent to exercise self-negating and self-involving faith.

Other conceptual models aided the way we conceived of agency, for example, the way that Bultmann articulates faith as *Tat* (human action) and not *Werk* (human work). Faith is not a condition for grace to become effective in a believer, but submission that receives from God. It is not accomplishment, but total surrender and obedience. Conceptualising faith as an act pairs with this understanding of faith as surrender for it allows the human to become what God intended the human to be. Barth also enhanced our understanding through his depiction of human agency as a form of covenant partnership with God in which the divinity of God and the authenticity of the human are both established. This pattern has also been articulated as the indicative/imperative paradigm, in which the saving action of God is followed by its corollary of command.

With these helpful models, our study of faith elucidated the quandary of agency in that faith defines what kind of agents humans are—agents wholly dependent on the divine. It seems that Paul conceives of human agency primarily in terms of faith, which becomes the new mode of existence in which the believer is liberated to live a life that is pleasing to God. Faith arises in the death of self (Gal 2:19-20). At the same time, the "I" is revived in Christ, reconstituted by the Holy Spirit to live in this mode of faith in Christ. This life is wholly defined in Christ and operates by complete dependence upon him (Gal 2:20). Faith defines the mode from which all Christian activity flows because it is the mode of dependence upon God.

#### **4. Expanding the Discussion**

Having traversed through four of Paul's letters, how could these findings apply to other Pauline letters, not discussed for reasons of space?

#### 4.1 Faith in Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans has often been understood to present two alternative soteriological categories: righteousness by faith, emphasised in chapters 1–4, or participation/union with Christ, emphasised in chapters 5–8. Interpreters such as Wrede, Schweitzer, and Sanders deemed the emphasis on participation of greater theological import in Romans and concluded an emphasis on justification is significant primarily insofar as it distinguishes Christianity from Judaism. Consequently, faith is significant only in the context of the doctrine of justification. Conversely, interpreters such as Käsemann understand that the whole letter is consumed with the concept of righteousness by faith.

Here again, we seek to underscore the role of faith as a unifying thread throughout the letter. The readings above tend to limit the scope of discussion to the first eight chapters. Yet, there is a noteworthy *inclusio* framing this letter that marks the very purpose for God's sending his Son and the calling of Paul as apostle: εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (1:5; 16:26). The prominence of the faith theme pervades the opening of the letter (Rom 1:8, 12) and can be traced as an underlying point of focus throughout.<sup>908</sup> As we have previously discussed, Paul is versatile in the way that he talks about salvation, but the calling of humans to faith remains consistent.

Of particular significance is the way that faith functions in the two verses which have been said to summarise Paul's theology as a whole, Romans 1:16–17.<sup>909</sup> In the phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν<sup>910</sup>, Paul has established, and will continue to establish, that the birth and development of human faith is the goal in his own ministry of proclamation of the gospel. The εἰς indicates purpose just as it did in Romans 1:5. Human faith is the cause of Paul's thanksgiving in Romans 1:8 and the desired means of mutual encouragement between the apostle and the Roman believers in Romans 1:12. The power of God in the gospel is actualised in those who exercise

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<sup>908</sup> Faith is quite clearly a crucial theme in Paul's letter to the Romans, having more occurrences of πίστις than any other NT book (40 times out of 243 total).

<sup>909</sup> Barrett, *Romans*, 27.

<sup>910</sup> Space will not allow a full treatment of how to interpret this phrase. Against the increasing tendency to read ἐκ πίστεως as an allusion to Christ's faith and εἰς πίστιν as human faith, I read both as referring to human faith. This falls in line with our discussions of the phrase ἐκ πίστεως as deriving from Hab 2:4 and referring to human faith (cf. ch. 5 § 2.2.3.2 on "Intertextual Evidence" and ch. 6 § 1.2.2 and 1.2.3). With Cranfield, the εἰς πίστιν can be read as an emphatic repetition of ἐκ πίστεως. C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Chapters 1–8*, vol. 1, ICC 32 (Edinburgh: Clark, 2001), 100.

faith (Rom 1:16). Thus, the immediate context alone reveals that human faith is the intended outcome of God's gospel and the proclamation of it. Additionally, Romans 1:17 is an important point of comparison with our study of Galatians 3 as both cite Habakkuk 2:4. In our examination of Galatians 3:11, we argued two main points: 1) that the phrase should read, "The one who is righteous by faith will live," and 2) that ὁ δίκαιος refers to a human subject and not the Messiah. That reading is consistent with the logic of Romans as Paul spends the first four chapters addressing the problem of human sin and the need for the revealed righteousness and saving power of the gospel. Human faith is the call, but as we have insisted throughout our study, human faith is always preceded and elicited by the δύναμις of God, as this *propositio* states so well (Rom 1:16).

