

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GRACE IN THE LETTERS OF PAUL

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IN THE LETTERS OF PAUL

by

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Abstract

To determine the importance and function of the concept of grace in the letters of Paul, this study examines texts, as they occur throughout the undisputed Pauline letters, which have to do with the apostle's beliefs concerning dependence on God at the time of entrance into the Christian community and texts which relate to dependence on God throughout the life of the believer. Although the study does not focus exclusively on the issue of the law in relation to the church, it points toward answers to questions about Paul's views of the role of grace in relation to the Jewish Law.

The picture that emerges is that grace is a theme of vital importance for Paul, not simply because it is a useful part of his arsenal in the battle against what he perceives to be a wrong-headed reliance on "works of the law." For Paul, salvation cannot be contingent on any human activity; it must, rather, be a gift.

Paul believes divine grace to be a fundamental component of the matrix of the believer's life, past, present and future. The study concludes that the "justification" texts fall into a pattern widely evident in the Pauline corpus. Paul's views on grace may be shaped by polemical concerns, but his beliefs about grace also shape the polemical texts, causing him to reject "works" of any kind as leading to divine action which benefits humanity. Faith and obedience are the believer's response (made possible by God) to God's offer of salvation and to divine resources which make possible compliance with the ethical demands of the gospel.

In Paul's thought the divine and human do not play equal roles. Paul intends his paraenetic texts to be taken seriously, but demonstrates that he believes that human achievements and effort find their origin in the divine realm. Paul is not a theological fatalist: people can frustrate the work of the Spirit, but when they allow themselves to be led "by the Spirit," God's purposes will be accomplished. For Paul, one of the most significant defining characteristics of life in Christ is dependence on God's grace.

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Abbreviations

- BAGD Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Tr. and adapted by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 2nd edition revised and augmented by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker.
- BDF Blass, F. and A. Debrunner. A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Tr. and revised by R. W. Funk. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly.
- JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society.
- LSJ Liddell, H. G. and R. S. Scott, revised by H. S. Jones, A Greek English Lexicon. Revised by H. S. Jones Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1968.
- LXX Septuagint
- Metzger Metzger, B. A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. London: United Bible Societies, 1975.
- MHT III Moulton, J. H. A Grammar of New Testament Greek. 4 Vols. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963 Vol. III, Syntax, by N. Turner.
- NA26 Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 26th edition, United Bible Societies, 1979.
- NIDNTT New International Dictionary Of New Testament Theology, C. Brown, ed. 3 Vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
- NovT Novum Testamentum.
- NT New Testament
- NTS New Testament Studies.
- SBL Society of Biblical Literature.
- SJTh Scottish Journal of Theology
- TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. 10 vols. R. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Zer Zerwick, M. Biblical Greek. Tr. and adapted by J. Smith. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1963.
- ZNW Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.

Chapter One -- Introduction

"Man shall find grace;
And shall Grace not find means, that finds her way,
That speediest of Thy winged messengers,
To visit all Thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?
Happy for man so coming!"

Milton: Paradise Lost, iii. 227f.

Grace, so lauded in this excerpt from Milton, appears time and time again in the letters of one of the earliest of Christian writers, Paul the apostle, who would surely share the sentiment expressed in the last line. This dissertation is an attempt to determine why Paul would say so. What role, or roles, does grace play in Paul's letters? Does Paul represent exclusive reliance on God's grace as a mark of the new covenant, and if so, why?

To determine the significance of "grace" in Paul's thought I will not focus exclusively on the classical texts that speak of "justification by faith." Certainly in any discussion of grace in Paul, these texts must be brought to bear, since they have implications for the subject, though these must be determined. Such texts should not be studied to the exclusion of other equally important texts which either mention or make use of the idea of "grace." To focus only on texts in which Paul refers to "justification" is to miss much of what Paul has to say that can inform our understanding of the importance Paul's views on "grace" play in his religious vision.

Many recent studies have called into question the significance that has traditionally been assigned to "grace" in Paul's letters. Before discussing these recent contributions to the debate, a brief summary of what we may call the traditional view of the significance of grace in Paul is in order.

The story of God's salvation made available in Christ has frequently been understood as a signal demonstration of divine grace. In the second century, Clement of Alexandria

writes:¹

He then who would live the true life is enjoined first to know him "whom no one knows except the Son reveal (Him)." Next is to be learned the greatness of the Saviour after Him, and the newness of grace; for, according to the apostle, "the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" and the gifts granted through a faithful servant are not equal to those bestowed by the true Son.

Later, Augustine would say:²

Yet you believe in grace, for you say it is granted to few to reach God by virtue of intelligence. You also use this word more expressly when ... you make no doubt that in this life a man cannot by any means attain to perfect wisdom, but that whatever is lacking is in the future life made up to those who live intellectually, by God's providence and grace. Oh, had you but recognized the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, and that very incarnation of His, wherein He assumed a human soul and body, you might have seen it to be the brightest example of grace.

An opposition between grace and the Jewish Torah, such as that implied by Clement of Alexandria, has long been taken to be of central importance in Paul's soteriology.³ Paul, as traditionally interpreted, speaks as though Christianity is *the* religion of grace and as though Judaism knows little of grace.⁴ As a result of this reading of Paul, Judaism is

¹ "Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?" viii. Tr. W. Wilson, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans reprint 1975.

² "The City of God," x, 29. Tr. M. Dods, in A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church P. Schaff, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans reprint, 1973.

³ This view is still assumed by some modern interpreters, but its most celebrated proponent is Martin Luther. For his own summary of his position, see his "Lectures on Galatians," in Luther's Works, vol. 26, J. Pelikan, ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1963) 122-27.

⁴ See E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) 33-59, for a discussion of how this understanding has been applied to Judaism in the past. Cf. also the earlier article by G. F. Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," HTR,

seen as a religion in which people are thought to be "saved" primarily through the performance of good works. Judaism has therefore been described as a religion of "legalism," in which the intention is to gain God's favour by establishing one's own righteousness. By way of contrast, Christians are said to be justified solely by divine grace, which is merely "received" by human faith. The way of salvation by works (scholars have debated whether Paul saw works as merely inadequate or as being inevitably sinful) which leads to sinful boasting in one's own good works is replaced by the way of reliance upon divine grace.

I. The Recent Debate

Since the early part of this century scholars have questioned the centrality of this notion of "justification by faith" in Paul's thought. Wrede argued that justification by faith was only a polemical tool, used when Paul discussed the "Gentile problem," and thus was only of limited importance to Paul. For Schweitzer, the same doctrine was a "subsidiary crater" in the landscape of Paul's thought, the main crater being Paul's eschatological mysticism.⁵

In more recent scholarship, the focus has shifted from a discussion of the centrality of the concept of "justification by faith" to a questioning of its meaning. The traditional picture no longer holds sway. Traditional discussions presuppose that humanity's utter dependence on God underlies Paul's notion of "justification by faith," but this is now often thought not to be the issue. However much scholars may differ on significant points of interpretation, it is fair to say that, because of the consensus that Judaism was not a religion

14 (1921) 197-254.

⁵ W. Wrede, Paul, tr. E. Lummis (Lexington, Kentucky: American Theological Library Association, 1967[1908]) 122-28 and A. Schweitzer, Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, tr. W. Montgomery (New York: Seabury, 1968 [1931]) 219-26. For others who take the view that justification is a "subsidiary crater," see H. J. Schoeps, Paul, tr. H. Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961 [1959]) 169-200; K. Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in Paul Among Jews and Gentiles, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 78-96 and E. P. Sanders, Paul, 434-42.

of works apart from "grace," many interpreters of Paul no longer think the apostle sees Christian reliance on grace in opposition to Jewish works required to earn salvation. Interpreters who still think that Paul opposes "grace" and "works" often argue that he is not accurately representing Judaism.

E. P. Sanders, in what has proved to be the most stimulating discussion of the role of the law in Second Temple Judaism and in the Pauline corpus in recent scholarship, raises significant questions that impinge directly on how one views grace in Paul. J. D. G. Dunn, H. Räisänen, H. Hübner, S. Westerholm and F. Thielman have also made recent and significant contributions to the study of Paul and the Mosaic law that take into account the work of Sanders and modify his conclusions to a greater or lesser extent. These works have direct implications for our study, since how one views the place of the law in Paul's thought affects how one construes the significance of grace in Paul's thought.

A. E. P. Sanders

Paul and Palestinian Judaism is perceived by many to be one of the most significant monographs to be published in the study of early Judaism and Christianity in the latter half of the twentieth century. In it Sanders attempts to demonstrate, among other things, that Judaism was not a religion that predicated salvation on the performance of good works. Sanders elucidates the now well known pattern of belief that he calls "covenantal nomism," which he claims underlies the Palestinian Judaism of Paul's day (based on the literary evidence of Tannaitic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha).⁶

⁶ Sanders sums up covenantal nomism as follows:

1. God has chosen Israel
2. And given the law
3. The law implies:
 - a. God's promise to maintain the election
 - b. The requirement to obey
4. God rewards obedience and punishes transgression
5. The law provides for means of atonement

The basic pattern which Sanders describes precludes the understanding of Judaism as the "graceless" religion which many biblical scholars have presupposed. He insists that Judaism was not a legalistic religion in which the individual was thought to have to earn God's favour by performing enough good works to tip the scales of divine justice in one's favour.

According to Sanders, in Palestinian Judaism the notions of "grace" and "works" are not opposed to each other in any way.

I believe that it is safe to say that the notion that God's grace is in any way contradictory to human endeavour is totally foreign to Palestinian Judaism. The reason for this is that *grace and works were not considered alternative roads to salvation*. Salvation (except in IV Ezra) is always by the grace of God, embodied in the covenant.⁷

Although the theme of reward and punishment is everywhere in the Tannaitic literature, this does not exclude grace. Sanders shows that in Judaism the idea of being judged according to one's works is not incompatible with the notion that one is saved by grace. One enters the community by grace, but is obligated to live in a certain way to maintain that status. The law requires obedience and promises rewards for obedience. Sanders points out that the rabbis talk about reward to encourage service to God,⁸ but also warn repeatedly against fulfilling the commandments to *earn* payment. Rather, covenant members should perform the required commandments without ulterior motive simply because the commandments are in and of themselves good; they should be done out of love

6. This results in maintenance of relationship or re-establishment of same

7. All who are maintained in covenant will be saved. Salvation and one's place in the covenant are a result of God's mercy.

From E. P. Sanders, "Jesus, Paul and Judaism," in Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, vol. II, 25.1, Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase, eds. (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1982) 394.

⁷ Sanders, Paul, 297.

⁸ Sanders, Paul, 119.

for God.⁹ The rabbis also recognized that God had not really dealt with Israel according to a strict accounting of her merits.¹⁰

According to Sanders, much evidence for this pattern is found in Paul. Paul, too, does not believe the law is incompatible with grace and he does not believe that being saved by grace rules out reward for obedience. Sanders' conclusion raises a crucial question. Why, if Paul does not believe the law is incompatible with grace and does not oppose a "works-righteousness," does he criticize the law as a means of salvation? For Sanders' Paul, the reason is that "salvation is only in Christ and appropriated only by faith."¹¹ The conviction that God appointed Christ to be saviour of both the believing Jew and Gentile lies at the core of Paul's soteriology. According to Sanders, Paul did not believe that righteousness could come by meeting the requirement of the Torah, because Gentiles would then be excluded from the believing community. For Sanders' Paul, the "salvation of the Gentiles is essential to Paul's preaching; and with it falls the law; for, as Paul says simply, Gentiles cannot live by the law (Gal. 2.14)."¹² For Sanders, Paul did not so much misunderstand the law as see it in a new perspective that led him to view the law as superseded by the new covenant in Christ.¹³

B. H. Räisänen

Unlike many other scholars, Räisänen is convinced that some form of legalism is indeed Paul's target. "For Paul, Judaism was legalism...."¹⁴ Thus, although Räisänen finds that Sanders' position concerning the main lines of Tannaitic Judaism is correct, he

⁹ Sanders, Paul, 120.

¹⁰ Sanders, Paul, 122.

¹¹ Sanders, Paul, 519. Sanders sees two factors as being at stake: Paul's exclusivist soteriology and Paul's insistence on the inclusion of the Gentiles.

¹² Sanders, Paul, 496.

¹³ Sanders, Paul, 496.

¹⁴ Räisänen, "Legalism," 64.

finds fault with Sanders and others who say that Paul is not combating what he perceives to be the "works-righteousness" of Judaism.¹⁵ Räisänen introduces a distinction between two kinds of "legalism." "Hard" legalism refers to a legalism in which the intention is to gain God's favour by establishing one's own righteousness. It is a system of human achievement that could be termed "anthropocentric."¹⁶ This is to be distinguished from a "soft" or "torah-centric" form of legalism. This system of salvation consists of observance of precepts, but, according to Räisänen, is free from any boasting or self-righteous attitude.¹⁷ Räisänen believes that Paul's vision of the soteriology of Judaism is that of "soft" legalism, though he does not exclude all overtones of "hard" anthropocentric legalism (cf. Rom 4:4-5). In Räisänen's view, the apostle's criticisms of Judaism cannot be supported from Jewish sources: the extant literature does not indicate that Jews thought they would be saved through performance of good works.¹⁸ In any case, the true root of the failure of Judaism lies for Paul not in anthropology, but in Christology.

Räisänen asks two questions: How did Paul come to treat the law as the Jewish way of salvation detached from God's covenantal grace? And why did he construct an irreconcilable contrast between law and grace, while mentioning nothing about the role of repentance and forgiveness in Judaism?¹⁹ Räisänen rejects the notion that Paul was reacting against the Judaism of the Diaspora, noting that it is impossible to draw a clear-cut boundary between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism. Nor was Paul reacting only against the Christian Judaizers of his generation, for if even "soft" legalism were rare in Palestinian Judaism, how could it have become so strongly represented among those Palestinian Jews

¹⁵ Räisänen, "Legalism," 66.

¹⁶ H. Räisänen, "Legalism and Salvation by the Law. Paul's Portrayal of the Jewish Religion as a Historical and Theological Problem," in Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie, S. Pedersen, ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) 63.

¹⁷ Räisänen, "Legalism," 64.

¹⁸ Räisänen, "Legalism," 72.

¹⁹ Räisänen, "Legalism," 74.

who accepted Christ?²⁰ Räisänen also rejects theories (such as that of Hübner discussed below) that posit a detectable straightforward development in the extant Pauline letters. It is unlikely that there would have been a dramatic theological development within the short time between the writing of Galatians and Romans in the mind of one who had been engaged in missionary activity for approximately twenty years.²¹ In addition, Räisänen does not think that the individual letters themselves are internally consistent, a fact which further complicates theories of development.²²

For Räisänen, Sanders' position that "Paul did not so much misunderstand the role of the law in Judaism as gain a new perspective which led him to dethrone the law as abolished"²³ leaves one important question unanswered: "Why does Paul first enthrone the law as a straw king, in order to dethrone it in the next moment?"²⁴ In his article "Der Bruch des Paulus mit Israels Bund," he argues that Paul wanted to maintain continuity with the Sinai covenant, but that his view of salvation led inevitably to a critique of Judaism. He does not blame Paul for this, saying that from the time when Christians first believed that salvation was only in Jesus the break with Judaism was inevitable.²⁵ From the beginning of the new movement -- perhaps even from John the Baptist -- there was a tension between two views of salvation. In Paul's letters, this tension comes to clearer expression. Since, for Christians, Christ is the only way to salvation, there can be no basis for salvation in Judaism apart from Christ. In a manner similar to Sanders, Räisänen says that it was this soteriological axiom that led Paul to ascribe a provisional and partially negative purpose to

²⁰ Räisänen, "Legalism," 75.

²¹ H. Räisänen, Paul and the Law, 2nd ed., WUNT 29 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987) 8.

²² Räisänen, Law, 9.

²³ Sanders, Paul, 496.

²⁴ Räisänen, "Legalism," 77.

²⁵ Räisänen, "Der Bruch des Paulus mit Israels Bund," The Law in the Bible and Its Environment, Timo Veijola, ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 169.

the law and to arrive at a negative judgment concerning works. The result is that Paul drives a wedge between the grace of God and works, although they had always belonged together in Judaism.²⁶

In Räisänen's view, Paul actually speaks in places as if Judaism did not know the grace of God and as if it were based entirely on human works. This picture is grounded less in an experience in Judaism than in the theological necessity to affirm that the law and works cannot lead to salvation.²⁷

Räisänen's Paul boldly goes where none had gone before, creating a new theology in the process, but falls into difficulties and finds himself at odds with the Judaism that he criticizes. According to Räisänen, Paul is not responsible for the rise of this situation. The problem ultimately lies in Christianity itself, that is, in the contradiction between a purported continuity between Christianity and Judaism and an actual and more considerable discontinuity.²⁸

C. J. D. G. Dunn

J. D. G. Dunn, in 1983, published an article entitled "The New Perspective on Paul." In it he acknowledges and agrees with Sanders' assessment that what "is usually taken to be the Jewish alternative to Paul's gospel would have hardly been recognized as an expression of Judaism by Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh."²⁹ Since then, Dunn has defended and expanded on his view in other articles³⁰ and a two-volume commentary on

²⁶ Räisänen, "Bruch," 170.

²⁷ Räisänen, "Bruch," 171.

²⁸ Räisänen, "Bruch," 171.

²⁹ J.D.G. Dunn, "New Perspective on Paul," BJRL, 65 (1983) 7.

³⁰ Cf. the collection Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990) 215-236. See also Dunn's "Yet Once More -- 'the Works of the Law': A Response," JSNT 46 (1992) 99-117 and his "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.10-14)," NTS (1985) 523-42.

Romans.³¹

Although Dunn agrees with Sanders that the Judaism of Paul's day was not a legalistic religion of "works-righteousness," he criticizes Sanders for speaking of Paul in such a way that Paul appears to be making an arbitrary jump from one system to another. Sanders has done away with the Lutheran antithesis between grace and works, but has erred by replacing it with an antithesis between faith in Christ and Paul's Jewish heritage, much of which is incompatible with his new faith. The result of this is that Paul's occasional defense of Jewish prerogatives seems quite arbitrary. His treatment of the law and of its place in the divine purpose becomes inconsistent and illogical.³²

Dunn proceeds from the assumption that Sanders' "covenantal nomism" is indeed to be found in all forms of Palestinian Judaism of Paul's day.³³ Most important for Dunn is his contention that the law "became a basic expression of Israel's *distinctiveness* as the people specifically chosen by (the one) God to be his people."³⁴ In sociological terms, the law functioned as an "identity marker" and "boundary," distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations. This, not unexpectedly, resulted in a deeply rooted sense of separateness in the national consciousness. The characterization of Gentiles as ἄνομοι (those who were, by definition, "without the law, outside the law") and of their works as ἀνομία is consistent with this. There was within Judaism a strong desire to live within the law and to be marked off from those who were without the law.³⁵

Dunn thinks that a natural and "more or less inevitable converse of this sense of

³¹ Dunn, Romans 1-8, vol. 38A (Texas: Word Books, 1988) and Romans 9-16, vol. 38B (Texas: Word Books, 1988).

³² Dunn, "New Perspective," 102, finds that in Sanders' interpretation of Paul, there is an abrupt discontinuity between the new movement centered in Christ and the religion of Israel, which makes it difficult for the interpreter to make sense, in particular, of Paul's olive tree allegory in Romans 11.

³³ Dunn, Romans 1-9, lxviii. Cf. also his "Yet Once More."

³⁴ Dunn, Romans, lxix.

³⁵ Dunn, Romans, lxix.

distinctiveness was the sense of *privilege*, precisely in being the nation specially chosen by the one God and favored by gift of covenant and law."³⁶ The result was a very real pride in the law as a mark of divine favour.

Dunn argues that his "sociological perspective" helps the reader to see how the conviction of privileged election and the practice of covenantal nomism almost inevitably came to expression in what he calls "focal points of distinctiveness." These are "particular laws and especially ritual practices which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from the other nations." Three of Israel's laws and ritual practices gained special prominence as being especially distinctive: circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath.³⁷

This is the context within which we must understand Paul's treatment of the law. Paul is concerned that "covenant promise and law had become too inextricably identified with ethnic Israel as such, with the Jewish people marked out in their national distinctiveness by the practices of circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath in particular...."³⁸

In Dunn's view, Paul is objecting to a *misunderstanding* of the significance of "works of the law." According to the view which Paul is said to be rejecting, status as a member of the covenant people cannot be obtained by Gentiles who are unwilling or unable to perform certain rituals and to obey certain laws. Thus, that to which Paul is objecting is perceived by Dunn to be a form of Jewish exclusivity or ethnocentrism. Paul believes faith in Christ to be in opposition to "the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary-marking ritual...."³⁹ In effect, this

³⁶ Dunn, Romans, lxx.

³⁷ Dunn, Romans, lxxi.

³⁸ Dunn, Romans, lxxi.

³⁹ Dunn, Romans 1-9, lxxii. Dunn's basic thesis has been further extended and refined by several of his students. See D. B. Garlington, "The Obedience of Faith." A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context, WUNT 38 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991) and B. W. Longenecker, Eschatology and the Covenant. A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

rules out the work of Christ, whom Paul perceives as Lord over both Jew and Gentile.

D. H. Hübner

Hans Hübner's monograph is an attempt to see Paul's intellectual endeavours as a process in which he attempts, in part, to get at the sense and meaning of the Mosaic law.⁴⁰ The German title, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus: Ein Beitrag zum Werden der paulinischen Theologie*, is more descriptive of Hübner's purpose than the shortened English title. As the author notes, the title implies that the "justification" about which Paul writes in Romans constitutes the core of his theology.⁴¹ His work amounts to a comparison of Paul's efforts to understand the law in their early and more uncompromising expression in Galatians with those later expressed in a more moderate form in Romans. Hübner speculates that a "softening" of Paul's position on the law came about as a result of criticism by the Jerusalem apostles.

Hübner finds that Paul's prohibition against the boasting in one's good works that inevitably results when one does the "works of the law" to "earn" salvation (as Romans has traditionally been read) does not occur in earlier letters. Hübner argues that Paul's presentation of salvation by grace alone, expressed as the antithesis to attempts to earn salvation by doing "good works," represents a development that appears in his later letters.

Neither is "boasting" of all kinds prohibited by Paul. According to Hübner, Paul does not absolutely prohibit boasting in Galatians. What Paul "is trying to say (is) that one should not glory in what one has done for the Law... but one should boast in the Cross — and there lies the paradox, for one is to be 'self'-glorying in respect of something which is in fact *not* the product of one's own efforts."⁴² In Galatians, Paul recognizes a genuine

⁴⁰ H. Hübner, Law in Paul's Thought, tr. J. Grieg (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984) 7.

⁴¹ Hübner, 7

⁴² Hübner, 110.

claim on the part of Christians to "glory" on the basis of their lives' work.⁴³

Hübner argues that in 1 and 2 Corinthians, although Paul indicates that people who boast "in Christ" boast only in "being in Christ" (1 Cor. 1:26-31), the question of boasting in one's work is still not disqualified in principle. By the time Paul writes Romans, however, he does in fact conclude that boasting in works, whether by Jew or Christian, is categorically wrong. Paul has now realized that boasting in one's achievements is tantamount to boasting in the presence of God. If "*righteousness through works* is legitimate... then it implies the legitimacy of self-glorying or boasting...."⁴⁴ Salvation must rather be accepted as a gift.

Jews, according to Hübner's Paul, err because they boast in their (alleged) fulfillment of the works of the law. The Jewish understanding of the law as a "law of works" is itself a perversion. The law's requirements cannot be fulfilled if they are seen only as "works" by which one earns salvation.⁴⁵

Hence, Paul only contrasts grace (which cannot lead to ill-founded boasting) to works in Romans. It is only in what Hübner believes might be Paul's last letter that the apostle opposes as a perversion an understanding of the law that sees it as requiring a works-righteousness. The traditional interpretation of Paul is only legitimate insofar as it is limited to Romans.

E. S. Westerholm

In his recent book Israel's Law and the Church's Faith, Stephen Westerholm reviews the work of scholars who figure prominently in the recent debate and proposes his own solutions to the problem of understanding Paul's view of the law. Westerholm accepts Sanders' depiction of Judaism as "covenantal nomism." Westerholm believes that while

⁴³ Hübner, 108.

⁴⁴ Hübner, 116.

⁴⁵ Hübner, 124.

one should take seriously the "new" picture of first century Judaism, the claim that "grace" and "works" play an identical role in Paul and Judaism is overstated. Westerholm argues that "Paul must not be allowed to be our main witness for Judaism, nor must Judaism, or the position of Paul's opponents, determine the limits within which Paul is to be interpreted."⁴⁶

Westerholm observes that Paul often uses νόμος to refer specifically to the Mosaic code, sees the essence of νόμος as demand, and distinguishes it from grace and the path of faith.⁴⁷ Westerholm's Paul agrees that the law promises life to those who observe its commands, but finds that human transgressions are responsible for the law's failure to provide the life it promises. Since the death of Christ was, for Paul, necessary for human redemption, Paul's understanding of the human condition was inevitably more pessimistic than that of most non-Christian first century Jews. Inevitably, in light of the extreme divine intervention required for salvation, Paul perceived the human need for divine grace in a way that excludes human contributions, and saw human efforts at compliance with the law as ineffectual at best. The Mosaic law thus became a measure of human failures and sin rather than the path by which Jews expressed their loyalty to God.⁴⁸ Hence, Paul "attributes salvation to divine grace to the exclusion of any role by human works in a way that is not typical of Judaism."⁴⁹

For Westerholm's Paul, there is a very real contrast between law and grace. A humanity that is unable to meet the requirements of the law must necessarily rely on God's grace for salvation. Grace, according to Westerholm, is central to Paul's doctrine of justification. The Pauline emphasis on grace and the contrast between grace and law is

⁴⁶ S. Westerholm, Israel's Law and the Church's Faith, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 150.

⁴⁷ Westerholm, 122.

⁴⁸ Cf. Westerholm, 119-21, 163.

⁴⁹ Westerholm, 142.

explicable once the character and failure of the law have been defined in Pauline (not modern, or contemporary Jewish) terms. For Westerholm's Paul, grace is *the* solution to the plight that resulted from life lived "under law."⁵⁰

F. F. Thielman

Frank Thielman attempts to reexamine the possibility that Paul's view of the law finds its genesis in an eschatological pattern common within some contemporary expressions of Judaism.⁵¹ In Thielman's view, there is a basic continuity between Judaism and the new era inaugurated by Christ. Thielman maintains that the Hebrew Bible and other writings from the second temple period reveal a pattern of thinking that runs from plight to solution. In at least some cases, the literature portrays Israel's plight as an inability to obey God's law. In the eschaton, God will deliver Israel and will enable her to keep the law from a renewed heart. Thielman does not maintain that this was the only manner in which Israel's future was thought of, but he does believe it provides the key to understanding Paul's statements about the law. According to Thielman, an examination of Romans and Galatians reveals that Paul's thinking remains within this eschatological scheme, and runs from plight to solution.

In Galatians, Paul shows that he believes that the curse of the law on those who sin has been rescinded for those who become members of the new eschatological community brought into being by Christ. In this community, believers are given the ability to keep the law (through fulfillment of the "love command" which Paul says sums up the law) by means of the Spirit. In Romans, as in Galatians, Paul's argument continues to run from plight to solution. There, Paul describes the human condition in terms of disobedience to God's commands. The solution to this is again the eschatological gift of the Spirit, by

⁵⁰ Westerholm, 165.

⁵¹ F. Thielman, From Plight to Solution. A Jewish Framework for Understanding of the Law in Galatians and Romans (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

which people are able to fulfill the law. Thus, Thielman's Paul shows himself to be, at heart, a Jew who believed that the long hoped for deliverance from sin had arrived.

II. Proposed Research

Why another study of grace in Paul? First, because, as the above survey reveals, there is no consensus about the significance of grace in Paul's thought with regard to the law, or to the overall place of grace in Paul's thought. It is hoped this study will suggest a resolution to the problem.

Second, a study which takes account of the recent debate on the law in Paul while at the same time treating grace more comprehensively is necessary. Focusing on grace only with reference to Paul's view of the law yields an incomplete picture of the role of grace in Paul's thought. Paul uses the concept of grace in other than polemical contexts, and it may be that ignoring those occurrences has led to a diminished appreciation of the role of grace in Paul.

Furthermore, G. P. Wetter's monograph Charis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums⁵² and that of Moffatt, Grace in the New Testament,⁵³ while containing many valuable insights, are quite dated and do not take account of recent developments in Pauline studies. Recent treatments of grace in Paul have been limited in scope and thus are of limited usefulness for a comprehensive discussion of grace in Paul's thought. The first of these, entitled Die überströmende Gnade. Studien zu einem paulinischen Motivfeld, by M. Theobald,⁵⁴ focuses on "superabundant grace," a motif which Paul only uses in certain texts. The more recent monograph, Charis bei Philon und Paulus, by D. Zeller,⁵⁵ is valuable, but there are gaps in the coverage of the relevant

⁵² Leipzig: Oscar Brandstetter, 1913.

⁵³ London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931.

⁵⁴ Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1982.

⁵⁵ Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990.

Pauline material, since the majority of the book is devoted to Philo. Furthermore, Zeller's book does not interact with the contribution of Sanders and others who build on Sanders' work.

The focus of the following study may be broadly expressed as the notion of "dependence on God" in Paul's letters. The texts that I examine will thus not be confined to those in which the word *χάρις* occurs: the idea is frequently present where the word is not. To facilitate the discussion I have divided the category "dependence on God" into two sub-categories: 1) dependence on God at the time of entrance into the Christian community, and 2) dependence on God throughout one's life as a believer, which includes both the idea of being "preserved" by God as well as that of being enabled to serve. These subdivisions provide a useful framework for organizing and examining the material, although the line between them is, at times, admittedly blurry.

Although the focus is not exclusively on Paul's view of the law, this study will help to resolve questions concerning Paul's views of the role of grace and dependence on God and their relationship to his views concerning Jewish law. Given the recent debate, the issue whether Paul's views on grace play a role in his opposition to Judaism and Torah needs reexamination. If it is found that Paul does in some way contrast grace with the law, then we must ask whether he does so in such a way as to give the impression that Judaism is a "graceless" religion. I wish to explore the possibility that Paul's antinomies are more nuanced than has often been thought and that the point of his contrasts lies somewhere between the traditional view and some of the more recent interpretations.

Along with this, the issue of how Paul combines his references to grace and dependence on God with references to "works" as a necessary part of Christian life must be considered. One of the perennial problems of Pauline scholarship is the relation between his statements about salvation by grace/faith and others which speak of judgment according to works. Are there indications that Paul was aware of a tension between reliance on grace

and his own demand for Christian "works?" If there are such indications, then what, if anything, does Paul do to resolve the tension?

A final note about the texts that I will be examining. My texts will be drawn from the letters of which the Pauline authorship is not in serious doubt. These letters provide the minimum upon which almost all scholarly work on Paul is based. I will examine texts from 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans and Philippians. Although I will be treating them in approximate chronological order,⁵⁶ I will not attempt to trace a development in Paul's thought on my topic. The occasional nature of Paul's letters makes that, it seems to me, a very dubious undertaking. What might be offered as proof of development in Paul's thought might only be the result of different circumstances underlying different letters.

Although I will be dealing mainly with textual and theological analysis, which I believe addresses the central issues in the debate, I grant that sociological studies can do much to illuminate Paul's thought.⁵⁷ Some of these studies examine issues with an awareness of

⁵⁶ I shall discuss the letters in the following order: 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans and Philippians. For discussions of the dating of each letter, see the introductions of chapters two through six.

⁵⁷ Cf., for example, S. C. Barton, "Paul and the Cross: A Sociological Approach," Theology 85 (1982): 13-19 and "Paul and the Resurrection: A Sociological Approach" Religion 14 (1984): 67-75; G. Clark, "The Social Status of Paul," Expository Times, 96 (1984-85): 110-11; T. Engberg-Pedersen, "The Gospel and Social Practice According to 1 Corinthians" NTS 33 (1987): 557-84; A. Funk, Status und Rollen in den Paulusbriefen. Eine inhaltsanalytische Untersuchung zur Religionssoziologie (Innsbrucker Theologische Studien 7) Innsbruck, 1981; R. F. Hock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry. Tentmaking and Apostleship (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); B. Holmberg, Paul and Power. The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); E. A. Judge, The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century. Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation, (London: Tyndale 1960); M. MacDonald, The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings, SNTS 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); W. Meeks, The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); G. Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth, tr. and ed. with an introduction by J. H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) and F. Watson, Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach

the influence that social forces have upon individuals and groups in society. Others utilize explicitly sociological concepts such as millenarian cult, sect, class, or charismatic authority to examine texts; some apply a specific sociological theory to a particular problem.

Sociological analysis can be a helpful way of interpreting historical evidence, but it is, of course, not the only or, necessarily, the most helpful means of analyzing texts. There are, no doubt, social dimensions to Paul's formulations and solutions to problems that spring from the concrete realities of Paul's work. But the possible influence of such factors is limited by a particular world view and convictions inherited from his ancestral faith or imposed by his becoming a Christian. Paul's letters bear eloquent testimony to his "theological concerns" and to what for him were serious theological struggles over issues that he believed were of fundamental significance. If Paul's mission and the content of his message were shaped by sociological factors, they were also conditioned by theological reflections.

Interpreters of texts, whether their interests are literary, philosophical, or theological, cannot rest content with a discussion of social factors leading up to the composition of a text, but must go on to interpret, evaluate and appreciate the completed text's sense, coherence and merit. The task at hand in *this* particular study is less concerned with the social influence on Paul's thought and more with the sense and coherence of its epistolary articulation.

I am not attempting a comparative study between the significance of grace in Paul's letters and the significance of grace in the writings of groups or individuals contemporary with Paul. This is, in part, for the practical reason that a dissertation needs a precise and limited focus if it is to be brought to completion. But it is also clear that the questions that I am discussing spring from the Pauline texts themselves, and it must be legitimate to ask what answers those same texts provide to the questions they raise. My primary task is to

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

attempt to determine what Paul thinks about grace, not from where he gets his ideas or how his ideas compare to those of his contemporaries.⁵⁸

It is with the results of Paul's reflections, as seen in his letters, that I have chosen to concern myself. Thus, the dissertation functions as a first step toward what could be a more comprehensive study that would include sociological analysis and comparisons with other contemporary groups and individuals. Before we can compare Paul's understanding of grace to those of other individuals and groups we must answer the question, "What do the texts about grace in the Pauline letters reveal about Paul's thinking on the subject?"

In the next five chapters, I will examine the role of "dependence on God" in the six letters listed above. Since, for Paul, a unifying theme is people's dependence on God as an answer to the human condition, in each of chapters two to six, I shall articulate what each letter reveals about Paul's perceptions of the nature of this predicament and the manner in which Paul thinks of grace as a response on the part of God.

These chapters will also examine what Paul has to say about the nature of grace and the extent to which it is depicted as the answer to the human condition. Is there in fact a conscious effort by Paul to attribute salvation wholly to God's initiative? Does Paul stress absolute reliance on grace for salvation and for continued life in the community, and how is this related to his prohibition against boasting in one's achievements and gifts?

Closely connected with this question is the importance given to "works" (see above) in each of the letters. In some (most notably 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans) there are references to God's judgment of Christians, the implications (at least) being that they will be rewarded on the basis of their behaviour. How is this to be related to Paul's views on grace? Is he being inconsistent? For example, after arguing that "works of the law" do not

⁵⁸ Note the brief comparative work of Räisänen, Paul and the Law, on a number of issues (191-98, 203-228); J. Moffatt, Grace in the New Testament (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931); Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism and Zeller, Charis bei Philon und Paulus.

justify (cf. Gal. 2:16), is Paul inconsistent when he insists upon certain types of behaviour for Christians if they wish to "inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:21)?

In the final chapter, I will draw together the evidence presented by the textual analysis and summarize its results. I will also show that my hypothesis situates this aspect of Paul's theology between more traditional viewpoints and certain recent interpretations.

Chapter Two -- Divine Gratuity and 1 Thessalonians

I. Introductory Matters

1 Thessalonians probably represents the earliest of Paul's extant writings.¹ The letter reflects Paul's relief and joy that the Thessalonians are persevering in the faith. Before writing the letter, he had sent Timothy to encourage them and to bring him back news of their progress (1 Thess 3:1-2). Upon Timothy's return, Paul writes 1 Thessalonians as a supplement to his previous instruction, which had been cut short, to encourage them in the face of persecution, and to correct certain misunderstandings. Chapter one contains a lengthy thanksgiving section, chapter two deals both with the way Paul and his company conducted themselves in Thessalonica and with the Thessalonian reception of the gospel. Chapter three reflects Paul's continued concern for the Thessalonians and his joy at the news of their loyalty. The exhortations in 1 Thessalonians that comprise the rest of the book cover three main areas: general morality, the return of the Lord, and community life. There are no references to the Torah.

¹ That 1 Thessalonians is an authentically Pauline letter is not in serious dispute, but that it was sent before 2 Thessalonians has not always been accepted. Some think that 1 and 2 Thessalonians were sent at about the same time, but to different recipients, while others maintain that 2 Thessalonians was sent first. For a summary of the debate see R. Jewett, The Thessalonian Correspondence (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 21-26. The authenticity of 2 Thess has been questioned by many. Cf. John Bailey, "Who Wrote II Thessalonians?" NTS 25 (1978-79) 131-45. Hence the exclusion of the letter from consideration here.

As one might expect, the actual date of 1 Thessalonians has been debated. Bruce, however, asserts that it "is commonly agreed that 1 Thessalonians, together with 2 Thessalonians, if its authenticity is accepted, should be dated shortly after the first evangelization of Thessalonica...about A.D. 50" (F.F. Bruce, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, WBC [Waco: Texas, 1982] xxxiv). Jewett, with a view to the lack of references to justification by faith and to the law in the Thessalonian letters, places the founding of the church in Thessalonica in the latter part of C.E. 49 and the mission in Corinth starting at the beginning of C.E. 50, more than a year and a half before the Jerusalem Council, which he dates in October, 51. A dating of c. 50, before the Jerusalem council seems reasonable and would make this one of the earliest, if not the earliest of Paul's letters which we possess. See Jewett, 49-60, for a fuller discussion of the problem of dating 1 Thessalonians. For an alternative view, see G. Luedemann, Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, tr. F.S. Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) who dates the letter c. 41. Luedemann argues that Paul's mission to Europe, which included trips to Philippi and Thessalonica, took place c. 36.

I will first examine the human condition and then Paul's idea of dependence on God as a way out of what Paul sees to be a decidedly negative state. It will be seen that, for Paul, dependence on God thoroughly characterizes the life of the believer. Yet, despite this, it seems clear that Paul believes that people are responsible moral agents with a role to play in their own salvation.

II. The Human Condition in 1 Thessalonians

Paul characterizes the state of Gentiles as being one of ignorance of the "living and true God." In 1:9b, near the end of the thanksgiving section (1:2-10), he reminds the Thessalonians that they "turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God..."² That idols are contrasted with the living God suggests that they are not viewed as having any substantive reality.³ In 4:5 he refers explicitly to "the Gentiles who do not know God."⁴ The wording may be a deliberate echo of Ps 79:6 (LXX 78:6) which refers to "the nations that do not know you (ἔθνη τὰ μὴ γινώσκοντα σε),"⁵ but whereas in Ps 79 the nations are vilified because of the destruction they have wrought in the Jewish homeland, in 1 Thessalonians Paul condemns the pagan "lustful passions (πράθει ἐπιθυμίας)," indicating that for him ignorance of God has ethical consequences.

For Paul, ignorance of God can be characterized as being "in darkness" and the condition of those outside the Christian community is described in just that way in 5:4-5. Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers that they are not "in darkness (ἐν σκότει)," so

² Paul's blanket statement indicates that the church was composed mainly of Gentiles. Acts 17:1-9 gives the impression that the Thessalonian converts were primarily Jews and God-fearers. Bruce, 18, observes that more evangelization must have been carried on in the city than is reported in Acts. The missionaries must have stayed longer than the two or three weeks they spent in the synagogue (according to Acts).

That the Thessalonians had "turned from idols" could apply either to their becoming proselytes to Judaism or to their conversion to Christianity, although in the context it obviously refers to the latter.

³ Cf. F. Büschel, *TDNT*, II, 375-8. There is a certain ambiguity in Paul's usage of the term εἰδωλον. In 1 Cor 10:19-20 Paul says that in sacrificing to idols, pagans are in fact sacrificing to demons. That idea does not appear to be present here.

⁴ Gk. τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν. Here the definite article serves to specify that group of Gentiles, admittedly large, who do not yet know God, as do the Thessalonian converts.

⁵ Noted by Bruce, 84.

that the coming eschatological day of destruction will not take them by surprise. To be in darkness is to be ignorant of God and, consequently, to live in a way not pleasing to God. Believers are "children of light and children of the day,"⁶ in contrast to those who are "of the night and of darkness" (5:5).⁷ Paul urges them to be alert, so that whenever "the day" comes, they will be ready.

In vv. 6-7 drunkenness is used to sum up the various forms of immorality⁸ that characterize the lives of those who are "in darkness." By contrast, the Thessalonian believers are to be "sober," that is, they are to live as God would have them live. Those who are "drunk" must face the wrath of God (5:9), a theme which Paul has already introduced early in the letter. In 1:10, he reminds his readers that they wait for God's Son from heaven, "Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming (τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης)." Negatively, then, salvation for the Thessalonians consists of deliverance by Jesus from the eschatological wrath of God.

Paul also characterizes the pre-Christian state of the Thessalonians as one of hopelessness in the face of death. 4:13-18 reveals concerns about the eschaton. From 4:13 we see that at least some Thessalonian Christians were concerned over the fate of those from their number who had died before the parousia.⁹ Paul assures them that they need not

⁶ Literally "sons of light" and "sons of darkness" (πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς υἱοὶ φωτός ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ἡμέρας). In the DSS (most notably in 1QM) the phrase "sons of light" (בני אור) is used often for members of the community, while those outside are often called "sons of darkness" (בני חשך) (cf. Bruce, 111 and C. Wannamaker, The Epistles to the Thessalonians, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990] 182).

⁷ Gk. οὐκ ἐσμὲν νυκτὸς οὐδὲ σκοτὸς.

⁸ Cf. the later Rom. 13:12 where Paul encourages the Romans to "lay aside works of darkness" which he describes in 13:13 as "reveling and drunkenness," "debauchery and licentiousness," and "quarreling and jealousy." Cf. also the somewhat unusual expression in Eph 5:8 "you were darkness" (ἦτε γὰρ...σκοτὸς) as well as the reference to "unfruitful works of darkness" in 5:10.

⁹ Commentators differ as to whether the Thessalonians were concerned that (1) the dead would be excluded from future salvation, or merely that (2) dead believers would be placed at some sort of disadvantage compared to those still alive. J. E. Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975) 164, takes the view that the Thessalonians merely thought that the dead were going to be disadvantaged in some way. E. Best, A Commentary on the I and II Epistles to the Thessalonians (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 181, maintains that the Thessalonians did not doubt the fact of resurrection, but were merely confused about the

worry and they ought not "grieve as others (unbelievers) do who have no hope." He consoles the Thessalonians, and urges them to console each other (4:18) with the news that the "dead in Christ" will be resurrected and will meet the Lord in the air (4:16-17).

For Paul, the state of the Gentiles can be summed up by the word "ignorance." It is a costly ignorance, for, in Paul's view, Gentiles live in ignorance of the true God and thus live in a manner not pleasing to him. Not only must they face death without hope: they also do not have a deliverer to save them from the wrath about to be poured out on those who do not know God. The solution to this (for Paul) very real problem, lies in Christ.

III. Dependence on God in 1 Thessalonians

A. Initial Dependence on God

Paul believes that people come to a knowledge of God because they are chosen by God. In 1:4, Paul refers to the Thessalonians being "beloved by God (ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ)" and to their "election (τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν)."¹⁰ Here ἐκλογὴ is used of the election of the entire Christian community to faith. It is a term pregnant with meaning, given its associations with the nation of Israel, called out from among the other nations to be God's chosen people.¹¹ The term ἐκλογὴ does not actually occur in the LXX and is

chronology of the resurrection. Perhaps they believed that the resurrection of the dead in Christ would not come until the end of the Messianic kingdom. L. Morris, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 135, notes that perhaps the living believed that certain of their number had died because they were under the wrath of God. If they were being punished for sin, it would be natural to assume that they would miss Christ's coming. The conclusion of J. Gillman, "Signals of Transformation in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18", CBQ 47 (1985) 263-281, seems to account best for the data of 1 Thessalonians. He finds it impossible that Paul had not informed the Thessalonians about the resurrection of the dead. It seems probable that the Thessalonians accepted the traditional teaching about the resurrection of the dead, but were unable to integrate that teaching with what they knew about the parousia into one coherent scheme (271). The two expressions about "temporal ordering (vs. 15, οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν; vv. 16-17, πρῶτον -- ἔπειτα), followed by the resolution into simultaneity (vs. 17, ἅμα σὺν αὐτοῖς), show that Paul's attention is on the proper sequence or relation among the living and the dead and not on the fact of resurrection" (271).

¹⁰ The term occurs five times in Paul, in Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28 and 1 Thess 1:4. The noun ἐκλογὴ is used clearly and only for God's act of election (L. Coenen, "Election," NIDNTT, I, 540).

¹¹ Cf. Deut 7:6-11.

used by Paul of Christians only here.¹² A term such as this creates a sense of belonging and even superiority for a community that feels itself to be opposed by the wider society of which it is a part; it would have given the Thessalonians a new identity and a sense of belonging to the people of God, while breaking ties to the world of which they were formerly a part.¹³ The phrase ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ is "an interpretation of election";¹⁴ in view of her election, the church must be "beloved." For Paul, the Thessalonians would not have become members of the believing community were it not for the manifestation of God's love in the call to which they responded.¹⁵

The ὅτι clause, in vs. 5, where Paul says, ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, shows that the "election" was "manifested in the powerful operation of the Spirit in the community."¹⁶ Here, ἐν δυνάμει means not that God gives the Thessalonians the ability to receive the gospel,¹⁷ but that the message of the gospel came with "powerful accompaniments," that is, manifestations of divine power.¹⁸

¹² He does, however, use the adjective ἐκλεκτός of believers in Rom 8:33. Cf. also 2 Thess 2:13, 16; Col 3:12.

¹³ Wannamaker, 78-79. Cf. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 85-86, who observes that such language plays a role in the process of resocialization by which an individual's identity is modified and integrated with the new group which has just been joined. Members thus conceive of two classes of humanity: outsiders and insiders.

¹⁴ Schrenk, 179.

¹⁵ This is not to say that the idea is unique to Paul. In Jewish writings, divine love and grace are the grounds for election. Cf. 2 Bar 21:21; 75:1-8; Jub 31:24. Note also Paul's use of this concept in Rom 11:5.

¹⁶ G. Schrenk, "ἐκλογή," *TDNT*, IV, 179.

¹⁷ Against Bruce, 14. But cf. Morris, 47, who argues that πληροφορία refers not to the "full conviction" brought about in the Thessalonians' hearts by the Spirit, but rather to the conviction of the preachers regarding the message (so also Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] 54).

¹⁸ So I. H. Marshall, "Election and Calling to Salvation in 1 and 2 Thessalonians." *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, R. F. Collins, ed. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) 266. Paul does not completely devalue λόγος over against God's δύναμις, but apparently Paul expected the preaching of the gospel to be accompanied by manifestations of divine power. Dieter Kemmler argues that Paul is not "pleading for an 'objective Gottesmacht' at the expense of the human λόγος and argument or at the expense of human capabilities, both in Paul's presentation and in the Thessalonians' rational acceptance of the

In 1:9 the Thessalonians are said to have turned (ἐπεστρέψατε) from idols to the living God. To "turn from idols to God" is equivalent to, or at least includes, believing the gospel and implies the "turning of the human will to God."¹⁹ Although Paul again draws attention to the Thessalonians' response, clearly their response is to God's word which "came in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1:5).

For Paul, it appears axiomatic that people only become members of the community in response to the divine initiative.

B. Dependence on God in the life of faith

The question now to be answered has to do with continuing dependence on God. What, if anything, does 1 Thessalonians tell us about the role of dependence on God in the ongoing life of faith? Does Paul evince an awareness of dependence on God only with regard to entry into the community, or does this continue until the End?

1:10 provides at least a partial answer to the question. People must begin life in the Christian community relying on the salvation provided by God and end it in the same way. The Thessalonian believers "wait for [God's] Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the dead" (1:10). The reference to Jesus "rescuing us from the wrath that is coming" shifts the focus from the believers (who do play a role, since they have received the message and have turned from idols [1:9]) back to the divine agent. The Thessalonians are the objects of the eschatological salvation that will be effected by God through Christ.

This thought is picked up again in 5:9-10, where we see the clearest statement in the Thessalonian correspondence of the salvific purpose of Christ's death. Paul says that "God has destined us not for wrath (ὀργή) but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us (ὕπερ ἡμῶν),²⁰ so that whether we are awake or asleep we

λόγος" (Faith and Human Reason: A Study of Paul's Method of Preaching as Illustrated by 1-2 Thessalonians and Acts 17, 2-4 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975] 167).

¹⁹ F. Laubach, "Conversion," NIDNTT, I. 355.

²⁰ The alternate reading περί occurs in κ* B 33. The reading adopted in NA²⁶ appears in ϩ³³ κ² A D F G Ψ Ω. Bruce notes that the most commonly used preposition

may live with him." Wrath, as expressed in condemnation, has its counterpart in "life" or "salvation."²¹ In 5:9, Paul says that Christians obtain salvation "through our Lord Jesus Christ" and, in 5:10, we read that believers shall live "with him," that is "with Christ."²² God has destined believers for salvation, a term which stands in stark contrast to "wrath." σωτηρία is not given specific content. In vs. 9, it defines the Christian's destiny negatively, in terms of not facing God's wrath. In vs. 10, it is characterized positively as lasting existence with Christ after the eschatological judgment.²³ Here Paul attributes eschatological salvation entirely to God (cf. also 1:10). He is the subject acting for humanity's good. Because of the decisive act of God in Christ, all who are destined for salvation live in the present, and shall live in the future (ζήσωμεν).²⁴

In 5:23, Paul begins his conclusion by picking up the idea of sanctification, which he has spoken of earlier in 3:13 and 4:3-8. He prays that God himself will "sanctify you entirely" and that the Thessalonians' "spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul claims to be certain of this sanctification, since the one who calls (ὁ καλῶν -- present participle) them "is faithful (πιστός), and he will do this."²⁵ According to Paul, the completion of the life of faith depends on God. Hawthorne sums up well the sentiment expressed in these verses: "If God calls the community to faith, He stands also at the end of the call to bring each member to the

to express the saving potency of Christ's death for his people is ὑπέρ. It appears in Gal 1:4; 2 Cor 5:15, 21 and often in Romans (5:6, 8; 8:32; 14:15 etc.) (114). Cf. also Moule, *Idiom Book*, 63, and Best, 218, concerning the interchangeability of these prepositions.

²¹ Bultmann, *Theology*, I, 288-89.

²² This is probably the best understanding of σὺν αὐτῷ, since the nearest antecedent to "him" is τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

²³ Wannamaker, 187. The expression "hope of salvation" in 5:8 also highlights the forward looking aspect of Christian faith. In 1 Thessalonians Paul often speaks of salvation as still lying in the future (cf. 1:3; 4:16-18; 5:9-10) (cf. Morris, 159; Wannamaker, 186).

²⁴ Of course, this implies that people must choose to depend on God. Cf. the discussion below on p. 32.

²⁵ Cf. also 1 Cor 1:9, where God's faithfulness is the ground of the call of the Corinthians; Morris, 183, n84. Cf. also the discussion in Masson, 78.

desired goal of their faith -- the salvation of their soul."²⁶ This verse in effect sums up what Paul has said earlier. The Thessalonians may have "turned to God from idols" (1.9), but Paul repeatedly emphasizes that their change of heart was in response to God's calling²⁷ (cf. the discussions of 1:4; 2:12; 5:24) and his working within their hearts.²⁸

The term *χάρις* only occurs in two verses in 1 Thessalonians, and in both cases it is used to indicate that believers are to continually experience God's favour. *χάρις* occurs in the greeting (*χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη*; 1:1)²⁹ and in the benediction (*Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν*; 5:28).³⁰ The greetings and benedictions express Paul's wish that the grace that came, and continues to come, from the risen Christ

²⁶ G. F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983) 22. Cf. also 1 Cor 1:8, 9; 2 Cor 1:8; 2 Thess 3:3.

²⁷ S. Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 167.

²⁸ Note that their sanctification is a matter of prayer, which assumes that God is the effective agent. This also rules out that notion (here, at least) that faith is a "work." Faith itself is a gift.

²⁹ Cf. also Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; Phlm 3 for the formulaic use of *χάρις* in greetings. Since Paul wrote his letters in Greek, it might be expected that he would observe Greek epistolary conventions. Even Jewish letters of the period, when written in Greek, used the customary *χαίρειν* in the same way as letters by non-Jews (see J. M. Lieu, "'Grace to You and Peace': The Apostolic Greeting," *BJRL* 68 [1985] 166-67). In fact, Paul echoes the usual Semitic greeting, "peace," and combines it with *χάρις*, when we might have expected him to use *ἔλεος*, which is used in blessings and which the LXX used to translate *רחם*, God's steadfast faithfulness to Israel (cf., e.g. Num 6:24-26; Lieu, 168). Lieu, 168, n29, notes that in the Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch* the greeting is "Thus saith Baruch the son of Neraiah to the brethren carried into captivity: Mercy and peace" (78:1). "Grace and peace" is thus probably a variation of the Jewish expression "mercy and peace." So Bruce, 8 and Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 49.

It should be noted that the greeting in 1 Thess lacks the qualifying prepositional phrase, "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" which Paul uses elsewhere. Thus, in the more typical Pauline letter greeting, Christ is linked with the experience of God's favour. Koenig believes that the typical greeting "is best understood as a chiasmic a-b-b-a arrangement in which God the Father especially bestows peace through Jesus Christ, the embodiment of grace" (J. Koenig, "Occasions of Grace in Paul, Luke and First Century Judaism," *ATR* 64 [1982] 565).

The significance of *χάρις* in the greetings and benedictions does not vary from letter to letter and, for that reason, I will not be discussing them as they occur in each letter.

³⁰ Cf. Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:13; Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18; 1 Tim 6:21; 2 Tim 4:22; Tit 3:15; Phlm 25 for a similar formulaic use of *χάρις* in benedictions. The benediction *Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν* as it occurs in 1 Thess 5:28 is the basic epistolary benediction that is expanded upon in various ways in the Pauline letters.

will be the constant experience of the Thessalonians.³¹ Underlying the use of this phrase lay Paul's belief that the present and coming blessings of the new order were all due to God's gracious favour, as it was manifested in the Christ event.³² Χάρις here conveys the sense of God's favour, which Paul wishes to characterize the experience of believers.

IV. Human responsibility in 1 Thessalonians

Does the idea that Christians depend on God for salvation, for deliverance from ignorance and from the wrath to come, mean that Paul believes that Christians assume a completely passive stance? If that were the case, then what is to be made of the paraenetic section (4:1-5:22) of 1 Thessalonians? How does Paul view the relation between the ethical responsibility which he assumes of believers and dependence on divine grace?

In his book New Covenant Morality in Paul, Deidun argues that in 4:1-12, Paul speaks in such a way as to suggest that the ability to meet the ethical demands of the Torah is "interiorised." The background for this idea, Deidun asserts, is found in Ezek 36:27, which promises that God's Spirit will enable his people to obey or, perhaps better, that God's activity within them will *impel* them to obey. In Jer. 31:31ff. "knowing the LORD" is the *result* of God's putting his law in people's hearts.³³ Paul's understanding of the Spirit is colored by prophetic texts regarding the future Covenant, including texts such as this, which indicate that God himself becomes the power behind human obedience. Paul is thus aware of the ethical role of the Spirit in the OT passages.³⁴ There are, according to Deidun, two considerations that suggest that Paul sees the giving of the Spirit in 1 Thess. 4:8b as an "interior communication" that makes possible the proper ethical life of believers. By using Ezek 36:27 (37:14) he quite probably wished to appeal to the theme of "interiority," as Deidun puts it, that permeates the whole of the original context. Second,

³¹ Cf. L. B. Smedes, "Grace," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 2, G. W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 551.

³² Moffatt, Grace in the New Testament (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931) 139.

³³ T. Deidun, New Covenant Morality in Paul (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981) 54.

³⁴ Deidun, 54-55.

elsewhere in Paul, the centre of the communication of the Spirit is the "heart" (cf. Gal. 4:6; Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22; 3:3), that is to say, "a person's interior being which is the core of moral and religious personality."³⁵

If Deidun is correct about Paul's allusions to certain prophetic passages, it does not mean that, in impelling the Christian to action, God bypasses the human will. In 4:8, Paul says that "whoever rejects (ὁ ἄθετῶν) this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you." The very term ἄθετεῖν means "to set aside," "render ineffectual" and, as in Gal 2:21, can be used in contexts that have to do with rendering ineffective a power or activity. 4:8 therefore implies that God's activity within believers depends, in part, on their cooperation.³⁶

This is also implied in the fact that Paul holds the Thessalonian believers responsible for living up to an ethical standard. 1 Thess 4:3-8 focuses on the holiness (ἀγιασμός) that Paul expects to see in his readers (vv. 3, 7). He holds them responsible for such things as abstaining from fornication (vs. 3) and not exploiting fellow believers (vs. 7). In vv. 7-8, Paul holds forth the possibility that they might reject this teaching, but he urges them not to do so, since it is of divine origin. In 4:9-12, mutual love is said to be taught by God (γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοί ἐστε), but this is followed by an admonition to live quietly and independently, working hard while minding one's own business. In fact, Paul says a great deal about the behaviour of Christians in 1 Thessalonians. Besides other scattered references to Christian behaviour (1:6-7; 2:12; 3:12-13) Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to what Marshall calls "ethical progress"³⁷ in 4:1-12 and in 5:12-22 instructs them concerning life *as members of the believing community*. Clearly, he holds them

³⁵ Deidun, 56.

³⁶ Deidun, 58-59. For Deidun then, the ground of Christian obligation is not anthropological (authentic existence) or a "moral" imperative ("you shall..."), but is theological necessity. The ethical imperative derives not from what humanity could or ought to be, but from the nature of God and his activity. "God's holy and sanctifying Spirit, operating within the hearts of Christians, constitutes the divine indicative which, by theological necessity, imposes the christian imperative" (60). God's holiness both demands and creates sanctification. There will be a fuller discussion of this below.

³⁷ Marshall, Thessalonians, 11.

responsible at least for the manner in which they conduct themselves as Christians. One who depends on God's grace is still a responsible agent

What are we to say of the call by which they become believers? For Paul, although people are called by God, and would not be members of the believing community without his call, the idea of call implies a human response (cf. 1 Thess 1:6: "you received the word"). Does the idea of being called by God imply that the human response is also predetermined by God? The term *בְּחִירָה* is used in the Hebrew Bible of people who have become members of the people of God and never of individuals *before* they have become members of the community.³⁸ Marshall asserts that in Paul, the term *ἐκλεκτός* "refers to people who have now become part of God's people and not to those who have been marked out to do so prior to their response to the call of God."³⁹ This may be true, but it is difficult to be certain about the second half of Marshall's definition. Rom 9:11 (which makes reference to the continuance of "God's purposes of election") gives one pause. It is perhaps better to say that Paul does not fully explain the relation between election and human response, other than seeing that both take place. Human response "proves" election, but this says nothing about whether the election was irresistible.

In 1 Thess 1:4, Paul uses *ἐκλογή* to emphasize that the Thessalonians are indeed members of the believing community, a people that is chosen by God, but also a people

³⁸ See the discussion of *בְּחִירָה* in Marshall, "Election," 263-64, n13. In the Hebrew Bible, the theological use of *בְּחִירָה* is in reference to collective Israel as chosen by God or specifically to the king. The conception of individual election to membership in the people of God is not present (the notion of individual election does, however, apply to the king as well as to those who are called to serve as prophets). The word refers to Israel collectively as the chosen people and implies that they are beloved by God. It means that their favoured position depends on God's choice of them, but it says nothing about whether God's call was irresistible (cf. Marshall, 263, n13).

³⁹ Marshall, "Election," 264-65. In Rom 16:13, Paul uses it of "Rufus, chosen in the Lord..." a use which, if it says nothing about God causing Rufus to respond to the call, does seem to at least assume that without the call, Rufus would not have been a believer. In Rom 8:33, Paul uses the idea of election to make the point that because believers are chosen by God, charges cannot be laid against them. Rom 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28 emphasize the fact that election comes without regard to human "works" of any kind. In 1 Cor 1:27-28 election language is used to emphasize God's choice of the Corinthians, despite the fact that they were "weak and despised."

that had to respond in faith to the call of God. The text gives us very few hints about whether Paul perceives the call to be irresistible. Here, the implication of vs. 4 to which Paul wishes to draw attention is that the Thessalonians responded to the call, a fact which proves their election⁴⁰ and which serves as an example to other churches. That it proves their election is seen in vs. 5, where Paul indicates that he is certain of the Thessalonians' election because (ὅτι) he knows of their conversion. For Paul, that God chose them was confirmed in the coming of the gospel to them "in power and in the Holy Spirit" and in the Thessalonians' acceptance of the message. He then indicates that the Thessalonians were an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (1:8), so much so that Paul and his group "have no need to speak about it" (8b). The significance of God's past choice of the Thessalonians is seen in the fact that they are now counted among the elect, and that they serve as an example to others.

In 1:4-10, Paul gives no indication that he believes the Thessalonians have responded to the gospel because God caused them to do so.⁴¹ Paul can contend that salvation is from start to finish a work of God, but this does not exclude the human will, nor does it suggest that the will to believe is predetermined and brought to pass by God. Paul draws attention to the Thessalonians' election so that it might function as a source of confidence for them.

⁴⁰ This is borne out by Paul's use of ἐκλέγομαι, which, as Marshall notes, is always used by Paul of people who have "responded to the gospel and are currently believers" (Marshall, "Election," 265, n14). The verb appears infrequently in Paul and is never used by him of people who have not responded to God's call (it is found only in 1 Cor 1:27, 28; cf. also Eph 1:4).

⁴¹ 1 Thess 2:13, which says that the Thessalonians accepted the message "not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers," might be taken to suggest that God chooses on occasion to let the preaching of the gospel be mere human words, but that on other occasions they are imbued with divine power to convert the listeners. However, the focus seems to be on the human response. The listeners may simply hear the message as human words and not respond to it, or they may recognize its divine authority and respond accordingly (Marshall, "Election," 266).

Note, too, that although Paul says that the Thessalonians received the message with a joy inspired by the Spirit (μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου), this does not necessarily imply that the Spirit was instrumental in producing the positive response of the Thessalonians to the gospel. The phrase "to receive the word" became a technical expression for believing and accepting the gospel (H.-G. Link, "Take, Receive," *NIDNTT*, III, 746. Cf. Lk. 8:13; Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11).

"The reality of their conversion is attested by the signs of God's favour and their own new life-style, and on this basis they need not succumb to Satanic attacks."⁴²

Note that in 2:12 Paul also juxtaposes human response with God's call. There Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he and those who were with him urged and encouraged them to "lead a life worthy of God."⁴³ Paul does not stop there, however. They are to live a life worthy of the God "who is calling⁴⁴ them into his own kingdom and glory." There is a close connection between the Christian's moral life and God's call. Believers *are responsible* to respond to God's call with a life of holiness. Similarly, Paul reminds the Thessalonians in 4:7 that God calls believers not "to impurity but in holiness (ἐπὶ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγιασμῷ)." Paul seems to imply that it is possible to resist this calling, to yield to real temptations. The idea of calling provides the ground for Paul's ethical paranesis.⁴⁵

In 5:23-24, Paul prays that God will sanctify the Thessalonians, keep their spirits and bodies sound and blameless until the coming of Christ (5:23). He then says that the one "who calls you is faithful and he will do this (πιστὸς ὁ καλῶν ὑμᾶς, ὃς καὶ ποιήσει)." Here, Paul encourages the Thessalonians with the assurance that they will be preserved in the end. However, in light of the previous discussion, it seems that Paul does not believe this to be an irresistible process.

Note too 3:3-5, where Paul indicates that people are in some way responsible for persevering in the faith. In 3:5, Paul says that, in view of the persecution he knew the Thessalonians would face, "I sent to find about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the

⁴² Marshall, "Election," 266. So also Kemmler. 165.

⁴³ Cf. the similar expressions in Rom 16:2 (ἀξίως τῶν ἀγίων) and Phil 1:27 (ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε). Note also Eph 4:1 and Col 1:10.

⁴⁴ The present tense is to be preferred to the alternate aorist καλέσαντος, since it is better attested and is the more difficult reading (we would expect Paul to use the aorist). See Metzger, Textual Commentary. It indicates the continuous nature of the call. Masson observes that Paul uses the present tense to insist on the permanent reality of the divine call (Les Deux Epitres de Saint Paul aux Thessaloniens [Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1957] 78, n 5).

⁴⁵ Cf. Marshall, "Election," 269.

tempter had tempted you and that our labour had been in vain." Volf, admitting that this passage implies that Paul is uncertain whether some of his converts will be included in the eschatological salvation, nevertheless argues that it is more likely that Paul is afraid that his labour had failed to produce genuine converts and that he will lose his eschatological reward.⁴⁶ This is unlikely. In 1 Thess 3:3-5, Paul's underlying assumption appears to be that his readers are believers. He gives no hint that he thinks that some among them might not be truly converted. Paul did not send Timothy to see whether the Thessalonians were truly converted, but rather to encourage them to stand firm in the faith.⁴⁷ What Paul feared may not have happened, but it was a real fear. Paul thus seems to assume that in a real way, people bear a measure of responsibility for persevering in the faith.

In 1 Thess 4:8b-9, Paul implies that it is God's activity within the hearts of believers that impels them to action. It is the same God who both puts his consecrating power in the hearts of Christians (vs. 8b) and impels them to love (φιλαδελφία) (vv 9f.). The divine activity that Paul prays for in 3:12-13 ("make you increase and abound in love...") is shown in 4:8-9 to be God's love-creating and consecrating energy that impels Christians to obedience.⁴⁸ In all of 4:1-12, it is God's own activity in the hearts of Christians that provides the basic motivation. "*Because* it sanctifies, God's interior activity *demand*s holiness: *because* it impels to *agape*, it *demand*s growth in *agape*."⁴⁹

Yet, we must take sufficient account of the "ought" in 4:1 (τὸ πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν) and that Paul says that "to please God (as in fact, you are doing) you should do so more and more." If δεῖ is used here of the "compulsion of duty"⁵⁰ then there seems to be an assumption that the Thessalonians' individual wills have something to do with

⁴⁶ Volf, 267-71.

⁴⁷ Marshall, "Election," 261. Marshall further observes that "Paul's language deals with standing firm despite tribulation (3,3.8) and repairing any weaknesses in their faith (3,10), not with the question of whether the readers actually possess faith" (261).

⁴⁸ T. Deidun, New Covenant Morality in Paul (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981) 58.

⁴⁹ Deidun, 63.

⁵⁰ BAGD, 172. Cf. also Morris's translation, "how you must walk and please God" (115).

acting as they "ought to." Though the Spirit makes one able to do right, the human will still has its place.

Above we noted that in 1 Thess 5:9 Paul attributes eschatological salvation to the work of Christ. Volf argues that here Paul shows his belief that God has chosen specific people (in this case, the believers at Thessalonica) for final salvation and not wrath. Volf's Paul believes that this purpose will unfailingly move to its completion, so that the Thessalonians can be sure of their ultimate salvation. For Volf, the crucial question is whether Paul considers his readers to be active or passive in the process of "obtaining salvation" in 5:9. She concludes that the word "περιποιέω," which can mean "acquire, obtain, gain for oneself,"⁵¹ simply denotes the act of receiving something and says nothing about the Thessalonians taking action to receive salvation.⁵² In Volf's view, the acquisition of salvation thus depends completely on God. To argue, as Volf does, that 5:9-10 assumes that God has chosen specific people for salvation and not wrath and that this purpose will infallibly be brought to pass is to go beyond the text. Moreover, although Volf is probably right concerning the idea of "receiving" salvation, this does not necessarily imply that it makes no difference what believers do.⁵³ Certainly Paul is not allowing that Christians attain to salvation through their own efforts in contrast to the work of Christ, but the apostle does hold believers *responsible to obey* the divine imperatives. Even to speak of "obedience" makes no sense if the human will is bypassed.⁵⁴ This would seem to imply the possibility that believers can disobey, and if that is the case then salvation might not, after all, be received. Thus we have Paul's warning in 5:6: "So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and sober."

⁵¹ BAGD, 650

⁵² Volf, 24, argues that in Eph 1:4, taking possession of one's inheritance excludes the idea of exerting effort toward possession. An heir receives the inheritance on the basis of a status, not on the basis of an activity.

⁵³ Volf asserts that "Paul's statement that 'God has not appointed us to wrath' relativizes human action" (24)

⁵⁴ Note that Volf even concedes this point, saying that "God's appointment to salvation does not make human obedience superfluous" (27, n120).

There are two reports of intercessory prayers in 1 Thessalonians (3:10-13; 5:23-24), both of which indicate that Paul assumes a measure of responsibility on the part of the Thessalonians. In the first report, Paul indicates that he wishes to revisit the churches, and further prays for their growth in love for one another and that God will strengthen their hearts in holiness so that they will be blameless at the parousia. In the second, as noted already, he prays that they will be sanctified and kept blameless until the coming of Christ. Wiles makes the valuable observation that such prayers themselves imply paranesis. In his report of these prayers, Paul is instructing the Thessalonians how they are to live in order to please God.⁵⁵ The paranetic element is also evident in the way that the first prayer is immediately followed by ethical exhortation. Paul urges his readers to attempt to live in the way in which he prays that God will empower them to live.⁵⁶

The second prayer is immediately preceded by ethical exhortations that may well have prompted Paul's report of the prayer. As Marshall indicates, the prayer sums up Paul's desires for the readers in light of the entire letter. Thus Paul's reports of his prayers partly function as paranesis in which he instructs his readers concerning the Christian life.

Both prayer-reports indicate very clearly the ease with which Paul can hold together the ideas of dependence on God and human responsibility.⁵⁷ For Paul, there is no incongruity between the two. That God will preserve the readers until the parousia does not imply that this will happen without the readers' cooperation. Clearly, Paul does not intend his statements about divine enabling to be taken in an absolute sense.

Obviously then, Paul takes human responsibility seriously. That much we have established. What then of the role of grace? While I do not think that Paul believes that the

⁵⁵ G. P. Wiles, Paul's Intercessory Prayers: the Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974) 59, observes that Paul's prayer in ch. 2 takes on a "warm paraenetic quality." Wiles further observes that "by mentioning the needs of the readers in prayers which they themselves will read together during worship, the apostle is encouraging them before God to strive still harder..." (69).

⁵⁶ Marshall, "Election," 270.

⁵⁷ So Marshall, "Election," 270.

divine working within believers bypasses the human will, nevertheless Paul is keenly aware that God must be at work within believers to make continuing life in the community a possibility. Thus, although a verse such as 2:13 does not indicate that God impelled the Thessalonians to accept the message, it does refer to the word of God as being "at work in you believers." The point is that that word (here the kerygma) "presupposes God's interior activity."⁵⁸ Paul assumes that there is a constant divine work going on within the believer. To put it another way, it appears that there is, for Paul, a "river" in which all believers swim, a current which carries them in the direction they are to go (God's kingdom [cf. 2:12]). Without this river, they will not reach the destination, yet this current does not carry them inexorably forward. To continue the metaphor, believers can run themselves aground, but they are urged not to do so.

V. Conclusions

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul portrays the human condition as existence in a state of ignorance of God. Life in such a state is characterized by fear of death and an immoral life. The ultimate fate of those who live in "darkness" is the wrath of God, which will be poured out in the eschatological judgment. For Paul, Christ is the only hope of escape. Through the call of God, people come into the believing community, sure that they will escape the wrath of God, who makes it possible for them to live as they ought. It is not insignificant that in a letter where Paul does not concern himself with the "Gentile problem," he makes a considerable number of references to dependence on God. In 1 Thessalonians, we see that Paul believes that grace has implications for the lives of the believers, from start to finish.

What Paul does not say is just as significant as what he does say. Paul does not give any indication that he felt a tension between dependence on God and human activity. Paul simply does not oppose God's grace and human effort in 1 Thessalonians. A number of texts attribute salvation to God's activity in electing, calling, or appointing to salvation. It is Christ who "rescues us from the wrath that is coming," and it is Christ who "died for

⁵⁸ Deidun, 208.

us." Human responsibility involves reception of these blessings and subsequent living in a manner "worthy of God," but this is made possible by God himself.

Yet, in all this, there is little emphasis on the gratuitousness of the act. This must wait for later letters.

Chapter Three -- Grace in the Corinthian Letters

The two extant letters of Paul to the church at Corinth are the next objects of our study. Since the letters do not deal in any detail with the question of the relation of Christianity with the Torah, they provide us with a good chance to examine the importance and function of the concept of grace in Paul outside the arena of anti-Judaizing polemic. An examination of 1 and 2 Corinthians will address several questions. What are Paul's convictions about believers' dependence on God's grace, not only in conversion, but throughout their lives as believers? What is the relation between Paul's views on grace and boasting in human abilities or accomplishments? If there is an emphasis on reliance on grace, does this mean that in Paul's thought the believer is passive? And if Paul does emphasize reliance on God's grace, does he perceive no tension between that and being rewarded for good works?

I. Introductory Matters

1 Corinthians was probably written approximately 54-55 C.E., some three years after Paul left Corinth.¹ Dating of 2 Corinthians is difficult, given the apparently less than straightforward nature of its composition.² 2 Corinthians would have been written shortly

¹ See G. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 4-5. This dating is based on the Gallio inscription and on Acts 18:12, which indicate that Paul and Gallio were in Corinth some time between 50 and 52. See also C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Harper and Row, 1968) 4-5. For an alternative view see G. Luedemann, Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, tr. F. S. Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). Luedemann dates Paul's letters earlier than most interpreters, since he believes that the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 was not a prelude to Paul's law-free mission in Asia Minor and Greece, but was in fact a response to it. Luedemann argues that, although at the time of 1 Corinthians, the first generation of believers was dying out, Paul still thought of himself as one of those who would survive until Christ's return. In Luedemann's view, this scenario best fits the end of the first generation, that is, about the year 50 (244).

² I believe that 1 Corinthians is best seen as a unified whole. For a recent defense of this view based on rhetorical criticism, see M. M. Mitchell, Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991). It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that 2 Corinthians comprises parts of at least two or three of Paul's letters to the church in Corinth. There is, however, a decided lack of unanimity amongst scholars as to the chronology of its various parts, as well as to their extent. It is possible that 2 Corinthians

after 1 Corinthians. The church to which the letters are addressed would seem to have been primarily composed of Gentiles.³

Theories abound as to the nature of the opposition Paul faced in Corinth. Gnosticism has been proposed as the religious and philosophical framework of Paul's opponents, especially in 1 Corinthians. Schmithals has argued that in both 1 and 2 Corinthians Paul is contending with Jewish Christian Gnostics.⁴ This is inadequate, since, although the Corinthians use what might be construed as Gnostic terminology, and have no doubt been influenced by the pervasive Hellenistic *Zeitgeist*, there are differences between the Corinthians and the Gnostics that preclude the former from being identified with the latter.⁵ Other scholars advocate only a Gnostic-type influence, but deny a fully matured Gnosticism.⁶

is a unity which describes events in a sequential pattern, in which the breaks are accounted for "on the supposition of Paul's habits of digression or else the interruptions in his dictation occasioned by natural diversions such as a night's sleep that supposedly intervened between his composing of chaps. 9 and 10" (R. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC [Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986] xl). However, I think it most likely that the chapters are in order (with the exception of 6:14-7:1), but that chs. 10-13 represent a later work of Paul's occasioned by new outbreaks of trouble at Corinth (Martin, xl). See the fuller discussion in Martin, xli-liii.

³ This is supported by texts which indicate that the Corinthians were, in their pre-conversion days, idolaters (1 Cor 6:10-11; 8:7; 12:2). Fee, 4, also notes that attendance at temple feasts, mentioned in 8:1-10:22, is a Gentile phenomenon and that the attitude that marriage is a sin, apparently held by some Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 7:28), does not fit Palestinian or Hellenistic Judaism.

⁴ *Gnosticism in Corinth*, tr. J. E. Stealy (New York: Abingdon, 1971).

⁵ This in spite of the fact that there was no completely monolithic gnostic belief system. B. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians* (Missoula, Montana: SBL, 1973) 83, says:

For inasmuch as the Gnostics separate the πνευματικός nature of man from the realm of God's activity as Creator, inasmuch as they posit man's ψυχικός or χοϊκός nature as the product of an inferior or fallen being working in defiance of, or in ignorance of, the highest Deity, the continuity between the Corinthian opponents of Paul and the Gnostics has been broken.

⁶ Cf. R. Mcl. Wilson, "How Gnostic were the Corinthians?" *NTS* 19 (1972) 65-74, who finds evidence only for the tentative beginnings of Gnosticism in Corinth at this time.

Most treat the opponents behind 1 Corinthians as different from those behind 2 Corinthians.⁷ A broad spectrum of tendencies was present in Corinth when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. For example, he had to contend with both libertines (cf. their arguing over the right to resort to prostitutes in 6:12-20) and ascetics (cf. their apparent inclination to abstain from sexual relations in marriage in 7:1-6). He also had to deal with what we might call, from Paul's perspective, an "over-realized eschatology." Many in the church apparently thought that, in the present life, they possessed every spiritual blessing or gift.⁸ They may have looked forward to some exalted state of existence at Christ's return, but did not perceive the need for bodily resurrection. Some of the Corinthians claimed to possess a superior wisdom, which they believed was a badge of spiritual maturity. They saw themselves as πνευματικοί, people who were spiritually advanced, possessing wisdom and knowledge beyond that of the apostle Paul. Paul takes them to task for their boasting and attempts to show them what he thinks are the deficiencies of their endeavours and beliefs.

The number of proposals concerning the identity of the opponents of 2 Corinthians has been put at thirteen or fourteen.⁹ Sumney divides the various proposals into four basic groups: Judaizers, Gnostics, Divine men and Pneumatics. However, the exact identity of the opponents in either 1 or 2 Corinthians is of less importance for our purposes than a certain tendency of thought which can be detected. Indeed, Sumney's prudent conclusion about the identity of the opponents in 2 Cor 1-9 is that the data do not point specifically to

⁷ For example, C K. Barrett, "Christianity at Corinth," Essays on Paul (London: SPCK, 1982) 1-27.

⁸ Cf. 4:8, where Paul says to the Corinthians in a sarcastic vein, "Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich!"

⁹ See J. L. Sumney, Identifying Paul's Opponents. The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians, JSNTS 40 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 9. Sumney's summaries are quite helpful. See also the useful article by R. P. Martin, "The Opponents of Paul in 2 Corinthians: An Old Issue Revisited," Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament. G. F. Hawthorne, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 279-89.

any particular group.¹⁰ He concludes that all that we can say is that Paul's status as an apostle has been questioned. At issue in 1-9 is the correct criteria for evaluating both ministers and ministries.¹¹ Though Sumney believes that 10-13 are part of a later letter, he concludes that the opponents of that letter have the same characteristics as those whom we see behind the earlier letter made up of chapters 1-9. These opponents also focus their attention on the question of legitimate apostleship.¹² These conclusions form the working hypothesis for this chapter.

II. The Human Condition in the Corinthian Letters

Before looking at Paul's use of the concept of grace in 1 and 2 Corinthians, we must look at his portrayal of the human condition in order to answer the question, "To what problem (or problems) is grace an answer?" It is impossible to formulate a single coherent statement to adequately describe what Paul says of the human condition in 1 and 2 Corinthians, since there is no single section in either letter in which Paul focuses attention on humanity's plight; Paul touches on various aspects of the problem throughout.

We begin with 1 Corinthians. Unbelieving Jews and Greeks are said by Paul to be perishing, incapable of comprehending the message of the cross (1:18). The wicked, Paul reminds the Corinthians, "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (6:9-10).

According to Paul, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness ($\mu\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$) before God" (3:18). The thoughts of unbelievers are "futile" (cf. 3:20). The Corinthian believers, or at least some of them, take pride in that from which they have supposedly been delivered, that

¹⁰ Sumney, 147.

¹¹ Sumney, 146. He argues that Paul's opponents "cite accepting pay as evidence of their apostolic status," and contend both "that apostles need to present evidence of their status," and "that an unimpressive demeanour is inappropriate for apostles" (146).

¹² Sumney, 190.

is, the wisdom of the world, so Paul believes it necessary to remind them of the spurious nature of the wisdom they so warmly embrace.¹³

The human condition, as in 1 Thessalonians, is characterized by idol-worship and consequent ignorance of the true God.¹⁴ In 8:4 Paul says that "we know that an idol is nothing at all in the world" and in 10:20, he asserts that the sacrifices of pagans offered to idols are in fact offered to demons, and certainly not to God (ὅτι ἂ θύουσιν. δαίμονίοις καὶ οὐ θεῶ). Christians, unlike their pagan counterparts, worship God and ought to have nothing to do with demons.

As in 1 Thessalonians, Paul sees humanity as being subject to the "sting of death." In 1 Cor 15:21, Paul observes that "death came through a human being" and in 15:22, he reminds his readers that "all die in Adam." In 1 Cor 15:54-55 Paul uses the language of Hos 13:14 to taunt death, speaking from the vantage point of the future, in which its "sting" will have been completely eradicated through the resurrection of believers. He proceeds to interpret the prophetic texts: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (15:56). Sin brings about death. Were it not for sin, death would not exist (cf. Rom 5:12; 6:23). The reference to the law is somewhat surprising, though the connection between sin and law is definitely Pauline.¹⁵ The context gives us very little help to

¹³ C.K. Barrett, "Christianity at Corinth," points out that σοφία is used in a number of passages to denote a kind of eloquence, a technique for persuading the hearer. In itself harmless, it becomes corrupt when the user comes to rely on human machinations and lies, and not on the divine power dwelling in the crucified Christ and evident in the preaching about Christ crucified (Essays on Paul [London: SPCK, 1982] 8). Cf., e.g., 1 Cor 1:17; 2:1, 4.

In 2:6 Paul refers to a σοφία which he rejects because it is "of this age and of its rulers." The latter showed their failure to grasp God's wisdom by crucifying Christ and thus unknowingly sealed their own doom. Barrett observes that it seems likely that Paul means that they failed to comprehend God's purposes of redemption not simply through Christ, but through Christ crucified, which is, in fact, God's wisdom ἐν μυστηρίῳ. 1:21 implies that the world has a wisdom which is inadequate for acquiring a knowledge of God (Barrett, 8-9).

¹⁴ Cf. 1 Cor 15:34, which indicates that unbelievers have "no knowledge of God."

¹⁵ E.g., Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:13, 20; 7:5.

determine what Paul means by νόμος.¹⁶ Winger asserts that the other uses of νόμος in the letter make clear that in 15:56 the reference is to the Jewish νόμος.¹⁷ It seems Paul has in mind the effect with which he deals more explicitly in Romans, that is, that when the Mosaic code with its commands and sanctions, which themselves are good, encounters a "flesh" that is hostile to God (Rom 8:7), sin is inevitably provoked (Rom 7:5, 7-14).

Paul also observes that those outside the believing community, whom he characterizes as "wrongdoers" (ἄδικοι), will not inherit the "kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9). This observation is followed by Paul's list of these "wrong-doers," not meant to be exhaustive, but rather representative of the Corinthian believers in their pre-Christian days. Such people, who Paul says are well-represented in the church in Corinth, were in danger of failing to attain to salvation. Paul reminds the Corinthians that it was God who acted to wash, sanctify and justify the Corinthians so that this would not be their fate.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul says considerably more about his perception of life under the Mosaic covenant than he does in 1 Corinthians. For Paul, although both the old and new covenants are glorious and of divine origin, the old covenant brings death. In 2 Cor 3:6, Paul claims that God has "made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter (γράμμα) kills, but the Spirit gives life." Paul contrasts the Sinaitic covenant, which he calls the "ministry of death" and "condemnation (τῆς κατακρίσεως)" (3:7, 9) with the new covenant, the "ministry of the Spirit (ἡ διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος)" (3:8). Paul's description of the law as a "ministry of death" and a "ministry of condemnation" is predicated on the idea that the "letter kills." He

¹⁶ As Winger says, the "only thing clear from the immediate context is that Paul considers his reference to be so clear as to require no explanation" (By what Law? The Meaning of Νόμος in the Letters of Paul [Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992] 72). He also notes that something known to the Corinthians might have made the reference clear to them; Paul might, for example, be quoting a sentence with which they were familiar (72, n32).

¹⁷ Winger, 72.

does not spell out here how it is that the law brings death, but his claims are best understood as reflecting the understanding of Gal 3:10: failure to do the law's commands places one under a "curse."¹⁸ For Paul, life under the law inevitably leads to death because people in the "flesh" do not submit to God's law (cf. Rom 8:7-8).¹⁹

At the end of 2 Corinthians 3, Paul addresses the question of Jews who do not believe in Christ: "Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed" (2 Cor 3:15). Though Paul uses the passive "their minds were hardened (ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν)" in v. 14 to speak of Israel, thus implying that an outside agent is responsible for this condition, he also believes that this condition can be overcome if one "turns to the Lord (ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς κύριον)" (3:16). The veil is only removed in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται). The point would seem to be that many Jews fail to see that the old covenant has now passed away.²⁰

The theme of veiled minds is picked up again in 4:3-4 where Paul claims that "even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing (ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις)." He further observes that "in their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (4:4). The "god of this age (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου)" is a

¹⁸ This seems to be implied by κατὰ κρῖσις in 2 Cor 3:9 (εἰ γὰρ τῇ διακονίᾳ τῆς κατακρίσεως δόξα, πολλῶ μᾶλλον περισσεύει ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης δόξης). Cf. also Rom 2:12; 4:15; 7:10-11. See Bultmann, *Theology*, I, 263, 267.

¹⁹ Cf. Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 162.

²⁰ S. Westerholm, 212-13, n36. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 121 and V. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, ABC (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1984) 233. Cf. also the helpful discussion in Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 67-68. This is certainly the point of the argument in 3:7-11, which itself is a part of Paul's defense of his ministry. Cf. especially vv. 10-11: "Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!"

reference to Satan. Paul is thinking in terms of the Jewish apocalyptic distinction between this age and the age to come.²¹ Satan is the god of this age, but since this is only because God allows it, we do not have a true dualism.²² Nevertheless, Satan's power is malignant and, when exercised, blinds people to the truth of the gospel. Though Paul might be using "unbelievers (οἱ ἄπιστοι)" with his opponents particularly in mind,²³ the word includes all who are outside the community and who, as such, are destined for destruction. Paul says specifically that Satan's purpose²⁴ was to "keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

In Paul's view, unbelievers are excluded from the new order brought about by Christ. 2 Cor 5:17 implies that anyone who is not "in Christ" is still a part of the "old creation." It is only of those who believe that it can be said "there is a new creation: everything old is passed away...."²⁵ Paul believes that "with Christ's coming a new chapter in cosmic relations to God opened and reversed the catastrophic effect of Adam's fall which began the old creation."²⁶ Unbelievers, however, are not participants in this new eschatological order.²⁷

²¹ See G. Dalman, The Words of Jesus, Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1902) 147-56 and H. Sasse, "αἰών," TDNT, I, 206-07.

²² R. Martin, Reconciliation. A Study of Paul's Theology (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) 51-54.

²³ So Martin, 2 Corinthians, 78.

²⁴ Assuming that the εἰς τὸ μή is final. It could also be consecutive, meaning "with the result that" (cf. Barrett, 2 Corinthians, 131). In any case, the point is that because of the activity of Satan, unbelievers cannot perceive the truth about the gospel. This apparently includes at least some among Paul's opponents, who perhaps were charging that his gospel was obscure (Martin, 2 Corinthians, 78).

²⁵ This is reminiscent of the later Rom 8:18-24, where Paul makes reference to creation being made "subject to frustration" and looks forward to the redemption of the entire cosmos.

²⁶ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 152.

²⁷ Although in Paul's view, reconciliation of the world was accomplished when Christ's work was finished (cf. 2 Cor 5:19), unbelievers are called to receive it. If they do not answer the call, they remain effectively unreconciled to God.

The plight of humanity is thus variously described in Paul's letters to the church in Corinth. The ultimate end of unbelievers is destruction. They will not inherit the kingdom of God. For Paul, unbelievers, both Jew and Gentile, are "foolish" because they cannot recognize the wisdom of God in Christ. Unbelieving Gentiles make the mistake of worshipping idols. Death is an enemy to be feared, an enemy overcome only by those who are in Christ. Although the relationship of the church to the Torah is not a main theme of the Corinthian letters, Paul does assert that life under the law inevitably leads to death. For Paul, unbelievers' minds are veiled, incapable of perceiving what God has done in Christ. Subject to the whims of the god of this world, they live in darkness, unable to see the light. Those who do not accept God's offer of reconciliation through Christ will answer to God for their trespasses.

III. Grace in the Corinthian Letters

A. Dependence on God and Entry into the Community

In 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul's language demonstrates that, in his view, believers are utterly dependent on God's grace. They do not escape the "god of this world" through their own devices. In Paul's view, people become members of the believing community in response to the God who calls them and provides reconciliation through his Son. This dependence on grace continues throughout a believer's life, since the ability to persevere and to serve as a member of the community also comes from God.

1. Believers and God's call (1:2, 8-9, 24, 26-31; 7:17-24; 15: 9-10)

When Paul speaks of deliverance from the human condition he often uses the language of "call." Such language reflects Paul's belief that people become Christians in response to God's call. In 1 Corinthians, Paul stresses the divine call as the means by which the Corinthians became members of the "sanctified." The letter is addressed "to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints (κλητοῖς ἁγίοις)..." (1:2). In 1:9, the

apostle reminds his readers that "God is faithful; by him you were called (δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε) into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The one who will strengthen the believers "to the end" (1:8) has already shown his faithfulness in his call. The Corinthians can be certain of God's future help, since the present reality of their existence as believers is grounded in his sovereign call. 1:24 refers to believers as "those who are called (τοῖς κλητοῖς)" and in 1:26 Paul asks the Corinthians to "Consider your own call (Βλέπετε τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν)." In 7:17-24 Paul urges the Corinthians to "lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you" (cf. 7:18, 20, 21, 22, 24). For Paul, it is thus axiomatic that Christians are what they are because God has "called" them.

In 1:26-31, as part of his argument that the gospel he proclaimed does not meet merely human (and therefore inadequate) expectations, Paul shifts his focus from the content of the gospel ("Christ crucified") to the Corinthians themselves. He says three times that "God chose (ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός)" the Corinthians, not many of whom were wise by human standards, or powerful, or highborn. The verb ἐκλέγομαι is used by Paul three times in this passage of God's election of the Corinthians. Nevertheless, the emphasis is not so much on the fact of election *per se*, but on the sovereignty of God who elects "as he wills, and whom he wills."²⁸ That the Corinthians are members of the believing community and have experienced liberation from death, from ignorance of God, and are no longer doomed to destruction is, in Paul's view, due to the sovereign choice of God. In 1:27, 28, Paul insists that God has chosen "what the world counts foolish"²⁹ in order "to shame the

²⁸ Fee, 82.

²⁹ Barrett's translation, which takes the genitive τοῦ κόσμου of v. 27 to mean "in the world's estimation" as opposed to taking τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου to mean "the foolish element of the world." The latter rendering would imply a world partly wise and partly foolish. It is unlikely that Paul meant to be as laudatory as this (Barrett, 1 Corinthians, 58).

wise," the weak to shame the strong, and what is low and what is despised, "so that"³⁰ humanity will have no grounds to boast before God (cf. also 1:20).

It is with the claim that humans have no basis for boasting that the section on the divine call reaches its climax. God chose people from such a low position on the social ladder that there could be no chance of them thinking that their own status (or wisdom, or "power") was a factor in their election (1:29). In fact, it has been shown that the Corinthian Christian community included members higher on the social ladder than Paul's language here might lead us to infer.³¹ This indicates even more clearly the "theological" and "doctrinaire" force of the passage for Paul and underscores the significance in his thinking of the irrelevance of any human contribution to the call of God. When Paul informs his readers that "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'" (1:30-31), he is again insisting that believers owe their existence as God's people solely to God's activity in Christ. The gratuitousness of salvation here appears as an essential element of Paul's message.

Paul's own reliance on God's "grace" with reference to his call and the gift of his apostleship is set in bold relief by his confession in 15:9: "I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." God's "grace," Paul goes on to say, made possible the transition from persecutor to leader of the church (15:10). Just as the Corinthians' background made it readily apparent that their present standing among the people of God was due entirely to God's grace (1:26-31; 6:9-11), so the same is true of Paul himself.

³⁰ 1:29, final ὅπως.

³¹ On the composition of the church at Corinth, see G. Theissen, "Social Stratification in the Corinthian Community: A Contribution to the Sociology of Early Hellenistic Christianity," The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, tr. J. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 69-119.

2. Believers and Sanctification (1 Cor 1:6-11; 7:17)

Dependence on God is again underscored in 6:9b-11. Once more, Paul recalls the Corinthians' background, this time focusing on the fact that some of them had been of questionable moral character. The litany of 6:9b-10 (cf. also 5:10-11) shows some of the Corinthians to have been "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, greedy, drunkards, revilers and robbers."³² As such, none would "inherit the kingdom of God" (6:10). Corinthian pride again comes under attack. To have an over-inflated ego in light of this catalogue of vices is, for Paul, out of the question.

Despite their faults, Paul tells them emphatically³³ that "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." "Washed" would seem to be an allusion to baptism,³⁴ but this is not certain. It is perhaps simply a reference to a spiritual change. What is most significant is that sanctification is attributed to God,³⁵ as is their justification.³⁶ The importance of the passive voice ought not to be missed. Paul believes that the Corinthians have been changed by an outside agent. With two prepositional phrases, Paul says that they have been changed, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. In saying that the Corinthians have been changed "in the name of the Lord Jesus," Paul reveals that he believes that the work of grace seen in them has been, in

³² For a discussion of the individual terms, see Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, tr. by James W. Leitch [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975] 100-102, 106. This reads like a standard list of vices, but, given the fact that Paul must still deal with sexual immorality among the congregation at Corinth, there is little reason to doubt Paul's claim that at least some of the Corinthians engaged in some of these activities.

³³ Cf. the three-fold repetition of ἀλλά before each of the verbs in 11b.

³⁴ Many commentators favour this interpretation. The word is ἀπολούομαι, a term that occurs only once in Paul. Elsewhere it occurs in the NT only in Acts 22:16, where the term is used with reference to sins being "washed" away.

³⁵ ἡ γιάσθητε is in the passive voice, with an implied divine agent.

³⁶ ἐδικαιώθητε is also in the passive voice and again God is the implied agent. It is likely that δικαιώω is to be understood in a forensic sense (Barrett, 1 Corinthians, 142). Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 107, observes that it "has the full sense of the Pauline concept of justification."

its entirety, predicated on the work of God in Christ.³⁷ In the next phrase Paul indicates the instrumentality by which that change has been accomplished. It is "by the Spirit of our God."³⁸ The emphasis on God's initiative and grace in transforming the Corinthians is natural following the bleak assessment of their pre-Christian condition.

In 1 Cor 7:17, Paul admonishes believers to be content with their stations in life, since God's call came to people in different states, circumcised and uncircumcised, slave and free. Conzelmann reads too much into the passage when he interprets Paul as saying that the "call comes to me just as I am; I do not first have to create by some achievement the presupposition for my attaining to salvation."³⁹ There is no indication that Paul is here attempting to counter some sort of "works-righteousness" theology. Rather, Paul is urging individuals to be content with the state or social situation which has been "assigned" to them, that is, the station which was theirs at the time of their call. It may be that he means to say that God's call has in effect "sanctified" the particular situations people found themselves in at the time of their call. Paul does not mean to suggest that people may not change their position, but he is probably trying to help individuals to see that social status is irrelevant to their spiritual life and to their initial call to become believers.⁴⁰

3. Reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-21)

In 2 Cor 5:17-21 it seems that Paul has a conscious desire to state explicitly that salvation, in this case expressed in terms of the metaphor of reconciliation, is provided entirely through God's work in Christ, at God's initiative.

³⁷ Cf. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) 142-43. Orr and Walther go beyond the text when they say that it "is within the power of human freedom to take the initial step to clean one's life of such vices and sins as Paul enumerates" (I Corinthians [Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976] 201). Paul says nothing here that would suggest that.

³⁸ ἐν, used instrumentally. Cf. Rom 15:16 (ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).

³⁹ Conzelmann, I Corinthians, 126.

⁴⁰ Cf. Fee, 310-11.

5:17-21 begins with a claim by Paul that if anyone is in Christ, "there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" Paul, though he is aware that the new age has not been fully actualized in the lives of believers, nevertheless is convinced that Christians actually live in the new age.⁴¹

In verses 18-21, Paul apparently has used and adapted traditional material, whatever its extent.⁴² He first asserts that "All this is from God (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ)," the "all this" probably being a reference to the death of Christ "for all" (vv. 14-15) which has resulted in the "new creation."⁴³ It is this which comes from God "who reconciles (καταλλάξαντος) us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." For Paul, Christ is the agent of reconciliation. It is through him (διὰ Χριστοῦ) that relations between God and humanity are reestablished. The aorist participle (καταλλάξαντος) refers to God's action in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Verse 19 continues the thought of verse 18.⁴⁴ The problem in this verse is how to construe θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ. There are at least

⁴¹ I agree with Martin who notes that Paul is not merely speaking subjectively, as though it were only the individual's viewpoint that had changed (2 Corinthians, 152). Cf. R. C. Tannehill, Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967) 68-69, who maintains that it "is not a matter of the individual's viewpoint, but of the eschatological situation.... Paul's whole argument in these verses depends upon the reality of the presence of the new aeon."

⁴² As might be expected, there is no unanimity concerning the extent of the material Paul is citing. Furnish believes that it is confined to v. 19ab: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Martin, on the other hand, seems to see vv. 18-21 as the traditional material with insertions at 19b and 20c, partly to elaborate the meaning and partly to correct the sense of the tradition which Paul is using (2 Corinthians, 140). For my purposes, the question is more or less moot. As Käsemann says, the "pre-existing tradition is used to give a sharper profile to the apostle's own theology" (Perspectives on Paul, tr. M. Kohl [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971] 44). Paul has, by citing this material, made it his own.

⁴³ So Martin, 2 Corinthians, 152; Barrett, 2 Corinthians, 175; Bruce, 209; Bultmann, 158 and Furnish, 335.

⁴⁴ The words ὡς ὅτι are most likely an equivalent to ὡς (Lietzmann, 126 and Martin, 2 Corinthians, 153).

three theoretical possibilities:⁴⁵ (1) God was reconciling the world (which was in Christ); (2) God was reconciling the world in (that is, through) Christ; and (3) God was in Christ, reconciling the world. The first possibility is farfetched, and there are no conceptual parallels in Paul. Harris argues in favour of (3), saying that "it was only because God in all his fullness had chosen to dwell in Christ...that reconciliation was accomplished." He maintains that "not only was Christ God's agent in effecting reconciliation (Rom 5:10f.; 2 Cor 5:18; Col. 1:19-22); he also mediated the divine presence, thus giving validity to his reconciliatory sacrifice."⁴⁶ The problem with this view is that the context is emphasizing soteriological concerns, whereas Harris's interpretation puts the emphasis on revelation.⁴⁷ Option (2) is the best. Paul is not emphasizing the "incarnation." The periphrastic construction⁴⁸ emphasizes the imperfect aspect of the verb. There seems to be an element of contingency here. God has made the overture to humanity, but it can be rejected.⁴⁹ This makes ἐν Χριστῷ equivalent to διὰ Χριστοῦ in verse eighteen.⁵⁰

Paul, in two participial phrases, then spells out something of what reconciliation implies. The one reconciling the world to himself is also the one who "does not count their trespasses against them";⁵¹ he is also the one who entrusts the message of reconciliation to Paul and his co-workers (5:19).

In 5:20 Paul calls attention to the fact that he and his fellow-workers have become ambassadors of Christ, for it is through them, human agents, that God actually makes his appeal. Then he makes his own appeal, apparently directed at his readers, to "be reconciled

⁴⁵ Collange, 270.

⁴⁶ M. J. Harris, Appendix "Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament," *NIDNTT*, III, 1193.

⁴⁷ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 154.

⁴⁸ The participle καταλλάσσω and the imperfect ἦν.

⁴⁹ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 154. Cf. Bruce: "only with the response of faith can the aorist tense be used as in verse 18" (209).

⁵⁰ So Lietzmann, 126.

⁵¹ The αὐτοῖς refers to those who need to be reconciled to God.

to God." It seems odd that Paul would direct such an appeal at his readers since, whatever their problems, he assumes they are believers. It is perhaps possible that Paul is thinking of his opponents, but this seems unlikely, for in 5:12 we see that Paul is in fact speaking to the church itself. It is more likely that for Paul, being reconciled to God has ethical implications, evidence of which Paul does not see in sufficient quantity.⁵²

The verse implies that although reconciliation has been accomplished by God through Christ, humanity must choose to respond appropriately to it. Although, for Paul, God is the agent of reconciliation, it is not actually realized without a human response. That God has taken the initiative does not rule out human responsibility. In fact, the indicative, "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself" does not exclude the imperative, "be reconciled to God," but actually makes it a possibility in Paul's mind. Had God not taken the initiative, no human response would have been possible. Although Paul is very much aware of human dependence on God, such a dependence does not imply that people are completely passive.

The appeal of 5:20 is based on God's act in Christ as described in 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Whatever the exact meaning of the phrase, "he made him (Christ) to be sin who

⁵² So Furnish, 350, who asserts that Paul's appeal is best seen as a call to believers "to be renewed in their faith and life as individuals and as a believing community." Behind this appeal are the problems with which Paul was contending at Corinth. In light of the Corinthians' questioning of both him and his message, Paul believes that they need to show evidence of a right relationship with God.

As Marshall says, the indicative (God's act in Christ) forms the basis for the imperative (be reconciled). "God and Christ appeal to (the Corinthians) to accept the fact reconciliation has been accomplished and to complete the action by taking down the barrier on their side -- the barrier of pride and disobedience and hatred of God" ("The Meaning of 'Reconciliation,'" in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd*, R. Guelich, ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978] 123). See also on this M. E. Thrall, "Salvation Proclaimed: V. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21," *ExpTimes* 93 (1982) 228 and F. Büchsel, "καταλλάσσω," *TDNT*, I, 255-56.

knew no sin,"⁵³ it is most important for us to note that God is the unstated subject of the verb ἐποίησεν in 5:21.

Furnish makes the helpful observation that verses 18-21 emphasize three things: (1) that God was reconciling the world to himself; (2) that Christ is the agent by which this is accomplished; (3) that reconciliation means not charging people with their trespasses. For our purposes (1) is especially significant.

Büchsel suggests that reconciliation first became an important religious theme in the early Christian church.⁵⁴ 2 Maccabees was one of the few places where the idea found application in Hellenistic Judaism. There, however, reconciliation is seen as originating with those who have sinned, not with God. For example, in 2 Macc 8:29 it is said that the Maccabean guerrillas "made common supplication and implored the merciful Lord to be wholly reconciled with his servants." God is not the subject who initiates the reconciliation. He is rather the object of reconciliation.⁵⁵ Josephus also speaks of a God who is angry with humanity because of various sins, but who can be persuaded to cease being angry with them, that is, to be reconciled to people.⁵⁶ It is texts such as these which, when compared with Paul's presentation of reconciliation, have given one interpreter reason to say that the differences between Paul's presentation of reconciliation and the presentation of the same subject in Hellenistic Judaism are very serious.⁵⁷ In the same vein, Furnish concludes that against this background, Paul's presentation of

⁵³ See the survey of possibilities in S. Lyonnet and L. Sabourin, Sin, Redemption and Sacrifice. A Biblical and Patristic Study (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970), 249-56.

⁵⁴ Büchsel, 254.

⁵⁵ See also on this Marshall, 120-21.

⁵⁶ See Ant. 7.7.3 § 153 and Jewish Wars 5.9.4 §415.

⁵⁷ C. Breytenbach, "Versöhnung, Stellvertretung und Sühne," NTS, 39 (1993) 64. Breytenbach further maintains that the only point of similarity between Paul and Hellenistic Judaism on reconciliation is the terminology of a broken relationship (64).

reconciliation is "all the more arresting" since he speaks of God as the one who initiates it.⁵⁸

The notion that reconciliation first became important only in the early church is, however, incorrect. While the actual terms for reconciliation may not be used unambiguously with God as the subject in Hellenistic Jewish writers, the idea of God as the injured party taking the first step is abundantly present in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, the message of Hosea, to which Paul himself appeals in Rom 9:25-26, portrays God as a husband who will pursue his wayward wife, Israel (cf. 2:13-15). In Isa 65:1-2 God says that "I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me" and "I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people...."⁵⁹

Nevertheless, though Paul did not originate the idea that God initiates reconciliation, it plays an important role for him. 2 Cor 5:17-18 is most significant, in that the τὰ πάντα is all-encompassing. Life in the new age and the salvation wrought by the death of Christ are attributed in their entirety to God. All comes ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. God is the initiator of "the turn of the ages."⁶⁰ He is *the* source from which all the blessings of the new age spring. The whole passage seems to represent a conscious effort on the part of Paul to underscore the dependence of humanity on God's "good graces," as it were.

While Paul emphasizes that people are dependent on God for the initial experience of salvation in both 1 and 2 Corinthians, he also shows that, for him, believers continue to live in constant reliance on God's grace. In his view, God makes it possible for people to remain faithful members of the believing community.

B. Dependence on God and Life in the Community

⁵⁸ Furnish, 335.

⁵⁹ Noted by J. D. G. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 38A (Waco, Texas: Word, 1988) 260.

⁶⁰ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 146.

1. Equipped to Serve (1 Cor 1:4-9; 3:6-10; 4:7-8; 7:7; 12; 15:10; 2 Cor 1:8-9,12; 2:16; 3:5; 4:7b; 8, 9; 12:7-9)

In 1 Corinthians 1:4, Paul tells the Corinthians that he thanks God for them "because of the grace (ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι) of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus...." Paul probably wanted his readers to think both of the particular manifestation of divine grace in the Christ event and of the further effects of the same grace in their life in the community (cf. 1 Cor 1:5-8).⁶¹ This same grace working in their lives results in their being "enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind" (1:5) and also means that they "are not lacking in any spiritual gift."⁶² Note, too, that in a similar thought to that of Phil 1:6, Paul says here that God⁶³ will strengthen the Corinthians "until the end,"⁶⁴ that is, until the "day of the Lord Jesus" (1:8). It is he who will strengthen them so that they will be found blameless⁶⁵ on the day of judgment. In 1:9, we see the grounds for Paul's confidence.

⁶¹ Barrett, 1 Corinthians, 36, puts it well: the "antecedent and universal grace of God encounters particular Christians as a divine gift, constituting their Christian life, and enabling them to perform services they are called to render in the church and for the world." Cf. C. Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1857) 6 and Fee, 37. Fee, however, wants to limit the meaning of χάρις here to the gifts enumerated in the following verses.

⁶² Robertson and Plummer correctly observe that in Paul special "gifts of grace" presuppose that one is existing in a "state of grace," that is, that one is under the influence of the redemption and reconciliation brought about by Jesus Christ (5).

⁶³ Not all think that the subject of ὅς is God. Barrett, 1 Corinthians, 39, takes the view that it refers back to the nearest and what seems at first to be the most natural antecedent, Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ] (so Robertson and Plummer, 7). Fee, 44, however, offers several compelling reasons to think that Paul intended God as the antecedent. First, God is the implied agent for a series of passive verbs in the paragraph. Second, God is the implied subject of the prior occurrence of the verb βεβαιόω ("strengthen," NRSV), thus indicating that he is *also* the one who will confirm the Corinthians at the end. Third, in the final exclamation in v. 9, God is said to be the one who will bring all this to pass.

⁶⁴ ἕως τέλους. Volf notes that although this expression can mean "entirely," the reference to the "day of our Lord Jesus Christ" makes the sense "to the end of the world" more likely (J. M. Gundry Volf, Paul and Perseverance [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990] 78).

⁶⁵ The eschatological context indicates that ἀνέγκλητοι is forensic (Volf, 78, and Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 29). This cannot imply moral perfection, but rather means that "the righteousness of Christ himself is given to them so that they may be acquitted at the Great Assize" (Barrett, 1 Corinthians, 39).

Paul's confidence that God will complete what he has begun is based on the two convictions that God is faithful (πιστὸς ὁ θεός) and that it was he who called them into fellowship (οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν).⁶⁶ It was God who made possible the fellowship⁶⁷ which they now enjoy and it is God's grace that will see them through to the end.

In 1:4, the addition of the aorist passive participle of διδόναι, "to grant, bestow," seems to underscore the character of χάρις as a free gift,⁶⁸ while the prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ might express the "place" where χάρις is experienced.⁶⁹ At any rate, Paul is already countering the Corinthians' stress on the importance of the spiritual gifts that they possessed, as well as the resultant boasting (cf. 1 Cor. 4:7). Paul finds himself having to stress the fact that these gifts are given by God and are themselves particular manifestations of grace. He expresses gratitude; the implication is that the Corinthians should do the same.

1 Cor 4:7a underscores Paul's perception that members of the believing community are completely dependent on God. To the question "What do you have that you have not been given?" the intended answer is obviously, "nothing." The Corinthians in their pride have made a grave error. Paul asks them why they boast, since they clearly have received, not

⁶⁶ This is very similar to 1 Thess 5:23-24: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this."

⁶⁷ The reference here is to their conversion, but the language of fellowship with Christ is somewhat unusual. Usually Paul speaks of being "in Christ," with fellowship language used of relations with other believers.

⁶⁸ Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 26.

⁶⁹ A metaphorical locative use of ἐν is possible here, if ἐν αὐτῷ in vs. 5 (ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ. ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνῶσει) is also locative, but it is difficult to be certain. Cf. Héring, who maintains that the phrase implies that this grace becomes effective through communion with the risen Christ (The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, tr. A Heathcote and P. Allcock [London: Epworth Press, 1962] 2).

earned, gifts: "If you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?" (4:7b). If they are "rich," as Paul sarcastically observes in 4:8,⁷⁰ it is because of God working in them.

Part of what Paul believes the Corinthians to have received from God are *χαρίσματα*. For Paul, *χαρίσματα* are gifts which come from God. In 1 Cor 7:7, Paul indicates that "each has a particular gift (*χάρισμα*) from God, one having one kind and another a different kind." *χαρίσματα* are expressions of divine favour.⁷¹ Here in 7:7 the term seems to refer to an ability given by God. The particular *χάρισμα* to which he is here alluding seems to be celibacy. Paul acknowledges that although in his view celibacy is a preferable state, not everyone has been given this ability by God. The entire discussion of 1 Cor 12 is predicated on the supposition that it is God who gives the "gifts" with which believers serve the community. In 12:4-6, whether the various terms translated "gifts," "services," and "activities" are distinct categories or not,⁷² the significant point is that they find their origin in God. It is "the same God who activates all of them in every one (*ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*)" (12:6b). There follows a list of various gifts, all of which are "given" (12:7, 8) to individuals. In 12:11 Paul states that all these gifts "are activated by one and same Spirit (*ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα*), who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses (*καθὼς βούλεται*)." 12:18 indicates that "God arranged (*ἔθετο*) the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose." In 12:24 it is said that "God so arranged (*συνεκέρασεν*) the body...." Various gifts, including those of apostles, prophets, and teachers, are said to be "appointed

⁷⁰ The irony is present whether the sentences are taken as rhetorical questions or as statements (Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 87). The Corinthians act as though the end has been fully consummated (cf. C. Senft, *La Première Epître de Saint-Paul aux Corinthiens* [Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Delachaux and Niestlé, 1979] 67). Of course, 4:8 in fact reflects the Corinthians' high opinion of themselves. They, at least, think that they are "satiated."

⁷¹ Fee, 586-87, n16. Cf. Louw and Nida, who define *χάρισμα* as "that which is given freely and generously" (569).

⁷² Fee, 587 and Bruce, 118, indicate that they are not. Cf. Conzelmann, "χάρις," 405, who notes that "if the rhetorical element is noted one will avoid schematization."