The essential role of faith comes into sharper focus in 3:21-31. These verses expand upon Romans 1:16-17, drawing out the themes of the righteousness of God, faith, and shame. Our reading of the objective genitive of πίστις Χριστοῦ, however, works well in 3:22, underscoring the vital element of human self-negation and participation in the justification that is offered by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ (3:24). This passage also reveals that the concept of participation in Christ is central to the doctrines of justification and redemption. Romans 3:24 functions similarly to Galatians 2:17, leaving no doubt that Christ is the source of justification (Gal 2:17) and redemption (Rom 3:24). But the surrounding context makes certain that faith is the means by which believers participate in that redemption in Christ. Paul says this redemption is received by faith (διὰ πίστεως – Rom 3:25). The efficacy of justification is based on God's act but appropriated by those who have faith in Jesus (Rom 3:26). Our observations of a close correspondence between boasting and faith are evident here as well, as Paul excludes boasting based on the law of faith (3:27-28). In many ways, the first four chapters of Romans reflect the self-negating thread that we observed.

Romans 4 serves as the basis of support for Paul's doctrine of justification in Christ by faith and represents a close parallel to Galatians 3. Abraham is the paradigm of faith (Rom 4:3, 5, 9, 11) and the father of those who walk in the footsteps of his faith (Rom 4:12). In this chapter, Paul presents the condition of humanity prior to faith—sinful and ungodly. But to the one who trusts that God justifies the ungodly, to that person faith is reckoned as righteousness (Rom 4:5). Central to the paradigm of Abraham in Romans 4, and to Paul's theology of faith as a whole, is 4:16: διὰ τοῦτο

ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν. Faith is always a matter of depending on grace, which brings glory to God (4:20). Ultimately, the paradigm of Abraham finds its significance in that Abraham believed in the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist (4:17). The significance lies in the ultimate fulfilment of the promised seed, Christ (Gal 3:16), who died for humanity's τὰ παραπτώματα and was raised for their δικαίωσις (Rom 4:25). In this way, Christ is the ultimate link between Romans 1–4 and 5–8.

Romans 5–8 has often been discussed in sharp distinction from Romans 1–4. However, the theme of participation in Christ that is pervasive in chapters 5–8 is predicated upon the foundation of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith in chapters 1–4. Indeed, Romans 5:1-2 depicts in concise form the logical connection between justification by faith, δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως (5:1), and participation by faith, δι' οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν τῇ πίστει (5:2). Although πίστις language diminishes between 5:3 and 8:39, we see that many of faith's conceptual cognates prevail in these prominent participatory chapters. Space allows only a cursory glance, but we note specifically Paul's use of καυχᾶμαι in Rom 5:11 to depict the right human response to God. This disposition, which finds worth in Christ alone, leads into the discussion of participation beginning in 5:12. In a sense, the whole of 5:12–8:39 can be seen as an expression of what precisely the believer boasts in or expresses dependence upon.

What Paul states concisely in Galatians 2:19 as Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι is developed in the first four verses of Romans 6, providing one of the richest depictions of participation in Christ. Baptism in the death of Christ means a death to sin. But baptism in Christ is not just baptism in his death; the goal is sharing also in his resurrection, to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). Later, the connection between sharing in Christ's death and resurrection is articulated in terms of faith: εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ (6:8). Here, participatory faith believes that what was true of Christ will be true for the believer (cf. 1 Thess 4:14). Yet, πιστεύω is not the only expression of faith in this pericope. The context is shot through with confidence expressions that substantiate the importance of human connection with what God has done in Christ: γινώσκω (6:6), οἶδα (6:9), λογίζομαι (6:11) (cf. Rom 8:5-7).

In Romans 10, the theme of justification by faith comes back into view. At this point the difficult genitive phrase is absent, and Paul quite plainly asserts the necessity

of human faith. Salvation is, in part, contingent on human confession and faith (Rom 10:9; cf. 10:10-16). Still, it remains clear that faith is rooted in the prior work of Christ (Rom 10:17). Grace and faith go hand in hand; the act of giving requires a recipient.