(ἔθετο)" by God. The piling up of terms such as "give," "choose," "arrange" and "activate" in reference to God's working in the community makes it very clear that the various gifts mentioned in this chapter are thought by Paul to have been given for the good of the body entirely at God's initiative. Human choice has nothing to do with the apportioning of gifts. God freely gives them and chooses who will receive what gift. There is no room for human boasting or pride, since whatever gifts one has are the result of God's sovereign choice.

In Paul's view, God makes possible anything accomplished in his service. The church in Corinth had apparently divided in support of various personalities, such as Paul and Apollos (cf. 1:12; 3:4). To show that such a tendency is unjustified, Paul points out that both he and Apollos are only servants through whom the Corinthians came to faith. Using the metaphor of planting, Paul observes that he may have planted and Apollos may have watered, "but God gave the growth (ὁ θεὸς ἡύξανεν)" (3:6). The strongly adversative ἀλλά highlights the fact that for Paul, although human agents do their part, growth (which in this case is represented by the believing community in Corinth), that is, the effectiveness of their work, depends entirely on God. Since God gives the growth, neither Paul nor Apollos can take any credit; thus there are no grounds for dividing the church along party lines. After indicating that both he and Apollos are servants, doing the tasks assigned them by God, Paul draws what is for him a significant inference:⁷³ "so neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth (ἀλλ' ὁ ἀυξανων θεός)" (3:7). The point Paul wishes to make from his observation that he and Apollos were merely doing their assigned tasks is that ultimately neither Paul nor Apollos, though they are servants of God, is of any importance. For Paul, without God, the Corinthians would not be "God's field, God's building" (3:9). Note too,

⁷³ Note the inferential use of the particle ὥστε that begins vs. 7. On the inferential use of ὥστε, see Moule, Idiom Book, 144.

that in 3:10 Paul says that "According to the grace of God given to me (κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ⁷⁴ τὴν δοθεῖσαν μοι), like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it."⁷⁵ This verse makes the same basic point as 3:7-- that the work of building the church is a cooperative effort -- but there is a significant addition. Paul's particular ministry is described as a χάρις given to him by God. Given the context in which the discussion deals with service, here, as in 1:4, χάρις most likely refers not to God's redemptive activity in Christ, but rather to Paul's apostleship. Paul declares that without grace operating in him, he would not have accomplished anything for God.⁷⁶

In 1 Cor 15:10 ("but by the grace of God I am what I am..."), we see further evidence of Paul's concern to stress his dependence on the grace of God. Here Paul is continuing to press his claim to true apostleship by taking pains to point out that what he is, is a direct result of the operation of the grace of God in his life. Paul might be alluding here to his "Damascus" experience when he first perceived and experienced "the grace of God" in Christ, but it is more likely that he has in view the grace of God which is effective in his apostolic office.⁷⁷ What Paul is and does is a result of God's grace working in him and manifesting itself in a particular "grace," that is, the gift of his apostleship, a gift given to a former persecutor of the church (15:9).

⁷⁴ The τοῦ θεοῦ is missing from P⁴⁶ 0142 81 1962 2495 pc b f vg^{mss} and Clement. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 549, believes that the "words were eliminated as repetitious." Fee takes the view that the words were probably interpolated by the Textus Receptus. Usually, Paul does not include the genitive when referring to "grace" as a charism bestowed on an individual (Rom 12:3; Gal 2:9). At any rate, Fee correctly notes that God is the implied agent of the passive participle so the result is the same (135, n1).

⁷⁵ Here, χάρις is a specific gift given to Paul by God, evident in his apostolic work of founding churches. Given Paul's sense of dependence on the grace of God, the words κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσαν μοι are of theological significance. It is also of course true that they enable Paul to avoid the appearance of boasting.

⁷⁶ This understanding is anticipated by the author of 2 Esdras, who asks God to "send the Holy Spirit into me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world..." (14:22). 2 Enoch 69:15 reads, "And give a blessing to your servant in front of the face of all the people...." 2 Bar 81:2-4 reads, "'for I mourned with regard to Zion and asked grace from the Most High...." Cf. also Josephus, *Ant.* iv, 60.

⁷⁷ So Fee, 735.

God's bestowal of grace in the Christ event was not, Paul points out, in vain. His work as an apostle bears this out. But, again, the moment Paul mentions his own activity (ἐκοπίασα), he hastens to attribute it to the "grace" of God within him: οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ [ἢ] σὺν ἐμοί.⁷⁸

The choice of the preposition σὺν rather than ἐν is interesting. σὺν seems to portray grace as a sort of co-worker. However, even Paul's cooperation with grace is due to grace itself. As Hodge says, "he did co-operate with the grace of God, but this co-operation was due to grace -- so that with the strictest propriety he could say, 'Not I, but the grace of God.'"⁷⁹

The theme of dependence on God to accomplish one's tasks is also prominent in 2 Corinthians. In 2 Cor 1:12 Paul claims that his conduct as an apostle has been ἐν χάριτι θεοῦ.⁸⁰ Here, grace is spoken of as that which prevents an undue consideration of self in ministry. Grace is the controlling principle of the apostle's ministry. Negatively, the grace of God has kept him from taking inappropriate actions; positively it has enabled him to

⁷⁸ Cf. 2 Cor 1:12; 12:10. Note that the reading ἢ εἰς ἐμέ (P⁴⁶ syr^{hmg} goth Theodoret) in 10b is probably an assimilation to the expression ἢ εἰς ἐμέ in the first part of the verse. It is difficult to decide whether ἢ with one ἐμοί was accidentally omitted from several witnesses (⋈* B D* F G 1739 it vg) or mechanically inserted in other witnesses (Metzger. 567).

⁷⁹ Hodge, 1 Corinthians, 318. Cf. also Lietzmann, 78. Conzelmann aptly says, "At once the reference to his own achievement has a brake put on it" (1 Corinthians, 260). Augustine says in regard to this verse, "Even if men do good things which pertain to God's service, it is He Himself that brings it about that they do what He commanded" (De praedest. sanctorum, c. 19, cited by D. M. Baillie, God was in Christ [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948] 114). Baillie goes on to comment on the paradoxical nature of Paul's claim. While "there is a human side to every good action, so that it is genuinely the free choice of a person with a will, yet somehow... the divine side is logically prior. The grace of God is prevenient. The good was His before it was ours" (116).

⁸⁰ We "have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God -- and all the more toward you" (2 Cor 1:12).

carry out his mission in accordance with God's wishes, without being hindered by selfishness.⁸¹

In 2 Cor 3:5 Paul states, without qualification, that his competence "comes from God." He wants the Corinthians to realize that despite his commendation of himself to them, he knows that ultimately what he does well,⁸² he does because God makes it possible. This recalls Paul's rhetorical question of 2:16: "Who is sufficient for these things (that is, his apostolic responsibilities)?" The answer, for Paul, is "nobody." Paul's sense of his own inadequacies was, he claims, a lesson learned in difficult times. In 2 Cor 1:8-9 he refers to a crushing experience which made him feel that death was imminent. He relates, however, that "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." Whatever the exact nature of Paul's experience, it taught him, he claims, his complete dependence on God.

In 2 Cor 4:7b he makes the same basic point. Since believers are but fragile earthenware vessels, it "is clear that this extraordinary power (ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως) belongs to God and does not come from us." Whatever the significance of the reference to earthenware vessels,⁸³ it is intended to show (the ἵνα denotes purpose) that the human bearers of the treasure depend entirely on God for their power.

Even Christian generosity depends on the working of God's grace. Certainly, Paul insists upon the voluntary character of Christian generosity. In 2 Cor 8:2-4 he refers to the "wealth of generosity" of the Macedonian churches in spite of "extreme poverty." He goes on to say that they gave not only "according to their means," but even "beyond their

⁸¹ J. Moffatt, Grace in the New Testament (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931) 232.

⁸² The word ἰκανότης seems to imply an ability to do something well (BAGD, 374).

⁸³ Paul might be playing on the fragility and disposable nature of clay vessels. If, on the other hand, he has in mind clay vases which were highly prized in ancient times, he means to emphasize the dignity of his office. This latter idea does not, however, fit the context as well as does the former. See the summary in Martin, 2 Corinthians, 85.

means," actually "begging" for the opportunity to give. They gave "of their own accord," or "freely."⁸⁴ In 9:5-7 Paul tells the Corinthians that he sent co-workers to the Corinthians to arrange in advance for the Corinthians' portion of the gift which Paul wishes to present to the Jerusalem church, so that "it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion." In 9:7 it is claimed that each member of the church must give "not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."⁸⁵

Yet, in spite of this insistence upon the voluntary nature of giving, it is also referred to as a "grace." 2 Cor 8:1 refers to "the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia (τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας)." Here the attributive participle τὴν δεδομένην calls to mind the ordinary meaning of χάρις as "gift."⁸⁶ The gift which they received from God is apparently the gift of giving. That is to say, Paul believes that their generosity is itself a gift of God's grace. The NRSV's translation of 8:7b ("so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking") obscures Paul's use of χάρις. Literally, he says that he wants the Corinthians to abound "in this grace (ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύετε)." The term χάρις here implies that the collection, if successfully completed, would be evidence of the abundance of divine grace among the Corinthians.⁸⁷ In 9:14, the generosity of the Corinthians is referred to as "the surpassing grace (τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν χάριν) of God that he has given you." Just as in 8:1, χάρις here refers to "God's action in human

⁸⁴ ἀϋθαίρετος, an adjective used here with adverbial force (cf. BAGD, 121).

⁸⁵ Cf. also 2 Cor 8:9: "For you know the generous act (τὴν χάριν) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." Paul draws a parallel to the "gift" or "generous act" (χάρις) of Christ. Grace is not here an "attitude" of God which is made manifest in a concrete action (the Christ event), but is that act itself, which is attributed not to the will of God, but to that of Christ himself. That act of giving is used as an example to spur on the Corinthians in their χάρις of giving.

⁸⁶ H. D. Betz, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 42.

⁸⁷ Cf. Betz, 58.

lives leading to those impulses which cause people to be generous."⁸⁸ Paul's hope is that the Corinthians' experience of God's grace will make itself manifest in their giving.

That grace paradoxically comes to full expression in suffering and weakness becomes very clear in the "fool's speech" of 2 Cor 11:16-12:10, in which Paul claims that God, to keep Paul from becoming excessively proud of the visions and revelations granted him by God, gave him a "thorn in the flesh" (12:7). Paul reports that he prayed to have this taken away, but to this request the response came, "My grace is sufficient for you (Ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου), for power (δύναμις) is made perfect in weakness" (12:9). Although it is impossible to be certain about the nature of the "thorn,"⁸⁹ several things can be noted about it. The thorn, though it caused him great dismay and pain, is seen as having served a good purpose, since God was the unseen agent behind the experience.⁹⁰ Most important for our purposes, we see that the thorn is viewed within the context of divine grace which not only allowed the evil, but supports the sufferer in it.⁹¹ Thus, this negative part of Paul's experience provides a stage on which God is able to demonstrate his power, as Paul acknowledges his own weakness. It is precisely because of his weakness that Paul becomes an instrument of God. If Paul will boast, it will be in his weakness.⁹²

⁸⁸ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 295.

⁸⁹ For an excellent summary of the debate over Paul's σκόλωψ τῆ σαρκί see Martin, 2 Corinthians, 412-16.

⁹⁰ God is most probably the agent of the passive ἐδόθη, despite the fact that σκόλωψ τῆ σαρκί, ἄγγελος Σατανᾶ is the grammatical subject of ἐδόθη. If Paul had meant to indicate that Satan was the subject he would probably have chosen a word other than διδόναι (cf. Gal 3:21; Eph 3:8; 5:19; 1 Tim 4:14). Here we have an example of "*passivum divinum*." For Paul, God is the hidden agent behind incidents in human lives (Martin, 2 Corinthians, 412).

⁹¹ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 416.

⁹² When Paul says "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses in order that the power of Christ may reside with me" (12:9b), he gives the impression that "weakness" is the precondition for the reception of God's gracious power, and seems to imply that the one is proportionate to the other; the greater the weakness, the greater the power. Murphy-O'Connor correctly notes, however, that it is unlikely Paul means to imply this (The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991] 120).

The expression Ἄρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις may be translated as "My grace suffices for you."⁹³ The idea is that God's grace provides all that is needed to meet the challenge of Paul's "thorn in the flesh." In Barrett's view, χάρις is a reference to God's salvific act in Christ, the awareness of which "makes the sharpest suffering and the lowest humiliation tolerable, and enables Paul to continue his apostolic ministry."⁹⁴ However, the way in which χάρις is used indicates that the referent of the term goes beyond the Christ event. "Grace" continues to make itself felt in Paul's experience.

It has been maintained that here χάρις refers primarily to power, "power, exerting its fullest power when human incapacity is at its meanest and weakest."⁹⁵ On this view, χάρις and δύναμις are close to being synonyms.⁹⁶ However, to call χάρις an actual synonym of δύναμις is probably to go too far. Grace *is* the power which sustains Paul in

⁹³ Cf. LSJ, 242.

⁹⁴ Barrett, 2 Corinthians, 316.

⁹⁵ R. H. Strachan, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935) 33. Furnish says that here "it is understood primarily as that power by which Paul has been commissioned to and is constantly supported in his apostolic ministry" (530). Cf. also Moffatt, 165.

⁹⁶ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 419. Bultmann, Theology, I, 226, asserts that in 12:9, the phrase δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ appears in place of the χάρις of the κύριος. Bultmann concludes that the *Hellenistic* idea of χάρις as a power is thus present here, although he notes that for Paul the word never loses its significance as the gracious intent and activity of God. Nolland ("Grace as Power," NovT 28 [1986]: 26–31), however, has shown, I think convincingly, that this idea has antecedents in the Jewish Scriptures. Nolland finds that the OT use of יָד is not far from the idea of χάρις as power. In the one text where יָד is used with a suffix (Gen 39:21) it becomes clear that here יָד is originally God's own power to impress, which he can bestow as a gift which enables his people to create a favourable impression on those about them (29). These uses of יָד come over regularly into the LXX as χάρις (e.g. in Ps 44 (45):2) and the same usage can be observed in LXX texts where there is no Hebrew for comparison (cf. Nolland, 29–30). This use of χάρις appears even where the Hebrew text has something other than יָד (e.g. Dan 1:9, LXX). A similar use of χάρις can be found in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Nolland's conclusion is that in Jewish usages χάρις could be spoken of quite tangibly as a power given by God. There is no need to look to late Hellenistic sources to establish the provenance that does justice to that strand of NT usage of χάρις in which it is seen as a discernible power at work in the believer (31).

his ministry, but the term *χάρις* calls to mind the free generosity of God's gift of sustaining strength in a way that *δύναμις* cannot.

2. The inadequacy of human wisdom

Dependence on God is also evident from the fact that, in Paul's view, human σοφία is completely inadequate (1 Cor 1:21). Christ, Paul asserts, "became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1:30; cf. 1:20-25). All of these terms refer to the saving event of Christ.⁹⁷ He became their δικαιοσύνη, ἁγιασμός and ἀπολύτρωσις. By piling up these terms, Paul shows that the work of God is all-encompassing: salvation begins and ends with Christ. In view of the all-sufficient act of Christ, the Corinthians ought not to boast of their spiritual achievements and indeed have absolutely no grounds to do so. Christ makes possible their continued ethical life (only in him are they sanctified) and their redemption.

The wisdom which Paul preaches is not the wisdom of the world, but is rather the gospel of God. In 2:12, Paul informs the church that believers "have received...the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God (τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν)." The purpose of the gift of the Spirit, at least in this verse, is that believers might understand the nature of that wisdom (σοφία) which Paul speaks among the mature (2:6). Whatever the exact nature of the "wisdom" to which Paul refers, τὰ χαρισθέντα is most probably a deliberate allusion to God's grace. The plural τὰ χαρισθέντα seems to be a comprehensive expression, going beyond the "gift" of salvation (cf. Rom 6:23)⁹⁸ to include the other benefits of salvation such as sanctification,

⁹⁷ Cf. Fee, 86. Cf. also F. F. Bruce, *I & II Corinthians*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971) 36.

⁹⁸ So Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 67 and Fee, 113. Conzelmann notes that in the Hellenistic world *χάρις* can be used with reference to the mysteries and thus can denote the "power within the pneumatic," which makes it virtually a synonym with *πνεῦμα*. There is, however, no need to refer to Hellenistic parallels when the language is perfectly intelligible in terms of Paul's usual usage (Fee, 113, n68).

as well as "gifts" of the Spirit given to believers (cf. 1:4; 12:1-31). To live a life of service to God, Christians use gifts given to them by God.

3. Dependence on God and Boasting

Paul's emphasis on dependence on God effectively short-circuits potential grounds for boasting. Dependence on God appears to rule out any form of boasting. As far as Paul is concerned, people are not to boast in what they accomplish or in their particular status or gifts, since one's status or gifts find their origin in God's free choice and his working within them. Yet, in 1 Cor 9:15, Paul makes the claim that "I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that -- no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting!" Paul's "ground for boasting" is that although he, as an apostle, could legitimately claim pay from his churches (a right he has defended in 9:3-14), he does not do so. In 9:16, Paul seems to imply that simply preaching the gospel gives him no grounds for boasting, since he is under compulsion to do so. It is the added hardship of refusing to accept that which was legitimately his which gives him ground for boasting. Although most often "boasting" is a pejorative term in Paul (cf. 1:29; 5:6), he does use it positively. When he does so, his "boast" is normally in things that are antithetical to the things which humans usually boast about, such as "Christ crucified," weaknesses and sufferings (cf. 1 Cor 1:30-31; 2 Cor 10:12; Gal 6:14).⁹⁹ Perhaps, as Barrett maintains, this verse "betrays already the paradox of glorying in weakness," since Paul is boasting in circumstances that may have resulted in hunger and weariness or even mockery and insult.¹⁰⁰ It may also be that Paul means this assertion to be understood somewhat ironically. The Corinthians might boast in their "wisdom," but Paul boasts in that which brings him hardship.

⁹⁹ Fee, 417.

¹⁰⁰ Barrett, 1 Corinthians, 209.

Paul makes a similar assertion in 2 Cor 11:10: "As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia." Here too, his boast is in his refusal to accept payment which was rightfully his. It appears that Paul's rivals in Corinth not only accepted payment from the church, but also suggested that Paul's refusal to accept aid from the believers was a sign that he did not love them (cf. v. 11).¹⁰¹ Martin explains Paul's reference to his own boasting by noting that boasting is a practice which Paul only resorts to under duress (καύχησις is a keyword in the entire "Fool's Speech" of chs. 11 and 12). Paul is confronting those who are boasting of their mission in territory that was apparently his (cf. 10:13-18). It is at least possible that the real issue was that Paul's apostolic authority had been questioned by his rivals in Corinth, territory which Paul claims "God has assigned to us." Through his "boasting," Paul is thus probably affirming his right to be in Achaia.¹⁰² The most we can say with certainty is that Paul seems not to have thought that boasting is always inappropriate, despite the fact that he censures the Corinthians for doing so. It can apparently serve a polemical purpose, but it should not be primarily self-serving.

4. Grace abounding (2 Cor 4:15)

A significant, yet difficult, reference to God's grace working on behalf of humanity is found in 4:15: τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

The first phrase of the verse, τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, is relatively simple to translate. This verse is part of Paul's commendation of himself to the Corinthians, and thus τὰ πάντα refers to the ministry and attendant sufferings of Paul and his co-workers

¹⁰¹ This impression might have been given from the fact that Paul did accept aid from other churches. Thus Paul stresses his concern for the Corinthians and that he did not want to burden them (11:8-9). See also Furnish, 507-08, for a discussion of the relationship between benefactors and those who received their aid in antiquity.

¹⁰² Martin, 2 Corinthians, 347.

(cf. 4:8-12).¹⁰³ Thus Paul says, "So death is at work in us, but life in you." The verb in the first clause must be supplied, but something like "All this is for you" adequately expresses its sense.¹⁰⁴ Paul's apostolic work is to the advantage of the Corinthians, though they do not appreciate it.

The next part of the verse, which Furnish calls a "syntactical thicket,"¹⁰⁵ is not so easily understood. One of the key issues is whether *περρισεύω* is transitive or intransitive.¹⁰⁶ Theobald argues that *περρισεύω* is intransitive, and *πλεονάζω* is transitive.¹⁰⁷ According to Theobald, grace is the actual "actor," which works powerfully through the apostle, and, spreading out from the community at Corinth, brings ever more people into its dominion.¹⁰⁸ This yields the sense: "Das alles ist nämlich um euretwillen, damit die Gnade durch immer mehr Menschen die Danksagung erstarken läßt und (so) überströmt zur Herrlichkeit Gottes."¹⁰⁹

The syntax of the verse is difficult. With Furnish, I would say that the proximity of the accusative τὴν εὐχαριστίαν to the verb *περρισεύω* tips the scales in favour of

¹⁰³ See also on this M. Theobald, *Die überströmende Gnade. Studien zu einem paulinischen Motivfeld* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1982) 221-22. So also C. Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1859) 101.

¹⁰⁴ Against R. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 90, who supplies a verb in the future tense, supposing that τὰ πάντα refers to the future resurrection. Cf. also J. Héring, who sees the expression as referring to "the entire divine dispensation, which aims at the salvation of those who have faith, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (χάρις) in particular" (*II Corinthians*, 1st edition, tr. A. Heathcote and P. Allcock [London: Epworth Press, 1967] 34, n17). In context, however, the solution adopted above makes better sense.

¹⁰⁵ Furnish, 259. Collange's observation that the "style de tout le verset est un peu emphatique et lyrique; aussi ne faut-il pas chercher de nuances trop précises sous les mots," underscores the difficulty of arriving at a consensus concerning the meaning of the verse (*Enigmes de la Deuxieme Epitre aux Corinthiens*, SNTSMS 18 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972] 166).

¹⁰⁶ *περρισεύω* if it is transitive, means "to cause to abound" (cf. BAGS, 651).

¹⁰⁷ Theobald, 223.

¹⁰⁸ Theobald, 224.

¹⁰⁹ Theobald, 224. Cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 90, who also takes *περρισεύω* as intransitive, yielding the causative sense that "grace ... may cause gratitude to abound to the glory of God."

taking περισσεύω transitively.¹¹⁰ χάρις (which is qualified by πλεονάσσα) is its subject and its direct object is εὐχαριστίαν.¹¹¹

How then might we define χάρις in this verse? Furnish notes that in 1:12 Paul has used χάρις to refer to that which enables him to carry on as an apostle, that in the present context he has stressed how God's power is seen in his apostolic hardships (4:7-12), and that in 12:9 he uses both words, χάρις and δύναμις to characterize his ministry; thus he concludes that χάρις refers to the divine grace "which enables [Paul] to serve and suffer as an apostle."¹¹² But the word is in fact used in several different ways by Paul in the letter, and it is difficult to see how here the meaning of χάρις is to be limited to that which enables Paul to serve as apostle.

Taking πλεονάζω as intransitive and attaching the prepositional phrase διὰ τῶν πλειόνων to πλεονάζω, we see that grace is seen by Paul to be increasing (or spreading) through the growing number of converts, and in so doing, causing thanksgiving to abound.¹¹³ BAGD's definition of χάρις as "work of grace in conversion" is thus

¹¹⁰ In favour of this position see Furnish, 259-61 and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915) 134-35. Noack argues unconvincingly that both verbs are to be taken intransitively (B. Noack, "A Note on II Cor iv. 15," Studia Theologica 17 [1963] 131-32). On this view, the meaning is, "that the abounding grace might be to the greater glory of God, because there are Christians to thank him for his grace." For this idea to be expressed in the actual text, it would mean that διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν εὐχαριστίαν is one prepositional group, with a genitival complement splitting the group by separating the preposition from its regimen. This construction Noack himself finds possible, though not good classical style, and quite improbable in the Pauline letters (131). Cf. also Theobald, 222, who finds that this is syntactically improbable. Although the transitive use of περισσεύω is somewhat rare, it is used this way in Matt. 13:12; 2 Cor 9:8a; Eph 1:8; 1 Thess 3:12.

¹¹¹ So Furnish, 260, against Martin, 2 Corinthians, 90. Collange, 167, notes that χάρις is the subject of περισσεύω in Rom 5:15; 5:20 (ὑπερπερισσεύω); 2 Cor 8:7; 9:8; Eph 1:8. Cf. also Bruce, 198.

¹¹² Furnish, 260. Cf. also Bultmann, The Second Letter to the Corinthians, ed. E. Dinkler and tr. R. A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985) 124: "χάρις is identical in content with the δύναμις of God in verse 7."

¹¹³ Cf. the NRSV translation, "Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God."

appropriate.¹¹⁴ Or, as Koenig puts it, it is the "saving power of God."¹¹⁵ This seems to come closer to capturing the meaning of χάρις in this verse. In Paul's view, as χάρις, made manifest in the Christ event, is actualized in the lives of men and women, it "abounds." And as grace abounds it is only natural that it would increase the amount of thanksgiving to God. The increasing number of converts is due primarily to grace, not to Paul's efforts as an apostle, though Paul does not mean to imply that the former excludes the latter. In fact, in Paul's view, grace is what makes possible his work as an apostle (cf. the discussion above). In defense of his actions as an apostle, he claims that he is not concerned about increasing his apostolic stature, but rather wants God to be glorified.

Thus, the verse is illustrative of Paul's concern that grace be experienced by all humanity, everywhere. Grace for Paul is so expansive, it includes Jew and Gentile, everywhere. χάρις brings about εὐχαριστία which in turn leads to an ever-growing number of people who experience χάρις.¹¹⁶ This underscores the significance of the concept of grace for Paul. Here, where Paul is not opposing grace and law, where Paul does not even mention the latter concept, he speaks about the conversion of humanity in one term: grace.

IV. Human Responsibility in 1 and 2 Corinthians

A. The necessity of right behaviour

If Paul insists on dependence on God he also insists that believers are responsible to live in a manner pleasing to God. He refers to a future eschatological judgment of believers, the verdict of which may be positive or negative. The question for our study is Paul's understanding of the relation between his insistence on an all-encompassing

¹¹⁴ BAGD, 878.

¹¹⁵ J. Koenig, "Occasions of Grace in Paul, Luke and First Century Judaism." AnglTheolRev 64 (1982) 566.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Koenig, 566.

dependence on divine grace and his insistence that believers are responsible for how they live.

That Paul insists on correct behaviour is obvious. In much of 1 and 2 Corinthians Paul corrects what he perceives to be inappropriate actions or attitudes for believers. For example, in 1 Corinthians alone he deals with various problems in the community in Corinth: wrong beliefs and pride (cf. 1 Cor 1:31; 4:7), divisiveness (cf. 1:11-13; 11:13), tolerance of immorality (5:1-2), lawsuits between believers (6:1-8), licentiousness (6:12-20), and abuses of spiritual gifts (12-14).

The importance of ethical behaviour in Paul is demonstrated by 1 Corinthians 7:18-19. In 19b Paul observes that "obeying the commandments of God is everything." Having given reasons to show that those who were converted when married should consider their present state as the one in which to live out God's calling, Paul illustrates his point by reference to circumcision. Paul argues that those who were circumcised should not seek to remove the marks of circumcision and those who were not circumcised before their conversion should not now become circumcised. Since, in Christ, whether one is a Jew or Greek (cf. Gal 3:28) does not matter, by analogy one should also remain in the marital situation one is in. What one is, Jew or Gentile, means nothing to God, since Christ has rendered such distinctions obsolete. In verse 19 Paul tells his readers that in fact circumcision is nothing, as is uncircumcision. All that matters is keeping the commandments of God (ἐντολῶν θεοῦ). "Commandments of God" does not here seem to refer to the Mosaic law,¹¹⁷ since the law of Moses is not Paul's concern anywhere in this chapter. The only commandments Paul mentions are those which he attributes to Christ (vv. 10, 17), as well as his own imperatives, one of which he describes as the "opinion [of] one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy" (v. 25). The statement in 7:19b

¹¹⁷ Räsänen apparently thinks it does (Paul and the Law, 2nd ed., WUNT 29 [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987]) 68.

that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but obeying the commandments of God is everything" also points to the crucial importance of Christian submission to God's will.¹¹⁸

Beneficiaries of God's grace are expected to live a certain way. In 2 Cor 6:1 Paul says "as we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain." Paul, as a co-worker with God¹¹⁹ in bringing the message of reconciliation to humanity, urges the Corinthians "not to accept the grace of God in vain."

What does Paul mean by "accepting the grace of God in vain"? Various answers have been given to this question. One possibility is that the words reflect a danger that some who initially receive the gospel may subsequently fall away.¹²⁰ Another view is that the charge "not to receive the grace of God in vain" amounts to an exhortation for all people not to reject God's offer of salvation.¹²¹ The latter view ignores the fact that Paul focuses on the Corinthians, as indicated by his use of ὑμᾶς.¹²² It has also been maintained that "to receive the grace of God in vain" is Paul's way of pointing to a Corinthian failure to allow God's grace to work itself out in Christian conduct.¹²³

In my view, the last interpretation best reflects Paul's primary concern, although he implies that "falling away" is an actual possibility. Since Paul has just spoken of the judgment seat of Christ (5:10) and how believers ought to live in light of that judgment, the

¹¹⁸ Westerholm, 201. Cf. Barrett, 1 Corinthians, who says that keeping God's commandments here means "an obedience to the will of God as disclosed in his Son..." (169).

¹¹⁹ The context, specifically 5:19-20, which mentions the entrusting of the message of reconciliation to Paul and his fellow-workers, shows that the complement of Συνεργοῦντες is best understood as God (so most commentators). Martin, 2 Corinthians, 165, also points to 1 Cor 3:9 in which Paul refers to himself as "God's fellow-worker."

¹²⁰ So I. H. Marshall, Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1975) 119.

¹²¹ Hodge, 154.

¹²² Martin, 2 Corinthians, 166.

¹²³ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 166.

final judgment provides the background for Paul's exhortation in 6:1. Paul says in 5:9 "whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him." Paul points out that his own evangelistic work, which he discusses in 5:11-21, is done in light of the "fear of the Lord" (5:11). Upon urging the Corinthians not to accept God's grace in vain, Paul again defends his ministry (6:3-10). He concludes by admonishing the Corinthians to "open wide your hearts..." (6:13; cf. also 7:2). The Corinthians have failed to put into practice the gospel of reconciliation which Paul brought to them (cf. 5:21), but in light of the final judgment they need to rectify this. He has provided a concrete example of the gospel of reconciliation by his own forgiveness of the offender whom he met on his "painful visit" (cf. 2:8-11; cf. 7:12a). The Corinthians also must do the same and allow grace to manifest itself in their conduct. If they fail to do so, they will have received the grace of God εἰς κενόν. It thus seems appropriate to understand εἰς κενόν to mean something like "without result," "without effect," or perhaps, "without reaching its goal."¹²⁴

On this view, Paul is here using "God's grace" to refer to the gospel and all for which it stands, but particularly the reconciling love of God revealed through Christ's death, his topic in 5:14-15, 17-21. As in 5:20, the appeal is for believers to conform their lives to the reality of the new creation, to let one's conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ (cf. Phil 1:27).¹²⁵ The appeal of 5:20 takes the form of a warning because, as in 5:12, Paul wishes to counter what he perceives to be the negative effects his opponents are having in Corinth.¹²⁶ Here, then, χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ "gathers up the preceding references to reconciliation and righteousness (5:18-19, 20, 21)."¹²⁷ The warning encourages the

¹²⁴ BAGD, 427.

¹²⁵ Furnish, 352.

¹²⁶ Cf. Furnish, 352-53.

¹²⁷ Furnish, 341.

Corinthians to accept God's grace in such a way that the consequences of Christ's salvific death manifest themselves in their conduct.

In my view, Paul is not focusing on the possibility that the Corinthians might actually fall away from the faith – though it seems as though he thought it a real possibility – as much as he is urging the Corinthians to work out the implications of their reconciliation with God (cf. Phil 2:12). If, however, in Paul's mind a continuing failure to be reconciled to him is equivalent to denying the grace of God, the obvious implication is that the Corinthians might actually be in danger of falling away.¹²⁸

In 2 Cor 13:4-5 Paul begins a new approach to the Corinthians. In 12:9-13:3 he has told the Corinthians that when he comes to them again, he will act as a "judge, jury, and executioner." Now he changes tack and begins an appeal to their consciences, and gives them the opportunity to correct the problems themselves before he arrives.¹²⁹

Paul tells the Corinthians to "Put yourselves to the test." The verb *πειράζω* is virtually synonymous with *δοκιμάζω* and thus here means "put to the test."¹³⁰ They are to examine themselves to find out¹³¹ if they are "in the faith (*ἐν τῇ πίστει*)." The point is that they are to examine their character in order to determine whether or not they are really believers. *πίστις*, according to Furnish, is to be understood primarily in terms of obedience.¹³² Though that is included here, I think it likely that the word encompasses

¹²⁸ Against Volf, 280, who asserts that "it is conceivable that Paul beseeched the Corinthians 'not to receive the grace of God in vain' *for the sake of argument only*, counting on his converts not to deny the gospel of their salvation by denying its minister." Yet Volf actually goes on to admit that "the view that Paul thought the Corinthians might actually repudiate grace and apostatize cannot be excluded on the basis of the immediate context" (280).

¹²⁹ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 477.

¹³⁰ Furnish, 571. Louw and Nida indicate that when used in this manner, *πειράζω* means "to try to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting such to thorough and extensive testing" (332). Elsewhere Paul uses it with the meaning "to tempt" (1 Cor 7:5; 10:3; Gal 6:1; 1 Thess 3:5).

¹³¹ These words must be supplied.

¹³² Furnish, 577.

more. Paul is probably thinking of being ἐν τῇ πίστει as equivalent in some way to being ἐν Χριστῷ since in 5:17 "in Christ" refers to "a new situation and a new existence as Christian"¹³³ and 13:4-5 refers to life in that new situation. In Paul's view, this involves a right appreciation of the Pauline gospel versus the message of his opponents (11:4). Paul is asking them if they really understand what it means to be a Christian, since as far as he is concerned, evidence that they do is lacking. Rather than judging Paul, they need to judge themselves,¹³⁴ something he emphasizes by again repeating the imperative "test yourselves," this time using the verb δοκιμάζω.

This second injunction is followed by what Paul thinks is the test which will determine their status: "Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" In light of Paul's expressed hope that the Corinthians would "do what is right," it seems that Paul's purpose behind this self-examination is that it will lead them to correct actions, which include a right assessment of Paul's apostleship. He is calling them to examine their thoughts and attendant actions so that they might make the correct choices based on the knowledge that Christ is in them. Realizing one is ἐν τῇ πίστει is thus equivalent to discerning ὅτι Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν.¹³⁵ The goal of this self-examination is that the Corinthians "not do anything wrong" (13:7a); it includes, but is not limited to, a cessation of their criticism of him and his ministry which is to be replaced by an examination of their own conduct. His hope is that the church members will realize that indeed they are in the faith. If they find this to be so, this should demonstrate that Paul has come to them in truth (13:8) because they themselves provide genuine proof of Paul's

¹³³ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 478.

¹³⁴ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 478.

¹³⁵ Paul "ramène l'attention sur la présence active et effective du Christ dans la communauté" (Carrez, 241).

apostolic credentials.¹³⁶ The Corinthians have done this in the past, and Paul hopes that, despite all the difficulties they have caused him, they will do so again.

Paul ends his appeal with an ironic "unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!" Probably he does not think that such a self-examination will reveal that Christ is not in them, since in chs. 8-9 he assumes that in fact the Corinthians are believers and since in 13:7 we see that he prays for a favourable outcome. The Corinthians have responded positively in the past, and Paul hopes that they will do so again.¹³⁷

Although Paul stresses reliance on God's grace throughout these epistles, this apparently does not negate human responsibility for Paul. Thus he can write to the Corinthians and stress the importance of obeying God's commands. It is their responsibility, he says in 6:1, to work out the implications of being recipients of God's grace. Paul even seems to imply that to fail to do so may result in a "fall from grace." They are to judge themselves to see if they are exhibiting Christian behaviour.

B. Grace and Judgment

The emphasis on human responsibility also finds expression where Paul speaks of judgment. In 1 Cor 6:9-10, Paul lists various types of transgressors who are excluded from the believing community and who will not inherit the kingdom of God. He asks the Corinthians: "Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?" The passage, coming as it does on the heels of ethical instructions concerning the Corinthians' association with immoral persons (5:1-13) and their own fraudulent behaviour (cf. 6:8), functions as a warning to the Corinthians. Although they are believers, Paul warns them that evil-doers will be judged.¹³⁸ Although the Corinthians have been

¹³⁶ Martin, 2 Corinthians, 479. Cf. 2 Cor 3:1-3. where Paul opines that the Corinthians themselves are his "letter of recommendation."

¹³⁷ Cf. Martin, 279.

¹³⁸ "Kingdom of God" seems to retain here its apocalyptic sense, implying a still future judgment. Cf. Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 106, n31.

"washed, sanctified and justified" by God (6:11), this does not imply that they have no responsibility. Paul's point is clear: if the Corinthians persist in their wicked behaviour they will find themselves in the same position as the wicked: they, too, will not inherit the kingdom. There is a real tension in Paul that interpreters sometimes deny.¹³⁹ Although Paul stresses over and over again reliance on God's grace to successfully "run the race," he can with equal ease assert that believers can fail to finish the race.

Paul not only insists on right behaviour; he claims that believers will (or will not) be rewarded depending on how they live the life of faith. In 1 Cor 3:10-15, Paul describes a coming eschatological "Day"¹⁴⁰ in which every builder's work will be judged. Paul presents himself as the founder of the church in Corinth (v. 10). The foundation which he laid must be built upon, but whoever does such building must exercise caution. He lists various materials that builders might use -- gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and

¹³⁹ Cf. Volf, 134-35, who argues that Paul cannot mean that the Corinthians might actually be in danger of losing their "inheritance" since that would make Paul say in the same breath that believers will judge the world and angels (cf. 6:2,3) and that these same believers might not inherit the kingdom. Volf also denies that in Paul's view the Corinthians might conceivably become ἄδικοι, since Paul intends primarily to contrast his Christian readers with non-Christians. Paul's point is simply that the conduct typical of unbelievers should not typify those who are Christians. Motivation for good conduct comes not from the threat of a negative judgment in the future, but from "the realization that the destinies of believers and unbelievers are opposite...." In Volf's view, the only members in the church who are in danger of not inheriting the kingdom of God are those who have made a false profession of faith (Volf, 135-36). Volf's exegesis is, finally, unconvincing. There is no real indication that Paul is thinking of those who have made a false profession of faith. One wonders why he would not make such an important point more explicitly. Moreover, Volf's interpretation waters down the force of the warning considerably. While Paul would no doubt affirm that the different destinies of believers and unbelievers ought to motivate the former to exemplary behaviour, his point here is more simple than that. Believers must be careful not to place themselves in the danger they were in formerly. They have been sanctified. Now, apparently, they must do their part to stay that way.

¹⁴⁰ On Paul's use of the expression, see H. Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, tr. R. H. DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 551-52.

straw¹⁴¹ -- and then uses the metaphor of fire¹⁴² to say that in the eschatological Day, each builder's work will be tested. If what has been built upon the foundation survives, the builder will be rewarded. What will survive (the gold, silver and precious stones, since fire would not consume them) is that which is compatible with the foundation, Jesus Christ.¹⁴³ What is lost relates in some way to work in building the church. It would seem that a reward is lost, though the person himself shall be saved, "but only as through fire."¹⁴⁴ The nature of the loss is not spelled out.

Paul returns to the theme of judgment very quickly. In 4:1-5 he points out that, as a steward of Christ, what matters ultimately is not the judgment of the Corinthians (who have a mistaken notion of their own wisdom, and thus of their capacity to judge wisely) or "any human court."¹⁴⁵ Of primary concern is his belief that "it is the Lord who judges me." This judgment will not take place before the Lord's return, but when it does he (here Paul seems to say that it is Christ who will judge) "will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart"; that is, Christ will bring to light all the things that people have done in secret, and even their inner motivations and thoughts will be revealed. Then each will receive a "commendation from God" (4:5).¹⁴⁶ Here,

¹⁴¹ It is pointless to speculate about what each of these elements of Paul's analogy signifies.

¹⁴² On the use of the metaphor of fire for judgment in biblical and later materials, cf. F. Lang, "πῦρ," *TDNT*, VI, 936-39, 942-48.

¹⁴³ So Fee, 140. Conzelmann described that which is tested with the rather nebulous word, "achievement" (*1 Corinthians*, 76).

¹⁴⁴ The language here is reminiscent of the Amos 4:11: "like a brand snatched from the fire," and Zech 3:2: "a brand plucked from the fire."

¹⁴⁵ ἡ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας. ἡμέρα here refers to "a court of justice for determining guilt or innocence" (Louw and Nida, 552).

¹⁴⁶ I disagree with Donfried who claims that "neither 1 Corinthians 3:15 or 4:5 have anything to do with the good works of the individual Christian..." ("Justification and the Last Judgment in Paul," *Interpretation*, 30 [1976] 149). I do not feel that 3:10-15 is limited to apostolic labours, but even if it were, apostolic work would seem to count as one particular type of "good work" performed by some Christians.

then, the reward (for those found to be "trustworthy" or "faithful" [v.2]) is the praise of God. About what those will receive who are not judged favourably, Paul is silent.

In 1 Cor 9:24-27 Paul uses athletic imagery to encourage the Corinthians to continue striving to win a prize. The point of the paragraph is that in Paul's view the Corinthians need to exhibit self-control and self-discipline. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they are striving to win an "imperishable wreath," unlike athletes who compete only to win a "perishable wreath." If athletes exercise self-discipline to win a perishable wreath, then how much more should believers do so to win one that is imperishable! Paul is not specific about what the "imperishable wreath" signifies. Quite possibly receiving the prize is tantamount to inheriting the kingdom of God (cf. 1 Cor 6:9-10), though in view of 3:14-15 this is not certain. Paul practices self-discipline so that he himself will not fail to receive the final eschatological prize. The Corinthians ought to do the same, since contrary to what they may have thought, they have not yet finished the journey.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Paul thinks it is possible that some of the Corinthians might fail to receive the prize, in spite of the confidence Paul expresses elsewhere that God will complete his work in the Corinthians. In 1 Cor 10:12, Paul warns the Corinthians: "So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall (πέσῃ)." Volf argues that Paul here does not actually assume that the person addressed already has salvation. In her view, *πίπτειν*, though it suggests more than physical punishment, does not refer to "losing salvation but to losing the appearance of salvation" (127). The danger is not that one might fall away, but rather that one has made a false profession of faith. This overly subtle conclusion seems unlikely, since Paul addresses the Corinthians with the assumption that they are believers. 10:13 is designed to reassure the Corinthians that they need not fall. God will sustain them, but as Fee says, commenting on 10:1-13, while "it is true that in 10:13, after the severe warnings spelled out in vv. 1-12, he once again puts his confidence in God to 'keep them,' it would be sheer folly to suggest thereby that the warnings are not real. *Paul keeps warning and assurance in tension*" (440, emphasis added). Cf. Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 218. N. Watson contends that "warnings of judgment to come, like 1 Cor 10.1-12, are addressed to Christians whose faith has degenerated to a false security, that is, to Christians in their unbelief" ("Justified by Faith: Judged by Works -- An Antinomy?" *NTS*, 29 [1983] 220). It could be that the Corinthians have been presuming on God's grace and thus need a fresh encounter with the demands God makes on believers. Cf. Watson, 220.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Paul also deals with the subject of Christians and final judgment. What Paul says in 5:1-10 is directly related to the latter part of chapter 4.¹⁴⁸ The two-fold themes of (1) life in the midst of death and (2) glory after and through trials are continued in 5:1-10. In these verses Paul outlines three sources of comfort for the believer who faces the possibility of death. They are: (1) certainty of the possession of a supernatural body (v.1), (2) the present possession of the Spirit as a pledge of future transformation (vv. 4b,5) and (3) knowledge that death begins a walk "by sight" (v.7) and involves a move to Christ's immediate presence (v.8).¹⁴⁹

5:9-10 follow the typically Pauline pattern of an ethical imperative following a doctrinal statement (cf. 1 Cor 15:50-58). The prospect of fellowship with Christ after death must prompt the Christian to live correctly. In fact, the motivation for wanting to please Christ is the coming judgment, in which all deeds of the believer performed in this life, whether good or bad, will be judged. 5:9 begins with a logical conclusion drawn by Paul: "And so we earnestly desire, whether we are at home or away, to please him (the Lord)."¹⁵⁰ Verse 9 actually completes the thought begun in 6a. Since Christians always have confidence (guaranteed by the gift of the Spirit as downpayment of a salvation yet to be consummated -- v. 5) their only objective of believers is to please Christ.¹⁵¹ The point is that at all times the believer should be striving to please the Lord. This seems to suggest the possibility that believers can do something that might not please the Lord, even after

¹⁴⁸ Against Bultmann, 2 Corinthians, who says that 5:1-5 is actually a digression.

¹⁴⁹ M. J. Harris, "II Corinthians," The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 10, F. Gaebelin, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967) 346.

¹⁵⁰ Paul does not supply any prepositional phrases for the participles ἐνδημοῦντες and ἐκδημοῦντες, which raises the possibility of supplying either "in the body" or "with the Lord." It seems possible that Paul does this intentionally, however, in order to dispense with the previous imagery he has used. Furnish may be correct when he says that the effect of Paul's language here "is to relativize the matter of 'residency' so thoroughly as to dismiss it as an irrelevant issue. For him, what is alone important is whether one's service as an apostle (or as any ordinary believer) is finally adjudged *acceptable* to the Lord" (304).

¹⁵¹ Furnish, 304.

death. However, as Martin points out, in v. 10 Paul says that judgment will be for "what has been done in the body, whether good or evil." Paul is exhorting people to make efficient use of the time left to them.¹⁵²

The first part of verse ten is relatively straightforward. The ethical appeal of verse nine is grounded in the fact that it is divinely ordained¹⁵³ for all believers to appear individually¹⁵⁴ before the judgment seat of Christ. The verse goes on to say that those who stand before Christ will receive "recompense for what has been done in the body,¹⁵⁵ whether good or evil." Judgment will be rendered for both the good and the bad that individuals do while in this life.¹⁵⁶ In Paul's view, people must be ready for divine judgment after death. The word for good is the usual ἀγαθός, but the word for evil, φαῦλος, occurs here and in Romans 9:11.¹⁵⁷ Hughes argues that φαῦλος properly means "worthless." On this view, the judgment is not a "declaration of doom, but *an assessment of worth*, with the assignment of rewards to those who because of their faithfulness deserve them, and the *loss* or withholding of rewards in the case of those who do not deserve them."¹⁵⁸ On this reading, the judgment does not concern one's salvation,

¹⁵² Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 114. It would seem quite likely that Paul is trying to undermine the false sense of security which his opponents may have had.

¹⁵³ δεῖ is sometimes used in statements about what is divinely ordained, especially at the eschaton. Cf. 1 Cor 15:25, 53; also LXX Dan. 2:28, 29, 45; Matt. 16:21; 24:6; Rev. 1:1; 4:1; 22:6; Furnish, 275.

¹⁵⁴ ἕκαστος suggests individual accountability.

¹⁵⁵ The syntax of this part of this verse is awkward. It reads, literally, "to receive the things through the body according to what each has done." ἧ⁴⁶ makes the clause read κομίσηται τὰ ἴδια τοῦ σώματος instead of the more pleonastic κομίσηται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἔπραξεν adopted by NA²⁶. This is probably an early attempt to deal with the awkwardness of the text. So Furnish, 276, against Hughes, 181, n⁵⁷, who adopts it as the original reading.

¹⁵⁶ Barrett, *2 Corinthians*, 160, takes διὰ τοῦ σώματος to be instrumental, translating it as "by means of his body." Bultmann, 144, prefers to construe it temporally ("while in the body"), but also correctly points out that the choice between these two alternatives is of little consequence for the sense of the phrase.

¹⁵⁷ It is also found in Titus 2:8.

¹⁵⁸ Hughes, 182.

but the degree to which one is rewarded above and beyond eternal life. Hughes' judgment concerning the "proper" meaning of φαῦλος is incorrect. It can, apparently, mean "worthless," but it can also mean simply "bad," or "evil" in either a moral or physical sense.¹⁵⁹ But though the linguistic distinction does not bear close examination (see the examples given in BAGD), Hughes might be correct as to the practical significance of φαῦλος here. The distinction between good and evil must be taken together with the thought in verse nine that the Christian's aim to be acceptable before Christ at the judgment.¹⁶⁰ It seems most likely to me that Paul has in view the judgment of Christians. As in 1 Cor 3:14-15, it is not a judgment that determines if one will be saved.¹⁶¹

This judgment is not merely negative. Paul also implies that a favourable judgment will bring some kind of reward, though what that entails he does not spell out. In light of 1 Cor 4:5, it seems reasonable to assume that it includes some sort of commendation from God.

One final note concerning the passage. The polemical setting of the passage is significant. The emphasis on accountability fits well with Paul's defense of his apostolic ministry. Already he has insisted on the "godly sincerity" of his behaviour "in the world" and more so towards the Corinthians (2 Cor 1:12). Now he reminds those who oppose him of their ultimate accountability to God. He will in fact go on in 6:1 to remind the Corinthians that an experience of grace has certain implications for behaviour (see the discussion above).

The passages about judgment that I have examined in Paul concern the judgment of believers. It seems likely that for the most part, they do not have to do with questions of

¹⁵⁹ BAGD, 854.

¹⁶⁰ Furnish, 277.

¹⁶¹ Paul's πάντας ἡμᾶς in v. 10 seems to me to limit this particular judgment to believers. Cf. 1 Cor 3:10-15, which indicates that Paul conceived of a judgment which was limited to Christians.

salvation or condemnation, but rather with rewards received for how well one has performed as a Christian (although 1 Cor 6:9-10 and 10:12 seem to imply that believers may in fact "fall," in which case judgment for them involves more than a loss of reward). The idea of judgment of those who are, or have been, beneficiaries of grace raises questions about Paul's consistency. For if the whole of Christian existence is determined by, and made possible by grace, then, as Fee succinctly asks, "How can grace receive 'pay'?"¹⁶²

It has been maintained that the answer lies in the fact that for Paul, good works are a natural outflow of one's faith and prove the genuineness of one's faith.¹⁶³ This is partly correct.¹⁶⁴ As we have seen throughout 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul repeatedly asserts that all that he is and does is a result of God's work within him. In 2 Cor 8, 9, we see very clearly that Paul believes that Christian generosity is itself an outflow of an experience of God's grace. On this view, there is no conflict between Paul's insistence that salvation is a gift and his demand for Christian good works, since those good works themselves are a result of the gift of salvation. Yet dependence on God and human responsibility are both integral components of Paul's thought. How they are related he does not explain, though he does emphasize one or the other as the argument demands.

Yet, though Paul does not explain in detail the relation between the two kinds of statements, I think that a clue lies in the direction of Paul's "reflex" which brings him back to God's grace. That grace is fundamental to Paul's thoughts has been seen in 1 and 2 Corinthians. That Paul can hold together grace on the one hand and the demand for correct behaviour and the subsequent reward for that behaviour on the other is perhaps because of the fundamental nature of grace for Paul. For Paul, what one does is ultimately a function

¹⁶² Fee, 143.

¹⁶³ Cf. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Biblica* 66 (1985) 35.

¹⁶⁴ Although it should be noted that Gundry argues that 2 Cor 13:5 supports his view, whereas our discussion of the verse shows that it does not.

of grace. Paul's demands are predicated on his understanding of the importance of grace. Paul does not present a picture of a deity who, since he has freely brought believers into the community, ceases to function as judge. It is because God truly holds believers responsible that grace has meaning.¹⁶⁵

Whether Galatians, Romans and Philippians support this thesis remains to be seen.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Grace for Paul is evidenced in the individual call that comes to all believers. The fact that Paul believes the call comes without regard to human qualifications, either good or bad, underscores the gratuitousness of salvation for him. People become members of the believing community because of God's work within them, regardless of their social status.

Paul is also very much aware that his apostleship came despite his history as a persecutor of the church. Hence, what Paul is, he is by the grace of God. He discharges his duties to the best of his abilities, but God alone is responsible for the fruit of the apostle's efforts. The ability to endure his "thorn in the flesh," whatever its identity, is a function of the grace of God.

Paul also reminds the Corinthians that their own accomplishments have nothing to do with their merit. Moreover, whatever gifts they have come from God. God equips the Church (the "body" of Christ) as he sees fit. Even the ability to give to help other believers is a gift of God.

For Paul, it is axiomatic that being able to remain a member of the Christian community is attributable to God's grace. The Christian lives life in complete and utter dependence on God. Since believers are but fragile earthenware vessels, it is evident that they rely completely on God's power. In his discussion of reconciliation, Paul makes what

¹⁶⁵ Cf. W. Schrage, The Ethics of the New Testament, tr. D. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 185.

appears to be a conscious effort to show that salvation and life in the new age are made available entirely at God's initiative.

Paul can insist on the *voluntary* nature of giving, yet indicate that the very ability to give is a gift of God. Human activity is invariably emphasized when Paul is making ethical demands of the Corinthians. When divine enabling is emphasized it is at times because Paul wishes to exclude boasting (though not always; boasting is not, for example, at issue in the discussion of the collection for Jerusalem).

Paul can speak not only of divine enabling and human responsibility, but also reward. Paul never explains the relationship between reward and grace, but it is significant that Paul places a great deal of emphasis on dependence on God and on God's power to see believers through to a favourable judgment. Still, he implies that believers themselves are able to frustrate God's intent for Christians. Falling away from the faith seems, for Paul, to be a real possibility. The homiletic occasion has to do with whether Paul emphasizes God's power to preserve believers, or the possibility that if believers fail to live in a manner pleasing to God, they will fail to finish the race.

In letters which have nothing to do with a debate over the significance of the Torah, Paul stresses reliance on God's grace time and time again. This is significant, since it highlights the fact that a discussion of grace in Paul is not exhausted by references to "justification by faith" and the relation between grace and law. Grace is obviously of fundamental importance to Paul. If Schweitzer were correct that justification by faith and the attendant discussion about Torah are a subsidiary aspect of Paul's theology, this would do little to diminish the importance of grace in Paul's thought. However, our discussion will now move to letters where the relationship of the church to the Torah *is* an issue. It remains to be seen if in the texts in Romans and Galatians grace plays an equally significant role.

Chapter Four -- Grace in Galatians

The next letter to be considered in our study is Galatians. As usual, we will explore the role grace plays in Paul's thought but, for the first time, the relation of the law and grace comes into prominence. The question of Gentile observance of the law plays a significant role in Galatians and leads us to consider what Paul says or assumes about the relation of grace to law-observance. And do these texts which concern "justification" paint a picture of dependence on God consistent with that of texts in which "justification" is not in focus, both in Galatians and elsewhere in the Pauline corpus? To put it another way, does the role grace plays in Paul's religious vision shape these texts, or is what Paul says about grace shaped primarily by the *ad hoc* nature of the texts themselves? Finally, we will also attempt to determine what Galatians says about Paul's perceptions of the relation between dependence on God and human responsibility in Galatians.

I. Introductory Matters

There is virtual unanimity amongst scholars that Paul wrote Galatians, but the date, location of the addressees and nature of the opposition are still being debated. A precise date is difficult to establish with certainty, but Galatians was certainly written before Romans, perhaps as early as 49-50 C.E., which would place it very close to the writing of 1 Thessalonians.¹

¹ The date one assigns to Galatians depends in part on one's conclusions concerning a North or South Galatian destination. The former situates the Galatian churches in the ethnic region of original Galatian territory in northern Asia Minor, of which Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium were important cities. The latter locates the churches elsewhere in the province, such as "Phrygia Galatica," where Antioch and Iconium were important cities, and "Lycaonia Galatica," in which Lystra and Derbe were villages. The South Galatian hypothesis sees Acts 13:14-14:23 as a reference to the founding of the churches and Acts 16:6 and 18:23 as references to Paul's later visits in the area (R. Longenecker, Galatians, WBC [Waco, Texas: Word, 1990] lxiii). Assuming that one takes account of the Acts data, if the letter was written to North Galatia it must have been written some time after the journey to the region of "Phrygia and Galatia" mentioned in Acts 16:6, perhaps -- given the thematic similarities, such as the importance of faith, justification and the Torah -- closer to the writing of Romans (cf. F. F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982] 12-13, on the identification of the Galatic region of Acts

A lengthy discussion of the identity and views of Paul's opponents, about which a great deal has been written, will not be undertaken here. I assume that Paul's opponents were probably Jewish Christians² who questioned his apostolic status. From Galatians, we can surmise that the opponents apparently believed that the Jerusalem leaders spoke with greater authority than Paul on the true nature of the gospel. His opposition may have accused Paul of acting on his own, modifying the gospel he received from the Jerusalem leaders and leaving out circumcision and observance of the law and various Jewish customs to make it more acceptable to the Gentiles. Paul did this on his own authority, without the approval of the Jerusalem leaders, who reprimanded him publicly in Antioch.³ Paul's opponents apparently believe that turning away from idols is an important first step, but that one's new status as a child of God cannot rest only on faith in Christ, who does fulfill the messianic hope. For Paul's opponents, the Torah and Christ belong together, because it is only within the sphere of the Torah that the promise is fulfilled in Christ.⁴ "Torah-keeping" for the Judaizers may have meant the obligation that marks Gentiles' entrance into the line of salvation-history that began with Abraham and is fulfilled in

16 with North Galatia). A South Galatian destination makes an early date possible. Against an early dating of the letter may be noted the relative lack of eschatological references in the letter (when compared to the very early 1 Thessalonians) and the developed nature of Paul's teaching on justification by faith, which is absent from 1 Thessalonians. However, the paucity of eschatological references can be explained by the fact that the occasion of the letter did not demand treatment of the subject. Even on an early dating of the letter, Paul had been a Christian for at least fifteen years and the main lines of his theological understanding would have been well defined by then (Bruce, 55-56). For a full discussion of this subject, see Bruce, 43-66 and Longenecker, lxxii-lxxxviii. For an alternate view of the chronology of Paul's letters, see G. Luedemann, Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, tr. F.S. Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). Luedemann argues that the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 was not a prelude to Paul's law-free mission in Asia Minor and Greece, but was a response to it. Luedemann starts with the data of Paul's letters and only appeals to Acts when it is in accord with information provided by Paul. He believes Galatians was probably written about 50 C.E.

² The view that Paul's opponents were Jewish Christian Judaizers has been challenged. For a bibliography and summary of the debate in the last 150 years, see Longenecker, lxxxviii-xcvi.

³ F.F. Bruce, 26.

⁴ J. C. Beker, Paul the Apostle, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 43.

Christ.⁵ Paul's opponents seem to have insisted that Paul's converts, to be "Abraham's seed," had to submit to circumcision (6:13) and may have insisted that they keep the laws relating to the Jewish calendar (4:10).

II. The Human Condition in Galatians

Paul's perception of the condition of humanity is well reflected in Gal 1:3-4a: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins (ὕπερ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν) to set us free (ἐξέληται) from the present evil age (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ ἐνεστώτος)...." This brief formulaic statement reflects two concerns. First, Paul refers to "our sins," for which Christ "gave himself."⁶ In saying that Christ gave himself ὑπερ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, Paul probably means something like "for the forgiveness (or expiation) of sins," drawing attention to an unredeemed humanity's culpability before God. Second, he uses a Jewish contrast between existence in "this (present evil) age"⁷ and "the age to come." Later in Galatians, particularly in chapter 4, Paul spells out in greater detail how he views life in the "present evil age."

Paul describes the life of unbelievers in 4:1-7 using the imagery of a son growing up in an aristocratic family. Life in the "present age" is, for Paul, like the life of an heir who is a "minor."⁸ Before heirs come of age and inherit the father's property, they "are no better

⁵ Beker, 43.

⁶ A number of interpreters suggest that the formulaic expression τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπερ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν reflects a pre-Pauline tradition (e.g., H. Riesenfeld, "ὕπερ," *TDNT*, VIII, 512 and H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979] 41). Paul does, of course, quote it with approval.

⁷ Cf. G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus, Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1902) 147-56 and H. Sasse, "αἰῶν," *TDNT*, I, 206-07. A conceptual parallel is found in the Qumran literature, where the present age is characterized as the "epoch of wickedness" (e.g. 1QpHab 5:7-8) during which Belial is loosed.

⁸ Here Paul seems to have in mind the legal sense of νήπιος, in which case he means "minor, not yet of age" (BAGD, 537). Cf. Gal 3:24, in which the law is referred to as a

than slaves" (4:1). Similarly, humanity finds itself "enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου)" (4:1-3).

The meaning of τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου is disputed,⁹ but there is no doubt that Paul uses the expression of the pre-Christian life of the Galatians. Schweizer argues that the belief of Empedocles that the cosmos was composed of four basic elements (earth, air, fire and water) provides the background for the use of the term in Galatians. Paul would be referring to the Galatians' fear that the soul, upon death, might not be pure enough to pass through the elements, but would instead be imprisoned within them.¹⁰ Ascetic practices as a means to the soul's purification would therefore have been important to the Galatians in their pre-conversion life, and for them now to adopt the Jewish commandments would mean a return to their former way of life.¹¹ However, against Schweizer, there is no suggestion that the Galatians saw the law as a means of escaping from the στοιχεῖα. And Paul for his part seems to identify the στοιχεῖα with "beings that by nature are not gods (τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὐσὶν θεοῖς)," but whom the Galatians had once served (4:8-9). It thus seems quite clear that Paul has in mind the worship of pagan gods.¹²

παιδαγωγός.

⁹ For a bibliography and a helpful discussion of how the expression has been interpreted, see G. Howard, Paul: Crisis in Galatia, 2nd ed., SNTSMS 35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 66-76.

¹⁰ E. Schweizer, "Slaves of the Elements and Worshipers of Angels: Gal 4:3-9 and Col 2:8, 18, 20," JBL 107 (1988) 466.

¹¹ Schweizer, 466.

¹² There is some question about the reality Paul ascribes to these beings. In 1 Cor 8:5, Paul refers to Gentiles worshipping "so-called gods (λεγόμενοι θεοί)," but in 1 Cor 10:20, he speaks of pagan sacrifices as being made "to demons and not to God." Betz argues that while Paul does not believe that such entities are "gods," for Paul they do exist as "inferior demonic entities" (Betz, 214-15). It is difficult to be certain, but, as Longenecker points out, Paul's words here and in 1 Cor 8:5 seem to indicate that in fact he sees no reality to the existence of pagan deities, even if, according to pagans, there are "many gods and lords." For believers, "there is one God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6). Yet Paul is aware that "not everyone has this knowledge" (1 Cor 8:7) and so he tempers his advice in 1 Corinthians concerning meat offered to idols accordingly (Longenecker, 179).

This may be the case, but the matter becomes more complicated when one takes 4:3-5 into account: "under the law" in 4:5 is parallel to "enslaved to the elements of the world" in 4:3. Hence, the law is somehow connected with τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, which lose their power as soon as people are redeemed.¹³ The question that must be answered is the identity of the common element that the law and the pagan "gods" share that enables Paul to include them under the same umbrella expression.¹⁴

Burton suggests that στοιχεῖα be understood in general terms as a reference to Gentile religion and Judaism apart from Christ.¹⁵ Burton's Paul believes that, when compared with the "power and richness of the gospel," both Judaism and pagan religion were "at bottom legalistic, without clear perception of ethical principles and destitute of dynamic to make possible the realisation of them in life."¹⁶ For Burton, Paul can use the same expression for Judaism and paganism because of what they have in common, i.e., lifeless ordinances.¹⁷ Apart from the lack of warrant in Paul for saying that the ordinances

¹³ Bruce, 204.

¹⁴ Certainly the equation of the law with pagan "gods" is not absolute. Bandstra argues that the first person plural in Gal 4:1-5 refers to Jews, but in 6b it refers to both Jews and Gentiles (The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul's Teaching [Kampen: Kok, 1964], 59-62). Bandstra argues that this switch in the referent of "we" reflects the thought pattern of Gal 3:13-14, where Paul means to say that "we" Jewish Christians have been redeemed from the curse of the law so that "the Gentiles might be recipients of the promise given to Abraham" (60). In Gal 4:3-6 Paul means to say that at one time "we" (Jewish Christians) were under the law, but we were redeemed from the law to receive the "adoption as sons." Gal 4:8-10, which contains the references to pagan gods, is addressed to Gentiles and thus an absolute equation of Jewish religion with paganism is avoided (62). This does not, however, mean that Jewish and Gentile religion do not have something in common which enables Paul to apply the same expression to them, and it is that common element with which we shall concern ourselves.

¹⁵ A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921) 515-16. Cf. also D. Bundrick, who argues that the "elements of the world" refer to "the elementary or rudimentary religious teachings, possessed by the whole human race, to which both Jew and Gentiles were enslaved prior to experiencing freedom by faith in Christ" ("*Ta Stoicheia tou Kosmou* (Gal 4:3)," JETS 34 (1991) 364.

¹⁶ E. Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921) 231.

¹⁷ So also Lightfoot, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957, original edition, 1865) 173.

of the law are "lifeless," there is no evidence in the text that Paul's problem with the law or the "elements" is that they are "legalistic."

Howard takes the unlikely view that Paul's equation of the law with "evil spirits who darkened [the Galatians'] minds and led them into idolatry" should be seen from the angle of polytheism, the main issue that he faced in the Gentile world. Paul shares the Jewish view that Gentiles worshipped local deities who were actually demons (cf. 1 Cor 10:20) and who blinded the eyes of people so that they were "ignorant of the true God and the concept of universal humanity."¹⁸ It is this opinion about Gentile religion that makes Paul's reference to the Galatians' return through the law to the elemental spirits of the world intelligible. Howard's Paul believes that Christ had destroyed the deception of the idols so that they no longer hold humanity captive. The particular aspect of the law which Paul has in mind in Gal 4:1-11, according to Howard, is its power to separate Jew from Gentile.¹⁹ Christ came and broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. Paul's gospel had changed the Galatians from polytheists into monotheists. Howard thinks that Paul believes that the message of the Judaizers would turn them back into virtual polytheists and that the imposition of the requirements of Torah upon the Gentiles would turn the Lord God into a national god. In Paul's view, to insist that Gentiles could not be saved without observing the Jewish law was tantamount to turning Christianity into a local cult. There could be no belief in the Lord as the one God as long as the Judaizers presented him as the God of Israel only. "Until the church admitted uncircumcised Gentiles into the kingdom, strictly on the basis of their faith in Yahweh, Paul knew that the universal nature of God would remain suppressed."²⁰ For the Gentiles to accept circumcision was to return to the concept of local deities, and thus to be enslaved again by τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ

¹⁸ Howard, 79.

¹⁹ Howard argues that in Paul's thought, the law is portrayed as keeping all humanity in pre-Christian times in bondage by separating Jews from Gentiles (52-65).

²⁰ Howard, 78.

κόσμου. It meant that the Gentiles would "lose that feature of Christianity which for Paul was its distinguishing mark, namely, belief in one God who is the Father of all men."²¹ Paul's concern was also with the Jews, since as long as they insisted on circumcision for the Gentiles, they too would not understand God's true nature. Howard's view is not without its problems. Besides the problem of making the universal fatherhood of God to be *the* distinguishing mark of Christianity, Howard makes Paul's problem with law observance for the Gentiles to be the suppression of the universal nature of God.²² However, as we shall see below, Paul's problems with the law go beyond its ethnically divisive effects. Also, it is difficult to see how, for Paul, belief in Israel's covenantal relationship with God would in effect make them polytheists.

Sanders, I think rightly, argues that for the common element shared by law and στοιχεῖα, we need not look any further than the idea of restraint itself.²³ Both the law and pagan deities function in some way to restrict a person's freedom. Paul can easily move from the law to pagan deities, since, from his perspective, everyone outside Christ, whether under the law or subject to pagan spirits, is in bondage.²⁴ In 4:3-5 Paul indicates that those who are "under the law" are enslaved and in 4:8, he reminds the Galatians that they had been "enslaved" to the elemental spirits of the world. For Paul, the human conditions for all is one of enslavement: release for both Jews and Gentiles is found only in Christ (cf. 5:1).

The theme of the enslavement of those "under the law" resurfaces in the Hagar analogy of 4:21-31. It is interesting to note that the surface meaning of the story in Genesis supports the Judaizers' position, who may well have used the passage to argue that the true

²¹ Howard, 78.

²² Howard, 78.

²³ Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 69. So also Bruce, 203.

²⁴ Cf. also G. Dellling, "στοιχεῖον," TDNT VII, 685.

descendants of Abraham are the Jews. Gentiles, the generalized "descendants" of Hagar, would have been interpreted as standing outside the people of God. Paul is forced to turn this interpretation on its head, arguing that now it is actually those under the law who are not children of the free woman (Sarah).²⁵ Hagar, says Paul, is "bearing children for slavery" (4:24a). She "is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children" (4:25). There is little doubt that Paul is speaking about slavery to the law.²⁶ Paul reminds the Galatians that "we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman." Since Christ has set believers free, they are not to "submit again to a yoke of slavery" (5:1). The yoke of slavery to which Paul refers can only be the law, given Paul's assertion in 5:3 that the person who lets himself be circumcised is obliged to obey the entire law.²⁷

Why does Paul equate existence "under the law" with the condition of bondage? In 3:19 Paul asks, "Why then the law?" -- a question that would be prompted by his previous discussion in which he argues that life does not come through the law. As part of his answer, he claims that the law "was added because of transgressions (τῶν παραβάσεων χάρις) until the offspring (τὸ σπέρμα) would come to whom the promise had been made..." (3:19b), by which Paul may mean that the law was given to increase the knowledge of sin.²⁸ Although Paul contends that the law was not opposed to the promises

²⁵ C.K. Barrett, "The Allegory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar in the Argument of Galatians," *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann zum 70. Geburtstag*, J. Friedrich, W. Pöhlmann and P. Stuhlmacher, eds. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1976) 10. Cf. Beker, 51.

²⁶ E.g., Betz, 246; Bruce, 220; Lührmann, *Galatians*, tr. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 91 and Schlier, 221.

²⁷ This is ignored by Thielman, 84, who observes that Paul often speaks of slavery to sin (Rom 6:6, 6:19, 6:17, 6:20, 8:21). These references do not, as Thielman himself admits, prove his view that Paul here is thinking of slavery to sin. Thielman also ignores Romans 7:6, where Paul refers to the law as "that which held us captive."

²⁸ Some assign a telic force to χάρις, meaning that the law was given to produce sin (so Bruce, 175 and Betz, 165). Others interpret Paul to be asserting that God gave the law to increase knowledge of, or to reveal sin. For example, Burton, 188, argues this, based on a distinction between ἁμαρτία and παράβασις, the latter being a "violation of

of God (v. 21), it is his opinion that "the scripture has imprisoned (συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή) all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Christ Jesus might be given to those who believe" (v. 22).

Paul portrays the law as being, in effect, a magistrate that consigns humanity to the jailer, sin.²⁹ Paul believes that God gave the law to reveal sin, to define and curse transgression³⁰ and, apparently, to confine people under the power of sin, until the coming of the eschatological age, an age that has begun with the removal of the curse of the law (3:13) from believers and with the coming of the Spirit (3:14).³¹

For Paul, the time before the coming of Christ represents a period of restraint, when people were guarded and imprisoned until the dawning of the new order in Christ, when faith was revealed (3:23). This idea of restraint is also suggested by 3:24-25, where Paul says that the law was a disciplinarian (παιδαγωγός), until Christ came. Now, he says, that faith has come, believers are no longer subject to the disciplinarian. The focus here would not seem to be on the teaching function of the pedagogue. A boy's pedagogue was responsible for reviewing the school boy's lessons for the day,³² but this was only one of

explicit law." Cf. also Longenecker, 138; A. Oepke, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt) 81 and R. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 159: "to make wrong doing a legal offense." Thielman, 74, maintains that χάριν is causal, in the sense that the law was given "because' sin was already present and needed to be reckoned and punished...." However, it is more likely that Paul has in mind the idea that the law was given to reveal sin, since παράβασις has the sense of an act contrary to an established law (Louw and Nida, 469; cf. Longenecker, 138). With Longenecker, I think that it is perhaps unwise to be overly precise in this case. Certainly an effect of the giving of the law would be to increase knowledge of sin, but elsewhere Paul also speaks of the knowledge of sin leading to the increase of sin (cf. Rom 7:7-8).

²⁹ Cf. Fung, 164, on this imagery. Fung, however, sees γραφή as a reference to all of Scripture. Thielman, 74, n92, however, correctly notes that in v. 22, Paul is answering the question posed in v. 21, "Is the law then opposed to the promises of God?" If by "scripture" Paul means something other than the law, this part of his answer is unrelated to the question.

³⁰ This is quite reminiscent of Rom 1:18-32, where the sin of the wicked is the reason God "gave them up" to various forms of wickedness.

³¹ Thielman, 77.

³² Bruce, 182.

his roles.³³ Thus Paul can "hardly have chosen the term specifically to attribute a propaedeutic function to the law."³⁴ The figure of the pedagogue is well-suited to Paul's purposes because it suggests disagreeable control or restraint, an idea that has just been called to mind by the apostle's description of the law in 3:23.³⁵

One of the more controversial aspects of Paul's portrayal of the human (and Jewish) state is his claim that "works of the law" do not bring life. In Gal 2:16, Paul asserts that "we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ (εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)." δικαιοῦ is normally used by Paul forensically and relationally³⁶ (cf., e.g., Rom 2:13; 3: 20, 24, 28; 4:2; 5:1; 1 Cor 4:4).³⁷ In my view, in

³³ The pedagogue was the slave who accompanied a school boy to school and home again. The slave's job was to protect the boy against accident and molesters, and insure that he learned appropriate manners. The boy remained under the pedagogue's supervision until puberty (Betz, 177). For a fuller discussion of the tasks and roles of the pedagogue, see D. Lull, "'The Law was Our Pedagogue': A Study in Galatians 3:19-25," *JBL* 105 (1986) 489-94.

³⁴ Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 196. Against G. Bertram, "παιδέω," *TDNT*, V, 620-21.

³⁵ Westerholm, 196. Cf. also Betz, 178.

³⁶ The debate over Paul's use of the δικαιο- group of words mainly centers around whether δικαιοῦ, δικαιοσύνη and δίκαιος refer to a status bestowed upon a person, or to the ethical nature of a life lived "in Christ." J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, *SNTSMS 20* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), marshals an impressive array of linguistic evidence to show that δικαιοῦ usually has a forensic sense. Ziesler's position on the verb δικαιοῦ represents the typical Protestant position, but he has been criticized for his conclusions about δικαιοσύνη and δίκαιος, which, he argues, describe the ethical behaviour within the relationship. This is an oversimplification. N. Watson (review article of Ziesler's *Righteousness*, *NTS* 20 [1973-74]:217-28) points to the example of Gal 3:11, where the term δίκαιος appears in the citation of Hab 2:4 (Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται). Ziesler admits that "righteous" in Gal 3:11 does have the forensic meaning of "acceptable before God" (204), but argues that it makes good sense to take δίκαιος as meaning both forensically righteous and ethically righteous at the same time. This, however, does not do justice to the main point of the sentence. The words Ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται are cited to prove that "no one is justified (δικαιοῦται) before God by the law." If δικαιοῦ is to be taken in a "declaratory" or relational sense here, as Ziesler does, then δίκαιος must also refer to status, to acceptability or acceptance. Moreover, if δίκαιος in v. 11 is taken to mean primarily "acceptable," then the verse appropriately pictures a state which is completely antithetical to the state of being under the curse mentioned in v. 10 (Watson,

Gal 2:16, to be "justified" is to be pronounced and treated as righteous, to be accepted by

220).

Stuhlmacher, building on the work of Käsemann (cf. Kasemann's "'The Righteousness of God' in Paul," New Testament Question of Today, tr. W. J. Montague [London: SCM, 1969], 168-82) argues that for Paul "justification" goes beyond the act of acquittal, although it certainly includes that. For Stuhlmacher, as for Ziesler, "justification" is an act that declares the believer to be righteous so that the believer might receive a favourable verdict in the final judgment. But Stuhlmacher observes that Paul also speaks of justification as a past event (cf. Rom 8:29-30). In Paul "justification" is both the participation in God's grace that has already been given by faith and vindication before God in the final judgment. The "justification of which [Paul] speaks is a process of becoming new that spans the earthly life of a believer..." ("The Apostle Paul's View of Righteousness," Reconciliation, Law, & Righteousness, tr. E.R. Kalin [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986] 72). The δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ of Rom. 3:21 is to be understood, in part, as a creative power which makes possible new life (Stuhlmacher, 81). For Stuhlmacher, then, "justification" is a synthesis of the declaratory act with the creative power of God.

Stuhlmacher's view is valuable because it prevents us from having too narrow an understanding of God's righteousness. It reminds us that in Paul, "God's righteousness" is not merely an abstract characteristic of God, but that it is the power of God. It should also be noted that for Paul the righteousness of God is seen in the fact that God acts righteously, and in doing so acts in power (373). However, considering the context of judgment which Paul develops in Rom 1-2, God's righteousness there must have a forensic content (C. Brown, "Righteousness," NIDNTT, III, 373). It seems to me that in Gal 2:16 δικαίω can be understood forensically, but in the act of declaring people righteous, God also makes actual righteousness a real possibility. People are declared to be "just" and are brought into a relationship with God. In that relationship they are, Paul believes, given the power to begin to live moral lives. To be one of the justified is to experience the creative power of the Spirit, who makes it possible for believers to exhibit the "fruit of the Spirit."

³⁷ However, according to Cosgrove, if we translate δικαιωθήσεται in Gal 2:16d (ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ) as a "true passive," then we should understand the sense of the whole verse to be "by means of works of the law shall no one become just." He bases this in part on his contention that the passive of δικαίω often expresses the idea "to be just" in the LXX ("Justification in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Reflection." JBL 106 [1987] 662; 662, n25). However, I do not find Cosgrove's LXX examples to be particularly telling. For example, in Ps 142:2b (καὶ μὴ εἰσέλθῃς εἰς κρίσιν μετὰ τοῦ δούλου σου, ὅτι οὐ δικαιωθήσεται ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ζῶν), the future δικαιωθήσεται in the Ps 143:2 (LXX 142:2) allusion appears to point to a future eschatological judgment.

Cosgrove argues that ἐπί with the dative, or κατά with the accusative, is the characteristic way of expressing evidential basis of judgment in a wide variety of Hellenistic literature (Cosgrove, "Justification," 658-57). He argues that Paul uses ἐκ in Gal 2:16 and Rom 3:20 to denote the instrumentality of "works of law" in producing righteousness. For Cosgrove, Paul's distinction between justification "on the basis of" and justification "by" is significant (cf. 658). Assuming that Cosgrove is correct concerning the significance of the difference between justification "by" and justification "on the basis of," he has not convincingly argued that Paul means to suggest that one is made "just" (in an ethical sense) by faith nor adequately demonstrated that δικαίω must be understood in the sense Cosgrove advocates.

God. Paul here is referring to a standing before God that is received through faith in Christ (see below on πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and is thus unavailable to unbelievers.

Paul sets "faith in Christ" over against the "works of the law." The meaning of πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ has been, and still is, vigorously debated. Many interpreters now favour taking Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive so that the phrase would mean the "faith (or faithfulness) of Christ," rather than "faith in Christ" (objective genitive).³⁸ The latter remains, however, the more likely interpretation.³⁹ Paul

³⁸ The most extensive recent treatment of this subject is The Faith of Jesus Christ, by R. B. Hays (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983). See also M. D. Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 165-86 (originally published in NTS 35 [1989]: 321-42), and Howard, 46-65. See Longenecker, 87, for a more complete listing of scholars who take this view. Not all want to choose between the two, however. Friedrich believes that "die grammatischen Unterscheidungen zwischen den verschiedenen Arten von Genitiven nicht möglich sind" ("Glaube und Verkündigung bei Paulus," Glaube im Neuen Testament, G. Strecker, et al, eds. [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982] 105). Friedrich believes that this is since "Glaube im Neuen Testament ist Christusglaube, glaube durch Christus und Glaube an Christus." This may be an accurate statement concerning faith in the NT, but I doubt that the expression πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be made to bear that much semantic weight.

³⁹ Silva makes several points that, to my mind, indicate that this is still the most satisfactory way of interpreting πίστις Χριστοῦ. First, he notes that, although it is possible that Paul could have used the expression to denote Jesus' faithfulness, and although it is true that Christ's obedience plays a central role in Paul's theology, it also remains true "that Paul never speaks unambiguously of Jesus as faithful...or believing..., while he certainly speaks of individuals believing in Christ." He also rightly points out that ambiguous grammatical forms ought to be clarified "in the light of unambiguous ones, and that the repetition in Gal 2:16 ('faith in Christ' twice; 'we believe in Christ Jesus' once) supports the traditional understanding" (M. Silva, Philippians [Chicago: Moody Press, 1988] 187). Finally, he says that when faced with an expression that is unclear, "that meaning should be preferred that adds least to the total meaning of the passage" (for a helpful elucidation of this principle, see Silva's Biblical Words and Their Meaning. An Introduction to Lexical Semantics [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983] 153-56). Thus, those who object to the traditional interpretation of Gal 2:16 because it is redundant "operate with an unjustifiably negative understanding of the role played by redundancy" (187, n31).

Westerholm notes that Rom 4:5 ("But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness") is a restatement of Gal 2:16, where the "faith" is that of believers (112, n12).

Gal 2:16 is most intelligible when Χριστοῦ is interpreted as an objective genitive. Immediately after asserting that a person is not justified "through works of law" ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Paul goes on to say that ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. Christ is

argues that a person is justified not by works of the law, but by faith in Christ.⁴⁰

The question that remains is why "works of the law" are ruled out as a means of justification by Paul. There are several different ways to construe Paul's rejection of "works of the law," as well as the meaning of the phrase itself.

1. Gaston argues that in the expression "works of the law," νόμου is to be understood as a subjective genitive, meaning "works produced by the law."⁴¹ For Paul, the law "works" to bring knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20); it causes sin to be reckoned against sinners (Rom 5:13); it increases guilt (5:20); it has authority over people (Rom 7:1) and it provides an occasion for sin (Rom 7:8-9). Far from effecting salvation, the "law actively works in the Gentile world to create a situation from which people need redemption."⁴² Why, however, should Paul need to insist that no one is justified by works *produced by* the law, since no one would claim such a thing? Neither Gal 3:10 nor Rom 3:20 indicate that for Paul, justification does not come by "works of the law" because such works are evil.⁴³

2. Dunn defines "works of the law" as denoting "all that the law requires of the

clearly the object of the verb πιστεύω and it is thus most natural to understand the preceding and following πίστεως [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ as objective genitives. Cf. Räisänen, Paul and the Law, 2nd ed., WUNT 29 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987) 162. n1.

⁴⁰ Dunn ("The New Perspective on Paul," Jesus, Paul and the Law, [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990] 191, originally published in BJRL 65 [1983] 95-122), argues that Paul's appeal is to "Jews, whose Christian faith is but an extension of their Jewish faith in a graciously electing and sustaining God." However, as Räisänen notes, this misrepresents the meaning of πίστις in Gal 2:16. "Faith in Christ" in this verse clearly does not denote just any "trust." It specifies faith in Christ, and that is something new. This is also implied in 3:23-24 where Paul speaks of the (recent) coming of faith ("Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," NTS 31 [1985] 546).

⁴¹ L. Gaston, "Works of Law as a Subjective Genitive," Paul and the Torah (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987) 100-06.

⁴² Gaston, 106.

⁴³ Cf. Schreiner, 231. For what these verses might say about Paul's rejection of works of the law as a means to justifications, cf. the discussions of Gal 3:10 and Rom 3:20 below.

devout Jew."⁴⁴ In Dunn's view, Paul is objecting to a Jewish Christian *misunderstanding* of "works of the law." According to the view which Paul is said to be rejecting, the status that doing the "works of the law" is perceived to maintain – status as a member of the covenant people – is unavailable to Gentiles who are unwilling or unable to perform certain rituals and to obey certain laws. Thus, that to which Paul is objecting is perceived by Dunn to be a form of Jewish exclusivity. Paul opposes faith in Christ to "the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary-marking ritual...."⁴⁵ This effectively rules out the work of Christ, whom Paul perceives as Lord over both Jew and Gentile.

However, a comparison of Gal 2:16 with 2:21; 3:11 and 5:4 shows that Paul could say either "a person is not justified by the works of the law" or "no one is justified by the law," and apparently mean the same thing.⁴⁶ This makes it unlikely that "works of the law" refers only to such a misunderstanding of the law, as Dunn presupposes. Note, too, that in Gal 2:19 Paul observes that it is "through the law" that he "died to the law" (v. 19). In neither phrase can Paul be referring to a misunderstanding of the law.⁴⁷ It thus seems

⁴⁴ J.D.G. Dunn, "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-14)," Jesus, Paul and the Law (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990) 223, 238. See also his more recent "Yet Once More -- 'the Works of the Law': A Response," JSNT 46 (1992) 99-117, in which he responds to C.E.B. Cranfield's critique (JSNT 43 [1991] 89-101) of Dunn's treatment of the phrase "works of the law." Cf. also the earlier article by J. B. Tyson, "'Works of the Law' in Galatians," JBL 92 (1973) 423-31.

⁴⁵ Dunn, Romans 1-9, Vol. 38a (Waco, Texas: Word Books), lxxii.

⁴⁶ Westerholm, 117-18. Cf. also Sanders, Law, 22.

⁴⁷ Westerholm, 118. Also, as Fitzmyer points out, in light of 4QMMT at least, the significance of "works of the law" cannot be as restricted as Dunn would have it. The text of 4QMMT refers to about twenty halakhot, but these are not limited to circumcision or food laws. More importantly, they are associated by the author of the letter with a righteous standing before God. In this letter, Fitzmyer goes on to say, the phrase "works of the law" was "used in connection with the way a Jew would seek for righteousness in God's sight" (see J. A. Fitzmyer, According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle [New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1993] 23). Doing the works of the law are marks of fidelity, not only to the community, but, in the sectarians' estimation, of fidelity to God.

Mark Seifrid ("Blind Alleys in the Controversy over the Paul of History" Tyndale Bulletin 45 [1994]: 78-79) criticizes Dunn for ignoring the fact that works of the law function not only as "boundary markers," but also as signs of piety. This is illustrated in

unlikely that by his use of the phrase "works of the law," Paul means to limit his concern to a misunderstanding of the significance of the law.

3. For some scholars, Paul rejects works of the law performed in a spirit of "legalism." In Bultmann's view, the primary reason why works of the law and the way of grace and faith are incompatible is that "*man's effort to achieve his salvation by keeping the Law* only leads him into sin, indeed this effort itself in the end is *already sin*," sin being defined as "man's self-powered striving to undergird his own existence in forgetfulness of his creaturely existence."⁴⁸ For Paul, this is a distortion of the law's purpose, since God intended the law to "snatch man out of his self-reliant pursuit of life, his will to rule over himself."⁴⁹ In the law, humanity encounters God's demand, and if the law were obeyed in a spirit of reliance on the creator, it would lead to life as it was intended to. But, according to Bultmann, the law, obeyed in a spirit of self-reliance, results in death.⁵⁰ Again,

Josephus' account of Izates' circumcision, which illustrates that Jews who were concerned with Gentiles' circumcision understood the act in *ethical* terms. Ananias and Eleazar disagree in their understanding of the importance of circumcision for Gentiles. Ananias thinks that commitment to Jewish tradition is of greater import than the act of circumcision. He does not, however, regard Izates as having become a Jew without circumcision, or having fully obeyed the law. Nevertheless, God will pardon Izates because of the limitations of his situation. Eleazar, however, thinks that the failure to be circumcised is an act of impiety. Both of these men are represented as looking upon circumcision as the completion of the decision to worship God, a notion that is reflected in Josephus' estimation of God's protection given to Izates after his circumcision: "The fruit which comes from godliness is not lost for those who look to him, and trust in him alone" (*Antiquities* 20:48). Seifrid, 84, also makes the significant point that Dunn's view "fails to account for the strong attraction the message of the agitators had for the Galatian believers. The letter contains no evidence that they had lost the assurance of their salvation. They seem rather to have been attracted to Judaism in and of itself, as supplement to their faith and a way to order their moral and religious universe...." Cf. also the critique of Jesus, Paul and the Law by Moises Silva, "The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis," Westminster Theological Journal 53 (1991): 339-353.

⁴⁸ R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, tr. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 264. Others who take similar positions include Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, tr. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1969) 226-35, H. Hübner, Law in Paul's Thought, tr. J. Grieg (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984) 113-24 and Bruce, 137-38.

⁴⁹ Bultmann, 250.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bultmann, 259.

however, the apparent interchangeability of "law" and "works of the law" in crucial passages in Galatians makes it highly unlikely that Paul uses the latter expression to denote a "legalistic" distortion of the law. In 2:16d, he quotes the same OT text (Ps 143:2) as he does in Rom 3:20, but in the latter context his explanation for the shortcoming of the law is that "all have sinned" (Rom 3:23), both Jew and Gentile.⁵¹ Paul's problem with the law seems to be not the spirit with which it is kept, but that people do not adequately do its commands. Also, since Paul contends in Gal 2:21; 3:11-12, 15-18, 21-22 and 4:21-25 that by its very nature the law cannot justify, it is unlikely that he means in 2:16 only that "works of the law" done in a spirit of self-reliance do not justify.⁵²

4. Some scholars believe that Paul repudiates "works of the law" (taking "works of the law" as referring to deeds demanded by the law) not only because legalism (i.e., the attempt to earn God's favour by doing good works) is wrong, but also because people do not do the works of the law.⁵³ The first element of this interpretation is indefensible (see above), but I shall argue below that the second is correct.

5. The best explanation for Paul's rejection of ἔργα νόμου in 2:16 as a path to justification is that people do not perform the necessary works.⁵⁴ In this view, "works of

⁵¹ Fung, 114.

⁵² Westerholm, 118. Cf. J. Barclay, Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1988) 82. Not unrelated is Cranfield's insistence that Paul often means "legalism" by νόμος. Cranfield's explanation for the unusual meaning "legalism" for νόμος is "that the Greek language of Paul's day possessed no word-group corresponding to our 'legalism,' 'legalist' and 'legalistic.'" Thus, we must deduce what Paul means from the context (C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, II, ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979] 853). This seems rather unlikely. As Räisänen says, although Paul did not have the technical term "legalism" at his disposal, yet he "might have been able to form a few sentences through which to indicate that he wished to make such an important distinction between the law and its false interpretation" (Law, 43).

⁵³ Burton, 120, 164 and M. Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 26, J. Pelikan, ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1963) 122-27. Fung, 114, while admitting that the main purpose of Paul's present statement is to point out the complete inadequacy of the law, suggests that the *implication* of Paul's statement may be the rejection of "works as works-of-merit." See T. Schreiner, "'Works of Law' in Paul," Novum Testamentum 33 (1991) 218-19, n6, for a fuller list of interpreters who take this view.

⁵⁴ Most recently F. Thielman, From Plight to Solution. A Jewish Framework for

the law" refers to the actions that the law requires of its adherents.⁵⁵ The problem is not "legalism" or Jewish particularity, but rather human failure to do the works required by the law. This explanation is not, admittedly, spelled out in 2:16, but it seems to be implicit in Paul's allusion to Ps 143:2 (142:2 LXX),⁵⁶ and becomes apparent in chapter three.

That Paul rejects "works of the law" as a path to justification because people do not do them is more evident in Gal 3:10, where Paul asserts that "all who are of the works of the law are under a curse (ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν ὑπὸ κατάραν): for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not persevere and do all the things written in the book of the law'" (my translation). The problem here is not that of a wrong understanding of the law; here it is clearly that people do not do the law.⁵⁷ Paul cites Deut 27:26 with the

Understanding of the Law in Galatians and Romans (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989) 61-65. Thielman notes that this view was made famous by Schlatter (Der Glaube im Neuen Testament, 6th ed. [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1927] 323-33) and was adopted by U. Wilckens ("Was heißt bei Paulus: 'Aus Werken des Gestezes wird kein Mensch gerecht'?" Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien, 77-109 [Neukirch: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974]). So also Schreiner, 229 and Westerholm, 220-21.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that although the expression ἔργα νόμου does not, in and of itself, refer to only a few of the law's commands, it is possible that the Galatians were being told to obey only some of the law's requirements. They were being urged to be circumcised (6:13) and perhaps also to keep laws having to do with the Jewish calendar (4:10). Gal 5:3 suggests that Paul's opponents did not require them to obey every commandment. It is Paul who points out to the Galatians that "you cannot be half-Jewish; either you are a Jew or you are not" (M. Winger, By What Law? The Meaning of Νόμος in the Letters of Paul [Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992] 138, n60).

⁵⁶ It is interesting that when Paul uses Ps 143:2 (which in the LXX [142: 2] reads, ὅτι οὐ δικαιωθήσεται ἐνώπιόν σου πᾶς ζῶν) at the end of 2:16 (ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ), not only does he insert ἐξ ἔργων νόμου before οὐ δικαιωθήσεται, but he also substitutes πᾶσα σὰρξ for the πᾶς ζῶν of the LXX. Thielman argues that since, in Gal 4:23, 29 σὰρξ carries the ethical connotation of "humanity viewed from its inclination to sin," it is quite possible that Paul modified the neutral ζῶν of the LXX to the ethically charged word σὰρξ because he meant to say that when humanity is viewed from the perspective of its weakness, it is obvious that no one can do the law (Thielman, 64). It is, however, difficult to be certain that πᾶσα σὰρξ bears the significance Thielman attaches to it.

⁵⁷ Dunn argues that the curse that was removed by Christ's death "was the curse which had previously prevented that blessing from reaching the Gentiles, the curse of a wrong understanding of the law" ("Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3.10-14)", Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians [Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990] 229 [originally published in NTS [4, '85] 523-42]). Cf. also Barclay,

universality of the problem in mind. The first $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ in the citation ($\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ Ἐπικατάρατος $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ ὃς οὐκ ἐμμένει $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\upsilon$ τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτά) is significant. The problem is not that only those who have misunderstood the law are under a curse. For Paul, *all* who do not do the works of the law are under a curse and in need of deliverance.⁵⁸ Paul's use of Deut. 27:26 in Gal 3:10 is in line with Deuteronomy, which is referring to Israel's failure to keep the law as that which places them under a curse.⁵⁹ The reason why works of the law are unable to secure justification is here clearly that people fail to perform the works of the law.

Finally, Paul's use of $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi$ in Galatians also sheds light on his perceptions of the

who argues that denying the grace of God in 2:21 does not imply the attempt to earn righteousness, but rather entails remaining "in a culture-bound tradition which had been rendered obsolete by God's initiative in Christ" (240). Such an understanding of Pauline soteriology is much too narrow. For example, it does not take adequate account of Paul's statements about the inability of the law to save. For Paul, the problem is not merely that of a wrong understanding of the law. Note also that in Romans 5:12-21, Christ's death is seen as the means by which humanity is delivered from the power of sin and death (5:12-21) and the law (7:4-6).

⁵⁸ Thielman, 67, n72. Sanders argues that Paul's purpose in 3:8-14 is simply to demonstrate that God justifies the Gentiles by faith, and that keeping the law is now unnecessary (since salvation is through Christ). He maintains that Paul "cites the only two passages in the Septuagint in which the *dik-* root is connected with *pistis*" as well as the "the only passages in the LXX in which *nomos* is connected with 'curse'" (Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983] 21). Paul's interest is only in proof-texting his idea that faith in Christ is right and covenantal nomism is wrong, not in providing an actual reason why this might be so, such as "no one can actually do all the law and therefore all are transgressors." The words $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ and $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\upsilon$ that occur in Deut 27:26 are accidental, as far as Sanders (and Paul) is concerned. He only included them "because they were there." Räisänen notes that Deuteronomy would be a rather poorly chosen proof-text if, as Sanders maintains, Paul had only wanted to show that "those who accept the law are cursed." The text seems to say the opposite (Räisänen, Law, 95, n13)! Räisänen believes that Sanders does not take seriously enough Paul's claim regarding the law in Gal 5:3 that, "if you start it, it must all be kept" (Räisänen's translation). Paul's point is that all who are bound to keep the law prove in fact to be transgressors.

⁵⁹ Thielman, 67-69. Bruce notes that Paul replaces the LXX's $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\upsilon$ τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου with $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\upsilon$ τοῖς γεγραμμένοις ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τοῦ νόμου. In the LXX and the MT, the curse is pronounced upon the one "who does not confirm the words of *this law* by doing them" (Bruce's translation). In Paul's version of the text, however, the indictment is generalized. Paul speaks not of "this law" (the dodecalogue in Deuteronomy), but the written Law in all its detailed demands (Bruce, 158).

human condition.⁶⁰ In Gal 3:3, Paul chastises the Galatians for attempting to complete the Christian life "by the flesh (σαρκί)" when they began it by the Spirit (πνεύματι). Gal 3:2b (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;) indicates that in 3:3, σάρξ is linked to the "works that the law demands."⁶¹ For some interpreters, Paul's emphasis here is on "self-righteousness." Jewett says that "σάρξ for Paul is not rooted in sensuality but rather in religious rebellion in the form of self-righteousness."⁶² Bultmann indicates that σάρξ here means "trust in oneself as being able to procure life...through one's own strength in the form of self-righteousness."⁶³

There is no evidence, however, that Paul is thinking of the attitude of "self-righteousness" here. Note that Paul is setting human obligation and observance of the law on the side of the flesh over against new life in the Spirit. Here then, the contrast is ultimately eschatological. The "flesh" must refer to human nature and resources of a life lived in the old aeon, apart from the Spirit given to believers in Christ (note the contrast between "flesh" and "Spirit" in 5:16-24; 6:8). Life "in the Spirit" is "lived in keeping with the values and norms of the coming aeon inaugurated by Christ through his death and resurrection and empowered by the eschatological Spirit."⁶⁴ As we have seen in our discussion of the "works of the law," Paul does not believe that human attempts to do the works of the law will ultimately succeed (cf. Gal. 3:10; 6:13). They are bound to fail, for

⁶⁰ σάρξ ("flesh") is used in various ways in Galatians, not all of which are equally relevant to our purposes. In 1:16, σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι is used to denote "any human being" (so the NRSV translates). In 2:16 πᾶσα σάρξ is a reference to "all humanity" which is not justified by "works of the law," though perhaps the sinfulness of humanity may be implied (see n60 above). In 2:20 Paul refers to his life ἐν σαρκί, that is his "mortal body." In 4:13, Paul mentions a "physical infirmity" (ἀσθένεια τῆς σαρκός) and in 4:14 he again refers to this infirmity in his "flesh."

⁶¹ Cf. A. Thiselton, "Flesh," NIDNTT, I, 680.

⁶² R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: a Study of their Use in Conflict Settings (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971) 95.

⁶³ Theology, I, 239.

⁶⁴ G. Fee, God's Empowering presence: the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1994) 385.

the person "in the flesh" must attempt to please God without the resources of the Spirit.⁶⁵

Since the believer lives life in reliance on the Spirit, and since living life "by the flesh" leaves out the dimension of the Spirit, it is fair to say that Paul's substitution of σάρξ for "works of the law" in Gal 3:3 implies that, in Paul's view, "works of the law," far from being a necessary part of Christian existence, are actually antithetical to it. They are bound to the flesh, not to the Spirit.⁶⁶ The antidote to humanity's inability to please God "in the flesh" is the power of the Spirit, which, in Paul's view, the Galatians are unwittingly rejecting.

In the Hagar analogy of 4:21-31, Paul sets life under the law over against life in the Spirit and, in doing so, identifies those who are under the law as being born "according to the flesh." In 4:23, Paul says that Hagar's child was "born of the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα)." The child of the "free woman" was "born through the promise (ὁ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἐλευθέρου δι' ἐπαγγελίας)." In 4:29, Paul asserts that the "child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit." "According to the flesh" in 4:23 could be taken simply as a reference to the natural process of procreation, without pejorative connotations. However, the expression in 4:29 calls to mind people who exist "under the law," since the child who is "born under the law" is set in opposition to the child who is "born according to the Spirit."

In 4:21-31, existence under the law is identified as a "fleshly" existence, since for Paul here the Hagar story functions as a "type" (cf. the κατὰ Ἰσαάκ of 4:28 and the ὡσπερ τότε ... οὕτως καὶ νῦν of vs. 29) of the situation of present day believers.⁶⁷ Isaac represents those who experience the working of the Spirit. On the other side is Ishmael

⁶⁵ Thus, Longenecker's translation of σαρκί by "human effort" is helpful, as long as by that one does not mean "self-righteousness" (Longenecker, 103).

⁶⁶ D. Lull, The Spirit in Galatia: Paul's Interpretation of *Pneuma* as Divine Power (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1980) 104.

⁶⁷ Cf. the discussion in Lull, 158-60.

(whom Paul does not mention by name), the child "according to the flesh." Existence in the flesh in 4:21-31 is characterized by slavery to the law from which believers have been freed (cf. 4:3-6). Their existence in the Spirit is an existence of "freedom." To be a child "according to the flesh" is to be in slavery to the law. But being of the flesh in 4:21-31 also implies active opposition to the purposes of the Spirit. The reference to "persecution"⁶⁸ serves to set "fleshly" existence in opposition to existence in the Spirit.

Longenecker notes that in 3:1-14, Paul's arguments that are based on the Galatians' experience and Scripture are shot through with references to the Spirit (cf. 3:2, 3, 5, 14), but after that "promise" is spoken of instead (cf. 3:16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 29; 4:28). In 4:21-31 however, Paul uses *κατὰ πνεῦμα* as a parallel expression to *δι' ἐπαγγελίας* in vs. 23, and references to the Spirit come to the forefront in the rest of the letter (cf. 5:5, 16-18, 22, 25; 6:8).⁶⁹ The net effect is that Paul's "previous references to the gospel, the Spirit, the promise, the blessings, and the inheritance become focused here and throughout the rest of the letter in terms of the Spirit's presence and guidance in a believer's life."⁷⁰ It is to a life without the dimension of the Spirit that Paul believes the Galatians are heading if they adopt the views of the Judaizers and take on themselves the "yoke of slavery," that is, the Torah.

Closely related to the use of *σάρξ* in Gal 3:3 and 4:21-31 is Paul's use of the term in Gal 5:16-21, where it is used of an inclination within people that is opposed to the purposes of the Spirit. That the flesh is in open opposition to God is here made more explicit. In Gal 5:16, Paul says that "what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit." In 5:17, Paul actually portrays individuals as a battleground, in which the flesh attempts to

⁶⁸ As concerns the possible historical referent that prompted Paul's comment, Jewett finds evidence here "that Jewish Christian were stimulated by pressure from Zealots into a nomistic campaign among their fellow Christians in the late forties and early fifties" ("The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *NTS* 17 [1970-71] 205).

⁶⁹ Longenecker, 216.

⁷⁰ Longenecker, 216-17.

prevent believers from doing what they know they ought to do. But it is not a battle between equals. Paul indicates in 5:18 that if believers allow themselves to be led by the Spirit, they are not "under law," a law which cannot help believers to do as they would like. Paul believes that people who are "under the law" (and thus obligated to do the works of the law) sin, not because there is anything intrinsically wrong with doing the law, but because the law is ultimately unable to free one from the power of sin.⁷¹ To put it in different terms, the law cannot make it possible for people to do what it demands of them. In effect, the law and the flesh are aligned in a radical new way by Paul. Whereas Paul's opponents would no doubt have thought of the flesh and the law as being opposites, Paul implies that the law is an ally, or at least a tool, of the flesh.⁷²

In Gal 5:19-21, Paul includes among the "works of the flesh" things such as fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, jealousy and anger. It is axiomatic for Paul that people without the Spirit will do the works of the flesh. It is only when people allow themselves to be led by the Spirit, when they, through the Spirit, crucify the "flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24), that they find life and the power to overcome the flesh. We might say that in this passage, σάρξ points to a particular relationship to God. The person who lives according to the flesh is opposed to the will of God.⁷³

In Galatians 6:8, living according to the flesh is connected with death. Those who live according to the Spirit will gain "eternal life," but those who sow εἰς τὴν σάρκα "will reap corruption from the flesh (ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν)."⁷⁴

⁷¹ Cf. the discussion in Wilckens, 93.

⁷² J. L. Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians," NTS 31 (1985) 416.

⁷³ Cf. E. Schweizer, "σάρξ," TDNT, VII, 134. Yet Paul does not think that once a person becomes a believer the struggle is forever ended. As Jewett says, the believer's life "is characterized until its end by the struggle between the leading of the spirit and the luring of the flesh" (Jewett, Anthropological Terms, 116).

⁷⁴ Since "corruption" is parallel to "eternal life," it seems most likely that here Paul is referring to the ultimate destruction of those living "according to the flesh."

In 6:12-13, Paul indicates that from his perspective, doing the "works of the law" becomes an occasion for the "boasting" of the Judaizers. Paul believes that they "want to make a good showing in the flesh (θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί)." He claims that they are motivated primarily by the desire to escape persecution by being able to boast about the Galatians' "flesh" (ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσονται [6:13]).⁷⁵ Here σάρξ is not used in the ethical sense of 5:16-24, but rather in a physical sense. Even so, it connotes that which is in opposition to the Spirit. Boasting in the flesh, that is, in circumcision, is, for Paul, a denial of the "new creation (καινὴ κτίσις)" wrought by the Spirit. The expression καινὴ κτίσις embraces life, righteousness and freedom, all things the Galatians possessed without accepting the demands of Torah.⁷⁶

Summary

In Galatians, humanity is in need of deliverance from what Paul calls the "present evil age." Those who do not experience the new age ushered in by Christ are subject to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, that is to say, to the law and pagan "gods." For Paul, both Jews and Gentiles are in bondage. Being "under the law" is seen by Paul as being under bondage since, in Paul's view, the law is unable to empower people to do that which is right. Paul is very pessimistic about humanity's ability to do the works of the law. Those who seek to be justified by the law are, in fact, under a curse because they do not keep the law. Justification and the ability to live in a manner pleasing to God come only through faith in Christ.

Life without the resources of the Spirit is characterized by Paul as life in the "flesh." To live life "according to the flesh" is to live life depending only on one's own resources, which Paul believes are inadequate to live in a manner pleasing to God. The flesh

⁷⁵ It is, of course, important to note with Longenecker that this is "a judgment call on Paul's part that depends on a certain reading of events unfolding within the Jewish world and that is highly subjective in nature" (291).

⁷⁶ Lull, Spirit, 30, 46 n19. Cf. Gal 4:31; 5:1, 5, 13, 25.

inevitably draws people into opposition to God. The law, because of its inability to empower people to live a life pleasing to God, becomes an ally of the flesh. Living by the flesh will, in Paul's view, lead inevitably to death.

III. Dependence on God in Galatians

Since for Paul, humanity is unable to extricate itself from its plight, God must intervene. The question which we must ask of Galatians, is, again, the extent to which Paul deliberately articulates humanity's dependence on God. In Galatians, the added issue arises whether this theme is related to Paul's argument against embracing the "works of the law."

We will look first at texts that highlight initial human dependence on God for salvation and then texts in which Paul speaks of reliance on God to continue in the faith, to live a moral life.

A. Dependence on God for Salvation

1. Gal 1:6

Shortly after the greeting,⁷⁷ Paul expresses amazement that the Galatians are defecting from his gospel, *the* gospel: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting⁷⁸ the one who called you into the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel" (1:6). For Paul, there is no middle ground. On the one side there are God, Christ, grace and the gospel; but the "other gospel" is not a gospel at all (1:7), since (as the sequel in Galatians shows) it makes membership in the Christian community contingent upon doing works of

⁷⁷ Of course, the letter begins ("Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" [1:3]) and ends ("May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters" [6:18]) with Paul's usual formulaic greeting and benedictions, in which Paul expresses his desire that the Galatians would continually experience God's grace.

⁷⁸ The present tense of the verbs indicates that the defection was still in progress (Betz, 47). Cf. Burton, 18-19 and Oepke, 21, who says that it is "threatening."

the law. To defect to the "other gospel" is to desert God, the one who called them.⁷⁹

1:6 is one of only two places in Paul where the term καλέω is connected explicitly with the term χάρις (cf. also Gal 1:15). How are we to understand this connection of χάρις with καλέω? In 1:6, the answer depends in part upon the force one assigns to ἐν in the phrase ἐν χάριτι. There are three options. ἐν may be understood as having: 1) a causal sense, which would mean that Paul is here indicating that grace is the ground of the call; 2) an instrumental sense, where grace is understood as the means by which the believers were called; or 3) a metaphorical local sense, in which χάρις is understood as referring to the state into which the Galatians were called.

The first option is unlikely because, while Paul conceives of redemption as being based on the work of Christ (cf. Rom 3:24), it is unlikely that he would speak of God's call as being grounded in Christ's grace. For the most part, Paul speaks of Christ's work as having its basis in the love of God.⁸⁰

In view of Gal 1:15, where Paul says God called him διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ,⁸¹ the instrumental sense might seem to be a strong possibility. However, in the expression καλέω ἐν as used elsewhere by Paul, ἐν is never either instrumental or causal (except possibly in 1 Cor 7:22), but almost always has as its object the state or sphere into which one finds oneself, either (1) when God called (1 Cor 7:18, 20, 24), or (2) as the result of

⁷⁹ The expression ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς could refer to either Christ or God, but Paul's usage elsewhere suggests that he sees God as the primary agent of the calling. See Gal 1:15; 5:8, 13; Rom 4:17; 8:30; 9:12, 24; 11:29; 1 Cor 1:9, 26; 7:15, 17, 18-24; Phil 3:14; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; also 2 Thess 1:11; 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9 (Betz, 48).

⁸⁰ Cf. Rom 5:8-11 (Burton, 21). It should be noted that "of Christ" is textually uncertain. Χριστοῦ is missing in some important witnesses, such as \mathfrak{P}^{46vid} , and is included in \mathfrak{P}^{51} & A B Byzantine vg syr^{pesh} cop^{bo}. Metzger indicates that a majority of the committee that worked on the UBS³ was unwilling to adopt a reading that is supported by only part of the Western tradition, though Χριστοῦ was included with reservations due to its omission by \mathfrak{P}^{46vid} and other Western witnesses (B. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament [London: UBS, 1975] 589-590).

⁸¹ H. Conzelmann, "χάρις," TDNT, IX, 395, n185.

God's call. In this latter case, the phrase means "call to be in" (1 Thess 4:7; 1 Cor 7:15; cf. Col 3:15 (ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι); Eph 4:4; cf. also εἰς in 1 Cor 1:9; Col 3:15; 2 Thess 2:14). A local sense of ἐν is most likely intended here.⁸² The Galatians have been called into a "new state of salvation."⁸³

Since the state in which the Galatians exist is made possible and defined by God's gracious act in Christ, and since the Galatians have entered that state through the call of God, χάρις here may be understood as "God's favour." To be called ἐν χάριτι is to enter a state where one experiences God's favour. To leave the gospel is to leave the "sphere of God's favour."

Paul's use of the term καλέω reflects his understanding of grace. It is, as Bruce says, part of Paul's vocabulary for emphasizing God's initiative in salvation.⁸⁴ 1:6 reflects not only Paul's understanding of the whole of Christian existence as an experience of divine favour, but also his understanding that believers would not enjoy that experience were it not for God's call. Being called by God implies dependence on God for salvation.

2. Galatians 2:21

At the end of chapter two, as part of his defense of his gospel, Paul protests that he

⁸² Cf. Burton, 21. So also R. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 44 and Betz, 48. Moffatt, *Grace in the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., 1931) 184, suggests that ἐν χάριτι might be rendered "to" or "into" (Christ's) grace, as is the case in 1 Corinthians 7:15 -- ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός). Cf. also Eph 4:4 (ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἐν πνεῦμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν) (cf. also 1 Thess 4:7). Similarly, J. H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 117, asserts that Paul's language here stresses the agency of God and indicates the place into which the Galatian Christians were called by God and in which they continue to exist. This is also supported by the absence of the article before χάριτι, giving the word qualitative rather than individualizing force (Burton, 21).

Betz, 48, finds ἐν χάριτι to be synonymous with "in Christ Jesus" (see especially 3:26-28) or the "body of Christ." However, while such expressions refer to the same state of existence, it might be better to say that each emphasizes an aspect of that existence that the others do not.

⁸³ J. Becker, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*, tr. O. C. Dean (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 289.