Finally, we observe that the letter to the Romans depicts faith as something which has the potential to wane or to grow. Paul explains that Abraham did not weaken in faith (4:19), rather he grew strong in his faith (4:20). This same idea is developed in chapter 14 when Paul exhorts the Roman Christians about how to handle those who are weak in faith (ὁ ἀσθενῶν τῇ πίστει – Rom 14:1). Paul urges all to be fully convinced in their own minds (ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῦ πληροφορεῖσθω – Rom 14:5). The strong in faith live not for themselves but to honour the Lord (Rom 14:7-9). The very purpose of faith is to glorify God (Rom 4:20). Finally, at the end of chapter 14, Paul provides a very telling statement that whatever is not from faith is sin (14:23). Indeed, faith is the way Paul depicts the new life of those who are baptised into the life of Christ. The themes of justification and participation that permeate this letter are summed up in the language of faith in his concluding thoughts. His closing benediction also discloses faith as the mode of existence for the life of God to become manifest: ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν, εἰς τὸ περισσεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου (Rom 15:13). Once again, we see the kind of dynamic relationship between the Holy Spirit and human faith. There is no question in Paul that to be considered righteous before God stems from the power of the Holy Spirit, but the human shares in that power only through faith. And with that faith, the Spirit enables hope which is a direct result of faith.

#### *4.2 Faith in Philippians*

Philippians provides fruitful ground for discussion of the role of faith in Paul's theology. Many of the conceptual cognates that we have explored in relation to faith can be seen in Philippians. The idea that human faith entails confident reliance is seen as early as chapter one, where Paul explains how his imprisonment served to advance the gospel (Phil 1:12, 14). In Philippians 1:14, Paul speaks of the brothers' confidence in the Lord, using the verb πέποιθα: καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν (1:14; cf. 2:24). The word here refers to that confident trust in the Lord which inspires

evangelistic proclamation: τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν. Additionally, Paul can speak of the human mode of existence in faith in terms of symbolic capital through a variety of terms, including language of boasting and shame (Phil 1:20-21). In Philippians 1:26, he speaks of a boast in Christ just as he would speak about faith in Christ: ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Again using the verb πέποιθα, Paul contrasts those who have reason to have confidence in the flesh, including himself, with those who boast (καυχάομαι) in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal 6:13-14). Paul uses metaphors of value, κέρδος, and loss, ζημία (3:7-8). Whatever had previous value to Paul is now loss to him in comparison to knowing Christ (3:8-10).

The life of active participatory faith depicted in Philippians is described as fruitful labour (καρπὸς ἔργου – 1:22) and participation in Christ's suffering (1:29). Desiring to be with the Lord, Paul continues in the flesh for the progress and joy of the Philippians' faith (εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως – 1:25). Paul also depicts the life of faith with terms of endurance and unity (1:27), cognitive assent (1:27; 2:2, 5), self-involvement (2:1), and self-negation (3:3-11). It is an active faith that reflects the self-giving love of Christ (2:17).

Paul's greatest desire is to be found in Christ (3:9). Once again the themes of righteousness and participation are joined together. εὐρίσκω is here in the passive, verifying again that justification is an act of God and not human faith. Yet human faith is the necessary means of appropriating and participating in that righteousness: τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. Righteousness by faith derives from one's relationship of faith in Christ and being found in him. Being in Christ means participating in God's righteousness through Christ by faith.

Finally, what we have observed about agency holds true in Philippians as well. Following the Christ hymn, Paul exhorts his readers: μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε (2:12). Yet this command to work out their salvation is based on the work of God, logically connected by the γάρ of the following verse: θεὸς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας (2:13).

## **5. Conclusion**

Thus, what we have found in the letters we have studied in depth also seems to hold true in Romans and Philippians. It seems that several of the problems and conundrums in recent Pauline scholarship turn out to derive from an inadequate understanding of what Paul means by faith. Once we have that clear, we can satisfy many of the concerns raised by those who advocate a subjective genitive reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ, we can assert the responsive agency of the believer without diminishing the prior agency of God, and we can integrate Paul's language of justification and participation as union with Christ because, as we have found, faith is, for Paul, the mode of self-negating participation in the prior gracious work of Christ.

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