⁸⁴ Bruce, 80. Cf. Gal 5:8, 13; Rom 8:30; 9:11, 1 Cor 1:9; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7.

does not "nullify the grace of God (οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ); for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing" (Gal 2:21).⁸⁵

21b rests upon vv. 15-20, a section that begins with a concession to a common Jewish conviction: Jews are distinct from Gentiles who, since they are outside the covenant community and living apart from God's law, are inevitably "sinners."⁸⁶ But in vs. 16, Paul undermines this distinction. He observes that in fact no one is justified by "works of the law," meaning that Jews too are not justified by doing the deeds which the law requires of its adherents (cf. the above discussion). Justification, Paul asserts in vs. 16, comes through faith in Christ. In the same verse, Paul emphasizes that "we" (that is, the Jews by birth of vs. 15) have come to believe in Jesus. "Justification," that is, a "right relationship with God," comes through such faith. In 2:17, Paul raises a possible objection: does not his law-free gospel, by apparently inviting believers to transgress such demands of the law as that for circumcision, make Christ a promoter of sin? To this Paul says, μὴ γένοιτο! For Paul, believers cannot transgress a law to which they have died and which, consequently, has no power over them (2:19). Only if the law were restored to its former hegemony could they transgress it (2:18). But that old way of life has now passed, and, as

⁸⁵ Is Paul here merely anticipating a potential objection, or is he countering a known charge against himself? Opinions vary. Bruce notes that Paul is not primarily contrasting himself with the Judaizers here. If he had meant to do so he would perhaps have inserted ἐγὼ before ἄθετῶ for emphasis. He believes that Paul may be replying to a charge that his gospel has somehow led to a misuse or abuse of the grace of God (146). G. Ebeling, The Truth of the Gospel, tr. David Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 150, finds it unlikely that Paul is referring to an accusation made by his opponents. He argues that it is more appropriate that, in the context of Paul's discussion of the Antioch incident, he would summarize all he has to say theologically about the grace of God by proclaiming that he would not surrender it for anything.

Betz goes further and finds it possible that Paul's opponents charged him with doing away with God's grace. His opponents could make such a charge if their concept of redemption ("grace of God") would include the Torah covenant (126). Burton, 140, says that since χάρις was a favourite term of Paul's in reference to the gospel, it is not impossible that it was taken up by his critics who charged that he was minimizing the importance of the grace of God to Israel. Cf. also Moffatt, 188; Fung, 124 and Schlier, 104. In the end, it is impossible to be certain.

⁸⁶ Cf. Luke 24:7 with Acts 2:23 (noted by Bruce, 137).

Paul goes on to affirm in 2:20, the new life he now enjoys by faith in Christ is no longer his own life, but that of Christ living in him -- a life made possible by the self-sacrifice of God's Son ("who loved me and gave himself for me").

Such a life -- both brought about and sustained by the gift of God's Son -- is surely the expression, not the denial, of God's grace (2:21). God's grace would be frustrated only by a return to the old order of the law for justification.⁸⁷ The conditional clause in vs. 21 ("if justification comes through the law") is the opposite to what Paul had formulated in vs. 16 as that upon which all Christians (including, presumably, his opponents) agreed ("we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ") and for this reason is meant to be taken as a false presupposition. The relevance of this verse to the preceding argument requires that the phrase διὰ νόμου is equivalent to ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 2:16-17.⁸⁸ To affirm that the "works of the law" are needed for justification, Paul claims, is to treat the death of Christ as pointless,⁸⁹ to fail to see that it marks the doing away of the old order (2:18-20), to frustrate God's grace as revealed in Christ.

The expression "the grace of God" (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, a subjective genitive) is here given its content, at least in part, by 2:20. "God's grace is basically the gift of Christ, his person and all that he did, especially his dying out of love."⁹⁰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ is

⁸⁷ Betz, 126, argues that here δικαιοσύνη is used to describe what the act of justification is expected to produce. I find preferable the view of Longenecker, 95, who suggests that δικαιοσύνη picks up the forensic sense of the verb "justify" in vv. 15-16 and the ethical sense of the discussion in vv. 17-20. Paul would thus be saying that "for neither status nor lifestyle does the Christian depend on the law."

⁸⁸ So Betz, 126 and Longenecker, 95.

⁸⁹ δωρεάν does not mean "without result," a meaning that it never has in the NT. It does not mean "freely" in the sense of "gratuitously," nor "without (giving or receiving) pay" since, though this is a well-established meaning of the word, it would be completely inappropriate here. It means, rather, "without cause," "needlessly," as in John 15:25 (Burton, 141). So also Lightfoot, 120. If Christ's death were "without cause," then, in Paul's view, as Oepke, 64, puts it, "Gott hätte mit dem Tode seines Sohnes Spiegelfechten getrieben!"

⁹⁰ J. Lambrecht, "Transgressor by Nullifying God's Grace. A Study of Gal 2,18-

a dynamic expression, since Paul believes that in the Christ event, grace makes life a possibility for all humanity. To attempt to obtain justification on the basis of the observance of certain requirements of the law is to render the death of Christ pointless. It is to reject the grace of God "since God's χάρις is historically realised in Christ's death ὑπὲρ ἑμοῦ (v. 20)."⁹¹ In that sense, for Paul, obedience to the law and faith in Christ are antithetical.

In 2:15-21, then, we see that Paul portrays justification through faith in Christ as an exclusive alternative to justification through the law. With Sanders, we can say that 2:21 posits an "irreconcilable contradiction between [Christ's] death and justification through the law."⁹² It is also clear that, for Paul, God's *grace* is active and realized through the death of Christ in a way that is not true of the law: God's grace is set aside by those who insist

21," Biblica 72 (1991) 228.

⁹¹ T. J. Deidun, New Covenant Morality in Paul, (Rome: Biblical Institute press, 1981) 47.

⁹² Sanders, Law, 76. Cf. also 152. Sanders finds this verse to be evidence that Paul argues from solution to plight, claiming that only here in Galatians does Paul state unambiguously not only what his position is, but why he holds it. Paul's views can be expressed in the following propositional statements: 1) God sent Christ to offer righteousness; this would have been pointless if righteousness were already available by the law (2:21); 2) the law was not given to bring righteousness (3:21). That "the positive statement about righteousness through Christ grounds the negative one about the law" is, to Sanders, "self-evident" (Sanders, Law, 27). He later says that Gal 2:21 "seems to indicate that Paul himself saw his negative conclusions about the law to be required by the death of Christ" (Law, 165, n34).

Cosgrove, however, thinks it surprising that Sanders finds the key to Paul's views about the law in Galatians 2:21b, when so little of Paul's specific teaching about these themes is implied by this statement (C. Cosgrove, The Cross and the Spirit. A Study in the Argument and Theology of Galatians [Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1988] 142). In fact, 2:21b sounds more like the sort of argument that one would use to reinforce a basic point of agreement with one's dialogue partner (in this case, the Galatians and perhaps also the Judaizers who would have agreed with Paul on the importance of faith in Christ). A believer in Christ who would affirm that "no one is righteous except through Jesus Christ" (2:16a) would, in Paul's view, also find it easy to agree with the logic of saying that if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for nothing. Paul's statement only sounds "dogmatic" because he has reached a point of common ground with his readers that he feels no need to defend (Cosgrove, Cross, 143; cf. also J. Becker, Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles, tr. O. C. Dean [Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993] 287).

on observance of the "works of the law," not by Paul who considers himself dead to the law. That, for Paul, the self-sacrificing death of Christ is the supreme demonstration of God's grace is self-evident; it is also apparent that, for Paul, those who insist on a role for law observance in the believer's justification are thereby undercutting and opposing God's grace as demonstrated in Christ. What is not so clear -- though it remains a possibility -- is whether Paul sees the path of the law as in itself, by its own nature, operating on a principle other than that of divine grace. The law, after all, demanded human deeds, and it appears (as we have argued) that Paul regards human failure to comply with the law as the explanation why "no flesh" can be justified by its works. Is it not then the case that those who insist on law observance are, in Paul's judgment, not only opposing God's grace as specifically revealed in Christ, but also "setting aside the grace of God" *in principle* by requiring deeds of people that (in Paul's view) they have proved too weak to perform? Is law *in principle* being contrasted with divine grace?

We cannot be certain on the basis of this passage alone. What is at any rate clear is that Paul sees human salvation as utterly dependent on the grace of God. Grace is on display in the death of the Son, and Paul believes that an insistence on "works of the law" frustrates God's grace.

3. Gal 3:15-18

In Gal 3:15-18, Paul makes use of the idea of "promise" to demonstrate that Gentiles need not submit to the law to remain members of the Christian community. In so doing, he again reveals his understanding of humanity's dependence on God's grace for salvation.

In 3:15, using an example from daily life, Paul reminds the Galatians that "once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it." Paul exploits the different meanings of διαθήκη⁹³ to make his point about the nature of God's covenant with

⁹³ Unfortunately, this is lost in the English translation, since διαθήκη must be rendered by different English words. The term can mean "last will and testament," or

Abraham. In 3:15, where Paul wishes to draw attention to the irrevocable nature of the *διαθήκη*,⁹⁴ it seems to have the sense of "will." Paul makes the point that just as a human will is irrevocable, so is the *διαθήκη* God made with Abraham. Hence, the "law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise" (3:17).

In vs. 18, Paul introduces a further argument in support of his claim that the enjoyment of God's promise cannot be made dependent on observance of the law: "For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise" (3:18).

We have already noted that Paul believes humanity (in the "flesh") has not in fact lived in compliance with the law's demands and is therefore subject to the law's curse (3:10; cf. 3:13). It is thus fair to say that in Paul's scheme of thought, to make the "promise" contingent upon human compliance with the law's demands is in effect to guarantee that the promise will not be granted. But Paul's point in vs. 18 is not that "if the inheritance comes from the law (i.e., is only granted where there is compliance with the law), it will not be granted (because the law is transgressed)," but rather that to make the granting of the inheritance contingent on conformity with the law in itself means that "it no longer comes from the promise." The granting of the inheritance⁹⁵ must take place one way *or* the other, either by promise or through the law. At stake are two different modes of divine operation, so that what is granted by divine promise cannot then be made conditional on human

"covenant" (BAGD, 183).

⁹⁴ Of course, in the case of a "will," Roman and most other systems allowed the testator to cancel or modify it at any point during his lifetime, but only with his death was it validated. Then the testator obviously could not change it, and neither could anyone else (Bruce, 170). See Bruce, 170-71 for a summary of discussions concerning legal technicalities. See also on this Longenecker, 128-30.

⁹⁵ The inheritance (*κληρονομία*) in the covenant with Abraham had to do with land and material possessions (Gen 13:14-17; 15:7, 18-21; 17:3-8). These, however, were spiritualized in Pauline thought (cf. 5:21, 1 Cor 6:9-10; cf. also Eph 5:5 and esp. Col 3:24) (Longenecker, 134).

compliance with the law. Apparently Paul sees the divine promise to Abraham as a unilateral commitment on God's part, granted by divine grace (note the verb *κεχάρισται*, "but God *freely granted* it to Abraham through the promise"), whereas law, with its demands for human compliance, rests on a different principle.

This interpretation of 3:15-18 is supported by 3:10-12, where Paul indicates that the path of faith and that of the law are based on different principles. Regardless of how one translates 3:11b,⁹⁶ 3:12 makes it clear that Paul sees the law as operating on a different principle than that of faith enunciated in Hab 2:4. For Paul, "the law is not based on faith (ὁ δὲ νόμος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ πίστεως)": the δέ must be adversative, contrasting 12a with 11b.⁹⁷ The just live "by faith," but the law is not grounded in faith. It is, rather, based on a certain "doing," a point Paul attempts to ground by citing Lev 18:5: "whoever does the works of the law will live by them."⁹⁸ As in 3:18, it is the law's demand for human compliance which sets it apart from the path of faith that receives the divine promise.

What seemed implicit at the end of chapter 2 is thus made quite explicit in chapter 3. Clearly Paul sees "justification by faith" (2:16), the new life in Christ (2:20), and the inheritance of the promise made to Abraham (3:18) all as gifts of divine grace. It also becomes clear in chapter 3 (and may have been implicit in 2:21) that Paul sees the law as operating on a different principle: its requirement for "doing" sets it apart from the path of justification by faith (3:11-12) and the free bestowal of what God has promised (3:18).

⁹⁶ ὅτι ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (Hab 2:4) can be translated "The righteous shall live by faith," or "The one who is righteous through faith shall live."

⁹⁷ As Stanley notes, the reader who encounters vs. 12 after having read and accepted vs. 12, can only think that law and faith are, for Paul, incompatible. "By placing ὁ νόμος in direct contrast to the ἐκ πίστεως picked up from the Habbakuk citation, v. 12a declares the law to be absolutely disqualified as a channel leading to 'life'..." (Stanley, 504).

⁹⁸ So the NRSV; but note that for "works of the law," the Greek simply has αὐτά; the emphasis is clearly on the participle at the beginning, Ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς.

Humanity's dependence on God is for Paul of the very essence of the Christian gospel in a way that it could not be where "life" was made contingent on the "doing" of the law's demands (3:12).

At the same time it must be conceded that though this conviction clearly is a factor in Paul's argument, it is not the focus of Paul's discussion. Chapter 3 moves rapidly from one type of argument to others quite different, and the argument of 3:12 and 18 bears no special emphasis. Furthermore, though Paul does indeed see the law as resting on a *different* principle than that of faith and the divine promise, and though he argues that justification and the inheritance, since they cannot be given by mutually exclusive ways, are in fact granted by God apart from the law, he does not in this passage suggest that there is anything *inherently* wrong or sinful in attempting to live by the law's commands.

Transgression of the law brings a curse (3:10) from which the law itself can provide no deliverance (cf. 3:21!). The law belongs to the old order dominated by the flesh (3:2-3), so that it is, for Paul, inconceivable that humans would conform with its commands and so please God. But there is no criticism of any supposed self-reliance, self-righteousness, or pride on the part of those who attempt to do so. The Galatians, if they turn to the "works of the law," will have been "bewitched" (3:1), will have misunderstood the scriptures, will be returning to the "curse" of the law, and so on; but Paul does not accuse them of abandoning dependence on God for self-reliance.

4. Gal 4:5

In 4:4-5, Paul asserts that God sent Christ "to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children (ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν)." The term "adoption" is unique to the "Pauline" corpus in the NT.⁹⁹ An equivalent is unknown in the Hebrew Bible, but it is possible that Israel's experience in the Exodus

⁹⁹ Paul uses it also in Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4. Cf. also Eph 1:5.

influenced Paul's use of the idea, since in Rom 9:4 Paul refers to the "Israelites, to whom belongs the υἱοθεσία" (cf. Exod 4:22-23).¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, for the term itself, Roman law no doubt was the source.¹⁰¹ In the Roman institution of adoption, the son adopted into the new family was legally on the same level as those who were born into the family. Paul's choice of the term here presupposes dependence on God. "Sonship" is not regarded by Paul as natural; it must be conferred upon the believer by God. Note that adoption is identified with freedom from the law. This freedom, which Paul reminds the Galatians is theirs already, and which they ought not to abandon, is a gift of God. Against his opponents, Paul is asserting that

the salvation effected by the Spirit cannot be augmented..., for anyone who in the sign of sonship cries, "Abba," has the God of salvation in Christ in such an immediate way that it cannot be surpassed. Any expansion through the demand of circumcision would even destroy all of this.¹⁰²

The ground of sonship is a divine act¹⁰³ sealed by God through the gift of his Spirit into believers' hearts, the Spirit by which they cry, "Abba! Father!"

5. Gal 4:9a

The idea of initial dependence on God for salvation is also seen in Gal 4:9a, where, after indicating that the Galatians "have come to know God (vῦν δὲ γνόντες θεόν)," Paul immediately amends this¹⁰⁴ and says that in fact they came "to be known by God

¹⁰⁰ Bruce, 197. Cf. also Hos 11:1: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." See the discussion in J. I. Cook, "The Concept of Adoption in the Theology of Paul," in Saved by Hope. Essays in Honor of Richard C. Oudersluys, J. I. Cook, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 137-42.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings of Paul -- Adoption." JBL 88 (1969) 459. Lyall, however, probably overstates the case when he says Jewish law does not possess the concept. See on this Cook, 135-37.

¹⁰² Becker, 293.

¹⁰³ Cf. E. Schweizer, "υἱοθεσία." TDNT, VIII, 399.

¹⁰⁴ Longenecker notes that the phrase μᾶλλον δέ introduces a supplementary thought or idea that also corrects what has just been said and "transfers the emphasis from

(μᾶλλον δὲ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ)." He shifts the emphasis from the act of the Galatians to the act of God. The Galatians are not so much subjects that know God as they are objects of his knowing. The Galatians' experience of God was that of a family relationship (cf. 3:26 "sons of God"),¹⁰⁵ a relationship made possible by God. In God's "knowing" of the Galatians, he made it possible for them to know him. Without the former, the latter could not have happened.¹⁰⁶

6. Gal 5:4

In Gal 5:4 Paul says to the Galatians, "You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." Moffatt interprets the verse to mean that "Law and Grace are viewed as incompatible systems of religion. To toy with the former is to invalidate the latter...."¹⁰⁷ Oepke asserts that in 5:4 Paul is saying that because "'Gesetz' und Christus sich grundsätzlich ausschließen... wie Tag und Nacht, wie Feuer und Wasser, darum bedeutet jeder Versuch, durch das Gesetz gerecht zu werden..., automatisch die Aufhebung der Lebensverbindung mit Christus, das Herausfallen aus der Gnade."¹⁰⁸ Does Paul indeed portray grace and the law as being

what has just been said to the superior significance of what is now being said" (180). We have seen a similar (and revealing) Pauline reflex in 1 Cor 15:10, where upon claiming that Paul worked harder than the other apostles, Paul immediately corrects himself by saying that in fact it was the grace of God within him. Cf. also the qualification of "I live" in Gal 2:20.

¹⁰⁵ Longenecker, 180.

¹⁰⁶ "Der, der Gott aus dem Evangelium erkennt, vermag das nur als ein zuvor im Evangelium von Gott Erkannter und in seinem Leben Enthüllter" (Schlier, 202). The language here is very reminiscent of 1 Cor 8:3: εἰ δὲ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

¹⁰⁷ Moffatt, 182.

¹⁰⁸ Oepke, 119. In his comments on 5:4, Betz observes that for the apostle, "'grace' and 'Christ' stand in opposition to 'Law'" (261).

Others take the view that Paul is opposing grace and a legalistic misuse of the law (so Longenecker, 228). Burton says that "grace, by virtue of which God accepts as righteous those who have faith, itself excludes, and is excluded by, the principle of legalism, according to which the deeds of righteousness which one has performed are accredited to him as something which he has earned" (277). Bruce, 231, asserts that here Paul is emphasizing the incompatibility of faith and works, or divine grace and human merit. So Bultmann, Theology, I, 264.

antithetical in 5:4?

The seriousness of 5:4 has already been anticipated in 5:2: "Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you (Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει)." Here Paul speaks in the most stinging manner since 1:6-10,¹⁰⁹ telling the Galatians emphatically¹¹⁰ that submitting to the demands of the law with a view to justification will exclude them from any participation in Christ.¹¹¹ He then adds that "every man who lets himself be circumcised ... is obliged to obey the entire law." Paul wants the Galatians to know that if they intend to place themselves under the law, they are obligated to do all that it demands of its adherents.¹¹² The principle of 3:10 (cf. also 3:12) is being applied specifically to the Galatian situation: those who think they must adopt the law to be justified are reminded of the law's terms: its demands must be done, or it will bring a curse; and those demands cannot be selectively adopted.

The sharp tone of 5:2 is maintained in 5:4. The phrase οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε may be translated straightforwardly, "you who (the class of people who) seek to be justified by law."¹¹³ ἐν νόμῳ here apparently has the same meaning as in 3:11,

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Longenecker, 225.

¹¹⁰ Note both the opening Ἴδε and the emphatic use of ἐγὼ Παῦλος.

¹¹¹ Note that Paul is not necessarily opposed to Jewish Christians continuing to live according to the precepts of Torah (cf. 1 Cor 7:17-24; and note Gal 5:6; 6:15). What he is vigorously opposing here is the imposition of the demands of Torah upon Gentiles as necessary for salvation.

¹¹² Gal 5:3 is described by Nock as "Paul's misrepresentation of Judaism" (St. Paul [New York: Harper, 1938] 29). Cf. also Sanders, Law, 28. In a similar vein, but in light of 3:10, Moore speaks of Paul's "overstrained definition of the requirements of the Law" (Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, vol. 3 [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930] 150, n209). That those who would submit to the "yoke of the law" must intend to obey all its commands, the "light" as well as the "heavy," was, of course, a standard Jewish view (cf. 4 Macc 5:20-21). The Mishna speaks of being "heedful of a light commandment as of a weighty one" (*m. 'Abot* 2.1) and of fulfilling "the lightest duty even as the weightiest" (*m. 'Abot* 4.2). What Jews would find objectionable in Paul is the failure to take into account the law's provisions for repentance and atonement. On the issue, see Westerholm, "Law, Grace and the 'Soteriology' of Judaism," Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period, P. Richardson and S. Westerholm, eds. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1991) 70.

¹¹³ Taking δικαιοῦσθε as a conative present (so Bruce, 231, Burton, 276 and

where it means "in the sphere of," or, more specifically, "on the basis of," doing that which is demanded by the law.¹¹⁴ It is thus equivalent to ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 2:16 that, as we have argued, refers to "works demanded by the law."

Certainly, in Paul's view, those seeking to be justified ἐν νόμῳ have had their association with Christ nullified.¹¹⁵ καταργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ in effect repeats the Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει of 5:2. Both forcibly express Paul's idea that putting oneself under the law is to remove oneself completely from the sphere of Christ's influence, and thus to be excluded from the community of believers.¹¹⁶ Those who "seek to be justified by the law" are contrasted with the group in verse 5 who, "through the Spirit, by faith eagerly await the hope of justification (δικαιοσύνης)." Both groups have the goal of divine approval on the day of judgment, but "in Paul's terms, one group

Longenecker, 228). Cf. Fung, 223.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Burton, 276.

¹¹⁵ If it is true, as argued above, that the verbs in the present tense in 1:6 imply that the apostasy of the Galatians is still in progress, then the aorist καταργήθητε might be translated something like "you have become estranged from Christ" or "your association with Christ has been nullified" (Bruce, 231). Burton, 276, is probably wrong when he says that the force of the aorist is best expressed by the English perfect because the event belongs in the immediate past. Lightfoot correctly maintains that the aorists represent the consequences as instantaneous, with the meaning, "You are then and there shut out from Christ" (204). Cf. also Fung, 223-24.

Against Volf (*Paul and Perseverance* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990], 214-16) Paul seems to believe that it is a real possibility that some will fall away from the faith. Volf argues that such an interpretation is ruled out by a verse such as 3:4: "Did you experience so much for nothing? -- if it really was for nothing?" Volf says that Paul's "mood of incredulity" in 3:4a leads one to interpret that Paul could not possibly believe that the Galatians' experiences would end up being "for nothing." However, the fact that Paul is incredulous over the idea that the Galatians might be turning away does not rule out the possibility that he thinks it might happen. Volf mitigates the force of Paul's warnings and fears. For Paul's statement about being "cut off from Christ" in 5:4 to have any real force it must represent the real possibility that despite Paul's confidence, some of the Galatians may indeed find themselves outside the community of faith. Moreover, the use of the aorist in 5:4 "dramatically represents the consequence as a historical fact, so as to insist the more on the imminence of the danger run by those who are being warned" (Zer, 85, § 257; cf. MHT III, 74).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Luther: "Whoever falls away from grace simply loses the propitiation, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, freedom, life, etc., which Christ earned for us by His death and resurrection" (*Luther's Works*, vol. 27, J. Pelikan, ed. [Saint Louis: Concordia, 1964] 18).

bases its hope on the law, the other on faith."¹¹⁷ Note that 5:5 portrays justification as a future event. For Paul, justification is not simply that which makes possible membership in the believing community, but it represents as well a future hope. Paul looks forward to a future favourable and positive judgment for those whose faith is in Christ.¹¹⁸ The Galatians, Paul says, are on the verge of giving up their present *and* their future in Christ.

As we have seen elsewhere, Paul sees submission to the law and faith in Christ as alternative paths to justification, with only the latter being regarded as viable. If anything, the exclusivity of the two paths is insisted on still more strongly in this text! Adherence to the law with a view to justification cuts one off from Christ and his benefits. No doubt, Paul's understanding that two different covenants are involved (developed in 4:21-31) accounts in part for his view of the exclusivity of the two paths. But does he suggest here (as in 3:11-12, 18, and perhaps in 2:21) that two conflicting principles are at stake? Is the law conceived of as inherently different from grace?

Again, the point is not emphasized, but it appears to be a factor in Paul's thinking. To adopt the law with a view to being justified is, on the one hand, to incur an obligation to "do" the whole law (5:3) and, on the other hand, to forfeit grace (5:4) and the benefits conferred by Christ (5:2). Thus, in Paul's view, the Galatians are in danger not only of falling from divine favour, but also of abandoning the path of divine grace for one in which their compliance with the law is essential.¹¹⁹ It should be noted (again!) that Paul does not

¹¹⁷ Westerholm, Israel's Law, 145.

¹¹⁸ Here, given the eschatological reference, δικαιοσύνη is probably a reference to a favourable verdict by God in the last judgment.

¹¹⁹ Paul is probably making a distinction (that faith in Christ and doing the works of the law to obtain justification are incompatible) that his opponents did not. Betz believes that although for Paul "grace" and "Christ" stand in opposition to Torah, this does not *a priori* exclude any other arrangements. Betz believes that one can safely assume that in Jewish Christianity the concept of "grace" and "Christ," on the one hand, and that of "Law," on the other, must have gone hand in hand. Betz believes it quite possible that the anti-Pauline opposition had persuaded the Galatians to switch from Pauline theology to their Jewish-Christian theology, without implying that they need "drop out of grace" and forsake Christ. Switching over to the views of Paul's opponents did not involve giving up

denounce the latter path as being one of self-reliance or self-righteousness. He does, however, seem to imply that it involves the undertaking of obligations beyond what the Galatians will be able to fulfill.

Thus far we have focused on texts that highlight the believers' dependence on God for salvation. Paul recognizes that the very reason he and others are believers is God's gracious call. Dependence on God's grace is also evident in 3:15-18, where Paul refers to the promise of salvation given to Abraham at God's initiative. The metaphor of adoption also underscores the point, since "adoption" is conferred by God upon individuals. In 4:9, Paul stresses that knowledge of God is possible only because God "knows" people first. Finally, we have seen that for Paul, one cannot attempt to do the law with a view to justification and expect to remain a beneficiary of God's grace as it was revealed in Christ. For Paul, to seek justification through the works of the law is, in effect, to abandon one's utter dependence on God.

B. Dependence on God in the life of faith

For Paul, dependence on God not only characterizes the beginning of the believer's life of faith, but is a fundamental component of the matrix of the believer's life, past,

Christianity in favour of Judaism. Rather, says Betz, it was like changing "denominations" (261). Paul, according to Betz, believes that those born Jews can remain as they are, do that which they always have done, and be believers in Christ (cf. 2:15 -- "We are Jews by nature"). Gentiles, however, who have become believers in Christ, and wish to become Jews, demonstrate that for them "grace" and "Christ" (i.e., salvation through Christ outside of the law) are not sufficient and that to come under the Torah is necessary for their salvation. This implies that Christ is no longer a saviour and "grace" is no longer grace. The result for Gentiles is not a mere change of "denomination," but a conversion to non-Christian Judaism. Thus they are excommunicated (1:8-9).

Interpreters who believe that Paul contrasts grace and works and argues for salvation *sola fide* have in the past assumed that both his opponents and Judaism also distinguished between grace and works, but concluded that salvation was by works. It is now practically axiomatic that Judaism did not believe God's grace to be incompatible with God's requirements. However, Westerholm cautions that one should not conclude that "since Paul's opponents did not distinguish between grace and requirements, *Paul himself could not have done so either*" (Israel's Law, 150, emphasis added). With Laato, it seems that "Paulus und die Christen legen allerdings einen besonderen Nachdruck auf den *Kontrast von Gnade und Werken*" (T. Laato, Paulus und das Judentum: Anthropologische Erwägungen [Åbo: Åbo Akademis förlag, 1991] 55.

present and future. In this section we will note Paul's insistence that one can only live the kind of life which God demands of Christians because of God's work within the believer.

Earlier we noted that Paul is pessimistic about humanity's ability (or that of the "flesh") to do the works of the law. Before the coming of Christ, people were unable to live the kind of life God demanded of them. Even the law, Paul has argued with post-conversion vision, could not give life, since it had no means for enabling people to carry out what it demands. The answer to this dilemma had to wait until the coming of the new age, the new covenant brought about by Christ. In the post-law era, believers are enabled to live in a manner pleasing to God through the eschatological gift of the Spirit (cf. Ezek 36:27). Now, Paul argues, God gives believers the ability to do what he asks of them.

1. Gal 1:15

For Paul, God's equipping of believers to serve includes the apostle's own call to be the "apostle to the Gentiles."¹²⁰ The call by which he came into the community is seen to make possible his continued service as a member of the community. In 1:13, Paul reminds the Galatians of his former life in Judaism (Ἠκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ) when he violently persecuted the church and attempted to destroy it. He was, he says, "zealous for the traditions of my ancestors." In a phrase which underscores divine sovereignty, he observes that, in spite of his questionable track record, God¹²¹ "set him apart" before he was born (ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου) and called him διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ to be an apostle to the Gentiles (1:15).

¹²⁰ In view of the phrase ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν in 1:16, and that Paul's language (ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου) echoes Jeremiah 1:15, it seems most likely that Paul has in mind in Gal 1:15 his call to be "the apostle to the Gentiles."

¹²¹ The subject of the participles ἀφορίσας and καλέσας is clearly God (cf. the discussion of 1:6). Cf. also 2:8: "for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles."

Here χάρις functions differently than in 1:6, where it is also connected with καλέω. χάρις is here the agency by which God's call came to Paul, that is to say, the call results from God's grace. The point of mentioning his call to preach to the Gentiles is to show that he did not receive his gospel through any human agency.¹²² Paul's was a divine commission. The reader is reminded that "Paulus war als Gestezesfanatiker der denkbar

¹²² F. Watson (Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986]) uses sociological analysis to minimize the significance of the theological aspects of Galatians and does not believe that Paul perceived himself from the time of his conversion as the "apostle to the Gentiles." Watson's thesis is that Paul first worked as a missionary to the Jews who was faithful to the law and only later reverted to his pre-Christian view that Christian faith and law-observance were incompatible. Furthermore, it was only after the Jews reacted negatively to the success of Paul's law-free gospel that he propounded a theological antithesis between faith and works of the law.

Watson's historical reconstruction has been contested. Phil 3:6 reflects a belief that in Paul's pre-conversion days faith in Christ and law-observance were incompatible. This could well have been reinforced in the Damascus road experience (Barclay, 239). Hence it is inherently likely that Paul's conversion led to a questioning of his previous commitment to the law. Watson's thesis, that Paul first worked as a missionary to the Jews who was faithful to the law and only later reverted to his pre-Christian view that Christian faith and law-observance were incompatible, seems unnecessarily complicated. It is also built on fragile evidence (Gal 5:11; 1 Cor 9:20; Rom 11:11-13) and appears to be contradicted by Paul's insistence that his call itself was to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 1:15-16; Rom 1:5; 11:13; 15:16, etc.; Barclay, 239, n25).

Although Watson does not exclude the possibility of theological interpretations of Paul (Watson, 20), his attraction to the sociological notion of "ideology" (theory used to legitimate established social facts and practices) often leads him to evaluate Paul's theological statements on the law and Judaism as reflections which are secondary to primary historical fact (31).

Barclay wonders if, even granting the correctness of Watson's reconstruction, we cannot ask if a letter like Galatians (or Romans) reflects the continuing interaction between ideas and social conditions that some sociologists regard as a better explanation of such texts than a purely reductionist notion of ideology. Perhaps the social context of Paul's mission both prompted theological conclusions and was itself shaped by Jewish theological convictions that were refashioned in a Christian context (Barclay, 239. See M. Hill, A Sociology of Religion, London, 1972 and P. Berger, The Social Reality of Religion). It is, Barclay claims, finally a mistake to attempt to "explain" Paul's perspective on Judaism solely by reductionistic sociological means that yield a distorted image of Paul (243). From a sociological perspective, it is possible to imagine Paul attempting to maintain the separation of his Gentile Christian communities over against Judaism. But this ought not to minimize the importance of Paul's attempts to articulate the differences between his own position and that of his opponents (see also W. S. Campbell, "Did Paul Advocate Separation from the Synagogue? A Reaction to Francis Watson: Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach," SJTh 42 [1989] 464).

schlechteste Mann für ein gesetzesfreies Evangelium unter den Heiden."¹²³ By human (or even, one might be tempted to think, divine) standards, there was no possible basis for Paul's being called to be an apostle. Yet Paul is convinced that this is exactly what happened. God "called" him to preach to the Gentiles. That his call came without regard to external considerations¹²⁴ underlines the idea of dependence on God. As Longenecker says, "what Paul is stressing... is that his apostleship stems from God's good pleasure, ordination, and call."¹²⁵

2. Gal 2:20

In Gal 2:20, Paul evidences the same, almost instinctive, need to express dependence on God as he often shows following claims about what he or others have done. Earlier we noted in Gal 4:9 that Paul implies that the Galatians would not have come to know God without first being known by God. Here, after claiming that he has died to the law in order that he might live to God, Paul immediately shifts the focus to Christ, who he believes is living out his life through him. Paul claims that he is indwelt by the risen Christ: hence "it is no longer I who live: it is Christ who lives in me (ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός)."¹²⁶ And the life I now live in the flesh¹²⁷ I live by faith in the Son of God...." The resurrected Jesus is the effective power in the new age. The only reason he is able to have "faith in Christ" (2:16), the reason he "lives to God" and is "dead to the law" (2:19), is because of the divine life within him.¹²⁸

¹²³ D. Zeller, Charis bei Philon und Paulus (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990) 140.

¹²⁴ Although the call that he speaks of here is his call to preach to the Gentiles, it may be that the idea of a general call to all believers (as in 1:6) is included here.

¹²⁵ Longenecker, 30.

¹²⁶ The NRSV's translation is less emphatic than the Greek. δέ is obviously adversative and its appearance in the first two clauses of 2:20 only serves to underscore the significance of the point for Paul, though it admittedly would not be good English style to reproduce both of them.

¹²⁷ σάρξ here refers to his existence in the body, his earthly existence.

¹²⁸ In Galatians, the language of Christ living within the believer is equivalent to that

3. Gal 5:13-25

In 5:13, Paul reminds his readers that they "were called to freedom (ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε)." But this "freedom," he tells his readers, is not to be used as an occasion for self-indulgence. Quite the contrary, it provides the opportunity for the Galatians to "become slaves to one another." Whereas in 5:1, he says to them that they are not to submit again to a yoke of slavery (the law), now he tells them that, in fact, they have been called to a freedom which paradoxically manifests itself in slavery to one another. The freedom Paul is advocating "has stringent moral obligations built into it -- not the obligations of the law but the obligation of love."¹²⁹ For Paul, "the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (5:6). The person who is justified is set free to live in a manner pleasing to God.¹³⁰

Thus Paul sees the call for Christian works in what J. Barclay has called "peculiarly dynamic terms -- it was not simply a matter of what God *had* done (in election, etc.) but what he *continued to do* in and for the believer."¹³¹ The way Paul expresses this is by reference to the Spirit, a way of denoting God's presence and power. "By describing Christian ethics in terms of 'walking in/by the Spirit' Paul could convey this sense of *constant* divine power and direction...."¹³²

of the Spirit within the believer (cf. 4:6; 5:16-21).

¹²⁹ Barclay, 109.

¹³⁰ Barrett, 62.

¹³¹ Barclay, 227.

¹³² Barclay, 227. Cf. also Schweizer, who observes that walking by the Spirit "signifies man's acceptance of the power of God that is not under his own control and which is now to shape his life instead of his own power" (E. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα," TDNT, VI, 430). A. Thiselton, "Flesh," NIDNTT I, 681-82, well says that

the Spirit in the NT enables a man to go beyond what his own past has made him, giving him new desires, new capacities, new horizons. If 'life' is understood in the dynamic sense which it often has in the Biblical writings, to live according to the flesh is to travel into the cul-de-sac which ends in death; to live according to the Spirit is to enter life.

This idea of dependence upon the Spirit is also expressed by the metaphor "fruit of the Spirit" in 5:22. Paul's description of desired traits and attitudes of believers as "fruit"¹³³ of the Spirit" is in contrast to τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός to which verse nineteen refers. The phrase itself suggests that such virtues are given through the Spirit as gifts of God as opposed to being purely products of human activity (ἔργα).¹³⁴

IV. Human Responsibility and Reward in Galatians

A. Human responsibility

For Paul, the awareness of complete dependence on God does not rule out the idea of human responsibility. As in 1 Thessalonians and 1 and 2 Corinthians, here too Paul holds believers responsible for living as God requires. We have already noted how for Paul, a moral life is bound together with justification. Paul also insists that, in some way, God rewards people for how they live. For him, human responsibility, reward and dependence on God's grace go hand in hand.

The whole of Galatians assumes that Christians are responsible for their actions. As we have already seen, in 1:6 Paul lays the responsibility for the desertion of his gospel at the feet of the Galatians. In 4:9, Paul asks how the Galatians can "want to be enslaved" to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου again. Clearly for Paul, believers are not merely carried along by the Spirit. The believer does have a role to play. Paul believes that people make decisions to do or not to do as God wills.

In 5:13-15, Paul says that believers are not to "use" their new freedom in Christ as an "opportunity for self-indulgence," but rather are to "become slaves to one another." Here

¹³³ The collective singular, καρπός.

¹³⁴ Cf. Burton, 313, who suggests that love, joy, peace, etc., are the natural product of the vital relation between the Spirit and the believer, as opposed to attempts to live life according to the law, or the flesh. Cf. Oepke, 140: "καρπός bezeichnet die Lebensäußerungen als organisches Ergebnis der innerlichen Beschaffenheit...." Cf. also Barrett, 77.

too, Paul holds believers responsible for their actions. As noted above, in 5:17 Paul reminds his readers that the flesh is opposed to the Spirit, and that they are responsible for not allowing the flesh to have its way. But it is perhaps worthy of note that Paul does not tell the believers here to resist the flesh; instead they are to submit to the Spirit. If believers allow themselves to be led by the Spirit, then they will overcome the flesh. Believers are not passive, but Paul assumes that they can do what God requires of them only with divine enabling.

5:25 also seems to imply that believers are not completely passive. Paul asserts that if Christians "live by the Spirit (ἐἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι)," they are to be "guided by the Spirit."¹³⁵ The very fact that Paul encourages the Galatians to allow themselves to be guided by the Spirit implies not that believers adopt a completely passive stance, but rather that they are to respond to the Spirit's leading. If the Spirit is the source of the believer's life,¹³⁶ believers must let themselves be guided by the Spirit. That the Spirit is the source of life and of the ability to please God does not rule out human participation.

Human responsibility is also assumed in 6:4: "All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride." The word ἕκαστος emphasizes the responsibility of individuals to test their own work. The greatest emphasis comes on the words ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ ("his own work"), since they are at the beginning of the sentence.¹³⁷ The command for believers to examine their own work is a call to shift their critical eye from others to themselves. It is a call, as Grundmann puts it, "to test their own accreditation."¹³⁸ "Christian feelings of exultation and congratulation should spring from one's own actions as seen in the light of God's approval and not derive

¹³⁵ There is in fact little actual difference between πνεύματι στοιχεῖν and πνεύματι περιπατεῖν (v. 16) and πνεύματι ἄγεσθαι (v. 18).

¹³⁶ Cf. the NEB's "If the Spirit is our source of life...", which takes πνεύματι as a dative of means.

¹³⁷ Fung, 290.

¹³⁸ W. Grundmann, "δόκιμος," *TDNT*, II, 260.

from comparing oneself to what others are or are not doing."¹³⁹ It seems that in Paul's mind, people will not be so quick to boast once they realize who it is who is judging their life. For our purposes, it is significant that Paul wishes the Galatians to realize that ultimately they are responsible to God for their actions.

B. Reward

Finally, we must note that, as in 1 and 2 Corinthians, so also in Galatians, Paul speaks of reward. Judgment plays a prominent role in the paraenetic sections of Galatians.

Paul asserts in 5:21 that people who do such "works of the flesh" will not inherit the kingdom of God. Clearly, inclusion in the kingdom is contingent on one's deeds, however much they may be the expression of the life of the Spirit within. In 6:7-8, Paul makes statements that seem to say that one's destiny depends on what one does. In 6:7, Paul uses a well-known figure of speech: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked (θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται), for you reap whatever you sow."¹⁴⁰ Given the context, in which Paul urges the Galatians to "walk by the Spirit," and portrays for them a contrasting "walk by the flesh," μυκτηρίζω must connote "the despising of God by a man's being, by his whole manner of life."¹⁴¹ A person cannot claim to accept the gospel and its attendant obligations and at the same time live in accord with the desires of the flesh.¹⁴² It may also be that Paul is reminding the Galatians that failure to support their teachers financially is the same as failing to honour God.¹⁴³ In 6:8, he unpacks the maxim of sowing for the Galatians: "If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit." Probably Paul is here portraying the period of one's earthly life as a time of sowing, with a particular harvest

¹³⁹ Longenecker, 277.

¹⁴⁰ Burton, 341, notes that it occurs in Plato, *Phaedrus*, 260C; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.3.4; Prov 22:8; Hos 8:7; 10:12; Job 4:8; Sir 7:3; Luke 19:21; 1 Cor 9:11; 2 Cor 9:6.

¹⁴¹ H. Preisker, "μυκτηρίζω," *TDNT*. IV, 796.

¹⁴² Fung, 294.

¹⁴³ So Burton, 339.

(destruction or eternal life) which people will reap in the eschaton.¹⁴⁴

Although Paul is keenly aware of the believer's dependence on God, this does not prevent him from calling attention to the responsibility of the believer and to the reward for the successful discharge of that responsibility. Note how easily in chapter five Paul moves from human responsibility to divine enabling and back. In 5:1, on the basis of the fact that Christ has set them free, Paul urges the Galatians to "stand fast." In 5:5 he says that it is "by the Spirit" that they "wait for the hope of righteousness." In 5:10, Paul expresses confidence "in the Lord" that they will think as they ought, and in 5:13 he says that they were "called to freedom." This is followed by the exhortations of 5:13-15 and Paul's striking command to "live by the Spirit" in 5:16. That Paul gives a command to "live by the Spirit" seems to imply that the human will has a role to play in the life of faith. Believers must make a conscious effort not to "gratify the desires of the flesh" (5:16). They are responsible for following the leading of the Spirit. In 5:25 Paul says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit." Although the enabling of the Spirit is available for believers it is not, for Paul, an irresistible current that sweeps believers along. In 6:7-8, Paul again assumes both human and divine "responsibility," since his argument assumes that if believers do what is required of them, God will be faithful to his promises.

V. Conclusions

In Galatians we again see Paul's awareness that believers are dependent upon God for salvation. It is God who calls them into a "state of grace," a "place" where they continually experience God's favour. It is because of grace that believers are no longer subject to "the elements of the world." The promise granted to Abraham (in a covenant initiated by God) which finds its fulfillment in the church depends not upon performance of the works of the law, but rather on God's sovereign will. In saying that the Galatians were "known by

¹⁴⁴ So Betz, 508-09.

God," Paul implies that the relationship which believers have with God is made possible because God initiates it.

Dependence on God goes beyond the initial experience of salvation. Those who are freed from the law and the flesh are to live in a manner pleasing to God. Paul makes it clear that the believer is able to live a moral life because God makes it possible to do so. God frees people to live selfless lives of service, exhibiting the "fruit of the Spirit." The ability to live such a life thus comes from the eschatological gift of the Spirit. Yet in Galatians, as in the other letters we have seen, though Paul attributes the good that believers do to the work of God within them, he clearly assumes that they can frustrate the divine will by returning to the deeds of the "flesh." Hence the need for exhortation, the continuing place for human responsibility, and even the motivation and legitimation for reward.

For Paul, it is clear that without God's help, people would be unable to extricate themselves from their plight. In Galatians we see that Paul believes that people would not have become believers were it not for God taking the initiative. 4:9 sums this up well: if the Galatians had not first been known by God, they would never have known him. In Galatians, we see Paul's belief that people "get in" and "stay in" the community only because God calls them and empowers them. Yet this does not render them purely passive instruments in God's hands. There is, as Barclay says, a "constant interplay between the work of the believer and the grace of God."¹⁴⁵ Paul is clear that it is the latter that makes the former possible. But Christians, he implies, must always decide to let that grace operate in their lives. In other words, all is of grace for Paul, but grace does not equal compulsion. Christians can choose to cooperate with God, and if they do so, they will be rewarded. There is thus an ethical component to faith. God makes possible the right, but

¹⁴⁵ Barclay, 227.

Christians must choose to do it! That, it seems, is why Paul insists on the importance of human responsibility. Paul is very much aware that the active agent in the Christian's life is God -- that is why he says in 2:20 that Christ lives in him. But Paul believes just as strongly that Christians do have a role to play. They must allow themselves to let Christ live in them, or, as he puts it in 5:16, they must choose to "live by the Spirit."

It is thus not true to say that in Galatians, Paul sets up an absolute contrast between faith and works and thus, by implication, works and grace. He argues against works demanded by the *law* as a means to securing life, since humanity in the "flesh" does not keep the law. Only with the eschatological gift of the Spirit can believers produce "fruit" pleasing to God. He does, however, assume that believers will do good works. Being a believer has moral implications, for which Paul holds believers responsible. Yet it is God working within the believer that makes such a life a possibility. Paul will make demands of people, but he believes that the ethical imperative must be accompanied by the empowerment of the Spirit, or there is no possibility that ethical demands will find expression.

Chapter Five -- Grace in Romans

As in the discussion of Galatians, the question of the relation between the law and grace must figure prominently in our study of Romans. Furthermore, we must consider the relation between the "justification" texts and other texts in the epistle in which grace is a factor. We will also explore Paul's perceptions of the relation between dependence on God, human responsibility and reward in Romans.

I. Introductory Matters

Pauline authorship of the letter is not in serious dispute and it is almost universally accepted that chapters one to fifteen were sent to Rome.¹ The church in Rome certainly would have had a significant percentage of Gentiles among its members, though there was doubtless a Jewish presence as well.² Romans was probably written somewhere in the

¹ Some scholars believe that the letter was an encyclical or that it was sent to Ephesus. For a discussion of reasons advanced for these views, see J. C. Beker, Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 59-63. I assume the epistolary integrity of the letter, apart from the problems of the varying textual tradition regarding the position of the benediction and the doxology, which are not easily solvable. On the relation of ch. 16 to the rest of the letter, see K. P. Donfried, "A Short Note on Romans 16," The Romans Debate, K. P. Donfried, ed., revised and expanded edition (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) 44-52 and J. I. H. McDonald, "Was Romans 16 a Separate Letter?" NTS 16 (1969-70) 369-72. Cf. also W. G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, tr. H. C. Kee, revised and enlarged (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975) 314-320; R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier, Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity (New York: Paulist Press, 1983) 106-09; J. D. G. Dunn, Romans, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1988) 884-85 and J. R. Edwards, Romans (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1992) 352-53, 362-63.

² In 1:5-6 Paul refers to the "obedience of faith among all the Gentiles...including yourselves." In 1:13 Paul expresses the desire to "reap some harvest" among the Romans, just as he had "among the rest of the Gentiles" (cf. 15:15-16). In 11:13, Paul says that he is speaking to "you Gentiles" in contrast to non-Christian Jews. In much of chs. 9-11 Paul addresses non-Jews concerning the fate of the Jewish people (Kümmel, 309). The apparent appeal to Jews in Rom 2 seems to be rhetorical, and therefore cannot be used to draw inferences about the identity of Paul's readership (this also applies to 4:1). See on this S. Stowers, The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans (Chico, California: Scholar's Press, 1981) 112. In 7:1 Paul assumes that his readers know the law, but this assumption need not preclude a significantly Gentile audience. Yet the Roman community would not have been composed purely of Gentile Christians. Otherwise, Paul's statements to the effect that Jews and Gentiles have the same responsibility before God (1:16; 2:9, 25-26; 3:29; 10:12) and "the broad discussion of the grounds for the unbelief of the majority of Israel, including the proclamation of God's ongoing redemptive goal for Israel (9-11), would alike be incomprehensible" (Kümmel, 310).

middle 50s,³ and lacks the sharply polemic tone of the earlier Galatians. There has been far more written on the purpose(s) and themes of the letter than can be discussed here.⁴ The divergence of views indicates that we cannot suggest one overarching purpose for the letter, but that we must rather see, with Beker, "a convergence of motivations."⁵ Although Romans cannot be regarded as an abstract theological summary,⁶ Paul's own circumstances⁷ and the need to introduce himself and his gospel⁸ to the Roman Christians and gain their support seem to have elicited from him a more systematic presentation of his views than we find in other epistles.

Though Rom 1:18-4:25 might be taken as a dialogue with Jews, it is in fact directed at both Jews and Gentiles, albeit with a focus on discounting Jewish status and privileges by showing that the Jew, like the Gentile, fails to live up to God's demands and that both are justified by faith. Rom 5:1-8:39 explicates the meaning of life in Christ,⁹ chs 9-11 answer

³ A date early in Nero's reign (54-68) might make sense of the circumstances in Rome that seem to be reflected in 13:6-7 with its reference to paying taxes. Tacitus indicates that the year 58 saw a great number of complaints concerning taxes, and the situation had no doubt been building up for several years before this (Dunn, Romans, xliii-xliv, 766). For alternate views, see Knox (Chapters in a Life of Paul [New York: Abingdon, 1950], 86), who dates the letter in 53-54 and Luedemann (Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, tr. F.S. Jones [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984]), who places its writing in the winter of 51-52.

⁴ K. P. Donfried has edited a helpful collection of essays on these and related questions entitled The Romans Debate, revised and expanded edition (Peabody: Hendrikson, 1991). See also the bibliography in Dunn, Romans, liv-lv. For a summary of the various solutions that have been adopted to the problem of the purpose of Romans, see L. A. Jervis, The Purpose of Romans: A Comparative Letter Structure Investigation, JSNTSS 55 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 11-28.

⁵ See Beker, 71-74.

⁶ This view is assumed, e.g., by A. Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949; translation of Romarbrevet [Stockholm: Verbum, 1944]).

⁷ Cf. G. Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in The Romans Debate, 16-28.

⁸ Jervis, 161-64, suggests that the letter may have served as a substitute for an immediate visit from Paul. Since the church in Rome would have met in various house-churches, which likely had been founded by more than one individual, the danger was that the movement might have splintered. Paul "may have hoped that his presence mediated by the letter would help unify the church in allegiance to his Gospel" (M. Seifrid, Justification by Faith: the Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme [New York: Brill, 1992] 208).

⁹ Beker, 83.

concerns about Israel's salvation now that Christ has come,¹⁰ and chs 12-15 form the paraenetic section of the letter.

II. The Human Condition in Romans

Before looking at what Paul says about grace in Romans, we will examine his portrayal of the human condition in order to answer the question, "To what problem (or problems) is grace an answer?" Unlike 1 and 2 Corinthians, which do not contain specific sections devoted to humanity's plight, entire portions of Romans concern the topic.

First, we must take note of Paul's views on the position of unbelieving humanity with respect to God. 1:18-32 begins by declaring what Paul will attempt to show throughout the first three chapters -- that all humanity is guilty before God of particular sins that are rooted in a fundamental refusal to acknowledge God and give him his due.¹¹ Humanity, Paul argues, despite its knowledge of God, "did not honor him as God or give thanks to him..." (1:21). Paul believes that humanity has knowledge of God through creation (cf. 1:20; 2:14), but chose to repress that awareness and thus is without excuse. Instead of worshipping the creator, humanity allowed its thinking to become "futile" with the result that "senseless minds were darkened" (1:21). Paul's claim that the unrighteous have "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles" (1:23) can only be a reference to idol worship. The guilt of humanity is thus due not to ignorance, but to suppression of truth. Guilt is not an intellectual problem, but a problem of the will. Humanity has failed to respond correctly to God and thus is guilty.¹²

This fundamental failure to "acknowledge God" (καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεόν, 1:28), Paul asserts, has led to a "giving over" by God of sinful people to

¹⁰ See further the discussion of 9-11 below.

¹¹ As Westerholm notes, although Paul refers to sins for which pagans were well known, he himself does not use the word ἔθνη ("heathen"), but rather addresses the "ungodliness and wickedness of men" that bring down the wrath of God on humanity (1:18) (Israel's Law and the Church's Faith [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988] 157).

¹² Edwards, 51.

particular sins and their effects. Because of the worship of idols, God "gave them up (παρέδωκεν αὐτούς)" to "the lusts of their hearts" (1:24), to "degrading passions" (1:26), to "a debased mind and to things that should not be done" (1:28).¹³ 1:18, which says that "the wrath of God is revealed (ἀποκαλύπτεται) from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth," probably refers to the present "giving up." But this, of course, does not exhaust God's wrath. In 2:5, Paul speaks of a future eschatological judgment of the wicked.¹⁴ 2:8-9 claims that "for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek." Thus the wicked Jew and the wicked Gentile alike will be punished. 2:12 says that "those who have sinned apart from the law (ἀνόμως) will perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law" (see further the discussion of 2:12 below). In 2:17-3:18, Paul attempts to show that Jews are guilty before God as part of his point that all are guilty before God, and he cites a catena of scriptures to that effect (3:10-18). Gentiles have sinned by ignoring what knowledge of God they had, and Jews, Paul argues, in spite of their privileges as God's people, have transgressed the law, and therefore stand under God's judgment (cf. especially 2:17-29). Paul targets the Jewish "sense of security and privilege, to show that this does not exempt them from God's judgement any more than ignorance exempts the

¹³ Cf. Stählin, "ὀργή," *TDNT*, V, 444, who notes that the threefold παρέδωκεν corresponds to the threefold (μετ)ἠλλάξαν (vv. 23, 25, 26). He asserts that here "cause and effect are one and the same." Similarly, E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, tr. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 47, believes that Paul asserts that "moral perversion is the result of God's wrath, not the reason for it." This is probably somewhat overstated, given 1:32, which indicates that those who practice wicked deeds "know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die...." God is abandoning people to their sins, that is, to shameful deeds with disastrous effects, but they are deeds that, Paul claims, people know are displeasing to God.

¹⁴ "But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." That the "day of wrath (ἡμέρα ὀργῆς)" is still future is indicated by Paul's reference to the "storing" up of wrath, the implication being that, in the (near?) future, that wrath will be unleashed.

Gentiles."¹⁵ In this passage, all, Jews and Gentiles, are culpable because of particular acts of wrong-doing.¹⁶

What, then, are those who are under God's judgment to do in order to escape this judgment? For Paul, the law does not provide a way out: "no human being will be justified in his sight by deeds prescribed by the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), for through the law comes the knowledge of sin" (3:20). Exactly what Paul means by this claim has generated considerable discussion.

Here, as in Galatians, ἔργα νόμου is to be understood as a reference to the "works demanded by the law," but this still does not tell us why Paul excludes works of the law as a means to justification. It has been suggested that Paul thinks "works of the law" do not lead to justification¹⁷ because people do them in a spirit of "legalism,"¹⁸ or of (Jewish) exclusivity.¹⁹ A third possibility is that, like Gal 2:16, Paul has in mind a failure to do what the law requires of its adherents.²⁰

¹⁵ S. G. Wilson, "Paul and Religion," Paul and Paulinism. Essays in Honour of C.K. Barrett (London: SPCK, 1982) 341.

¹⁶ Note that in chs. 1-3 sin is portrayed as individual acts of wrong-doing, though (at least to some extent) they are all seen as expressions of a fundamental refusal to acknowledge God. This is commonly contrasted with the view of sin as an enslaving power in Romans 5-7. Paul can assert that humanity is guilty of particular sins, then later portray humanity as being in slavery to sin, indicating that for him, sin can be both an act committed willfully as well as a power which enslaves. Cf. Ziesler's discussion of sin in chapter five of Pauline Christianity, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹⁷ For a discussion of δικαίω, which I take as forensic and relational, see the discussion of Gal 2:16 in my chapter on Galatians.

¹⁸ Cf., e.g., Bultmann, Theology, I, 262-67; Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, tr. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1969) 226-27; Cranfield, Romans, I, 198; H. Hübner, Law in Paul's Thought, tr. J. Grieg (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984) 113-24; Käsemann, 102-03 and D. Fuller, "Paul and 'the Works of the Law,'" WThJourn 38 (1975) 35.

¹⁹ So Dunn, "Yet Once More -- 'the Works of the Law': A Response," JSNT 46 (1992) 102. Cf. B. Longenecker, who argues that "works of the law" signifies practices "necessary to Jewish lifestyle which reinforced their self-identity as a unique and superior people..." (Eschatology and the Covenant. A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 1-11 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991] 201). This is also the view adopted by D. B. Garlington, The Obedience of Faith. A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context, WUNT 38 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991) 242-53.

²⁰ So U. Wilckens, "Was heißt bei Paulus: 'Aus Werken des Gestezes wird kein Mensch gerecht?'" Rechtfertigung als Freiheit: Paulusstudien, 77-109 (Neukirch:

That "legalism" is not in view seems clear from the thrust of chs. 1-3. In illustrating his claim that people have sinned and are therefore under threat of God's judgment, Paul refers not to attempts to "earn" God's favour, but to actual deeds of wrong-doing. Jews do not keep specific commandments of the law (cf. 2:21-23). In ch. 2, Paul's point is not that Jews wrongly conform to the law in an attempt to *earn* salvation; it is that they *fail to do* what the law requires of them.

One of the chief proponents of the view that Paul is, for the most part, taking issue with Jewish particularity and pride is Dunn, who has found it necessary to defend and clarify his interpretation of the expression ἔργα νόμου. He again maintains that ἔργα νόμου denotes "what is required of the members of the covenant people"²¹ and argues that the expression is "given particular point by certain crucial issues and disputes," that is, disputes occasioned by attitudes prevalent among Christian Jews in Jerusalem and Antioch concerning circumcision and/or food laws.²²

Dunn admits that one must conclude that Paul is condemning both concrete acts of disobedience and "the typical Jewish attitude to the Law."²³ He argues that that attitude is in view, since Paul is attacking the assumption that the Jew "escapes the judgment of God" (2:3). The interlocutor's assumption is not that a Jew never sins, but that God will treat a member of the covenant community more favourably than he will the outsider.²⁴ Dunn finds 2:17-24 to be directed against the Jewish sense of privilege. Since the Jew transgresses the law in which he boasts, Paul claims that he cannot expect that his

Neukirchener Verlag, 1974); Schreiner, "'Works of Law' in Paul," Novum Testamentum 33 (1991) 228-30 and Westerholm, 120-21.

²¹ Dunn, "Once More," 102.

²² Dunn, "Once More," 101.

²³ Dunn, "Once More," 106.

²⁴ Dunn, "Once More," 107. In Wis 15:1 the author praises God for, among other things, his faithfulness and his mercy. The conclusion that is drawn from this is that "if we sin, we are yours, knowing your power; but we will not sin, because we know that you acknowledge us as yours" (cf. Garlington, 77). Dunn also draws attention to Pss Sol 8: 27-35; 15:8 as examples of Jewish literature in which the assumption is that Jews are different from Gentiles, that is to say, that they do not sin like the Gentiles, or if they do, their sins are not as serious.

privileged position will save him. In 2:25-29 we see, according to Dunn, an attack on the idea that circumcision gives the Jew a place of privilege over others before God. Paul praises the "uncircumcised" who keep the law over the "circumcised" who fail to keep the law, and thus he must have in mind the "Jew" as one who assumes that his circumcision protects from serious sin. Paul is thinking "of the 'Jew' as one who boasts of his righteous status (documented and maintained, to be sure, by his 'works of the law') which ensures that any failure to keep the law is not regarded as sufficient to disturb that status."²⁵

Regarding 3:20, Dunn agrees that the expression "works of the law" is used there to sum up the indictment of 1:18-3:20, but he finds that the thrust of that indictment is commonly misunderstood. Paul means to say that the Jew's "works of the law" should not lead to a false confidence and should not mask the seriousness of sin.

Certainly Paul intends to undermine Jewish exclusivity and confidence. For example, 2:17-24 sounds very much like an attack on what Paul believes to be an inappropriate attitude. Paul says that if those who call themselves Jews "boast" of their relation to God, if they know his will and can determine what is best because they are "instructed in the law" (2:17-18), if they think themselves "correctors of the foolish" and teachers of others, how is it that they will not teach themselves (2:20-21)? The question here is why Paul considers their boasting to be out of order.

The answer is found in a series of rhetorical questions: "While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? You that boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law?" (vv. 21a-23). That the answer to these questions is "yes" is implied by 2:24: "For, as it is written, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'" For Paul, the boasting is out of order *because Jews do not live up to the demands of the law.*

²⁵ Dunn, "Once More," 108.

It is significant that while Paul takes issue with Jewish pride in 2:25-29, he also attends to the issue of the performance of the law. He asserts that if the law is not kept, "circumcision has become uncircumcision" (vs. 25). With Dunn, it seems that circumcision did indeed function as a sort of "boundary marker;" but Paul's point is that such boundary markers lose their significance where the (moral) requirements of the law are not kept. Note that Paul is in fact quite prepared to concede the point of Jewish advantage and privilege throughout; but he claims that such privileges are offset or canceled where the law (Paul clearly has the moral commands in view) is disobeyed. It is in the end transgression which brings judgment (2:12) and which renders pointless the question whether Jews can be justified because of their adherence to the law (3:20). Paul claims that justification is not obtained through "works prescribed by the law," since "through the law comes the *knowledge of sin* (διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας)." The law promises life (cf. 2:13, 26-29) to those who adhere to its commands, but in actuality it brings knowledge of sin. Considering Paul's emphasis on the sinfulness of all humanity in 1:18-3:19, it is most likely that he means that the law makes Jews aware that they are sinners, just as the Gentiles are, and that they will be judged as such.²⁶ This is implied in 3:19, where Paul sums up 3:10-18, asserting that "whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God." Then, after asserting that justification does not come through "works of the law," Paul asserts that "through the law comes the knowledge of sin." The "law" -- perhaps Paul is here thinking of the texts cited in 3:10-18 -- makes one aware that one is a sinner. "The law provides the knowledge of sin, but no rescue from it. It is diagnosis, not cure."²⁷

The third option mentioned above (p. 143) is the most satisfactory way of accounting for Paul's rejection of "works of the law" as a means to salvation in 3:20. We have seen

²⁶ Cf., e.g., Westerholm, 188; Beker, 107; Cranfield, 199 and Wilckens, Der Brief an die Römer, I (Benziger: Neukirchener, 1978) 180.

²⁷ Edwards, 94.

that Paul's concern is with a failure to do the "works of the law," the demands which the law makes upon its adherents. As Westerholm says, "the 'works of the law' which do not justify are the demands of the law that are not met, not those observed for the wrong reasons by Jews."²⁸ Works that the law demands do not justify because people do not do them.²⁹

We have noted that in 1:18-3:19, Paul has attempted to demonstrate that all humanity is guilty before God. This observation brings us to another facet of Paul's account of the human condition. Thus far, our discussion has mostly highlighted sin as willful transgression. But there is a two-sidedness to sin as a description of the human condition for Paul. If, on the one hand, sin is willful transgression, it is, for Paul, also a malevolent power that holds people in its sway.³⁰

In 3:9, Paul speaks of "being under the power of sin (ὕφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι)." That Paul thinks of sin as a power in 3:9 is clear from Rom 6:14, where to be "under" something, be it the law or grace, is to be subject to its power: ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει, οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν. The expression "under sin" personifies sin, making it a despot imposing its will upon subjects who are helpless to resist. The character of a life lived "under sin" is summed up in a catena of quotations from the LXX, all of which are anticipated in the first quotation from Ps 14:3: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Rom 3:10a). The idea of sin as a power also underlies 6:6,

²⁸ Westerholm, 119.

²⁹ It should be noted, with Moo (Romans 1-8 [Chicago: Moody, 1991]), that "Jews become, as it were, representative of human beings generally." In 3:19, Paul moves from the Jews, who are under the law, and whom the law holds to be guilty, to all humanity, saying that the "whole world" is accountable to God (possibly this move is an example of a "from the lesser to the greater" argument). That is, if the Jews who are God's chosen people are not free from sin, then how much more shall Gentiles also be found guilty? Cf. Moo, 208 and Cranfield, 196-97.

³⁰ Paul's description of sin as a power must be held in tension with his view of sin as willful transgression. This is reflected in the comment of J. Becker, that "the concept of force has its pitfalls and thus should be used with reserve, because the apostle always gives prominence to the active character of sin and would in no case allow human responsibility for deeds to be diminished by talk of the dominion of sin..." (J. Becker, Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles, tr. O. C. Dean [Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993] 392).

where Paul describes the pre-Christian existence of his readers as being one of enslavement to sin. Using similar language, in 6:17 he reminds the Romans that they were once "slaves of sin" and in 6:19 that they once "presented [their] members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity." The significance of this imagery in Paul should not be underestimated. Sin is "a power which works in [a person] to bind him wholly to his mortality and corruptibility, to render impotent any knowledge of God or concern to do God's will, to provoke his merely animal appetites in forgetfulness that he is a creature of God...."³¹ Sin, as an enslaving power, is opposed to the purposes of God.

For Paul, sin is, in some way, affected by the coming of the law. There is a relationship between sin and the law, but, while one might have thought that the law would be the cure for sin, Paul indicates that the opposite is true.³² The law only complicates matters, since it redefines sin, causes the increase of sin, and is a ruling despot whose power must be broken by Christ. The law, Paul will argue further in Romans 7, actually arouses sin, but it does not provide the cure for sin.³³

³¹ Dunn, Romans, 149.

³² The law provided a means for dealing with "unwitting" sin -- sacrifices of atonement (Num 15:22-29) -- but Paul never deals directly with this. He no doubt felt that humanity's sin goes beyond the category of "unwitting" transgression (note that Num 15:30-31 at least does not allow for atonement in the case of "highhanded" sin). In any case, as Westerholm observes, Rom 3:25 implies a conviction that one might expect a believer in a crucified Messiah to hold: Christ is seen as the true ἱλαστήριον provided by God, of which the Sinaitic sacrificial system was only a foreshadowing (Westerholm, "Law, Grace and the 'Soteriology' of Judaism," Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period, P. Richardson and S. Westerholm, eds. [Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1991] 70).

³³ Before commenting on the nature of this relationship, we should note that this does not imply that for Paul, sin did not exist before the coming of the law. In 2:12, Paul assumes that Gentiles, who do not have the law, commit sins for which they will be held accountable by God (cf. Rom 2:12). Rom 5:12, 13, 20 make it quite clear that Paul believes that sin came into the cosmos when the first man, Adam, sinned. The problem with this view is that Paul says in 5:13b that sin "is not reckoned (οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται) where there is no law." Thus, 5:13b appears to be inconsistent with the early chapters of Romans (so Räisänen, 145-47). However, Westerholm argues that whatever Paul's precise point in 5:13b, he does not mean to suggest that sinners before the law were not thought guilty, since both 5:12 and 5:14 assume the guilt and punishment of those who sinned before the coming of the law. "Paul knows no innocent sinner" (Westerholm, Israel's Law, 181; cf. Cranfield, Romans, I, 282).

First, the law redefines sin. In 4:15, Paul claims that "the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation (παράβασις)." Paul cannot mean that until the law came sin was not punished, since he assumes elsewhere that God does punish the sins of those who do not have the law (cf. 2:12). What the law brings about is a new way of defining sin: sin becomes transgression, a violation of God's revealed law code. For Räisänen, this amounts to a mere technicality, a "matter of no consequence whatsoever."³⁴ It is, however, more than this. Transgression of a revealed law code amounts to "a greater challenge to [God's] authority, a more flagrant act of insubordination, than the same deed done in defiance of no law."³⁵ Paul believes that God always punished sin, but "there is both an appropriateness and an inexorability about God's wrath when it becomes operative as the stated sanction attached to a given law."³⁶ In 5:20, Paul calls this an "increase" of transgressions, asserting that "law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied." Sometime after Adam's fall, to which Paul has alluded in vs. 19, the law was instituted and sin "abounded" (ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα). Though the exact force of the ἵνα is not certain,³⁷ the verse is clear on one thing: sin increased when the law arrived, in part at least because the law made sin transgression. That is, sin "increases" in gravity when it is seen as a violation of revealed commandments.

Second, to be responsible to do the commands of the law is somehow also to be "under sin." Note that Paul's claim that believers are not ὑπὸ νόμον (6:14) is related to his conviction that they have died to sin (cf. 6:2). He asserts that since believers have died with Christ in baptism, they are "freed from sin" (6:7). And in 6:14, a connection between

³⁴ Räisänen, 146.

³⁵ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 183. Cf. Dunn, *Romans*, 215.

³⁶ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 183. Cf. also 5:13, which, as we have already noted, does not imply that sinners were not thought to be guilty before the coming of the law, but rather suggests a new way of reckoning sin.

³⁷ The ἵνα might express purpose (so Cranfield, 292-93, who says that Paul is referring to an "intermediate" purpose, where the law's disastrous effect of making sin increase is in fact subsumed under the larger and merciful purposes of God). It might merely express result, yielding the sense, "law came in, with the result that sin increased." Moule argues that Rom 5:20, 21; 6:1 all contain "genuinely *final* ἵνα clauses" (Moule, *Idiom Book*, 143).

sin and law is made explicit. Sin, Paul says, will not have dominion over believers, since they "are not under law but under grace" – though how being "under" the law results in one being ruled by sin, Paul does not here make clear.³⁸ And since, as we have seen, Paul describes sin as a power which holds people in servitude that cannot be broken except by Christ (cf. the discussion above), it seems likely that when Paul equates being "under the law" with being in subjection to sin, he has in mind an inability of the law to free people from sin (cf. 8:3).³⁹

Third, the relation between the law and sin is said to result in the law actually arousing "sinful passions" that lead to death (7:5), a claim which is developed in Romans 7:7-25.⁴⁰ For people "living in the flesh" their "sinful passions (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν), aroused by the law (τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο), were at work in [their] members to bear fruit for death" (7:5). Somehow, the law is seen as augmenting humanity's tendency to transgress. It actually stimulates sinful passions, reinforcing the connection between sin and death and having, as Dunn puts it, a "greenhouse effect."⁴¹

³⁸ We can, however, assume that he is anticipating the argument of 7:5, 7-11.

³⁹ In 6:14, Paul is using the terms νόμος and χάρις to contrast two different spheres in which one might exist. The contrast here is between two "ages" in redemptive history -- the age in which Torah was central, on the one hand, and the age in which people have died to the law (7:4) and in which grace dominates, on the other. Paul wants to remind his readers that since they died to sin (6:2) they cannot possibly live under its dominion. They are instead under the rule of grace (6:14).

⁴⁰ One of the thornier problems of Rom 7:7-25 is Paul's use of "I." Following Kümmel, I will be taking the stance that the "I" refers to a pre-Christian rather than a Christian condition and that the passage is not specifically autobiographical. Paul is using the "I" rhetorically, referring to the life of those who are unbelievers, subject to the law, though seen from the perspective of one who is a Christian. See Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: J. G. Hinrichs, 1929), reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1974) 87-89. For Kümmel, "Die Fragestellung 'wer ist Subjekt?' erweist sich als mißverständlich: denn man könnte überspitzt formulieren: niemand oder jedermann ist Subjekt" (132). Certainly, that Paul's own experiences have informed what he says is not to be denied, but the passage is not primarily autobiographical. Kümmel's view is summarized, with approval, by Westerholm, Israel's Law, 53-65, and is adopted by, among others, Käsemann, Romans; Ridderbos, 126-30; G. Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death: an Exegetical Study of Romans 7," Early Christian Experience, tr. P. L. Hammer (SCM: London, 1969) 87-104; and Ziesler, Paul's Letter to the Romans (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989) 181-84.

⁴¹ Dunn, Romans, 371.

Though Paul begins his explanation of how this could be in 7:7 by denying that the law equals sin, he adds that it provided an opportunity for sin to destroy people (vv. 7-10). 7:7 says that "if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would have not known (ἤδειν) what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" By itself, 7:7 might be taken simply to mean that the law brings knowledge that what one is doing is in fact the sin of covetousness. However, the context indicates that Paul has in mind more than this.

Vs. 8 explains further, saying that the law provided an opportunity for sin. "Sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment,⁴² produced in me all kinds of covetousness." "Apart from the law," Paul adds, "sin lies dead." Sin, which Paul describes metaphorically as "lying dead," is resuscitated by the Torah and begins to work its evil. The law, in effect, gives sin its power.⁴³ As one commentator puts it, "Like gasoline, sin is something of a theoretical hazard until a match is struck, and the match which ignited sin was the law."⁴⁴

Paul is not, however, saying that the law brings sin into existence. In fact, he presupposes that before the law humanity sinned. For Paul, the "law provides a focus on which a slumbering, inchoate rebelliousness can fasten, spring to life and expression."⁴⁵ In other words, by proscribing various attitudes and actions the law creates possibilities for human rebelliousness to express itself which did not previously exist. In 7:13, Paul says that it is through the law that sin is shown to be sin, and that sin becomes "sinful beyond measure (καθ' ὑπερβολήν)." Sin existed before the law, but the law exposes the true nature of sin as defiance of God and makes a negative aspect of the human condition more

⁴² Käsemann, Romans, 194, argues (against, e.g., G. Schrenk, "ἐντολή," TDNT, II, 550-51) that in 7:8 ἐντολή is to be understood as a reference not simply to the law, but to the specific commandment. However, 8b (χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά), following immediately as it does, indicates that Paul intends a wider application to the Mosaic law in general.

⁴³ Cf. the discussion in Wilckens, Römer, II, 81.

⁴⁴ Edwards, 189.

⁴⁵ Westerholm, Israel's Law, 186.

obvious.⁴⁶ Yet note that Paul is careful to portray sin as the active agent. It is sin that "grasps" the opportunity furnished by the law (cf. the διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς of vs. 11).⁴⁷ That which might have been a positive force in a person's life -- the law -- is exploited by sin.

Paul goes on to say that "apart from the law I was alive,"⁴⁸ but, in the presence of the law, sin, lying dead, "springs to life"⁴⁹ (vs. 9). The unfortunate result, Paul asserts, is that "I died, and the very commandment that promised life⁵⁰ proved to be death to me (καὶ εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωὴν αὕτη εἰς θάνατον)" (vs. 10). The force of the εἰς in the phrase ἡ εἰς ζωὴν is difficult to determine. Does Paul mean to suggest that the law was intended to bring about life (cf. the NRSV's "promised life") or that it would promote a life which was already possessed? It is true that Paul asserts elsewhere that the law cannot justify and that it was not meant to do so (Gal 2:16; 3:21), an observation that might seem to rule out the first possibility. But Paul also makes statements that indicate that the law does promise life to those who keep its commands (e.g. Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12). Since the parallel phrase εἰς θάνατον clearly denotes result, probably the first possibility is to be preferred. As Dunn says of 7:10, "Here in a nutshell is the sharpness of the human dilemma, and the depth of man's tragedy: were it not for sin the law would promote life (lead to and prosper life) in relationship with God...."⁵¹ In fact, the opposite takes place. The law provides an opportunity for sin to destroy people. To return to 7:7, it seems that

⁴⁶ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 182.

⁴⁷ ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα might be a military metaphor, since ἀφορμή means "the starting point or base of operations for an expedition" (cf. BAGD, 127). It is, as Dunn puts it, "one of the most vigorous of the personifications of sin as a power, underscoring the human experience of sin as an oppressive force acting upon the individual" (380). Cf. also the discussion in Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 44.

⁴⁸ Paul's language should not be pressed too far. He is probably only suggesting that humanity apart from the law was "alive" in a relative sense (cf. Schrenk, "ἐντολή," 551, n23, who says that it is "relative life in comparison with the death described in v. 10 f.").

⁴⁹ Ziesler's translation of ἀνέζησεν (187).

⁵⁰ So Dunn, *Romans*, 384. Cf. also Oepke's discussion ("εἰς," *TDNT*, II, 429).

⁵¹ Dunn, *Romans*, 384.

when Paul speaks of being brought to a state of "knowing" sin, he is thinking of a state in which one continually commits sin.

Paul continues: "For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me" (Rom 7:11). Here there seems to be a deliberate allusion to the motif of deception in Genesis 3. Just as the serpent deceived Eve so that she ate the forbidden fruit and died, sin continues to deceive and kill.⁵² Theissen notes that Paul does not start from the position that the law is linked to sin. His starting point is that law and covetousness are antithetical to each other. But, as we saw, Paul later asserts that although the law proscribes covetousness, it arouses covetousness. The link between the law and sin is put into sharper relief by the observation that sin "seduces" and "kills" with the help of the law and punishes with death those whom it has successfully tempted through the law. By vs. 11, law and sin are no longer utterly opposed to each other. For Paul, although law and sin are "diametrically opposed by nature, they are tightly bound together in their effects."⁵³

However, although sin and law are "bound together in their effects," note that Paul has not said that the law is the actual agent of death. The law is "holy," the commandments "holy and just and good" (7:12). The law did not bring death. Paul denies this with his characteristic $\mu\grave{\eta}\ \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$ and claims instead in 7:13 that the active agent was "sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown ($\phi\alpha\nu\eta$) to be sin..." The human dilemma is intensified by the law, but is ultimately the result of sin.

For Paul, the corollary of the negative effects of the law in increasing sin and giving sin its power is that the law does not provide the power to overcome sin. 7:14-25, as part of Paul's defense of the law, shows that a person ruled by the flesh does not do that which the law requires. The "fleshly" person, the person who by nature is hostile to God (8:7), simply finds it impossible to obey a law that is "spiritual." In 7:5, 18 and 25 Paul uses

⁵² Cf. Käsemann, Romans. 196.

⁵³ Theissen, 186.

σάρξ to account for the fact that a person who would like to do good is unable to do so. Those living under the law are "in the sphere of and under the power of the flesh,"⁵⁴ flesh personified as a power of the old aeon, hostile to God and his purposes, a power which seeks to control individuals, rather than see them submit to God. Those who exist in the flesh find that their "sinful passions" are aroused by exposure to the prohibitions of the law and it becomes impossible to please God.

The "flesh," Paul says in 7:18b, is the reason that "I can will what is right but I cannot do it." Those who encounter the law may, on one level, want to do what God requires, but find themselves unable to do so, since sin lives in the flesh. Thus, the flesh resists God (7:18).⁵⁵ In vs. 23, the power which resists God, and which Paul sees as dwelling in "his members," is called "another law (ἕτερον νόμον)." The war between the law and the flesh becomes a conflict between two laws, or "two normative orientations."⁵⁶ Note that in 7:22, θεοῦ is the modifier of νόμος, in the expression τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, where the reference is most likely to the commands of God. The genitive distinguishes God's law from the law of sin which "dwells within my members." 7:14-25 describes a battle, a war within the person between the desire to do the law and the actual inability to do so.⁵⁷ For Paul, this means that those who wish to obey God, cannot.

Finally, we ought to take note, particularly, that by linking death and sin in Rom 7 Paul picks up a theme that he has already used in ch 5.⁵⁸ Recall that in 5:12, Paul claims that "just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin... so

⁵⁴ R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms: a Study of their Use in Conflict Settings (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971) 145.

⁵⁵ Against Jewett, 146-47, I see no evidence that Paul here has in mind "nomists" who attempt to vindicate themselves through performance of the law.

⁵⁶ Theissen, 188.

⁵⁷ Thielman, 109. Sanders argues that Paul's claim that "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it" is inconsistent with Phil 3, where Paul says that with regard to the law, he was blameless (Sanders, Law, 80; cf. also Räisänen, Law, 106, 118, 230). However, Phil 3:6 may reflect Paul's pre-Christian assessment of himself. Also, the polemical context of the claim (in which Paul compares himself to his opponents who claim to keep the law) should be taken into account, since that may mean that Paul is exaggerating to prove a point (cf. Westerholm, Israel's Law, 161, n52).

⁵⁸ See the fuller discussion of Rom 5 below.

death spread to all because all have sinned (ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον)...." He connects Adam's sin with the sin of humanity, but does not spell out exactly the relation between the two. Because of Adam's sin, ἡ ἀμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν, that is, it became part and parcel of the human condition. Clearly Paul believes that Adam's sin somehow "infected" humanity, making it unable to resist sinning.

ἐφ' ᾧ in the phrase ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον has been much debated, but it can be understood consecutively, with the meaning "with the result that all have sinned."⁵⁹ Paul is thus asserting the universal sinfulness of humanity and in vs. 12 is ascribing death and human sinfulness to two related causes: to Adam and to the conduct of all people. But the emphasis in the passage is on Adam's sins and its effects -- because of the contrast Paul wants to develop between Adam and Christ. Thus Paul presupposes the universal causality of Adam's sin in 5:15a, 16a, 17a, 18a and 19a.⁶⁰ This confirms the connection which Paul expresses by καὶ οὕτως. Paul is ascribing the corruption of humanity to Adam. This corruption, moreover, continued as a result in the wrong conduct of his descendants.⁶¹

In 5:13, Paul makes a statement that has puzzled many interpreters: "Sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned (ἐλλογεῖται) when there is no law." It would seem to be a logical conclusion, based on this assertion, that death should not have become a factor in human existence until the law was given. However, Paul asserts that such is not the case. The rule of death predated even the coming of the law. Exactly how

⁵⁹ This view has been well argued by J. A. Fitzmyer, "The Consecutive Meaning of ΕΦ' Ω in Romans 5.12," *NTS* 39 (1993) 321-39. There have been no fewer than twelve proposals about its meaning in Rom 5:12. For a helpful summary of the various positions that scholars have taken, see Fitzmyer, 322-28. Perhaps the most widely accepted view is that it is causal and should be translated "for this reason, because." The problem with this view is that there are practically no sure instances in Gk. literature where ἐφ' ᾧ is used as an equivalent of the causal διότι (Fitzmyer, 326). On the other hand, there are abundant instances of the phrase being used consecutively, which also makes good sense in Rom 5:12.

⁶⁰ Fitzmyer, 339.

⁶¹ Fitzmyer, 339.

Paul would explain this is unclear.⁶² Even though sin was not "counted" until the coming of the Torah, because humanity's first parents sinned, death has been a part of human existence. In Paul's view, "Death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come" (5:14). In the same passage, however, death is again spoken of as a direct result of sin: "because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion" (5:17). Adam's sin was the occasion for the period of the reign of sin,⁶³ which, as 5:17 indicates, continued until the coming of Christ. Sin exercises "dominion in death" (5:21), that is to say, "as sin reigned, it was accompanied by death."⁶⁴

To sum up our discussion thus far, in Romans Paul does not seem to be taking issue primarily with "legalism." He does take issue with what he perceives to be an unjustifiable Jewish pride, but his assertion that the law does not bring life stems not from his objections to Jewish particularity, but from his conviction that in the end Jews do not keep the law. All humanity commits sins, though Paul also sees humanity in the "flesh" as under the "power" of sin, a power which is enhanced by the law. Paul believes humanity is unable to extricate itself from the desperate situation that exists because of the sin of Adam. Without divine intervention, humanity will face an eschatological judgment in which the verdict will be unfavourable. Paul's negative estimation of humanity's ability to please God results in what is, for him, a hopeless situation. For Paul there is only one possible solution. Humanity, Paul believes, is forced to rely on God for escape from its plight.

III. Dependence on God in Romans

⁶² Bultmann, Theology, I, 252. asks, "What sort of sin was it if it did not originate as contradiction of the Law? And how can it have brought death after it if it was not 'counted'? These questions cannot be answered."

⁶³ The aorist ἐβασίλευσεν is best understood as a constative aorist, rather than an ingressive aorist (Cranfield, I, 287, n4).

⁶⁴ ἐν probably expresses result here (Cranfield, I, 297). Note the ambivalence of the term "death." Although in vv. 15, 17 it is used of a present spiritual condition that came from the sin of Adam, here it refers to an eschatological condition, the opposite of eternal life (F. G. Lafont, "Sur L'Interprétation de Romains V, 15-21," Recherches de Science Religieuse, 45 [1957] 495). Probably Paul does not distinguish between death as a spiritual condition and "eschatological" death, because the former leads to the latter.

A. Dependence on God for salvation

This brings us to the idea of dependence on God in Romans. In Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians, Paul assumes (and argues) that humanity is unable to extricate itself from a desperate plight and that God must intervene on behalf of humanity. How does Romans portray this divine intervention and what does that say and imply about dependence on God's grace in Paul's thought? And what does this portrayal add to what Paul says about depending on grace in the "justification" texts?

We begin with the ideas of "call" and "election" since, for Paul, one does not become a member of the believing community without being "called." We shall then turn to Paul's references to reconciliation since we have already seen that in 2 Corinthians reconciliation, for Paul, means that God has taken the initiative to restore the fracture in divine/human relations. Whether the same is true of the references to reconciliation in Romans must be determined. We will then consider whether Paul's discussions of how Christ has dealt with sin emphasize human dependence on God. The idea of adoption also resurfaces in Romans, and here too it may imply something about the divine "first step" in making people members of the believing community.

From these topics our discussion will move to the texts which deal with grace, the law and works. I deal with them as a group since discussions of grace in Paul have often centered around "justification by faith" texts and what they say about the relation between works and grace.

1. Election and the call of God

a. Rom 8:28-30

Earlier in the epistle, Paul says that the Roman Christians are "called to belong to Jesus Christ," and notes that they are "called to be saints" (cf. 1:6-7). But what does the idea of being "called" say about dependence on God for entry into the community? To answer that question, we turn first to Rom 8:28-30, where Paul refers to believers who are "called" by the sovereign will of God.

In 8:28, Paul, continuing to encourage the Roman believers to endure until the Christian hope is fulfilled, says that believers are "called according to his purpose (κατὰ πρόθεσιν)." πρόθεσις, which denotes "that which is planned or purposed in advance,"⁶⁵ points to one aspect of the role Paul believes divine sovereignty plays in securing salvation. An expression such as this reflects the Jewish view of "God's purpose... moving history and [moving] through history to its intended end."⁶⁶ 8:29a says that "those whom he foreknew (οὓς προέγνω) he also predestined (προώρισεν) to be conformed to the image of his Son...." The word προγινώσκω, while it implies knowledge before the event, means more than that. The Hebraic idea of knowing implies a relationship (as seen in passages like Gen 18:19; Jer 1:5; Hos 1:5; Amos 3:2 and 1QH 9:29-30).⁶⁷ "Foreknow" is so pregnant with meaning that "predestined (προώρισεν)" adds little additional meaning to the clause, but rather functions to reinforce it. Both terms imply that in Paul's thought, "the history and personal make-up of the Church are not due to chance or to arbitrary human choices, but represent the working out of God's plan."⁶⁸ In 8:30 the thought has come back to the concept of call. "Those whom he decided upon ahead of time, these he called."⁶⁹ God's foreknowing and foreordaining culminated in the divine call which leads to the believer's experiences of justification and glorification. The point for Paul is that although the present age is characterized by sufferings (cf. 8:18), God has called Christians according to his purpose -- a purpose which Paul is confident cannot be thwarted (cf. 8:31-38) -- and they can therefore endure such sufferings in the hope that one day God will fully accomplish his purposes in them.

⁶⁵ Louw and Nida, 358. For a similar usage, cf. Eph 3:11, "according to the eternal purpose (κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων)." Cf. also C. Maurer, "προτίθημι, κτλ.." TDNT, VIII, 165, who notes that in Rom 8:28 the term points "to the sustaining ground of the community."

⁶⁶ Dunn, Romans, 482. Dunn calls attention to Ps 33:11; Prov 19:21; Isa 5:19; 19:17; 46:10; Jer 49:20; 50:45; Wisd Sol 6:4; 9:13, 17; 1QS 1:8, 10, 13; 2.23; 3:6; 11:18; 1 QH 4.13; 6.10-11 as Jewish evidence of the conceptual parallel. Note also the similar wording in Rom 9:11.

⁶⁷ Dunn, Romans, 482.

⁶⁸ Barrett, 159.

⁶⁹ Louw and Nida, 361.

b. Rom 9-11

In the preceding chapters of Romans, Paul attempts to demonstrate that God has been faithful, that he has acted righteously, and that although justification is not through works of the law, God has provided a means of salvation for all people, Jew and Gentile alike. 9:1 appears to open a new topic of discussion, but it is not unrelated to the previous chapters.⁷⁰ In fact, chs 9-11 are an integral part of the letter. Central themes of chs. 9-11 also appear earlier in the letter. Paul describes what he believes to be a true Jew in 2:25-29 and a discussion of the advantages of the Jews in light of the unfaithfulness of "some" follows in 3:1-8.⁷¹ In Romans 9-11 Paul demonstrates that God is faithful to his promises by addressing a question raised by Israel's apparent rejection of the gospel. In his answer to the question whether God has been faithful to fulfill his promise to Israel (cf. 9:6; 11:1) -- and the accompanying discussion of the faith of Gentiles -- we shall see that the language of call and election plays a significant role and underscores the idea that entry into the community depends, for Paul, on God's initiative.⁷²

Before we focus on our theme in 9-11, it will be helpful to review briefly the argument of the chapters. Paul asserts that it is to Israel that the blessings outlined in 9:4-5 belong, yet beginning in vs. 6 he attempts to refute the thought that God's word has somehow failed. The question whether God's word had failed arises out of the apostle's belief that Israel's salvation hinges upon its acceptance of Jesus as the messiah -- and the majority

⁷⁰ Views which do not take seriously the place of Romans 9-11 within the letter as a whole are unsatisfactory. Representative of them is C. H. Dodd, who said that chs. 9-11 are an old sermon of Paul's that forms "a compact and continuous whole, which can be read quite satisfactorily without reference to the rest of the epistle," and that Paul inserted it here without relevance to the rest of Romans (The Epistle of Paul to the Romans [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932], 148). However, 9-11 must be seen as an integral part of the letter. This approach still leaves open a wide range of interpretive possibilities. See the summary in Wright, "Christ, the Law and the People of God: Romans 9-11," The Climax of the Covenant (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 232-33.

⁷¹ H. Räisänen, "Paul, God, and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research," The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism, J. Neusner, E. Frerichs, P. Borgen and R. Horsley, eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 180.

⁷² Cf. also the discussion in E. Johnson, The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 116-23.

have not accepted him. Paul responds to the issue of God's faithfulness first by arguing that the effectiveness of God's word does not and has never meant the inclusion of all descendants of Abraham in the community of faithful Israel: not all "Israelites" truly belong to "Israel." The children of God, he argues, are those who are "children of the promise" (9:8), not merely "children of the flesh" (9:8). Certainly Paul does not believe that being a physical descendant of Abraham disqualifies one from being a true member of Israel; but it is not enough. The community of promise is determined by God's "call" (9:11). That not all (physical) Israelites have been objects of the divine "call" raises the issue of divine justice; but Paul insists that it is God's prerogative to show mercy or harden as he sees fit, citing the story of Pharaoh and the right of the potter to choose what to make of the clay (9:14-24).

Paul's moves his argument forward in 9:24-29 by stressing that Gentiles have now been included with a "remnant" from Israel in the community of the "called," the "vessels of mercy."

Up to this point, Paul has spoken of God's "hardening" of those Jews who have not come to faith in Jesus as Messiah. In 9:30-10:21, he discusses how it is that (unbelieving) Israel, in spite of a manifest zeal for God, has failed to submit to God's righteousness and insists on their responsibility for failing to respond to a message that had been proclaimed in their hearing.

In 11:1, Paul returns to the starting point of his discussion and asks whether God has rejected Israel. He emphatically rejects such a notion, claiming again that the existence of a believing "remnant" proves it to be false. Others, to be sure, have been "hardened" by God, but even in their case the "hardening" is only temporary. Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. Israel's "stumbling" has led to salvation for the Gentiles; but the inclusion of the Gentiles, Paul claims, will lead, by way of jealousy, to the salvation of Jews as well (11:11-32).

In turning now to look at what Rom 9-11 says about Paul's views of the role of grace in entry into the believing community, we must start by noting that for Paul, there is no doubt that God has been faithful to his promises. Israel has a place in the divine plan, though, Paul insists, it is for the present in the form of a "remnant" (cf. 9:27; 11:5). What is significant for our purposes is that chs 9-11 reveal Paul's belief that the remnant exists because of the divine will. In fact, throughout his depiction of the eras of the patriarchs and Moses in 9:6-18, Paul affirms the sovereignty of God in choosing his people. God, he asserts, acts through grace, of his own initiative, without regard for human works. The apostle illustrates this by quotations from the LXX that refer to God's promise to Abraham (Gen 18:10, 14; 21:21). Only those who are born as a result of God's promise (as in the case of Isaac) really belong to "Israel" (vv. 6, 7b). 9:11-12 sums up the matter: "Even before they [Jacob and Esau] had been born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose of election might continue, not by works but by his call [οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος]) she was told, 'The elder shall serve the younger.'" Whatever else the implications of this verse, it serves to underscore the fact that Paul is convinced that God's choice is not based on the works that one performs.

Although "works" here might call to mind Paul's earlier expression "works of law," the referent is more comprehensive, referring to human activity in general.⁷³ The point is that God's salvific purposes were achieved as he willed, independent of human activity. Paul says in 9:16, "it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy." Similarly, in vs. 18, the apostle claims that God "has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses." Recall that the point in Rom

⁷³ Against Seifrid ("Blind Alleys in the Controversy over the Paul of History" Tyndale Bulletin 45 [1994]: 83), who asserts that the "thesis that Paul is opposed to 'works in general' as a means of justification, claims just a shade too much," note that vs. 11 excludes the consideration of *any* deed done, "good" or "bad." Seifrid, 83, allows that this represents "a legitimate development of Paul's argument, but Paul was not thinking in categories broader than the Law itself." The comment misses the point made here, namely that God's mercy functions independently of any human activity, which would include, but is not limited to, the "works of the Law."

9:6-13 is that in fact not all physical Israel has been elected to membership in the believing community. Concerns of "fairness" are not at issue here. God elects whom he will, and neither consults humanity, nor considers human "works." As de Villiers says, "what makes Israel the real Israel is not determined by the faith and obedience of Jacob, but it is determined by what God promises and does."⁷⁴ One becomes a member of the community of believers because of God's mercy, made manifest in his sovereign "call."

Here, then, the exclusion of human activity by divine mercy is thematic for Paul. He is clearly intent on depicting salvation in this context as dependent not on any human activity, but only on God's sovereign will. In his defense of the idea that God has been faithful to his promises to Israel, Paul depends very much on the assumption that what God decrees will happen regardless of other factors, including human activity, be it "good" or "bad." Note 9:6: "It is not as though the word of God had failed...." Edwards, correctly I think, notes that here the emphasis is not so much on Israel's failure to believe as on God's purposes.⁷⁵ Israel's failure to fulfill her call does not nullify God's word or his sovereignty. 9:11c-12a shows the same concern. God, Paul claims, was not responding to the good or bad that Jacob and Esau would do ἵνα ἢ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος. The same concern underlies Paul's use of Exod 33:19. God, Paul claims, is not unfair. Rather it is his prerogative to do as he pleases, and for that reason he can say Ἐλεήσω ὃν ἄν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἄν οἰκτίρω. From this Paul draws the conclusion that what is decisive is not "human will (τοῦ θέλοντος) or exertion (τοῦ τρέχοντος)," but the will of God "who shows mercy."

In vv. 19-24, Paul continues to insist upon God's sovereignty. God is the potter, humanity is the clay, and the potter does with the clay what he will. And what he has done, Paul says, is to call people into the believing community, not only from among the

⁷⁴ J. L. de Villiers, "The Salvation of Israel According to Romans 9-11," *Neotestamentica*, 15 (1981) 202.

⁷⁵ Edwards, 231.

Jews, but also from among the Gentiles. In 9:25-26, Paul applies Hos 2:23 and 1:10 (which, in their original contexts, refer to wayward Israel) to the Gentiles whom God has called through Christ. Then, Isa 10:22-23, Hos 1:10 and Isa 1:9 are cited to show that it is God's purpose to save a remnant of Israel as well. God is merciful to both Jews and Gentiles. "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him" (10:12). As Johnson says, both Jews and Gentiles are among "God's elect, and God elects because of who God is, not because of who people are."⁷⁶

In ch 11, Paul argues that just as Elijah was not the last of those faithful to God, so, too, there is now a remnant (11:2-5). Paul presents himself, a member of the tribe of Benjamin and a believer in Christ, as proof that a remnant of God's people exists and as proof that God's grace is still at work among his people. The story of Elijah is, for Paul, a type of the present day situation. Elijah had complained to God that he was the last faithful Israelite, to which God had replied that there were yet "seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." In the same way, Paul asserts, there is still a "remnant."⁷⁷ Most important for our purposes is that Paul believes this remnant to exist solely because of the grace of God: "So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace (οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ λείμμα κατ' ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν). But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works (οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων), otherwise grace would no longer be grace (ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις)" (11:5-6).⁷⁸ Election is

⁷⁶ Johnson, 139. Note that Romans 9:30-10:13 will be discussed in section 5 below.

⁷⁷ Against S. Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32," *Ex Auditu* 4 (1988) 49, it seems to me that for Paul the remnant is already in existence. It is hard to read Paul's words (ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ) in any other way. Paul's assumption is thus that the Jews who are members of the remnant are those who have believed the Christian message, of which he is an example (so Bassler, 161).

Cf. U. Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1968) who observes that "Im Lichte der eschatologischen Gnade Gottes wird für Paulus die Einheit des Heilshandelns Gottes durch die Geschichte hindurch sichtbar. So vermag die Eliaepisode vom Alten Testament hier die Gegenwart zu beleuchten" (82-83).

⁷⁸ After χάρις, the Textus Receptus adds εἰ δὲ ἔργων οὐκέτι ἐστὶ χάρις ἐπεὶ τὸ ἔργον οὐκέτι ἐστὶν ἔργον, following ^κc (b) L Ψ and later MSS. If the words

only properly understood when it is seen as an act of God's sovereign and unconditioned choice, with human activity playing no role. The emphasis on God's grace reinforces the κατέλιπον ἑμαυτῷ of the Elijah quotation. The perfect tense (γέγονεν) indicates an original action establishing a situation that still pertains (and exists). God's election holds true because it is an election of grace.⁷⁹

Dunn understands ἐξ ἔργων in 11:6 to be short for ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, and asserts that what Paul means here is that "if a Gentile must assume the ethnic and religious identity of a Jew by committing himself to observe the customs and ritual obligations peculiar to Jews," then "grace would not be grace."⁸⁰ That "works" and "grace" are put in direct antithesis here for the first time confirms, in Dunn's view, that Paul's understanding of divine grace is not antithetical to *law* as such, but to law understood in terms of works, which in turn are thought to reinforce Jewish ethnocentrism. For Dunn, Paul objects to "works" understood as "a qualification for God's favour simply because it is they which qualify for membership of the covenant people and which sustain that identity as God's elect."⁸¹ It is the reduction of election to matters of ethnic and ritual identity which Paul believes represents a failure to recognize God's grace and the election that stems from this grace.

It is, however, far from certain that ἐξ ἔργων is merely an abbreviation for ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. Note, first, that nothing in the context suggests such a limitation. On the contrary, the exclusion of "works" repeats the similar exclusion of human activity of 9:11-12, in favour of decisive divine activity. It is significant that in 9:12, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων summarizes the very general phrase μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φάυλον of 9:11. Note too the close parallel to 11:6 in 4:4 (τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ

were original it is hard to imagine why they should have been deleted. Also, the existence of the addition in various forms casts doubt on the originality of any of them (Metzger, 526).

⁷⁹ Cf. Dunn, Romans, 639.

⁸⁰ Dunn, Romans, 647.

⁸¹ Dunn, Romans, 647.

λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα) where it is the fact that work merits reward and hence runs contrary to "grace" that is the point rather than the exclusion of specific types of "work." Paul's point in ch 11 is basically the same as in 4:4-5: "work" cannot be rewarded by "grace," which operates quite differently.

In 11:22, the apostle reminds the Gentiles that they are beneficiaries of God's kindness. If they are not careful to "remain in his kindness," they too will find themselves "cut off." God deals severely with "those who have fallen," but he has dealt kindly with them. The triple occurrence of kindness (χρηστότης) underscores the importance of the idea that, for Paul, salvation depends upon the divine will.⁸² Paul points out that if there are those in Israel who "do not persist in unbelief," they "will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again" (11:23). It is worth noting that salvation, although contingent upon belief, is explicitly attributed to God's power.

Note Paul's claim that though Israel has now temporarily been hardened, when the "full number of gentiles has come in," "all Israel shall be saved" (11:25-26). Again Paul's conviction is clear. This salvation will come about because God wills it. Just as the Gentiles have received mercy, so also will Israel receive mercy (11:30). God, Paul claims, "has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all." For Paul, the entire history of Jews and Gentiles has been a part of a divine plan, implemented with a view to showing mercy to all. Paul attributes the salvation of Jews and Gentiles to God's mercy. Without his mercy, the wild branches of 17-23, the Gentiles, would not have been grafted into the olive tree; and without his mercy, the branches that have been cut off would have no hope of being grafted back into the olive tree. The call which comes to both groups comes gratuitously.

⁸² Cranfield, Romans, 570, makes the helpful observation that the use of τῆ χρηστότητι in the phrase ἐπιμένης τῆ χρηστότητι instead of τῆ πίστει (cf. vs. 23a: τῆ ἀπιστίᾳ) "brings out the true nature of faith as living from God's kindness, God's grace."

For Paul, then, the ideas of call and election are subsumed under the larger category of "grace." Believers are called to be the elect not because of anything they do or do not do. Paul believes that one's call originates in the sovereign will of God, and therefore he perceives it to be an experience of grace.

2. The divine initiative in reconciliation -- Rom 5:6-11

Earlier we saw that in 2 Cor 5:16-21 Paul makes what appears to be a conscious effort to emphasize that salvation is provided entirely at God's initiative. A similar emphasis occurs in Rom 5:6-11, where (in 5:6) Paul asserts, "For (γάρ) while we were still weak (ἀσθενῶν), at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."⁸³ Similarly, in 5:8 he says that "God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us."

The γάρ of 5:6 serves to link 5:6-11 to what Paul has just said. Vv. 6-11 provide the justification for the hope expressed in vv. 3-5.⁸⁴ The verb ἀσθενέω, which Paul uses to describe the state of unbelievers in vs. 6, usually describes a state of "weakness" or pertains to "a state of limited capacity to do or be something."⁸⁵ Here it seems to denote a moral weakness, that is, an inability to do that which is right.⁸⁶ In Paul's thought, humanity is helpless under the power of sin, unable to do what is right.

Paul continues, asserting that "at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly (ἔτι κατὰ καιρὸν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν)." The term "ungodly" can be applied to

⁸³ The Greek is somewhat awkward, with the twofold occurrence of ἔτι (ἔτι γὰρ Χριστὸς ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν ἔτι κατὰ καιρὸν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν). The alternative reading εἴ γε...ἔτι is preferable from a grammatical point of view, but the external support (B 945 syP) is poor. It is difficult to imagine why the other readings would have arisen, were this one original. It is easier to think that all witnesses that omit either instance of ἔτι do so as a result of scribal attempts to improve the wording of the original (Metzger, 512). Barrett, 94, suggests that Paul, wishing to emphasize that Christ died for people while they were still weak, places ἔτι first, and then uses it again in the normal place, perhaps forgetting that he had already said it.

⁸⁴ Dunn, *Romans*, 254.

⁸⁵ Louw and Nida, 679.

⁸⁶ Louw and Nida, 755, 243, note that ἀσθενής may be a more general reference to a "helpless condition." Since, however, for Paul sin holds humanity in its sway, rendering it helpless to do good (cf. Rom 7), the idea of moral weakness overlaps with the idea of helplessness.

those who "live without regard for religious belief or practice,"⁸⁷ but here the term finds broader application. The first person pronouns indicate that Paul includes himself and other Jews among the "ungodly" for whom Christ died, though many were scarcely "without regard for religious belief or practice." Paul portrays all of humanity, Jew and Gentile, as though they were cast in the same mold. The mindset of all that is "flesh" is one of hostility toward God (8:7) -- hence all are "ungodly." Grace is evident in the offer of salvation to those who neither deserved it (the ungodly), nor were able to extricate themselves from the power of sin (the weak).

Next, Paul stresses the great lengths to which God went in the gift of his Son for a sinful humanity. Paul concedes that "for a good person someone might actually dare to die" (5:7), but God offers unassailable proof of his love. Christ died for people while they were still sinners (5:8). Thus, the apostle goes on to argue, future salvation is assured: "For if while we were enemies (ἐχθροὶ ὄντες), we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life" (5:10). The term "enemies" can be passive, denoting that which is hated by God, or active, denoting that which opposes God (cf. 8:7). Since it is part of Paul's theology that "wrath" signifies an active hostility on the part of God to humanity's rebellion, the passive sense might be thought to be in view.⁸⁸ However, in view of the intentional rebellion of humanity of which Paul speaks in 1:18-3:20, some take it to be active⁸⁹ and this seems more likely, in light of the fact that the terms "ungodly" (vs. 6) and "sinners" (vs. 8) signify active rebellion⁹⁰ and the fact that God's act of reconciliation rather than his hostility to sin is highlighted in this passage. Paul speaks here of hostile humanity as the object of a divine initiative to achieve reconciliation, not the subject which petitions God for reconciliation. The implication seems to be that in its enmity against God, humanity had no

⁸⁷ Louw and Nida, 533. Cf. BAGD, "godless," "impious."

⁸⁸ Dunn, *Romans*, 258.

⁸⁹ Cf. BAGD, 331, Wilckens, *Römer*, I, 298, n986.

⁹⁰ Against Ridderbos, 185.

interest in being reconciled to God. We see a similar sentiment in vs. 11, where Paul draws attention to the fact that if believers do boast, it is to be in God "through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation (τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν)." The removal of this enmity through reconciliation amounts to a deliverance from wrath, to being acquitted of sin. The result is that reconciliation describes both humanity's standing before God and God's stance towards humanity.⁹¹

3. The defeat of sin through Christ -- Rom 5:12-21

Not only does Paul believe that the Christ event makes possible reconciliation, he believes it signals the overthrow of sin's tyranny. In 5:12-21, he shows how the era of grace contrasts with the era of sin, illustrating, as Moffatt puts it, how "against this bright Now stands a dark Then."⁹² The connection of 5:12-21 with the whole of the letter is important. The argument of 1:18-4:25 has shown the plight of humanity (though it should be noted that the point seems to be that Jew and Gentile share the *same* plight) and the salvation achieved by God in and through Jesus Christ. It is this that Paul is summing up in 5:12-21 by the series of "as...so..." contrasts in 5:12 and 5:18-21.⁹³

The section does not proceed as an unbroken argument. The sentence begun at vs. 12 breaks off into a parenthesis (vv. 13-14), and the thought is not brought to completion until

⁹¹ Ridderbos, 185. Rom 5:1-12 illustrates how "justification" is the creation (or re-creation) of a relationship (cf. Becker, 369). Danker notes that here Paul illustrates his belief in the remarkable nature of God's consideration for humanity as expressed through Christ's death by making use of the "model of the endangered benefactor friend" (Benefactor: An Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field [St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982] 417. Danker indicates that the term "benefactor" has "no single referent in Greek or Latin. It denotes rather a depth-structural reality that breaks into various thematic patterns and comes to linguistic expression in numerous modes and forms" (27). Lysias illustrates the theme with two questions in his oration against Andokides, when he asks why Andokides should receive consideration: "For the conferment of what benefit? Because he incurred danger on account of you many times in behalf of the city?" Danker indicates that many documents, especially those that narrate the actions of heads of state or their representatives, call attention to the perils undergone by benefactors on behalf of their wards. For example it is said of Akornion the priest that he "shrinks from no danger...to accomplish whatever might be advantageous to the city" (No. 12. 30-32). See further Danker, 363.

⁹² Moffatt, 220.

⁹³ Wright, "Adam in Pauline Christology," SBL 1983 Seminar Papers (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1983) 370.

vs. 18, where the comparative element of vs. 12 ("just as sin came into the world through one man") is repeated.⁹⁴ The premise that Adam's sin somehow led to human death would be easily accepted by people acquainted with the Genesis account, but it would not necessarily follow that the effects of Christ's work are universal. Yet Paul asserts in vs. 18: "Just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all." Obviously the content of vs. 18 is based on the argument 5:15-17.⁹⁵

5:12 asserts that sin came into the world through one man (Adam),⁹⁶ that death came through sin, and that death spread to all because all have sinned. In vv. 12-14, Paul accounts for the entry of sin and death into the world. One man (Adam) sinned, and because of that sin death entered the world. Ever since Adam sinned, humanity has participated in that sin, and, as a result, all die. The solution to the problem of sin and death is found in Christ. "But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely (πολλῶ μᾶλλον) have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many."

Cranfield is of the view that Paul is making a *contrast* between Adam and Christ.⁹⁷ Adam's act of sin, in the way it brought death to all humanity, is antithetical to Christ's

⁹⁴ So Cranfield, 270 and C. Caragounis, "Romans 5:15-16 in the Context of 5:12-21: Contrast or Comparison?" *NTS* 31 (1985) 143.

⁹⁵ Caragounis, 143.

⁹⁶ On the subject of the Adam of Genesis being identified with the primitive gnostic myth of the so-called "*Ur-Mensch*," W. D. Davies observes that the "myth of the *Ur-mensch*...was in the air throughout the period, but Jewish preoccupation with the problem of sin and its relation to Adam is enough to account for the growth of traditions about the latter" (*Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* [London: SPCK, 1962] 45). B. Englezakis is more blunt: to "speak with Bultmann and others of a Gnostic background appears to me rather preposterous. The Old Testament and Judaism offer an indisputable and direct background..." ("Rom 5,12-15 and the Pauline Teaching on the Lord's Death: Some Observations," *Biblica* [1977] 234).

⁹⁷ Cranfield, 284; S.-H. Quek, "Adam and Christ According to Paul," *Pauline Studies. Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday*, D.A. Hagner, and M. J. Harris, eds. (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1980; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 72; C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last. A Study in Pauline Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962) 15, 71. Cf. also Theobald, *Gnade*, 73. Bultmann ("Adam and Christ according to Rom 5" in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, eds. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder [London: SCM, 1962], 155) thinks that the contrast is more

death which brings life to the many. Paul's portrayal of the reality of sin and the fact that all humanity finds itself in the oppressive and inescapable grip of sin only serves to highlight how great the act of grace, which neutralizes the effects of Adam's sin, really is.⁹⁸

However, one should not overlook the similarity inherent in the fact that both Adam and Christ are portrayed by Paul as having performed acts of cosmic significance.⁹⁹ For all of humanity, then, one brought death, the other life.¹⁰⁰ Rather than understanding vv. 15a and 16a as statements emphasizing *only* the difference between Christ and Adam, it is better to understand them as also indicating that both performed acts that affect human history profoundly, but in completely different ways. One man's sin resulted in great evil, but, for Paul, God's grace is more than sufficient to undo the negative effects and to bring life.¹⁰¹ Paul here is emphasizing similarity *with a difference*. Christ is, in a sense, like Adam, but in another sense what he did was vastly different: he brought life, not death.

After saying in 5:15 that "the free gift is not like the trespass," Paul then proceeds to argue, in *qal wahomer* style,¹⁰² that if death came through the transgression of the man, Adam, life shall certainly come through the obedience of the man, Jesus Christ.

between Adam (τοῦ ἑνός) and God (τοῦ θεοῦ) than Adam and Christ. However, if, as Quek argues, one sees the parallelism not as verbal, but as conceptual, then it appears that the whole thought in 15d is pitted against the thought of 15c, that is, Christ's representative act against the aftermath of Adam's act. In both premises (15c, 17a) there is a development of 5:12b (Quek, 72).

⁹⁸ Cf. Theobald, Gnade, 94.

⁹⁹ Cf. Caragounis, 144.

¹⁰⁰ Caragounis, 144. But see H. A. Lombard, "The Adam–Christ 'Typology' in Romans 5:12–21," Neotestamentica, 15 (1981) 84, who, although he acknowledges the direct comparison, prefers to emphasize the great difference between the deeds of Adam and Christ.

¹⁰¹ Caragounis, 145. Caragounis emphasizes the similarity between the acts, whereas I think that elements of similarity and contrast are both present.

¹⁰² See on this Theobald, Gnade, 91.

In vs. 15, τὸ χάρισμα is seen as being a direct result of ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ which overflowed to the many, manifested in "the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ." τὸ χάρισμα most likely refers to the Christ event.¹⁰³

The relationship of the phrase ἐν χάριτι to ἡ δωρεά as it occurs in the expression ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι is less than clear. Most prefer to take the ἐν as functioning in an equivalent manner to the genitive, yielding the sense "the gift which consists of grace."¹⁰⁴ I find preferable the view of Cranfield who, in view of Paul's τῆ after χάριτι, understands ἡ δωρεά. κ.τ.λ. as meaning "the gift (which had come) by the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ." ἐν χάριτι is thus understood instrumentally.¹⁰⁵ After ἡ χάρις

¹⁰³ Alternatively, in view of the presence of τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης in vs. 17 and of εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς, δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται and διὰ δικαιοσύνης in vv. 18, 20 and 21, respectively, it may be that Paul is referring to the gracious gift of a righteous status before God (Cranfield, 284). However, these considerations are overshadowed by the fact that in 15a, χάρισμα is parallel to παράπτωμα ("trespass"), where the latter refers to a single act (Moo, Romans 1-8, 347-48). Adam's trespass is paralleled by Christ's obedience. This means that grace is not viewed by Paul as a static attribute of God, but rather signifies God in action on behalf of humanity, undoing that which the first man brought on his descendants; χάρισμα in vs. 15a has the sense of "work of grace," the particular "work" being the Christ event. Cf. Barrett, 106, who translates it by the expression "act of grace" and notes that it is used here to express the actualization of grace, just as παράπτωμα represents the actualization of sin. It is unusual to take χάρισμα in this sense, since χάρισμα is usually used to denote gifts given by God to believers (cf., however, 6:23, where Paul says that the "gift" is "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"). Michel, 189, comments that χάρισμα "bezeichnet hier den konkreten Erweis der Gnade und Güte Gottes" and that it "wird wieder aufgenommen durch ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ und ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι." F. G. Lafont takes the view that here χάρις "peut être pris au sens passif." Grace is that which is "possessed" and of course, the gift is that which is received ("Sur L'interprétation de Romains V, 15-21," Recherches de Science Religieuse, 45 [1957] 483-84). However, in expressing it this way he obscures the emphasis on grace as an act of God.

¹⁰⁴ BAGD translates ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι as a hendiadys, by "the gift of grace" (261). So also Theobald, Gnade, 93. Michel, 189, n10, states that ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι is equivalent to ἡ δωρεὰ ἢ ἐν χάριτι, that is δωρεὰ τῆς χάριτος. In his view, "die Gnade ist selbst die Gabe" (189). So also Käsemann, Romans, 153. Cf. M. Black, Romans, 2nd edition, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 83, who says that it seems likely that Paul is defining further that in which the divine 'grace' lay, that is, the free gift of righteousness; the 'free gift in the grace' is to be taken as a unity, i.e. the free gift consisting of the grace of the one man Jesus Christ. However, ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ function as a dual subject in the apodosis. ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ are not a hendiadys ("the gracious gift of God"), but more probably have separate importance, given the repetition of the article (Moo, 349).

¹⁰⁵ Cranfield, 285. Cf. also Moo, 349-50. Cranfield also observes that the subject of the apodosis is not the οἱ πολλοί which one expects (corresponding to the οἱ πολλοί

τοῦ θεοῦ it is natural to understand the gift to be the gift of God rather than of Christ, and in view of vs. 17, it should be identified with δικαιοσύνη.¹⁰⁶ In this verse then, righteousness is understood to be made available to humanity by means of the grace of God made manifest in the one man, Jesus Christ.

Paul concludes vs. 15 by saying that the gift "abounded for the many (εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσεν)." As Barrett notes,

the act of grace does not counter-balance the act of sin, but rather overbalances it, the point being that grace operates more inclusively and more strongly than did destructiveness. Christ's act was an act of the grace of God, a fact which upsets straightforward analogies between Adam and Christ.¹⁰⁷

Paul does not think of a mere restoration of humanity to some primeval state of innocence and immortality. God, through grace, more than overcomes the human dilemma. For Paul, life after Christ is superior to life before the sin of Adam.¹⁰⁸

In 5:16, Paul continues to deal with the nature of the "free gift," saying that the "free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin." Paul then asserts that although judgment

of the protasis). Instead the subject ἡ χάρις. κ.τ.λ., logically corresponds to the τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι of the protasis, and the real parallelism of thought between the apodosis and the protasis is a strong reason for connecting ἐν χάριτι. κ.τ.λ. not with the verb ἐπερίσσευσεν, but with ἡ δωρεά. This, too, tips the scales in favour of Cranfield's view of the function of ἐν χάριτι, since it means that ἡ δωρεά κ.τ.λ. means "the gift (which had come) by the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ" (Cranfield's translation).

¹⁰⁶ Cranfield, 286. Bultmann, "Adam," 155 understands it as a reference to "life." Less convincing is Dunn, *Romans*, 280, who suggests that with δωρεά the gift of the Spirit may be in view. However, he allows that it may also refer to "righteousness," noting that in descriptions of what comes to man from God, "gift," "grace," "righteousness" are all near synonyms, and so can be used in various prepositional combinations (cf. 3.24; 5.17, 21; 8.10; Gal 4.4-5; Acts 2.38; 10.45; Eph 3.7; 4.7).

¹⁰⁷ Barrett, *Romans*, 106. For Paul, God's grace cannot be measured by human standards (cf. Michel, 190).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Lafont, 484: "Non seulement le régime de la grâce compense, mais il surpasse infiniment le régime de la mort." Bultmann notes that while in vv 17, 19 (21) the final clauses are in the future, we have here in ἐπερίσσευσεν a summary or constative aorist (cf. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 11). The Adam/Christ relationship is here formulated without any reference to the still future consummation (but contrast vs. 18).

followed just one trespass, the gift followed, even after many sins, and brought justification.¹⁰⁹ The effect of sin was the bringing of death, but χάρισμα brings δικαίωμα, that is, "justification."

In 16c ("the free gift following many trespasses brings justification"), the noun χάρισμα does not have here the usual sense of "grace-gifts," but, as in 6:23, denotes the basic work of grace already accomplished through the death of Christ which finds its outcome in δικαίωμα. For this reason, δικαίωμα can be correctly translated by "justification."¹¹⁰ The reference is to the work of χάρισμα and not, as in 1:32; 2:26; 8:4, to the demand of the law, nor to God's righteous order. Most likely, Paul is thinking of the objective reality of the resulting justification.¹¹¹

Vs. 17 is probably best understood as reinforcing the point made in 16, that is, that the gift undoes the effects of sin. Here Paul asserts that if, because of Adam's trespass, death reigned, "much more will those who receive the abundance of grace (τὴν περισσεῖαν τῆς χάριτος) and the free gift of righteousness (τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης) reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."

τὴν περισσεῖαν τῆς χάριτος calls attention to the magnitude of the manifestation of God's grace.¹¹² Significantly, it is linked with τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης.

¹⁰⁹ It is worth noting that Paul does not here explain in great detail the "how" of things. He simply asserts that because one man sinned, now all humanity sins and, therefore, all humanity is culpable. As Englezakis puts it, Paul's theology is a "theology of facts" (234). "It is 'grace for all' that the apostle has in mind, and this is expressed in terms of the ancient idea that community or race suffer and succeed with him who is their head or representative" (Moffatt, 221). For a summary of various possibilities of how Paul might have viewed the "how" of things, see W.D. Davies, "From Tyranny to Liberation: The Pauline Experience of Alienation and Reconciliation," Jewish and Pauline Studies (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 194-95.

¹¹⁰ Thus in Rom 5:16 the term is used as an equivalent for δικαίωσις. Cf. BAGD, 198; G. Schrenk, δικαίωμα, TDNT, II, 222. Ziesler notes that δικαίωμα should probably be translated "justification," because it is parallel with κατάκριμα, "condemnation" and so refers to God's free acceptance or acquittal of the guilty party (Romans, 149).

¹¹¹ Käsemann, Romans, 154. Cf. Hodge, 168.

¹¹² Dunn makes the observation that "Paul's piling up of language in superfluous repetition is an instinctive or deliberate attempt to mirror the superabundant quality of grace given and received" (Dunn, Romans, 281).

Paul thinks of righteousness as a gift, "a potency or status or relationship received from God."¹¹³ The earlier linking of "gift" with "grace" in vs. 15 indicates that Paul views the gift of righteousness as being dependent on God's "abundant grace."

But grace is not only responsible for the gift of righteousness: there is an eschatological element, a "not-yet" aspect, to the fullness of grace. Paul believes that grace brings about the future reign of believers.¹¹⁴ He argues that if death reigned through one man's sin, then "much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (5:17). It is interesting that Paul does not draw the obvious parallel between a reign of death and reign of life. Instead Paul says that although death reigned in the old order, *believers* will reign in life.¹¹⁵ The focus shifts from the abstract to the concrete: those who are the recipients and beneficiaries of God's superabundant eschatological grace¹¹⁶ and the gift of righteousness (which itself is a manifestation of χάρις) will reign. Paul uses apocalyptic language here,¹¹⁷ emphasizing the generosity of God's grace and the glory of the divine purpose for humanity.¹¹⁸

In the two units of vs. 15 and vv. 16-17 Paul attempts to show: a) that the gift affects all people (potentially), just as the trespass did, and b) that if one man's sin could do so

¹¹³ Dunn, Romans, 295.

¹¹⁴ In vs. 17, βασιλεύσουσιν is in the future tense. Denney, 630, observes that the future tense is no doubt "logical," but nevertheless refers to the consummation of redemption in the age to come. See also on this Lafont, 488-89.

¹¹⁵ Michel comments that "Der Tod 'herrscht' über die Menschheit, das Leben aber kann nicht über Menschen 'herrschen', sondern ist das Zeichen der eschatologischen Herrschaft" (190). Cf. also on this Theobald, 107-08.

¹¹⁶ Theobald, Gnade, 104, observes that here the nominal phrase τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος is equivalent to the verbal phrase ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ... ἐπερίσσευσεν" from which he concludes that "die περισσεία ist also auch hier die eschatologische Fülle der Gnade, die sich den Glaubenden durch die Tat Christi am Kreuz erschließt."

¹¹⁷ Michel, 190. Michel notes that the reign of life is not actual, but is yet future. The reign of life is an "eschatologischen Herrschaft."

¹¹⁸ Cranfield, 288. Note also the active and passive roles humanity plays here. While on the one hand people are recipients and beneficiaries of God's grace, there is a purpose to the gift; it is so that they might "reign in life" (cf. Theobald, Gnade, 107).

much evil, the other man's act of obedience, through the grace of God, can overwhelmingly undo the effects of sin and in so doing make possible a "reign in life."

This is the basis on which Paul next says, "Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life (εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς) for all." Paul explains in vv. 18-19 that through Christ's righteous acts of obedience, believers will be made righteous, and so shall live. The implication would seem to be that the final rule of which Paul speaks is a consequence of δικαίωμα.¹¹⁹ Those who experience grace and are justified by faith will "reign" through Jesus Christ.

5:18 refers to the effects of Christ's act of obedience in the life of believers (εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς). The attributive ζωῆς tells us that justification and life are correlative, that is to say, the content of δικαίωσις is life. Vv. 17 and 21 both indicate that ζωή must be understood throughout the passage in an eschatological sense. Though Paul's use of the term elsewhere (Rom 6:4; 8:2, 6, 10) shows that this eschatological life begins now for those who are justified, the phrase δικαίωσις ζωῆς, like the δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται of vs. 19, confirms the idea that in Paul, justification looks forward to the consummation in which it will reach both its goal and final completion.¹²⁰

In this passage we see two great powers at work, each confronting the other, but one bringing death, the other bringing life. As Zeller says, "Die Königin Sünde ist hier der Königin Gnade konfrontiert, die durch die Gerechtigkeit Gottes, zum ewigen Leben führt."¹²¹ The great power sin, accompanied as it is by death (12c, 15c, 17a), more than meets its match in the "superabundant" power of grace (15d, 17b, 20c, 21b). This brings the reader to the conclusion of vs. 18, which also completes the comparison begun in vs. 12: "Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of

¹¹⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 282. Cf. Rom 4:13, which speaks of the promise to Abraham that he would "inherit the world."

¹²⁰ Schrenk, "δικαίωσις," *TDNT*, II, 224.

¹²¹ Zeller, 158.

righteousness leads to justification and life for all." "The many" were made sinners by the one man's disobedience, but "the many will be made righteous" by the obedience of the one man (5:19).¹²²

In vs. 20, Paul asserts that the law was introduced with a view to increasing sin, but then claims that "where sin increased, grace superabounded (ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις)."¹²³ ὑπερπερισσεύω, in a manner typical of Jewish apocalyptic, signifies eschatological abundance¹²⁴ and makes a fitting climax to the sequence of contrasts begun in vs. 15, resuming, yet going beyond the πολλῶ μᾶλλον...ἐπερίσσευσεν (vs. 15).¹²⁵ Sin's deadly effects, which have now been connected with the νόμος, have been more than countered by χάρις.¹²⁶ Because of the all-sufficiency of grace, Paul is completely certain of the success of the new covenant.

Rom 5:21 reveals the purpose for the "superabounding" of grace. It is so that the reign of sin¹²⁷ would be superseded by the reign of grace διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. Grace is now ruling in place of the deposed despot, sin. The solution to the reign of sin is the reign of grace, here spoken of as a cosmic power. Because the Christ event is "the decisive eschatological event in which the time of salvation has dawned, therefore grace may be spoken of as a personified power which works against the power of sin and takes over its lost command" (Rom 5:20-21).¹²⁸

¹²² Cf. Theobald, Gnade, 83.

¹²³ ὑπερπερίσσευσεν is the climax to the series of terms which express abundance and superabundance in this section (Cranfield, 294).

¹²⁴ F. Hauck, "περισσεύω," TDNT, VI, 60. Cf. particularly 4 Ezra 4:50. Cf. also the discussion in Theobald, 117.

¹²⁵ Dunn, Romans, 287.

¹²⁶ The οὐ, often a linking word, may have a temporal significance here, referring to the epoch where sin increased (Dunn, Romans, 286-87). Cf. also Rom 4:15.

¹²⁷ A reign made possible through death, since ἐν probably expresses result here (Cranfield, 297). Note the ambivalence of the term "death." Whereas in vv. 15, 17 it is used of a spiritual condition which results from the sin of Adam, here it refers to an eschatological condition, over against eternal life (Lafont, 495).

¹²⁸ Bultmann, Theology, I, 290

Paul asserts that grace reigns "through righteousness (διὰ δικαιοσύνης)" that leads to eternal life (5:21). δικαιοσύνη is probably not to be limited to the idea of being "declared righteous,"¹²⁹ but probably includes the idea of God acting on behalf of humanity to make "life" a possibility.¹³⁰ Paul does not specify this life as being purely a future experience. He envisions life as both a present and future possession of the believer, mediated by grace.

The concluding phrase of 5:21, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, points to Christ as the one who makes the reign of grace possible, as well as the one who sustains it. Christ's obedience accomplishes for humanity what it cannot do for itself. Grace is, as always, a gift of God. God's original intention for humanity will be restored in the new aeon which has been inaugurated in the work of Christ.¹³¹ The whole verse highlights the dynamic nature of grace. Grace is active, both in the present and in the future, making possible justification in the present and life that will not end. The believer's existence in the community, both in the present and the future, is completely dependent on the grace of God.

In 5:12-21, Paul shows how in the Christ event, God undoes the effects of the sin of Adam. Just as Adam's sin had far-reaching effects, Paul asserts, so did Christ's obedience. Through Adam's sin, death and sin reigned. Through Christ's death, the reign of sin is broken. Grace, however, does not merely undo the effects of Adam's sin. It goes beyond them and makes possible a future reign of believers. Paul even personifies grace itself as reigning. Perhaps the most significant point to be drawn from the passage for our purposes is that throughout, Paul portrays God as the sole author to the solution of the

¹²⁹ So Cranfield, 294.

¹³⁰ So Dunn, *Romans*, 287. Ziesler (*The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, SNTSMS 20 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972] 199-200) asserts that δικαιοσύνη here refers to both forensic justification and ethical righteousness, which Ziesler asserts are "the twin, inseparable results of being in Christ, the obedient, gracious Man."

¹³¹ Cf. N. T. Wright, "Adam in Pauline Christology," *Society of Biblical Literature 1983 Seminar Papers* (Chico, Calif: Scholars Press, 1983) 372.

plight of humanity and the gratuity is repeatedly emphasized. Deliverance from the deadly effects of Adam's sin, the freedom from condemnation, justification and a future "reign in life" are all made possible by God. The fundamental assumption of the passage is dependence on God.

4. Adoption -- Rom 8:15

As in Galatians, the concept of adoption surfaces in Romans and here too it implies that one is dependent on God for becoming a member of the believing community. In 8:15 Paul observes, to buttress his earlier assertion that "those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God," that "you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit¹³² of adoption, by which we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Paul once again uses adoption as a metaphor for salvation,¹³³ a metaphor which implies the dependence of a person on God to become a member of the believing "family." Thus, in vs. 14, Paul calls believers "children of God," and in vs. 15, he claims that it is by the Spirit¹³⁴ that believers cry "Abba, Father!" It is this same Spirit, asserts Paul, that bears witness with the spirit of believers that they are children of God (8:16).

5. Grace, "works of the law" and "works" -- Rom 3:24; 4:4-5, 16; 9:30-10:13

Before examining what Paul says in Romans 3 and 4 that impinges directly on our subject, a brief overview of Paul's argument in this section will help us to appreciate the broader context of Paul's sayings on grace.

¹³² That the second πνεῦμα is a reference to the Holy Spirit seems likely, given the fact that in Paul, entry into the believing community is marked by the reception of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:2-3). In 8:16 it is "that same Spirit (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα)" that bears witness with the πνεῦμα of believers; this too would seem to point toward a reference to the Spirit of God.

¹³³ Cf. the discussion of adoption in Gal 4:5.

¹³⁴ Taking ἐν ᾧ instrumentally. On the punctuation of vv. 15 and 16 see Cranfield, 398-99. An alternative punctuation (adopted by the NRSV) would be to place a period after υἰοθεσίας and a comma after πατήρ. In favour of the punctuation reflected in the English translation given above is the fact that, if the last words of vs. 15 are connected with οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε, κ.τ.λ., they balance πάλιν εἰς φόβον and clarify the meaning of πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας (Cranfield, 398).

In 1:18-3:20, Paul has argued that Jews and Gentiles share the same dilemma: all are guilty and without excuse before God. Jews have been given privileges, including knowledge of the law of God. But where the law has been transgressed, its only practical result is the "knowledge of sin" (3:20). Now, "apart from law," God's "righteousness" -- his faithfulness to his creation in not abandoning it to the bane of sin, his saving power -- is displayed in the expiating death of Jesus, providing "justification" freely for all who believe, Jews and Greeks alike (3:21-26). What God has done leaves no room for human boasting: neither Jewish privileges nor Jewish faithfulness to the law plays a role when Jew and Gentile are both justified on the same basis of faith (3:27-31). Even Abraham proves no exception; he was approved, not on the basis of what he did for which he might claim some recompense, but because of his faith in God who "justifies the ungodly" (4:1-5). Paul finds in Psalm 32 further support for the idea that divine favour results from a divine act of mercy: "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered...."

Neither circumcision nor the law have a role in the approval of Abraham or the inclusion of Abraham's descendants in the divine promises (4:9-15). God's power alone is decisive -- a power that "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (4:17). The part of humans is to trust in such a God: their faith is "reckoned as righteousness" (4:16-25).

a. Rom 3:24

The first verse which we will examine more closely is Rom 3:24. There, in the section in which Paul demonstrates that righteousness has been manifested "apart from the law," Paul claims that those who have sinned "are now justified by [God's] grace as a gift...." Much of our investigation of grace in Paul is concerned with texts where "justification" is not an issue, but here the two concepts are explicitly linked. What, then, is the significance of the link between justification and grace in Rom 3:24?

The line of argument of 3:21-26 forms a sort of circle. First, Paul articulates the revelation of the righteousness of God in Christ, then looks at the situation of humanity before God and, finally, returns to God's deed, that is, his justification of the one who has faith in Jesus.¹³⁵

At the conclusion of the indictment of both Jew and Gentile in chs. 1-3, Paul says that "works of the law" will not lead to justification, meaning that since no one does the works of the law, they are unable to save (see above). In 3:22, after asserting that all are guilty before God, Paul turns to the solution: righteousness that may be had by believing in Christ. The corrective for the problem faced by Jew and Gentile is the same. It is "the righteousness of God¹³⁶ through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."

After reiterating the universality of human sinfulness and the consequent falling short from the glory God had designed for humankind (3:23), Paul claims in vs. 24 that those who have faith¹³⁷ are "now justified by his grace as a gift (δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῆ ἀποτοῦ χάριτι), through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."¹³⁸ We see here a

¹³⁵ M. Theobald, "Das Gottesbild des Paulus nach Röm 3,21–31" Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt, 6-7 (1981–82) 136. In 3:22, 26, as in Gal 2:16, I take Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ to be an objective genitive. This is most likely in view of the prepositional phrase εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (on the function of redundancy, see the discussion in my chapter on Galatians). The logical object of faith in the passage is Christ. An objective genitive is also implied by Rom 4:4-5, the point of which is not that people are saved through the faithfulness of another, but rather through God's "counting" their righteousness as faith.

¹³⁶ Cf. Moffatt, 208. There is some question whether θεοῦ in the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is an objective or subjective genitive. It seems to me that δικαιοσύνη cannot be understood here as having only a forensic sense (in which case θεοῦ would be a purely objective genitive). Note that in 3:26, Paul says εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον ("to show that he [God] is upright"; cf. Fitzmyer, 262). What we have here is a reference to an "attribute" of God, though it is not an attribute that should be understood in a static sense. It is rather an attribute that finds active expression making possible the new relationship with God which Paul believes is brought about by faith in Christ. This suggests that θεοῦ should be read as a subjective genitive. Cf. further the discussion of Paul's use of the δικ- group of words in chapter 4 above.

¹³⁷ δικαιούμενοι refers directly to those who have faith in 3:22 (τοὺς πιστεύοντες) (Longenecker, Eschatology, 205). Here, as in the discussion of Gal 2:16, I take δικαιοῶ in a forensic sense.

¹³⁸ It is worth noting that Paul's assertion of the operation of God's grace in the face of a universal human sinfulness is again paralleled in Jewish writings. Cf. 2 Esdras 8:35-36: "For in truth there is no one among those who have been born who has not acted

further reason why there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. It is the other side of the depiction in vs. 23; there is no distinction not only because all have sinned, but also because all are saved by the same means.¹³⁹

The participle δικαιοῦμενοι picks up the line of thought which Paul began in 22a: "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe... being justified by his grace..." (24a). That the participle "being justified" is in the present tense (δικαιοῦμενοι) indicates that Paul has in mind not only a past event, but also one that is a continuous process. Justification is the act by which God brings people who have faith into a continuing relationship with himself.¹⁴⁰ The primary reference does not seem to be God's final verdict in the day of judgment,¹⁴¹ but one cannot easily separate the present from the future, since being justified in the present implies a favourable verdict at the last judgment. Justification, which makes possible membership in the community, establishes the grounds for a positive final assessment.¹⁴²

Paul describes justification as being δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι ("as a gift, by his grace"), but there is some question about the relation between δωρεάν and τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι. According to Cranfield, δωρεάν and τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι support and confirm

wickedly; among those who have existed there is no one who has not done wrong. For in this, O Lord, your righteousness and goodness will be declared, when you are merciful to those who have no store of good works."

¹³⁹ Bassler, 156, observes that the phrase οὐ ἔστιν διαστολή "stands as a logical bridge between the new claim that divine grace is available to all who believe (v. 22a) and a summary of the preceding argument, 'All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (v. 23).... The impartiality of the new dispensation of grace, which is open to all without distinction, is consistent with, even grounded in, the impartiality in judgment: all have sinned."

¹⁴⁰ The verb occurs in reference to justification as a past experience with present benefits in 5:1 (δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν) and future benefits in 5:9 (πολλῶ οὖν μᾶλλον δικαιωθέντες νῦν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ σωθησόμεθα δι' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς). Note also that in 8:30 it occurs in the aorist tense, but is immediately followed by ἐδόξαsen, which clearly does not refer to an event that has already been experienced by believers. The aorist is proleptic.

¹⁴¹ Against Dunn, Romans, 179.

¹⁴² Dunn, Romans, 79.

each other.¹⁴³ Michel observes that δωρεάν underscores the fact that man is not owed anything, but remains a recipient. In his view, χάρις simply describes justification as an act of the grace of God.¹⁴⁴ Bultmann asserts that δωρεάν emphasizes the "gift-character" of grace as an act.¹⁴⁵ Doughty, believing that δωρεάν is a part of the traditional confessional material which Paul is using, asserts that τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι represents, in typical Pauline language, Paul's commentary on the traditional formula δικαιοῦμενοι δωρεάν. What Paul actually wants to emphasize by his reference to χάρις is the "grace-character of the gift!"¹⁴⁶ If Doughty is correct, it means that Paul explicitly interprets the salvation that has been made available through God's act in Christ through the word χάρις.

Although it is difficult to ascertain the content of the pre-Pauline material in vs. 24 (if indeed vs. 24 is pre-Pauline), Doughty's view of the relationship between the two terms has merit. As he himself notes, in Rom 5:17, where χάρις and δωρεά appear together, δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης is to be understood in light of the preceding reference to χάρις. This is confirmed by the preceding phrase ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι, where χάρις seems to interpret δωρεά. Compare also Rom 5:16, where χάρισμα in 16b interprets δώρημα in 16a. In the thinking of Paul, the "gift of salvation" (δωρεά) is interpreted as a "gift of grace (δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι)."¹⁴⁷

Paul's obvious concern is to stress the gratuity of righteousness, both in 5:16-17 and in 3:24. In 5:16-17, Paul says that justification is a "free gift," that is, it is that which is

¹⁴³ Cranfield, 206. Cf. W. Sanday, and A. C. Headlam, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 5th ed., 1925) 86, who say that each of these phrases strengthens the other in an emphatic way. Wilckens says that justification is a gift, brought through the working of God's grace (Römer, I, 189). Cf. also J. Knox, "The Epistle to the Romans," The Interpreter's Bible, IX (New York: Abingdon, 1954) 431 and M.-J. Lagrange, Saint Paul Épitre aux Romains, 4 ed. (Paris: Gabalda, 1931) 74.

¹⁴⁴ O. Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, 5 ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 149.

¹⁴⁵ Bultmann, Theology, I, 281, 289. So also Zeller, 155.

¹⁴⁶ D. J. Doughty, "The Priority of ΧΑΡΙΣ," NTS, 19 (1972-73) 170.

¹⁴⁷ Doughty, 170, n2.

offered freely. Sin's rule is broken because God acts sovereignly. To return to 3:24, χάρις is used in connection with the idea that πίστις can lead to a righteousness that comes χωρὶς νόμου. For Paul, there can be no justification through "works of the law," since people do not do the law. What then is the answer to the plight which has been caused by human disobedience? There is no human solution. The answer to the human plight is "justification by faith," the gratuitousness of which is implied by the phrase "by his grace as a gift." People are justified because God acts on humanity's behalf.¹⁴⁸ Paul believes the righteousness of which he speaks is made available gratuitously.¹⁴⁹ Paul describes this "gift" as "redemption" which is made available through Christ, "whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood..." (3:25a). This gratuitous salvation, available because of Christ's atoning death, is, for Paul, the demonstration both that God is "righteous" and that "he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus" (3:26).¹⁵⁰

The link between justification and grace in Rom 3:24 is crucial to Paul's argument in that "justification" is here presented as God's gracious eschatological act by which he helps those who were unable to help themselves.

b. Romans 4: 4-5; 16

Before we can determine what various verses in Rom 4 say about dependence on God for becoming a member of the Christian community, we need to know what Paul here

¹⁴⁸ Cf. 3:25, in which Paul attributes the offering of Christ to God: ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεός...

¹⁴⁹ Fitzmyer observes that "justification" is spoken of in the Hebrew Bible as difficult to attain (Job 4:17; 9:2; Ps 143:2). Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2:41 §293) believes there to be nothing "more righteous" than obeying Torah to achieve a righteous standing before God (According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle [New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1993] 25). However, Qumran documents also witness to a tradition which is aware of human sinfulness and seeks justification from God alone (cf. 1QS 11:10-15; 1QH 7:28-30; 9:32-34; 14:15-18). The obvious difference between the sectarian teaching and Paul's teaching about justification lies in Paul's emphasis that "grace is an effect of the Christ-event apprehended by humans through faith" (Fitzmyer, According to Paul, 26). Paul is thus specifying the means of justification, and emphasizes that it is very much a function of God's grace. I would also suggest that a difference between Paul and the sectarians is the pervasiveness of the concept of grace in the apostle's letters.

¹⁵⁰ On the sense of the genitive Ἰησοῦ, see above n 136.

means by "works" and how these are related to grace. First, however, we must briefly examine Rom 3:27-28.

In 3:27 Paul asks the question, "Then what becomes of boasting (ποῦ οὐκ ἢ καύχησις)? It is excluded. By what law (διὰ ποίου νόμου)? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith (νόμου πίστεως)." Paul raises this question as one that arises naturally from his assertion that justification is by faith and not by works of the law. For Hübner, the boasting of which Paul speaks is "self-glorying," that is, boasting in "self-righteousness."¹⁵¹ Others find that the boasting that Paul excludes has to do with national pride. Thus Dunn says that Paul is attacking "the self-confidence of the Jew as Jew, the boasting in God as Israel's God, the pride in the law as indicating God's commitment to his people and as marking them off from the other nations."¹⁵² To evaluate these positions, we must first determine what Paul means by saying that boasting is excluded by the "law of faith."

There has been a great deal of debate over how to translate νόμος in this verse. Some have argued that νόμος is not to be translated by "principle," but is instead a reference to the law of Moses. Thus Paul would be saying that the law of Moses is correctly appreciated as a "law of faith." On this view, what Paul is opposing is not the law in and of itself, but rather the misuse or misunderstanding of the law.¹⁵³

That νόμος can have the meaning "principle," or "order" has been demonstrated decisively by Räisänen.¹⁵⁴ He also argues that each "νόμος in vs. 27 means an 'order.'

¹⁵¹ Hübner, 116. Also representative of this position are Bultmann, (Theology, I, 242) and Bornkamm, who says that Paul here has in mind the Jew "who appeals to the special status granted him in the plan of salvation, and who refuses to admit that he has failed to measure up to God's claim on him...." He is the "man who prides himself on being religious..." (Paul, tr. D. Stalker [New York: Harper & Row, 1971] 95).

¹⁵² Dunn, Romans, 185. So Longenecker, Eschatology, 207-09; Sanders, Law, 33-34; Räisänen, Law, 170-71 and Watson, 133-35.

¹⁵³ See H. Räisänen, "The 'Law' of Faith and the Spirit," tr. D. E. Orton, Jesus, Paul and Torah, JSNTSS 43 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 49-53 and Westerholm, Israel's Law, 123-24 for summaries of the debate.

¹⁵⁴ "Paul's Word-Play on νόμος: a Linguistic Study," tr. D. E. Orton, in Jesus, Paul and Torah, JSNTSS 43 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 69-94.

νόμος πίστεως is the order of salvation, founded on faith; νόμος τῶν ἔργων is the order that was built on works of the law."¹⁵⁵ The γάρ of 3:28 suggests that the assertion of 3:28 "that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law" is based on 3:27. This only makes sense if the "order" of faith is contrasted with the "order of law" in 3:27. In 3:27, Paul claims that boasting is excluded, not on the principle (νόμος) of works but on the principle (νόμος) of faith.

Most problematic for the view that Paul in 3:27 is taking aim at a distortion by which the (Mosaic) "law of faith" has been perverted into a "law of works" is the fact that throughout 3:20-31, Paul uses the expressions "works of the law" and "law" interchangeably, without any suggestion that the former phrase represents a distortion of the true character of the law. Paul's argument, which has taken up most of three chapters (1:18-3:20), reaches its height in the claim that God recognizes righteousness "outside of the law," that is, "by faith" (3:21-22): here faith and the law are clearly contrasted. Ch 4 continues to contrast law and faith, rejecting the notion that righteousness comes through the law (cf. 4:13-16). In this context -- one in which Paul emphasizes that the law requires deeds (cf. 2:13, 25-27) and contrasts it with faith -- it seems unlikely that 3:27 insists that the law, properly understood, speaks of faith, not works.¹⁵⁶ The boasting that is excluded by Paul would seem to be a boasting in doing that which the law requires. It is, for Paul, a boasting that is ruled out by virtue of the fact that justification does not come through doing what the law demands. Justification cannot come by such doing and, in 3:28, Paul reaffirms his belief that "justification is by faith and not works of the law (χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου)." ¹⁵⁷ If justification comes through faith in Christ alone, there is no room for human boasting. Since the excluded boasting is a temptation to which only Jews, as those given the law, are liable, Paul goes on to undercut the temptation still further by insisting

¹⁵⁵ "'Law' of Faith," 62.

¹⁵⁶ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 125.

¹⁵⁷ On the meaning of "works of law" see above.

that God is the God of both Jews and Gentiles, and he justifies the circumcised and the uncircumcised on the same ground.

But this raises a significant question which Paul addresses in ch 4: what then of Abraham, the father and hero of Judaism? That Paul asks this question probably reflects an awareness on his part of Abraham's near apotheosis in certain Jewish circles. Knowing the heroic status of Abraham, the one who worshipped the one true God in a land of idolaters, the one who followed God against all odds, Paul asks, "What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh?" (4:1). Paul seems to be anticipating an objection to his prohibition of boasting which would run something like, "If Abraham cannot boast, then no one can." For Paul, the principle of "justification by faith" applies also to Abraham and, to support his case, Paul appeals to Genesis:¹⁵⁸ "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (4:3).

Paul then asserts, "Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift (κατὰ χάριν) but as something due (ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα). But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness" (4:4-5).

Räisänen, who, as noted earlier, believes that Paul's attack on the soteriology of Judaism is based on a vision of it as "soft" legalism, finds in 4:4-5 overtones of a "hard" anthropocentric legalism.¹⁵⁹ In the same vein, Hübner argues that Paul is condemning individuals who seek to earn rewards by doing works of the law.

Paul energetically rejects a relationship to God as a legal relationship arising out of man's interest -- a relationship in fact in which man 'establishes' his rights in God's sight by what he does. Works, by their very nature, always engender this sort of relationship.¹⁶⁰

However, there is little to indicate that Paul is in fact opposing such "legalism." There is no hint that Paul finds anything wrong with doing the law in and of itself, or even with

¹⁵⁸ The LXX version of Gen 15:6.

¹⁵⁹ Räisänen, *Law*, 71. See the discussion of the distinction between "hard" legalism and "soft" legalism above in ch 1.

¹⁶⁰ Hübner, 121.

doing the law out of a desire to earn God's favour. Nevertheless, the denial that God's "reckoning" takes place κατὰ ὀφείλημα must have some opposite position in mind.

According to Dunn, Paul's point seems to be that in Gen 15:6 it is *faith*, not any sort of work, that is "reckoned." The wording of 4:4-5 is used simply as part of the analogy drawn from the world of contract and employment, language from the business world that would be quite familiar to Paul's readers.¹⁶¹ Dunn, I think correctly, concludes that the contrast is "solely between working and believing, between what the worker is due and what is given as a complete favor."¹⁶² Paul is reacting to the "normal business meaning" of λογίζομαι, saying that the model of "recompense for services provided" is "inappropriate [when applied] to divine-human relations," at least in the case of Gen 15:6.¹⁶³ Where Abraham's faith is in view, righteousness is reckoned in terms of grace, not of payment due.¹⁶⁴

Against Dunn, however, Paul's primary target is not Jewish particularity. That this is so is clear from 4:5: "to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly (ἄσεβῆ), such faith is reckoned as righteousness." Although Paul is not opposing a "merit" theology, he is insisting that, given human "ungodliness," justification will necessarily be a gift of God's grace. Abraham and present day believers may be considered just, not because of their deeds, but only because of their faith in God. For Paul, Abraham and Christians share in their complete dependence on God. As sinners, the "ungodly,"¹⁶⁵ their standing with God cannot be κατὰ ὀφείλημα. Certainly, Paul's

¹⁶¹ Dunn, Romans, 203-04.

¹⁶² Dunn, Romans, 204. Cf. "Once More," 112.

¹⁶³ Dunn, "Once More," 112.

¹⁶⁴ Dunn, Romans, 204.

¹⁶⁵ B. Longenecker takes issue with this interpretation of Rom 4:1-5, noting that in early Judaism, in Jewish self-definition, and in Jewish attempts to preserve their distinctive way of life, Abraham played a very positive role. His conclusion is that in many ways the Jews "looked to Abraham as the model Jew and forefather of Jewish society, claiming for him what they considered to be essential to their own self-identity" (212). Against this background, Longenecker argues that it is very likely that Paul's reference to Abraham has to do with Jewish ethnocentrism. Perhaps, however, Paul is simply using Abraham in what Longenecker's observations show to be a very untraditional way. In a manner that no doubt would have been shocking to many fellow Jews, Paul portrays Abraham as

position rules out Jewish particularity, but such particularity is not the *primary* focus for Paul. For Paul, the underlying problem here, as in 3:20, is that people do not do that which God would have them do.

Paul is portraying the performance of works and dependence on God as potentially alternative paths to right standing with God. Vv. 4-5 indicate that justification is only "counted" through faith and not at all through works.¹⁶⁶ For Paul, it could be no other way, since Abraham shares the human condition of being "ungodly" (cf. Rom 1:18; 5:6). He, too, had to rely on God's grace. Abraham, like David in vv. 7-8, was one whose "iniquities are forgiven." For Paul the idea that God grants righteousness apart from works has precedent not only in the story of the hero Abraham, but also in the words of David.¹⁶⁷ David, Paul asserts, also speaks of a God who "reckons righteousness apart from works." Here there is for Paul another scriptural reference to the ungodly being "justified," which in turn supports Paul's contention that Abraham functions as a paradigm for the believer.¹⁶⁸ In the case of all believers, what is significant for Paul is *God's* "act"

belonging to the "ungodly," whom God is prepared to justify. Cf. A. T. Hanson, who observes that "in describing Abraham as a justified sinner when he believed God's promise about his posterity, Paul was running directly contrary to contemporary rabbinic tradition" ("Abraham, the Justified Sinner," in Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974] 60).

¹⁶⁶ Cranfield, 231. Cf. also Laato, 244. According to Barrett, Paul's interpretation of Gen 15:6 centers on the use of λογίζεσθαι. He states that Paul's first step "is to fasten upon the verb 'to count'" (83). In Barrett's view, Paul's argument assumes that λογίζεσθαι is appropriately joined with πιστεύειν and χάρις, but not with ἐργάζεσθαι and ὀφείλημα, so that "since Abraham had righteousness *counted* to him, he cannot have done works, but must have been the recipient of grace (84)." However, as Cranfield notes, this explanation does not take into account Paul's use of λογίζεσθαι in vs. 4 with κατὰ ὀφείλημα as well as with κατὰ χάριν (230).

Silva ("The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis," Westminster Theological Journal 53 [1991]: 352) rightly observes that in 4:5 "Paul states so sharply the antithesis between working and believing that the latter is virtually defined by the negation of the former." Dunn's argument that Paul uses here an analogy drawn from the business world may or may not be true (Romans 1-8, 203-04), but it is unclear how this consideration mitigates the force of this.

¹⁶⁷ Hanson, 52-58, argues that Paul believes that Ps 32 applies to Abraham's situation, despite the fact that the psalm was thought to have been composed much later by David.

¹⁶⁸ Against e.g., Sanday and Headlam, who deny that ἄσεβής applies to Abraham, and say that it is merely taken from the psalm which Paul quotes. But in fact this

in *not* taking account of sins, but justifying freely. It is this which, in part, constitutes forgiveness. This is very much in accord with the apostle's concern to portray justification as a sovereign act of God without reference to "works."¹⁶⁹

In answer to the question whether this blessing is pronounced on the uncircumcised or the circumcised (4:9), Paul asserts that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. Abraham's circumcision, Paul asserts, functioned as "a seal of the righteousness that [Abraham] had by faith while he was still uncircumcised" (4:11). This was done so that¹⁷⁰ Abraham might be the father both of "all who believe without being circumcised" (4:11) and of those who are circumcised, but follow in Abraham's footsteps by exercising the kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised (τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἴχνεσιν τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστία πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ, 4:12).

Although for Abraham there was no Torah, circumcision in vv. 9-12 functions not merely as a "boundary" marker, but rather typifies the requirements of the law. That this is so seems to be assumed by Paul's assertion, immediately following vs. 12, that the inheritance is given either διὰ νόμου or διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως (4:13). Inheritance from Abraham thus depends *either* on having faith *or* on doing the law. According to Paul, one of the reasons that the inheritance had to depend on faith rather than on the law was "so that the promise may rest on grace (ἵνα κατὰ χάριν)" (4:16).¹⁷¹ Paul's target is thus not merely Jewish exclusivism. For Paul, the granting of the

observation lends weight to the notion that Paul thinks of Abraham as ungodly (Hanson, 59).

¹⁶⁹ Moo, 269.

¹⁷⁰ εἰς τὸ εἶναι can denote purpose or result, but it seems unwise to sharply distinguish between the two here. Here again it should be noted that this verse indeed underscores the universality of grace. Jews and Gentiles are equal since God impartially makes his grace available to all humanity (cf. Bassler, 159).

¹⁷¹ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, 113. Note that "grace" and works" are opposed in the same way in 11:6: εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων. ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις. For Paul, "Glaube und Gnade stehen in gleicher Weise im Gegensatz zum Tun des Gesetzes. Glaube ist die Realisierung der Gnade Gottes im Menschen" (Friedrich, 112).

inheritance could not have been given "by grace" had it depended on law because the law requires deeds in compliance with its commands.

Clearly, the conviction that God freely grants justification underlies 4:13-16. If we understand δικαιοσύνης πίστεως in 4:13 to be a reference to righteousness that comes through faith, and if διὰ νόμου refers to doing that which the law requires of its adherents,¹⁷² it would seem that Paul is continuing to de-emphasize human activity over against divine initiative. Clearly, Paul is again assuming that the divine promise by its very nature must depend on the exercise of God's will and not be contingent on human obedience. This explains 4:14, where Paul claims that if those who are "of the law (οἱ ἐκ νόμου) are heirs of the promise, faith is null and the promise is void" (4:14). 4:14 can best be understood in light of Paul's concern thus far throughout the chapter to make justification dependent on the exercise of God's will, as a gift to those with faith.

The train of Paul's thought leads him to a surprising claim: "the law brings wrath." How can the Torah, a gift of God, bring wrath? 15b provides the answer: "where there is no law, neither is there violation." In the present context, vs. 15 is problematic and, as Edwards points out, the constraints of Paul's argument in fact prevent him from developing the implications of it until ch. 7.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, the statement does draw attention to Paul's implicit claim that people do commit trespasses and therefore would not "inherit" anything, if inheriting depended on their ability to do what the law asks of them. For Paul, the path of the law leads to wrath.

¹⁷² Taking διὰ as instrumental. That Paul has in mind *doing* the law is likely, given our understanding of 4:4-6, where Paul refuses to make justification dependent on human works of any kind (cf. also 3:20). Käsemann's translation "on the strength of the law" is probably too ambiguous (117). That Paul introduces "law" here also suggests that he views circumcision in 4:9-12 as a requirement of the law. The omission of the article here does not mean that Paul is referring to "law" as a general principle (against Sanday and Headlam). The context requires us to think that Paul here has in mind the Mosaic law (so Moo, 279).

¹⁷³ Edwards, 123.

Over against the law, which is linked with trespass and wrath, Paul presents faith, grace and promise¹⁷⁴ to demonstrate the efficacy and universality of faith. In 4:16 Paul says, "For this reason (διὰ τοῦτο) it (the promise) depends on faith (ἐκ πίστεως), in order that (ἵνα) the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to those who are adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham...." The subject of 4:16 is quite probably ἡ ἐπαγγελία,¹⁷⁵ and διὰ τοῦτο probably refers forward.¹⁷⁶ Paul is thus saying that the fulfillment of God's promise depends on faith, "in order that the promise may rest on grace" and that it may be experienced by all people.

For Dunn, in 4:16, Paul is again taking aim at a restrictive (Jewish) understanding of the law. Certainly Paul's theology of grace leads him to claim that Abraham is not only the father of the Jews but the father of all who believe, and certainly Paul's claims concerning the importance of grace are inherently universal -- salvation thus understood is necessarily for all, both Jew and Gentile. This, however, does not exhaust Paul's concerns.

Note that ἐκ πίστεως in vs. 16 is roughly antithetical to ἐκ νόμου in vs. 14. For Paul, the alternatives are performance of the works of the law *or* faith.¹⁷⁷ If the promise

¹⁷⁴ Edwards, 124.

¹⁷⁵ So Dunn, Romans, 215. Cranfield, 242, suggests supplying ἡ κληρονομία from vs. 14. Hodge, 122, notes that these are only different ways of saying the same thing. Barrett, 90, suggests that God's general plan of salvation is in view. Käsemann, Romans, 121, asserts that the omitted subject is not God's plan in general, but the promised inheritance which is achieved by faith and therefore by grace.

¹⁷⁶ In view of the ἵνα (the ἵνα has a strong final sense [Wilckens, Römer, I, 271]) that follows almost immediately, it is preferable to understand διὰ τοῦτο as referring forward (cf. 2 Cor 13:10; Phlm 15; 1 Tim 1:16). Thus διὰ τοῦτο... ἵνα means "for this reason.... namely, in order that" (Cranfield, 241).

¹⁷⁷ "Faith" is not here merely a work replacing other works, but is the act of believing the Christian kerygma and the consequent receipt of a gift. "Faith" itself could not exist were it not for the preaching of the word (cf. Rom 10:17, which says that "faith comes from what is heard" and 1 Thess 1:5, where Paul refers to his Spirit-empowered preaching which led to the Thessalonians' reception of that same Spirit). Friedrich observes that "weil der Glaube nicht eine entscheidung ist, die der Mensch zu fällen hat, scheint Paulus bei seiner Missionspredigt nie den Imperativ 'Glaubet' verwendet zu haben" ("Glaube und Verkündigung bei Paulus," Glaube im Neuen Testament, G. Strecker, et al, eds. [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982] 111). In Rom 10:8, Paul refers to the ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως, which in context must refer to "das Glauben wirkende Wort" (O. Hofius, "Wort Gottes und Glaube bei Paulus," Paulus und das antike Judentum, M.

comes by the law, then faith "has no value and the promise is worthless, *because law brings wrath.*" Torah requires that its adherents comply with its commands, but vs. 15 Paul implies that they do not in fact comply. People who do not do what the law demands (recall that Paul devotes the first three chapters to showing that neither Jews nor Gentiles live up to divine standards) must face God's wrath. Since people do *not* do the law, the only hope is faith. In Rom 4, faith is the distinguishing feature of "one who does not work but trusts (πιστεύοντι) in the one who justifies the ungodly" (Rom 4:5). "Faith" for Paul implies reliance on God and his generosity that rules out recourse to human action, here identified specifically as doing the requirements of the law.¹⁷⁸ But the comment about

Hengel and U. Heckel, eds. [Tübingen: Mohr, 1991] 391). Hofius further observes that "der Genitiv nennt hier also die Gabe und Wirkung...." (391). Cf. also 2 Cor 4:6: ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμπει. ὃς ἐλάμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ.

More than this, though Paul does not say so in Rom 4, it is important to note that for him, "faith" itself is a gift of God. Recall Gal 2:20: "it is no longer I who live: it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God...." The life Paul lives "by faith (ἐν πίστει)" is life made possible by Christ. The explanation for Paul's "faith in Christ" (2:16), the reason he "lives to God" and is "dead to the law" (2:19), is because of the divine activity within him. Although faith is acceptance (and obedience), Paul sees its origin as being in God. Paul's acute awareness of one's dependence on grace extends even to this level. One cannot become a believer, that is, one cannot exercise "faith," unless God makes it possible. To be sure, Paul does not uniformly emphasize this -- at times he puts more emphasis on humanity's responsibility to accept God's gracious offer. But finally humanity can only do this because God makes doing so possible. In Phil 1:29, he says to his readers that God "has graciously granted you (ἐχαρίσθη) the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well..." The agent of the passive verb ἐχαρίσθη is God. Not only does Paul believe that the Philippians' perseverance (cf. 1:28) in the Christian way is of divine origin -- their faith is also. Apparently we are to think that for Paul, people would not come to faith were it not for God working within them. Cf. also 2 Cor 4:13: "Ἐχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν.... In the expression πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως, πνεῦμα can be construed as the source of the faith in question, in which case the referent would most likely be the Holy Spirit. The believing which Paul speaks of later in the verse is contingent upon possessing this πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως (cf. V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians*. [Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1984] 258. Cf. also 1 Cor 2:5, where Paul expresses the wish that the faith of the Corinthians μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

This is not to say that faith does not have an ethical component. To exercise faith is also to obey God. The Pauline imperatives imply that faith is an obedient response to the ethic of the new humanity created through the Christ-event (cf. Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968] 227).

¹⁷⁸ Westerholm, Israel's Law, 113-14.

works of the law can be applied to "works" in general. If the "inheritance" is to be granted by divine "grace," then, according to Paul, "works," bad or good, cannot be a factor. "Law" is excluded, not because it is sinful to adhere to the law, but because law, by its very nature, requires deeds of its subjects, deeds that they do not do. It is, therefore, incompatible with "grace." Paul's contrast is between the law and grace as it is revealed in God's promise. This contrast stems from Paul's presupposition that the law demands deeds if it is to grant life. For Paul, God's grace and promise must depend on his sovereignty alone (Rom 4:14, 16; Gal 3:18; cf. also Rom 4:4; 9:11, 16; 11:6).¹⁷⁹

c. Rom 9:30-10:3

In 9:30-31, Paul says that "Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, a righteousness through faith." Israel, on the other hand, "who pursued the law of righteousness (νόμον δικαιοσύνης),¹⁸⁰ did not attain to that law (εἰς νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν)." "Why not?" Paul asks. The answer is that she sought it not "on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works (ὡς ἐξ ἔργων)."

Our first concern is to determine what Paul means by saying that Israel pursued a "law of righteousness" (9:31) and that she pursued righteousness "as though it were based on works." One interpretation is that Paul is criticizing an attitude of legalism which sees performance of the law's demands as a means to earn salvation.¹⁸¹ Sanders takes exception to this view, saying that reading the words ὡς ἐξ ἔργων in 9:32 as though they refer to "meritorious achievement" is unwarranted eisegesis on the part of interpreters.¹⁸²

Before dealing with the issue of "legalism" in this pericope, we should note that Sanders' alternative interpretation is itself unsatisfactory. He argues that in 9:31, Paul uses νόμος a second time even though he really means "righteousness which comes by faith (in

¹⁷⁹ Westerholm, Israel's Law, 149. Note also that Paul's emphasis on God's sovereignty also finds expression in 4:17, where he describes God as the one "who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist."

¹⁸⁰ Understanding "righteousness" to be a reference to a right standing before God (cf. the discussion above).

¹⁸¹ So, e.g., Käsemann, Romans, 277.

¹⁸² Sanders, Law, 150.

Christ)." Sanders grants that such a usage is "certainly curious." We must conclude that "Paul did not say what he really meant." It seems, in Sanders' view, that Paul only used νόμος a second time out of a desire for a balanced antithesis, but the result was "an almost incomprehensible combination of words."¹⁸³ Sanders concludes that 9:30-32 functions as a part of Paul's critique of the Jews in which he faults them for seeking a righteousness outside Christ. In short, the problem is that the law is not Christ.

There is a more satisfactory way to read 9:30-32.¹⁸⁴ "Faith" in 9:32 seems to be in contrast to "works of the law" as the means to "attain" to the law. The adversative ἀλλά in the phrase ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων potentially indicates that Paul means to contrast faith (ἐκ πίστεως) and works (ἐξ ἔργων) as means of measuring up to the law. It thus makes good sense to understand νόμος in vs. 31 as a reference to the Mosaic law which makes demands of adherents: certainly these demands were what the Jews, according to Paul, were pursuing. If, as Sanders maintains, the second νόμος in vs. 31 meant "the righteousness of God by faith," then Paul would have already given the answer to the question "why?" which he poses in 9:32. The contrast in seeking, but not attaining, requires that the object of the seeking be identical in both cases, that is, the "law of righteousness," which is the Torah. The second occurrence of the term has no qualifier because the qualifier (δικαιοσύνης) attached to the first occurrence of "law" still applies.

The term ἔφθασεν in vs. 31 is significant. φθάνω means "attain" (not "fulfill" as the NRSV translates), in the sense of "achieve." Thus what Paul is saying is that Israel did not measure up to what the law offered or demanded. κατέλαβεν means "obtained, or acquired."¹⁸⁵ Thus, in 9:30-32, Paul is saying that, while Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness obtained it, Israel pursued the law with a view to attaining righteousness, but failed to attain the goal of the law, since she did not pursue it through faith. Since the path

¹⁸³ Sanders, *Law*, 42.

¹⁸⁴ The following paragraph is based on Gundry, "Grace," 17.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Louw and Nida, 564 and T. S. Schreiner, "Israel's Failure to Attain Righteousness in Romans 9:30-10:3," *Trinity Journal* 12 (1991) 213.

to the righteousness spoken of in the law is faith, not works, those who pursue the path of works could never reach the goal. Paul is contrasting a righteousness potentially acquired by doing the works of the law with righteousness which comes by faith, and only the latter path is found efficacious.¹⁸⁶ For him, the goal of the law -- a right standing before God -- can only be attained *apart from* the works of the law.

By asserting that God freely makes righteousness available to all, even to those who do not possess the law, Paul is underscoring not only God's sovereignty but also his grace. That God is sovereign is a theme throughout chs. 9-11. Paul believes that God is free to constitute as his people whomever he chooses, and that he does so without regard to human "works" (9:11-12, 16). The corollary to this is, of course, that all depend entirely on God for such standing. For Paul, that people are justified at all is due only to God's mercy, a mercy which God freely exercises (cf. 9:14).

Against this background, it follows that Israel necessarily strays in any attempt to "establish its own righteousness" (10:3). The expression ἰδίᾳ δικαιοσύνη in 10:3 ("for, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness") has often been taken to refer to individual self-righteousness.¹⁸⁷ In recent studies, however, it has been understood as a reference to Jewish national righteousness that excludes Gentiles.¹⁸⁸ Sanders, for example, believes that this is contrasted with the "righteousness of faith" because the latter is open to both Jews and Gentiles. However, Paul's claims in other passages that the law

¹⁸⁶ Wright unnecessarily restricts the meaning of the verse, saying that Paul is criticizing Israel for clinging to her "privileged status, and to the Torah as reinforcing it..." ("Romans 9-11," 239).

¹⁸⁷ For example, Käsemann says that "one's own righteousness is oriented to works of pious achievement and in fact leads away from faith" (Romans, 281). So also M. Black, Romans, 2nd edition, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 138; Bruce, Romans, TNTC, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 201 and Barrett, "Romans 9.30-10.21: Fall and Responsibility of Israel," Essays on Paul (London: SPCK, 1982) 146.

¹⁸⁸ Sanders, Law, 38; J. Barclay, Obeying the Truth: a Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1988), 248; Dunn, Romans 9-16, 38B, 595; Longenecker, "Eschatology," 218 and Ziesler, Romans, 256.

is based on "works" as opposed to faith suggest a different reading. Rom 3:21 says that "the righteousness of God has been disclosed apart from the law," that is apart from works demanded by the law (3:20, 28). In 4:4-5, Paul opposes the gift of righteousness with "works demanded by the law." In 4:13, he says that "the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith." In Phil 3, Paul contrasts his accomplishments as a Pharisee, which he views as constituting "a righteousness of my own," with a righteousness that is in Christ (Phil 3:9). In Phil 3, the point seems to be that Paul's "own righteousness" was a righteousness based on his zealous performance of the requirements of the law, whereas the righteousness that comes "in Christ" comes ἐκ Θεοῦ.¹⁸⁹ To return to Rom 10:3, it is also worth noting that the infinitive στῆσαι ("to establish") in the phrase "seeking to establish their own (righteousness)" is a word which primarily refers to activity, rather than an attitude, and the contrast with submitting to God's righteousness shows that Paul must be objecting to more than a perception of national privilege.¹⁹⁰ It seems likely, considering these other passages in Paul, that in 10:3 their "own righteousness" is meant as a reference to the product of deeds performed in compliance with Torah's demands.¹⁹¹ It is this righteousness that is set in opposition to the righteousness which comes from God. Whatever τέλος means in 10:4, it is clear that Paul is contrasting the way of law and that of faith.¹⁹² Westerholm notes that vv. 5-6 appear to carry the contrast further in terms of a

¹⁸⁹ See further the discussion of this passage in chapter six.

¹⁹⁰ Gundry, "Grace," 18.

¹⁹¹ Westerholm, Israel's Law, 115.

¹⁹² Most commentators claim that τέλος means "end" in the sense of "termination." E.g. P. Althaus, Der Brief an die Römer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1932) 88; Beker, 106-07; Bultmann, "Christ and the End of the Law," Essays Philosophical and Theological, tr. J. Grieg (London: SCM, 1955) 54; Käsemann, Romans, 249-85; Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 550; W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, 1962) 69

Others argue that τέλος signifies "goal" or "destination." E.g. R. Bring, "Paul and the Old Testament: A Study of the Ideas of Election, Faith and Law in Paul with Special Reference to Rom. 9:30-10:30," SJTh, 17 (1964) 20-60; Cranfield, Romans, 515-520; Fitzmyer, Romans, 584; G. Howard, "Christ the End of the Law; the Meaning of Romans 10:4 ff," JBL 88 (1969) 331-37; Johnson, 154-55. In my view, it is preferable to take

"righteousness that comes from the law" (vs. 5) and a "righteousness that comes from faith." Rom 10:5, in a paraphrase of Lev 18:5, argues that a "righteousness that comes from the law" is a righteousness that needs "doing." Paul then promptly contrasts this with the "righteousness that comes from faith" in 10:6-13. Paul is contrasting performance of the requirements of the law to salvation which is a gift.

d. Summary

Paul says in 3:20 that one is not justified through doing the works of the law. This is not because there is anything intrinsically wrong with doing the law or because Paul believes that Jewish "works" are done out of "legalistic" motives. The problem is that all people, Jew and Gentile, do not do what God requires of them. In the end, people are forced to rely on God for "justification." Justification, through which people are made a part of the Christian community, is made available as a gracious gift of God. It makes Christian existence possible. Grace is manifested in the death of Christ, through which redemption is secured. Through the Christ event, a new eschatological situation is created in which God graciously grants life to all who believe.

Paul excludes "works" (not just "works of the law") as a factor in salvation because of the theological implications of making salvation depend on human activity rather than on God alone. Thus, in 4:4-5, he rules out the language of "commerce" because it is inappropriate to speak of God "owing" humanity anything. For Paul, salvation must

τέλος as signifying "end," since Paul contrasts the law and faith as ways to righteousness, and rules out the former.

A third position, which claims that τέλος means both "goal" and "termination," is held by Barrett, Romans, Bruce, Romans, 203; Drane, Paul: Libertine or Legalist? (London: SPCK, 1975) 133 and Seifrid, 248. It is, however, difficult to see how it can mean both. As Räisänen says, "even if we cannot make up our mind between two linguistically possible options, it is suspect methodology to conclude that Paul could not either" (Law, 53). Räisänen asserts that in light of 9:33, τέλος might have the sense of goal. However, in 10:1-6, Paul uses polemical language about the law, contrasting the "righteousness from the law" about which Moses writes (vs 5) and the righteousness that is ἐκ πίστεως which speaks of Christ (vs 6). In light of this, and remembering that vs 5 is connected to vs 4 with an explanatory γάρ, the νόμος in vs 4 must be associated with the righteousness from the law disqualified in vs 5. It therefore belongs to the "own" righteousness which Israel attempted to establish (vs 3). Christ could only be the end of such a law (Räisänen, Law, 54).

depend on the free exercise of God's grace. Abraham is an example of a man who, though "ungodly," was reckoned to be righteous because he believed God. The point of 4:14-16 is also that the promise must depend on the free exercise of God's will, and the same assumption underlies Rom 9:30-10:3. The alternatives are law or faith, but for Paul, the law is really no alternative at all, since he is pessimistic about people's ability to do what God demands and since only faith is compatible with the sovereign operation of God's grace. For Paul, salvation is a gift for all who *believe*: it is not secured through doing the works of the law.

B. Dependence on God in the life of faith

Does the idea of *continual* dependence on God play an important role in Romans, as it does in 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians? Does Paul again portray dependence on God as characterizing not only the beginning of the believer's life of faith, but as that which makes possible the believer's continuing existence in Christ?

As we have already seen, in Romans, as in Galatians, Paul betrays a skepticism about humanity's ability to do the works required by the law. With his post-conversion vision, Paul again assumes and argues that the law could not give life, since it does not make it possible for people to carry out what it demands. The answer to this plight is found in the new covenant inaugurated by Christ. In the post-Mosaic law era, believers are enabled to live in a manner pleasing to God through the eschatological gift of the Spirit. For Paul, we shall see, it is the case that God gives believers the ability to fulfill divine imperatives.

1. Equipped to serve -- Rom 1:1,5; 12:3,6

As in the Corinthian correspondence and Galatians, Paul's reference to the divine "call" points not only to his belief that the divine initiative makes possible life in the community, but also that he believes God calls believers to various spheres of service. To experience the grace of God in salvation means that one will be the recipient of specific

manifestations of grace by which one is enabled to serve God.¹⁹³ The service which is demanded of the believer is made possible by the one who demands the service. So in Rom 1:1, he claims that he was "called to be an apostle." As we have come to expect, Paul attributes his mission as an "apostle to the Gentiles" directly to the call of God. It seems clear that within the general call to become believers, Paul thinks of a call to a specific task.

In 1:5, Paul indicates that it is through Christ that "we have received grace and apostleship (ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν) to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles...."¹⁹⁴ "Grace and apostleship" may be understood either as denoting two distinct things, grace (that is, God's favour, which is the basis of the Christian life) and apostleship (the office of apostle), or as an example of hendiadys, denoting the grace which is comprised of apostleship, that is, the office of apostle as a gracious gift undeserved by Paul. Probably the latter is what Paul has in mind, since a statement that Paul has received grace is not really apposite here.¹⁹⁵ For Paul, the encounter with the risen Christ made possible not only his entry into the Christian community, but also his commission and empowerment to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

In both 12:3 (διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι) and 15:15b (τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ), Paul refers to the "grace" which he believes was given to him by God. In 12:3 especially, it is evident that Paul can use χάρις in a way that overlaps with χάρισμα. The "grace" that God gives to Paul seems to be of a kind with

¹⁹³ Cf. Wetter, Charis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums (Leipzig: Oscar Brandstetter, 1913) 101.

¹⁹⁴ Apparently, he did not consider himself to be the sole apostle to the Gentiles, since he uses the first person plural. Cranfield (I, 65) argues that we have here an "epistolary plural." However, as Dunn points out, the plurals in 1 Cor 9:11-12; 2 Cor 1:12-14 and 1 Thess 3:1-2 are appropriate, since in each case others are associated with Paul. Moreover, it would have been difficult for Paul to maintain that he was the sole apostle to the Gentiles when he was writing to a church in which there was a sizable number of Gentiles (Dunn, Romans, 16).

¹⁹⁵ Cranfield, I, 65-66. So also Käsemann, 14; Black, 23 and MHT III, 335. Bruce, 70, also draws attention to the references in 12:6 to the "gifts that differ according to the grace given to us," and in 15:15-16 to the "grace" given to Paul by God "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles."

the χαρίσματα that all Christians receive from God.¹⁹⁶ For Paul, in 12:6 and 15:15b, χάρις seems to carry with it a sense both of commission and enabling and Paul assumes that without that particular χάρις, he would not be able to function as an apostle. For Paul, his apostleship is grounded in what he perceives to be a sovereign act of God.

Paul seems also to believe that this experience (that of being enabled by God to serve) is typical of all believers. It seems quite likely that he considers his apostolate to be one gift among many bestowed upon people by God.¹⁹⁷ In 12:6, he reminds the Romans that as there are different parts of a body which have different functions, so "we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us...." χάρις is the resource which comes to particular expression in various χαρίσματα. This emphasis on grace as the source of "spiritual gifts" highlights a crucial point not only of Romans, but of almost all Paul's letters: in order to live and serve in a manner acceptable to God, one must invariably live in dependence on divine resources.

2. Access to grace -- Rom 5:2

Rom 5:2 refers to a continuing existence "in grace." Ch 5 begins to draw out some of the implications of "justification." In Rom 5:1-2, Paul declares that "since we are justified by faith, we have¹⁹⁸ peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand (εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν)...."

¹⁹⁶ Thus what Paul says of himself applies to all believers. So Wetter, who observes: "Was Paulus, was die Christen tun und handeln, das ist alles ein Ausfluß der Gnade" (97).

¹⁹⁷ Against A. Satake, "Apostolat und Gnade bei Paulus." New Testament Studies 15 (1968-69) 104-05.

¹⁹⁸ In actual fact, the subjunctive ἔχωμεν has better external support (Ⓝ* A B* C D K L 33 8 and others) than the indicative ἔχομεν (Ⓝ^a B³ G^{sr} P Ψ 0220^{vid} 88 326 330 and others), but the UBS committee judged that internal evidence should take precedence here. The indicative is consistent with the apostle's argument, since in the passage he is not exhorting but stating facts (Metzger, Textual Commentary, 511). As Barrett, 96, indicates, in the next verse Paul says "we have obtained access," and he refers to the "grace in which we (presently) stand." Also, in vv 10-11 he says "we were reconciled", "having been reconciled" and "we have now received reconciliation." The emphasis is clearly on salvation and its accompanying benefits as an accomplished fact.

The use of χάρις here, though somewhat unusual, is reminiscent of Gal 1:6, where I take ἐν χάριτι to be a locative.¹⁹⁹ Since ἐν ᾧ ἐστήκαμεν is obviously locative, here χάρις denotes the sphere or dimension marked out by God's grace.²⁰⁰ The ἐν ᾧ, together with the perfect tense ("in which we have taken our stand"), underscores Paul's conviction that conversion results in a relationship with God which is secure and established.²⁰¹ The past, in which believers were brought into the community through God's grace, is brought together with the present where the believer's status is a continuing function of grace. "This grace (τὴν χάριν ταύτην)," Dunn writes, is the "overwhelmingly dominant characteristic of a positive relationship between God and man."²⁰² It is a relationship made possible in the past which has become a reality for all believers at some time in their individual pasts.

This bringing together of past and present is seen in the double use of the perfect tense ("we have -- ἐσχίκαμεν," "we stand -- ἐστήκαμεν") which signifies an access granted in the past which remains valid in the present -- either in the sense that believers stand permanently in God's presence or that they have the permanent privilege of immediate access when requested.²⁰³ Paul's thought is of the infinite resource of God's favour (including his power to translate that favour into practical effect) which Christ has secured for those who seek to approach God through him, trusting themselves to him.²⁰⁴

The implication is that there never is a time when the believer does not depend on God. Paul believes that one enters the community because of God's gracious act in Christ and

¹⁹⁹ See above, pp. 113-14.

²⁰⁰ Dunn, Romans, 248. Cf. the translation of Best, 55, "the sphere of God's grace, where we now stand." Turner says that in Rom 5:2 ἐν may be instrumental (MHT, III, 262), but this seems unlikely in view of the fact that προσαγωγή seems to imply entry into a *place*.

²⁰¹ Dunn, Romans, 248-49.

²⁰² Dunn, Romans, 248. Wetter, 73, observes that χάρις is here functioning as a synonym to salvation, but one should not miss that χάρις serves to highlight the gratuity of salvation.

²⁰³ Dunn, Romans, 263; Fitzmyer, Romans, 396. On this use of the perfect, see BDF §342.

²⁰⁴ Dunn, Romans, 263-64.

that grace continues to defines the believer's existence. For Paul, the thread of dependence on God runs throughout the fabric of Christian existence.

3. Adoption -- Rom 8:23

Although in Gal 4:5 and Rom 8:15 adoption is spoken of as something that the believer has already experienced, here it is spoken of as still being future: "we ourselves...groan inwardly while we wait for adoption,²⁰⁵ the redemption of our bodies." For Paul, believers are already children of God in this life, but here adoption is portrayed as yet to be fully consummated. Paul believes in this relationship even if his circumstances and condition sometimes seem to be inconsistent with the reality of adoption.²⁰⁶ But, Paul indicates, one day adoption will be manifested in the resurrection and transformation of all those who are in Christ. In this context, Paul is making the point that all creation is to share in the freedom of the children of God, but in so doing, he affirms the certainty of the future salvation of believers. The present possession of the Spirit guarantees that salvation will one day be consummated.²⁰⁷ What Paul portrays is, as Cook puts it, an "agonizing tension between what Christians experience now and the confident expectation of what they will be when the full blessing of their adoption is realized."²⁰⁸ The most significant point for us to note is that adoption, whether depicted as a present or future reality, is an act of God. That is to say, it is something which is conferred on believers by God.

²⁰⁵ Several witnesses, mostly Western (D⁴⁶vid D G 614 al), omit υἰοθεσίαν, since copyists probably found it to be clumsy in the context and dispensable, as well as seemingly contradicting vs. 15 (Metzger, 517). That adoption is used here of a future event may also have led some copyists to omit it. Fitzmyer prefers to omit it (510).

²⁰⁶ Cranfield, I, 412-13.

²⁰⁷ The Spirit is spoken of as the "first fruits" (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος). ἀπαρχή seems to be used as a synonym of ἀρραβών, a "down payment" given to guarantee the rest of the payment (Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, tr. by James W. Leitch [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975] 268). Fee, 749, notes that the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2.13) and the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 16.15) are the "firstfruits" in a given geographical area, which shows that as well as being the first converts, they are a promise of more to come (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987]).

²⁰⁸ J. I. Cook, "The Concept of Adoption in the Theology of Paul," in *Saved by Hope. Essays in Honor of Richard C. Oudersluys*, J. I. Cook, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 142.

4. Kept by God -- Rom 8:31-39

In Romans, as elsewhere, Paul evinces a deep confidence that it is God who makes it possible for believers to remain members of the believing community despite a myriad of potential threats to their faith. "If God is for us," he asks, "who is against us?" (8:31). With absolute certainty, Paul indicates that no one can bring any sort of charge against God's elect, since it is God who justifies them (8:32).²⁰⁹ Not only that, but Paul believes that if God gave up his own Son for the elect, then will he not give them "everything else"? (8:32). Finally, for Paul there is nothing -- no hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword -- that can separate believers from the love of Christ (8:35). The list goes on: neither death nor life, supernatural or earthly powers, neither things already existing nor things to come, "nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38-39).

Paul's point is clear. He believes in a God who is supreme in the universe. Whatever forces his readers encounter, they may be certain that those whom this God has called are secure. If God is for them (vs. 31), then nothing can successfully oppose them. The significance for our thesis is obvious. Since the continued existence of believers as members of the people of God depends on the divine will, such dependence is a vitally important aspect of Christian existence for Paul.

5. Enabled to obey -- Rom 6:2-11, 14; 8

For Paul, it is axiomatic that believers are to live in a manner pleasing to God. The problem is how believers might do so, since Paul believes that people do not do the "works of the law," that is, works demanded by the Torah of its adherents.

a. Rom 6:2-11

Paul finds the idea that believers might continue to live in sin to be abhorrent. In 6:1, Paul anticipates a question which might be thought to follow logically from his assertion

²⁰⁹ Paul seems to have in mind the eschatological judgment to which he referred earlier in Rom 2:5. There the reference is intended to warn. Here it is intended to comfort, since Paul assures his readers that God's elect have nothing to fear in that judgment.

that grace is a response to sin. The question "should we sin in order that grace may abound?" arises in part from Paul's claim in 5:20 ("but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more")²¹⁰ but also from Paul's insistence throughout the letter on God's graciousness. "Since grace is a good thing, should we not sin so that²¹¹ there might be more of a good thing?" asks Paul's interlocutor.²¹² Although in Judaism it was thought that the law was an expression of God's grace, Paul takes the bold step of linking the law not with grace, but with sin (cf., e.g., 5:20). Dunn notes that for Paul, the law then provides not an answer to sin, but, rather shockingly, the occasion for sin. It might even be said that God gave his law to provoke sin in order to give greater occasion for grace.²¹³

But to Paul, this would be a gross misunderstanding of God's grace, and thus his answer in vs. 2 is a typical "God forbid!" The hypothetical question of 6:1 misunderstands the nature of life as a member of the believing community. The believer's "death to sin" has forever broken the rule of sin. If one has "died to sin," one cannot be under sin's sway. For Paul, becoming a believer brings about a fundamental shift in one's existence, characterized by a move from the old age, ruled by sin and death, to the new age made possible by Christ. Paul speaks of the believer as being in the state of death with respect to sin because he believes that Christ himself has passed from one age and dominion to another (vv. 7-10) and that it is possible for believers to exist "in Christ."²¹⁴ Although

²¹⁰ This is confirmed by the phrase ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ, which calls to mind the phrase οὐ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία of 5:20 (so Dunn, Romans, 306).

²¹¹ The ἵνα expresses purpose (so Barrett, 113).

²¹² It is probably not the question of an imaginary opponent. Ziesler, Romans, 155, thinks, in light of 3:8, that it may be an attempt by opponents to show the consequences of Paul's view. John Knox argues that since this question occurs twice in the argument of the first third of this epistle, we may surmise that Paul was often challenged — either seriously or scornfully — on this issue (The Epistle to the Romans, The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 9 [New York: Abingdon, 1954] 471). Cf. Sanders, Law, 94, 149.

²¹³ Dunn, Romans, 326.

²¹⁴ Dunn, Romans, 307. Cf. also Wilckens, Römer, II, 10; Hodge, 192 and Ziesler, 166. Tannehill, 22-24, argues that being baptized εἰς Χριστόν (Rom 6:3) signifies baptism "into Christ," meaning that one enters "into Christ." This in turn means that one exists in the "new age." That εἰς can signify entry in this manner for Paul is clear from 1 Cor 12:13, where he refers to baptism into one body (εἰς ἓν σῶμα).

believers do not yet fully possess the life of the risen Christ (cf. the future tenses of vv. 5, 7, and 8)²¹⁵ they do participate in his life in the present and therefore they are to "live out" the conditions of existence in the new age.²¹⁶ As Beker says, for Paul, "grace is not a private line to a divine reservoir of indiscriminate graciousness that increases in proportion to the increase of evil.... It marks a new epoch and a new dominion of power that is antithetical to that of the power of sin."²¹⁷ And it means that the human ability to live a life pleasing to God comes from outside the human will. For Paul, living such a life is made possible only through one's transfer from the old age into the new, a transfer effected, and ultimately maintained, by God.

b. Rom 6:14

With this verse, Paul launches into an extended discussion in which he intends to show that, rather than being freed *to* sin by grace, by grace believers have been freed *from* sin.²¹⁸ Those who "died to sin" cannot "go on living in it."

Vs. 14 claims that sin will not have dominion over believers since they are "not under law, but under grace." To be "under law" means, as noted above, that one is obligated to perform the requirements of the law. A *result* of being under the law is subjection to the power of sin. Paul's use of the future tense ("shall not rule") is somewhat curious, since he speaks earlier as though the power of sin has been broken already (cf. vs. 6). Probably Paul looks ahead to the time when sin's power will be completely broken, since in his view, although believers live in the new age, they can still be affected by the powers of the

²¹⁵ Cf. Tannehill's observation that the tense of these verbs is important to Paul and ought not to be dismissed as "logical" futures. The believer walks in newness of life, but at the same time, this life "remains God's gift for the future" (R. C. Tannehill, Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967] 12).

²¹⁶ Cf. Byrne, "Living out the Righteousness of God: The Contribution of Rom 6:1-8:13 to an Understanding of Paul's Ethical Presuppositions," CBQ 43 (1981) 563.

²¹⁷ Beker, 265. Cf. the discussion in Tannehill, 15-20.

²¹⁸ Cf. Moffatt, 225.

"old age," one of which is sin. Nevertheless, the promise is already being realized in the present.²¹⁹

For Paul, being "under the law" refers to an existence in which one is also subject to the power of sin. The way to be liberated from sin's power is to be "under grace." Existing under this "grace" must be understood as an existence made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ. As Dunn notes, the parallel between Rom 6:14 and Gal 5:18 is instructive.

Rom 6:14	οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον	ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν
Gal 5:18	οὐκ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον	εἰ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε

Paul believes that being "under grace" means that one will be led by the Spirit. Being "led by the Spirit" results in freedom from the power of sin. Paul assumes that one must be a slave to *something*. Believers, freed as they are from the power of sin, are slaves of "righteousness" and of God (6:16-22).²²⁰ To be sure, Paul does not refer explicitly to the Spirit's role in freeing from sin until Rom 8 (cf. 8:2), but note that the "fruit" which results in "sanctification" to which he refers in 6:22 can only be seen as a gift of God. It is, for Paul, something wrought in the believer by God.

c. Rom 8:1-8

In Rom 8:1-8, we find further evidence of Paul's belief that people can live lives pleasing to God only by dependence on God.

Note first the contrasts between the description of life as an unbeliever in 7:14-24 and life in Christ as pictured in 8:1-13.²²¹

7:14	One is sold under sin.	8:2	The believer is liberated from the law of sin and death.
7:17	Sin lives within one (cf. 7:20).	8:9	The Spirit of God lives within believers.
7:18	The "flesh" and "I" are equated	8:9	"You are no longer in the flesh."

²¹⁹ Conzelmann's assertion (Outline, 229) that 6:14 "means that it is impossible to sin" is unlikely (cf. also Wetter, 74-75). Although the churches to which Paul wrote were fraught with problems, Paul gives no indication that he thinks that those who sin are not believers, a conclusion which Conzelmann's position would require.

²²⁰ Here δικαιοσύνη obviously has an ethical sense.

²²¹ Noted by Theissen, 183.

It is clear that for Paul, believers in whom the Spirit dwells have been removed from the realm of the flesh, and enabled to please God.

Rom 8:2 explains 8:1. There is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" because Paul believes that the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you²²² free from the law of sin and death." Most commentators,²²³ I believe correctly, conclude that ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος cannot possibly refer to the Mosaic law,²²⁴ since Paul asserts that it is through this "law" that God accomplishes what the Mosaic law could not do. It proved powerless to bring life, and actually had the opposite effect of increasing sin. If νόμος in vs. 3-4 is a reference to Torah (this seems very likely, given the similarity of the description of its failing here with earlier references to the Mosaic law's failings), then its opposite, the "law of the Spirit," is that which frees people from sin. νόμος must in 8:2 be a metaphorical expression, denoting a power, with the genitive τοῦ πνεύματος identifying the source of the power. The power behind this νόμος is the "Spirit of life,"²²⁵ the same Spirit which lives within believers (8:9). It seems likely that the genitive τῆς ζωῆς is dependent on "the Spirit" and, given that the law brings death, can be translated as "life-giving."²²⁶

²²² The Greek "you" is singular (σε). Other witnesses have με (A D Π) or ἡμᾶς (Ψ bo). The text which appears in NA²⁶ is supported by κ B F G 1506* and others. In a very few texts (Origen, arm^{mss}) there is no pronoun. The με was probably meant (consciously or unconsciously) to bring the text into line with Paul's use of first person pronouns in the previous chapter. The ἡμᾶς most likely reflects the expectation that Paul would use the first person plural in a hortatory section such as this.

It is less certain whether σε or με is to be preferred. Certainly, as Metzger says, the former was more likely to have been replaced by the latter. He also notes, however, that the σε may have arisen from the accidental repetition of the last syllable of ἠλευθέρωσέν when the final -ν, signified by a horizontal line over the ε, was disregarded (Metzger, 516). The σε is to be preferred, since it is the most difficult reading, and since it has the best external attestation. At any rate, there is little doubt that Paul means the verse to apply to all believers.

²²³ See Wilckens, Römer, II, 122, n490.

²²⁴ Against Dunn, Romans, 416-417, Wilckens, Römer, II, 122. See Moo, Romans, 505, n7, for a list of others who take this view.

²²⁵ M. Winger, By what Law? The Meaning of Νόμος in the Letters of Paul (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992) 195.

²²⁶ So Cranfield, Romans, I, 376; Barrett, 145 and Käsemann, Romans, 216.

It is important to note that 8:3 indicates that liberation by the Spirit takes place as a result of the Christ event. For Paul, freedom from sin would not be a possibility if God had not sent his own Son. Whatever the difficulties of interpreting vs. 3,²²⁷ it is clear that in Paul's view, God took the initiative in sending his own Son to solve a problem caused by the law's inability to secure its own fulfillment.²²⁸ It appears as though Paul intended to make a direct contrast between what the law could not do, and what God did. However, for whatever reason, Paul does not finish the contrast.²²⁹ He moves on to show how God accomplished this liberation, that is, "by sending his Son." The NRSV translation supplies the missing verb by translating 3a as "For God has *done* what the law could not do...." God accomplished for people what neither they nor the law could accomplish. He frees them from sin.

As we have already seen, Paul believes that the law, far from eradicating sin, increases it. So "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do...." Those who "walk by the Spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα)" are given the ability to "walk not according to the flesh" (8:3-4). Whatever it means to say that the "just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (8:4), in this context it is certain that this involves living one's life in a manner pleasing to God.

πληρωθῆ most likely denotes an act which has in some sense already been accomplished.²³⁰ The ἐν ἡμῖν, given the references in vv. 9 and 11 to the Spirit's presence within believers, indicates that the fulfillment is accomplished within believers by

²²⁷ Important problems are the significance of ὁμοίωμα, the meaning of περὶ ἁμαρτίας and of the phrase κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. With Cranfield, we should probably take ἐν τῇ σαρκί as indicating where the condemnation of sin took place. What Paul means by "condemnation" is less clear. Cranfield correctly sees in the verb κατακρίνω as it is used here "such a combination of sentence and execution as constitutes a final and altogether decisive dealing with its object -- so God's effective breaking of sin's power" (382-83).

²²⁸ Cf. P. Stuhlmacher, Paul's Letter to the Romans, tr. S. Hafemann (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994) 119.

²²⁹ Moo, Romans, 509, suggests that this might be due to the large number of prepositional modifiers.

²³⁰ T. J. Deidun, New Covenant Morality in Paul (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981) 74.

the Spirit. This is how God does what the law could not do. Through the working of the Spirit, humanity is enabled to submit to God's will.²³¹

Paul continues, "For those who live according to the flesh set their mind on the things of the flesh, but those who live by the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (8:5). One who lives *κατὰ σάρκα* is hostile to God. Such a person does not, and in fact cannot, submit to God's commandment (8:7).²³²

Zeller's observation proves true. In Romans, grace appears before a backdrop of threatening judgment, and the "free gift" is portrayed as the alternative to judgment and condemnation. The working of grace, however, lies not only in pardon. In Paul's thought, God actually enables believers to live lives of obedience to God. Certainly it is through grace that a person will no longer be subject to God's wrath, but grace does not merely eliminate God's wrath; it makes possible the elimination of that which brings God's wrath.²³³

The answer to the problem of not being able to please God comes from outside the believer. The Spirit of God who "dwells in you" makes it possible for individuals to serve God. For Paul, one cannot "set one's mind on the Spirit" (8:5) or "live by the Spirit" unless one is in fact the Spirit dwell in one. The ability to live a life by the Spirit is only possible for those who have been given the gift of the Spirit.

To sum up, Paul portrays a picture of dependence on God that is consonant with the letters we have thus far examined. Apostleship is one of a number of gifts that God gives believers through which they can serve him. Grace, which by definition avers dependence on God, is the state in which Christians continually exist, and as such, it largely defines their existence. Adoption is again used as a metaphor for God's work on behalf of believers, and, although Rom 8:23 refers to a future act, it still bespeaks of God's initiative

²³¹ Deidun, 74-75.

²³² νόμος is probably best understood in a more general sense here as God's commandment, qualified as it is by τοῦ θεοῦ (cf. Winger, 160).

²³³ Cf. Zeller, 156.

on behalf of believers. Further, Paul again shows his deep confidence that despite dangers that threaten the faithful, God himself will keep believers in the community until the very end. And in Rom 6 we see that Paul believes Christians are not to live lives of sin so that "grace may abound," but rather are to recognize that they are no longer in bondage to sin and that they do not sin because God has transferred them into the new order of existence made possible by Christ. Finally, Rom 8 explains that believers are able to live lives pleasing to God because of the empowering Spirit.

IV. Human Responsibility in Romans

In view of the above, we must now ask if Paul betrays any awareness of a tension between the emphasis on grace and the expectations he places upon believers, with his warnings and promises of reward. And if so, does he try to resolve the tension?

A. Paul's insistence on human responsibility

That Paul insists on human responsibility is clear. He insists on responsibility before one is "in" Christ, in responding to the "call," and in living as a Christian.

As we have seen, Rom 1-3 indicates that humanity is guilty before God. The law, according to Paul, was powerless to resolve this plight, but humanity is still accountable to God – and without excuse (1:20; cf. 3:19).

Human responsibility is implied in Paul's use of "call" vocabulary. The very idea of being called implies the need for a response.²³⁴ Paul does not address the Romans as κλητοί simply because they were addressed by God in the preaching of the gospel. For Paul, one must respond to the call before one can be considered to be one of "the called."²³⁵

In Rom 9:24 (οὗς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἰουδαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἔθνων), Paul uses language of the Roman Christians which is used of ancient Israel,

²³⁴ In Rom 10:14-16 Paul refers to those who will "call" on the Lord, where the call is a response to the preaching of the message. And not all will respond positively.

²³⁵ Garlington, 238.

but it is language to which Jews, Paul believes, as they fail to respond positively to the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, do not measure up. Gentiles have responded in faith and obedience to God's call, while Israel, who has heard God's call (10:18), has not responded likewise. Certainly Paul is aware that there are Jewish Christians, of which he is one; nonetheless, he paints Israel with broad strokes as a "disobedient and contrary people" (10:21).²³⁶ Gentiles have responded and have become what many in Israel are not. Those who are to be identified as "the called" are those who respond positively to the call as it comes in the preaching of the gospel.²³⁷

Note too that Paul calls the Roman Christians κλητοὶ ἅγιοι in 1:7. In the OT, it was Israel's holiness that set her apart from the other nations (cf. Lev 20:22-26).²³⁸ By calling the Romans "saints," Paul perhaps implies that believers too are set apart by their faithfulness to God, though it would seem more likely, in light of 1 Cor 6:11, that the expression implies something which is done *to* believers.

As we have seen, believers are enabled to live faithfully by the Spirit of God. Paul uses the expression "led by the Spirit" (πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται - 8:14) in Romans as elsewhere, without implying passivity on the part of believers, as though their own wills were somehow circumvented. Believers are urged to submit to the leading of the Spirit. Earlier, Paul tells his readers to "consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." "Therefore," he continues, "do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions" (6:12-13). In 8:5, Paul says those who live "according to the Spirit" set their minds (φρονοῦσιν) on the things of the Spirit. The verb φρονέω certainly implies that the Romans are responsible for the direction of their thought processes. In 8:13, he tells the Romans that if they "put to death (θανατοῦτε) the deeds

²³⁶ We should not ignore that dual emphasis here of divine calling and hardening on the one hand and human responsibility on the other. Paul is aware of the difficulty inherent in maintaining the validity of both ideas, but he does not launch into an extended explanation of how they might be reconciled (see the discussion below).

²³⁷ Garlington, 239. Cf. the discussion of Rom 11 above.

²³⁸ Dunn, Romans, 20.

of the body, [they] will live." Clearly, the Romans bear a measure of responsibility in the putting to death of sinful deeds.²³⁹ In Romans 12:1-2, he urges the readers to present their bodies as "living sacrifices" to God and exhorts them not to be "conformed to this world, but (to) be transformed by the renewing of your minds...."

Clearly, then, for Paul the idea of dependence on God for entry into and continued existence in the community does not mean that Christians are passive. They have responsibilities for which they will be held accountable.

B. Human responsibility and judgment

As in 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians, Paul speaks of reward in Romans too. In several places in Romans, Paul makes use of the concept of judgment, both of believers and of unbelievers. Again, Paul's use of the motif of eschatological judgment implies that he holds people responsible for their actions, but the larger question concerns his perceptions of the relation between the concepts of salvation "by grace" and divine enabling and that of humanity being judged for what it does or does not do.

1. Rom 2

The most problematic statement concerning reward is found in Rom 2:6-7: "For he will repay according to each one's deeds: to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life; while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury." The conclusion in 2:10-11 is that for those who do good, there will be "glory and honour and peace.... (for) the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality."

How have interpreters treated the apparent tension between these verses and passages like Rom 3:21-24, which claim that justification is by faith? What does Paul mean by

²³⁹ Note that here Paul puts the ideas of divine enabling and human responsibility side by side. Believers are to "put to death the deeds of the body," but this is to be done "by the Spirit" (πνεύματι is an instrumental dative).

saying that God rewards "steadfast perseverance in good works"?²⁴⁰ Various answers have been proposed.

1) Some take the view that there is simply an irreconcilable tension between Rom 2 and Paul's statements elsewhere. Typical of this position is Räisänen, who asserts that "there is a formidable tension in Paul's thought at this point."²⁴¹

2) Others argue that Paul means that God gives eternal life to those who manage to live up to the level of their moral knowledge. Snodgrass, for example, argues that there is no contradiction with Paul's teachings elsewhere as long as it is recognized that the ability to achieve this level of performance is a result of God's grace.²⁴²

3) Some believe Paul is making a purely hypothetical claim about the way things would be if the law could be fulfilled and if Christ had not come.²⁴³

4) Others have argued that Paul means that, although the promise of life for those who do good is not hypothetical, the rule of sin over unbelievers prevents this from actually being realized. Vv. 7 and 10 articulate the principle of salvation apart from Christ, though Paul's argument shows that no person can actually fulfill those conditions.²⁴⁴

5) It is thought by some that the Gentiles of Rom 2:6-16 refers to Christians. "Paul affirms that these Gentiles do good and will receive eternal life, no less than Jewish

²⁴⁰ Cranfield, 147.

²⁴¹ Räisänen, Law, 107. Cf. Sanders, Law, 123-35. See further on Räisänen's view Laato, 98-100.

²⁴² Cf. K. Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace -- to the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul." NTS, 32 (1986) 86. Cf. also Shreiner, Fulfillment, 196, who concludes that Paul here refers to non-Christian Gentiles who occasionally obey the moral norms of the law that are "written on their hearts." but usually fail so to do. The result is that their consciences will accuse them on the eschatological judgment day.

²⁴³ So Thielman, 92. Cf. also Bassler, 145, who says that here Paul is "speaking of ideal types."

²⁴⁴ Wilckens, 130-31; Longenecker, Apostle of Liberty, 121-22. Cf. Murray, 78, who concludes that "Judgment according to works... applies to all who will be damned," and Moo, Romans, 141, who argues that Paul is not speaking hypothetically, but "once his doctrine of universal powerlessness under sin has been developed (cf. 3:9 especially), it becomes clear that the promise can, in fact, never become operative, because the condition for its fulfillment -- consistent, earnest seeking after good -- can never be realized."

Christians...."²⁴⁵ Cranfield favours the explanation that Paul is referring in vv. 7 and 10 to Christians, and means by the ἔργον ἀγαθόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν not their faith itself, but their conduct as the expression of their faith. Similarly, ἔργα in vs. 6 denotes each person's conduct as the expression either of faith or of unbelief.²⁴⁶

6) Some think Paul's words should be softened by understanding them only as missionary preaching designed to awaken the conscience.²⁴⁷

7) It has been suggested that chapter two should be dismissed as a non-Pauline missionary tract originating within Hellenistic Judaism, which was added secondarily to the epistle.²⁴⁸

8) Finally, Russell Pregeant tries to overcome the strain through the use of a process hermeneutic which eliminates the eschatological dimension of Paul's thought.²⁴⁹

The last three explanations have little to commend them. First, why should Paul want to awaken the consciences of those who are already believers? Moreover, chapter two is anything but irrelevant to Paul's argument, since it sets up the claim of 3:23 that "all have sinned," and therefore are in need of the redemption which is "in Christ Jesus" (3:24). Finally, Pregeant's argument is fundamentally flawed in that he completely downplays the importance of apocalyptic in Paul's thought.²⁵⁰

Explanation number five is unlikely. There is little in chapter two that suggests that Christians are in view, but much which indicates that Paul does not have believers in mind. The description of Gentiles who do not possess the law, but instinctively (that is, "by

²⁴⁵ F. Watson, Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 120.

²⁴⁶ Cranfield, 151.

²⁴⁷ E. Weber, Die Beziehungen von Röm. 1-3 zur Missionspraxis des Paulus. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie IX (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1905) 47. Cited by Snodgrass, 73.

²⁴⁸ J. C. O'Neill, Paul's Letter to the Romans (England: Penguin Books, 1975) 41, 53-54.

²⁴⁹ R. Pregeant, "Grace and Recompense: Reflections on a Pauline Paradox," JAAR, 47 (1979) 73-93.

²⁵⁰ Snodgrass, 74.

nature")²⁵¹ do what the law requires, does not sound like a description of Christians.

Later, in 8:4, Paul says that believers fulfill "the just requirement of the law...according to the Spirit," but that verse cannot be read back into the earlier parts of chapter two, where Paul makes no mention of the Spirit until (possibly) 2:29. From 2:9 onwards Paul consistently juxtaposes Jew and Greek, and thus, in this context, it is difficult to take ἔθνη as referring to anything other than Gentiles in general.²⁵² Cranfield believes that "good works" in 2:7 are "goodness of life, not however as meriting God's favour but as the expression of faith."²⁵³ This idea, however, must be imported into the passage. There is no hint at all that Paul here has in mind "good works" as the natural outflow of the Christian life.

There are also problems with explanation 2. Snodgrass's exegesis is inconsistent with 3:19-20a: "'Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For 'no human being will be justified in his sight' by deeds prescribed by the law...." Though Paul would not deny that those who were faithful to the revelation given by God *would* be saved by God's mercy, Paul's ultimate point in this section is that no one actually does God's will.²⁵⁴ His conclusion in 3:23 is that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (note that in 2:7 one of the things to be sought for is "glory").

With regard to explanation 1, it must be admitted that Paul may simply not be bothered by the inconsistency between his insistence on salvation by grace and his reference to righteous Gentiles being judged favourably. Much of Paul's depiction of Gentile sins in 1:18-32, and of the need for Jews to be "doers" and not mere "hearers" of the law, is traditional. It is possible that he simply took over traditional ways of speaking about

²⁵¹ Gk. φύσει. Räisänen, 104, n58, notes that Paul never refers elsewhere to new life in Christ with φύσις. Cranfield connects the word with what Paul has just articulated, making Paul speak of Gentile Christians, who "by nature do not have the law." However, this fails to do justice to the phrase ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος (Räisänen, 104, n 58)

²⁵² Räisänen, 104.

²⁵³ Cranfield, I, 147.

²⁵⁴ Thielman, 94.

judgment, believing that he could establish the point of 3:19-20 in this way without concerning himself about the need to be fully consistent with 3:21-23.

It seems that explanation 3 -- that Paul is speaking hypothetically -- and explanation 4 -- that he assumes that the power of sin prevents people from actually obeying God -- should not be distinguished. Paul's conviction that sin holds all humanity under its sway certainly suggests that he intends his discussion of "righteous" humans to be hypothetical. In 3:9, Paul informs his readers that "both Jews and Greeks are under the power of sin." It must be admitted that a hypothetical reading of Paul's claims about Gentiles fulfilling the law dulls the force of Paul's polemic against Jewish transgressions, but this is not a fatal objection.²⁵⁵ It may be a rhetorical device that serves to put the Jewish dilemma, as Paul perceives it, into sharper relief. As Thielman notes, Paul nowhere in ch 2 actually says that there are Gentiles who will be saved by keeping the law. I believe Paul's point here is not salvation, but condemnation. In his effort to indict Jews who feel that they are not subject to judgment in the same way Gentiles are, Paul reminds all his readers that God will judge Jews by the laws which he has given them, and Gentiles by the law which he has written on their hearts. Paul never claims that τὰ ἔθνη of 2:14 or ἡ ἀκροβυστία of 2:26 will be saved.²⁵⁶ In 2:14 he says that they will eventually appear before God to be accused or defended by their consciences. In 2:26, Paul says only that if the uncircumcised person keeps the law, he will be counted as circumcised.²⁵⁷

2. Rom 8:12-13

The next text we will consider is Rom 8:12-13. Although Rom 2:6-16 does not. I have argued above, refer to believers, this text does. Here Paul insists that believers will

²⁵⁵ Räisänen, Paul, 104, asks how a non-existent Gentile could "condemn" a Jew.

²⁵⁶ It might be thought that 2:27 comes close to saying this, but I am inclined to think that 2:27 is to be understood in light of 2:26 where Paul uses a third class condition (ἐάν and the subjunctive) which, in distinction to a first class conditional, is more tentative and only projects an action or event for hypothetical consideration (see on this S. Porter, Idioms of the Greek New Testament [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992] 261-63).

²⁵⁷ It should also be noted that in 2:14-15 Paul is only speaking of individual cases when Gentiles do what the law demands (Laato, 103). ὅταν in 2:14 does not mean "if," but rather means "every time that" or "as often as" (Laato, 101; cf. BAGD).

live a life pleasing to God. Not only that, but he apparently connects one's ultimate fate with one's lifestyle. Thus we must return to the question of how, if salvation is a gift, can one be judged worthy of salvation on the basis of how one lives. A related question is how this text relates to Paul's confidence that, with divine help, believers will remain members of the community, since here he seems to hold out the possibility that believers might fail to remain members of the Christian community.

In 8:12 Paul says, "So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh...." He then breaks off this line of thought and says "for if you live according to the flesh, you will certainly die" (μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, my translation) (8:13a). But if his readers "put to death the deeds of the body," they will live (8:13b).²⁵⁸

Paul's language in 13a hardly suggests that the warning can be understood merely hypothetically or as an unreal possibility. Paul seems to intend that his words are to be taken straightforwardly. The switch to the second person heightens the note of warning, and the indiscriminate nature of the address indicates that Paul is addressing not unbelievers, but believers.²⁵⁹ "Death" does not refer to the punishment of physical death, since that is the fate of all who do not live until the parousia. Here, death is a theologically pregnant term, denoting separation from God as the penalty for disobedience.²⁶⁰ Paul does not use the simple future, but here uses μέλλω (μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν), probably to indicate the certainty and inevitability of the future doom.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ In 8:13, the verb ζάω, "to live," is used in two different ways. The first instance refers to the believer's ethical life. The second occurrence of ζάω, which is in the future tense, has eschatological overtones. If believers continue to put to death the "deeds of the body," they will continue to enjoy life in the eschaton. Note that here σῶμα is used in the same manner as σάρξ is often used, to refer to life lived in opposition to God.

²⁵⁹ Dunn, *Romans*, 448.

²⁶⁰ Moo, *Romans*, 527.

²⁶¹ Cf. Louw and Nida, who give as one of the possible meanings of μέλλω "to be inevitable, with respect to future developments". The sense is "must be, has to be" (672). Cf. also BAGD, 501.

Paul betrays no awareness that this is inconsistent with the belief that God will keep believers in the community. In fact, human responsibility and divine enabling are here juxtaposed, as they often are in Paul. Believers are not to live "according to the flesh," but are instead to "put to death the deeds of the flesh." That is clearly their responsibility. They do this, however, "by the Spirit (πνεύματι)."²⁶²

It is the Spirit dwelling within believers that makes it possible for believers to live in obedience. The ability to obey is thus a gift of the grace of God. The Spirit, however, does not override the human will. Humans can choose to disobey. And if they do, they will suffer the consequences. In Rom 8:13, Paul emphasizes human responsibility, reminding believers that they cannot give the flesh free reign in their lives.

3. Rom 11:22b

In 11:17-24, Paul reminds the Gentile Christians not to become proud because Israel's unbelief has led to Gentile status within the people of God. They are wild branches that have been grafted into the olive tree of God's people; at that demonstration of God's mercy they are to stand in awe (cf. 11:20). In 11:22, Paul reminds the Gentiles that they, too, are beneficiaries of God's kindness. But they must be careful to "remain in his kindness," lest they too find themselves "cut off" ("...provided you continue in his kindness: otherwise you also will be cut off [ἐπεὶ καὶ σὺ ἐκκοπήσῃ])" (Rom 11:22b). Here Paul puts the responsibility for remaining "in Christ" on the shoulders of believers. While the Spirit makes it entirely possible to overcome the flesh, to avoid being "cut off," believers themselves must continue in God's kindness (ἐὼν ἐπιμένῃς τῇ χρηστότητι). Here "God's kindness" is a reference to his act of grafting in the "wild branches" of the Gentiles into the "olive tree" of the believing community (cf. 11:17-20). To "remain in God's kindness" is to remain "in grace," that is, to persist in one's faith, one's belief (cf. 11:23). Although Paul is confident that God is well able to keep Christians secure, and although Paul places a great deal of emphasis on the belief that God gives Christians the ability to

²⁶² Taking πνεύματι as an instrumental dative.

obey, he does not view Christians as passive agents. ἐκκόπτω is probably a variation on ἐκκλάω ("to break off") used in vv. 17, 19, 20,²⁶³ the point being that just as branches have been broken off the olive tree in the past for unbelief (members of Israel who refused to believe in Christ), the same fate will befall anyone who does not continue to believe. The triple occurrence of "kindness" in 11:22 underscores the importance of this divine characteristic for Paul, but he reminds his readers that "perseverance is a Christian responsibility rather than an unconditional promise."²⁶⁴ Again we see no indication that Paul is aware of any inconsistency between his insistence on human responsibility and his belief that Christians rely on God's grace.

4. Rom 14:10-12

In 14:10-12, to counter judgmentalism in the church, Paul reminds his readers that all "will stand before the judgment seat of God" (παρραστησόμεθα τῷ βήματι τοῦ θεοῦ). As seen earlier, the term for "judgment seat" (βῆμα) occurs in 2 Cor 5:10, but there it is the judgment seat of Christ. Here God is the one who judges. Paul's homiletic purpose is obvious. He mentions the judgment to dissuade believers from judging others, when they ought to be more concerned about their own conduct. Ultimately, Paul reminds his readers, believers are accountable to God (14:12).²⁶⁵ Exactly what form this judgment will take, Paul does not say, but presumably it has to do with the conduct of believers. It is probably the case that here, as in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul is thinking of reward for a life well-lived. Here too, Paul means his words to be taken seriously. God will judge humanity.

C. The relation between human responsibility and divine enabling

²⁶³ Dunn, Romans, 665.

²⁶⁴ Dunn, Romans, 665.

²⁶⁵ Schrage observes that it is "not by accident that most of these judgment passages occur in parenetic contexts. Even in the case of Christians, God has the last word" (The Ethics of the New Testament, tr. D. Green [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 185). Schrage makes the further observation through such passages Christians are "asked whether they have given full weight to the *sola* of *sola gratia*; they are asked what they have done with what God has given them" (186). This may be a legitimate extension of what Paul says, but he in fact does not tend to put the matter so clearly.

Thus far, we have shown in every letter that Paul's emphasis on grace does not rule out the concept of human responsibility. Despite his seemingly constant awareness that all which believers do and are is a result of God's call and work, we have seen that Paul holds believers responsible for how they live and for persevering in the faith. What is the relation between these two ideas?

First, we must note how easily Paul moves from one concept to the other. He observes that believers have "died to sin" (6:2), that their "old self" was "crucified with [Christ]," that they have been freed from sin (6:7), but then urges believers to "consider yourselves dead to sin" (6:11). One would think that Paul's statements about divine enabling leave nothing for the believer to do but to "go along for the ride." However, he urges them not to let sin "exercise dominion" in their bodies (6:12-13). They *are* "slaves to righteousness" (6:18), yet *they* are to "present [their] members as slaves to righteousness" (6:19). Although believers are completely dependent on God, they bear a measure of responsibility for how they live their lives within the Christian community.

In these texts, at least, it seems to be a matter of emphasis with Paul. Human activity and responsibility are emphasized when the homiletic occasion calls for it. But this observation does not *explain* why Paul can so easily shift between an emphasis on divine activity and human responsibility.²⁶⁶ Nor does it explain why, in other texts, Paul seems insistent on excluding human activity in the operation of divine grace.

The former paradox was addressed in a debate between Bultmann and Windisch in the '20's. Bultmann claimed that for Paul, salvation does not effect a change in a person's moral character.²⁶⁷ To this Windisch replied that although such a view is correct for statements about justification, such as we have seen in Romans 3 and Galatians 2, it does

²⁶⁶ Bassler, observing that Paul does not recognize the apparent tension in his thought, attributes Paul's lack of awareness to the fact that in both cases he is making the same point. Whether referring to justification by faith or reward for works, he is asserting that "God makes no distinction between Jew or Greek. In either case he shows no partiality" (166). This is helpful, but it does not fully explain Paul's thoughts on the matter.

²⁶⁷ Bultmann, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," ZNW 23 (1924) 136.

not suffice for Romans 6.²⁶⁸ In Bultmann we see a concern to argue that there is a definite continuity from pre- to post-conversion experience.²⁶⁹ Windisch, however, disagreed and argued that there is no continuity between old and new and that the believer is set free from the past (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Believers have been called into a new existence.²⁷⁰ Bultmann's view does not take into account a chapter such as Romans 6, where Paul indicates that the believer has died to sin.²⁷¹

For Bultmann, the justified person is never anything but an ἀσεβής (ungodly person). Since "ungodliness" constitutes some aspect of the existence of the justified person, such a person should stand under the divine imperative. That Paul would say that believers remain "ungodly" Windisch judges to be unlikely. Justification is both a forensic and creative act through which one becomes a "new creation." Paul seems to presuppose that the moral renewal of the Christian will lead eventually to moral perfection.²⁷²

Windisch's Paul believes that that which has become a reality in the unseen realm of God's activity must be demonstrated visibly in the life of the transformed believer. A person must submit to the will of God.²⁷³ The measure *and* objective of the believers' effort is called δικαιοσύνη. This view can be summed up in the maxim "Werde das was Du bist."²⁷⁴ Windisch makes the attaining of "righteousness" the goal of the moral life.

²⁶⁸ Windisch, 279.

²⁶⁹ Bultmann, "Ethik," 137. Bultmann does not, however, take this position in his Theology of the New Testament.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Windisch, 273.

²⁷¹ Cf. Windisch, 268.

²⁷² Windisch, 277. Stuhlmacher, Romans, 47, takes the same position, observing that for Paul the only one who can hope for pardon is "the one to whom God the creator grants, as an act of free grace, a new nature in righteousness and the spiritual ability to do what is right, and then establishes at the judgment an advocate at his or her side, against whom no accuser can appear." Cf. 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Cor 1:8 and Phil 1:10.

²⁷³ Windisch, 271. Cf. Kertelge, Rechtfertigung, 252.

²⁷⁴ Dodd, 93. Cf. also Johnstone, 71, who says that atonement "is not the goal but the means: the end for which humanity exists is not mere reconciliation but the realization of the pattern of living which is expressive of the harmonious relationship with God." Thus, like Dodd, Johnstone believes that Paul speaks about "being the people of God and realizing that status," that is, "becoming what [they] are" ("Justification by Faith Revisited," The Expository Times, 104 [1992]). Cf. also Bultmann, Theology, I, 332.

Apparently it is only as the two types of righteousness work together, the unseen and the seen, that salvation is bestowed.

For Bultmann, Paul bases the imperative on the fact of justification and derives the imperative from the indicative. Fung observes that this is "justified to the extent that Paul regards justification as the necessary foundation for the new life of the believer." To be under grace and not the law (Rom 6:14) presupposes justification. Those who have been baptized, those to whom the imperatives are addressed in Rom 6:11-13, are the justified.²⁷⁵

But perhaps the best way to formulate the relation between the responsibility (the imperative) and divine enabling (the indicative) is in terms of the believer's union with Christ as developed in Romans 6²⁷⁶ – a conclusion which the above chapter on Galatians would lead us to expect. It is through union with Christ that the believer has passed from the old age to the new (cf. Gal 1:4),²⁷⁷ and now because of that union with Christ, in which one enjoys the gift of the Spirit, the believer may and must live in a manner pleasing to God. It is *through* union with Christ that one experiences divine enabling, and it is *because* of this union that one must and can do what God requires. This is the reason that the tension is more apparent than real in Paul. Unbelievers live life without God, and, although they ought to do what pleases God, they cannot. No effort of the "flesh" can please God (Rom 8:7-8); that is why Paul is adamant in excluding the activity of those who are in the "flesh" as a factor in admission to the people of God. The transformation from

²⁷⁵ Fung, 281.

²⁷⁶ Fung, 282. Cf. Sanders, Paul, 511-15, who argues that for Paul terms such as "set free" and "redemption" seem "to be connected with the change of aeons (from the old creation to the new creation), the change of lordship from the service of sin to the service of Christ" (512). For Sanders, ethics are not connected with justification by faith but to "receiving the Spirit." This is, of course, reminiscent of Schweitzer's declaration that "ethics are just as natural a resultant phenomenon of the dying and rising again with Christ as is liberation from the flesh, sin and the Law, or the bestowal of the Spirit" (The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, tr. W. Montgomery, 2nd ed. [London: A. & C. Black, 1953] 225). Cf. also R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, tr. J. Holland-Smith and W. O'Hara (New York: Seabury Press, 1979) 276.

²⁷⁷ Fung, 282.

the old order to the new is entirely of grace. On the other hand, the indicative of union with Christ makes possible and requires the divine imperatives.²⁷⁸ Divine enabling implies human responsibility.

In Romans 6, we see that in baptism the believer participates in Christ's death and resurrection. Thus, in baptism, through union with Christ, the believer has died to sin. The imperatives in Rom 6:11-13 are inferences (cf. the οὐτως of vs. 11 and the οὖν of vs. 12) that Paul draws from the meaning of baptism. There is, in a sense, a two-fold grounding of the imperatives in 6:11-13. The new life of the baptized individual follows from dying and rising with Christ and flows from union with him. But note that union with Christ presupposes justification, since it is, for Paul, justification that makes possible union with Christ. Thus, Schweitzer perhaps goes too far when he states that "there is no logical route from the righteousness by faith to a theory of ethics,"²⁷⁹ since for Paul the ultimate basis for new life is "justification."²⁸⁰

Moving to Romans 8, we see that in 8:12, the connecting particle is again inferential (ἄρα οὖν). The content of 8:1-11 (concerning life in the Spirit) does not make the imperatives of 8:12-13 superfluous, for it describes that which makes the performance of the imperatives possible, and implies that obedience to them is part and parcel of life in the Spirit. The ethical imperative is grounded in the indicative of the reality of the Spirit's work in the life of the believer.²⁸¹ It is because of life in the Spirit, made possible by

²⁷⁸ Ridderbos observes that this is most clear where the imperative follows a conditional clause, such Gal 5:25: Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν. The conditional εἰ performs two functions: it states "a supposition from which the imperative goes out as an accepted fact. But at the same time it emphasizes that if what is demanded in the imperative does not take place, that which is supposed in the first clause would no longer be admissible" (255-56). The new life must become evident in changed conduct.

²⁷⁹ Schweitzer, 225. Others who see little connection between "justification by faith" and ethics include Knox, *Chapters*, 142-58 (cf. esp. 153) and L. E. Keck, "Justification of the Ungodly and Ethics," in *Rechtfertigung*, ed. J. Friedrich *et al* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1976) 199-209.

²⁸⁰ Fung, 282, n21.

²⁸¹ Deidun, *Morality*, 78. Schrage, 171, also concludes that the indicative implies the imperative, which is confirmed by the beginning of the specifically paraenetic sections in

"justification" which in turn makes possible union with Christ, that believers are not debtors to the flesh (8:12) but instead live by the Spirit, "putting to death deeds of the flesh" (8:13).

In Romans, as in Galatians, we see Paul's belief that there is an ethical component to life as a member of the believing community. If what is demanded by God is not evidenced in the believer's life, the indicative may be lost. This does not put the "imperative cart before the indicative horse; it simply emphasizes that the new life (with the Spirit as its source) must become evident in the new conduct (under the Spirit's direction) and cannot exist without it."²⁸² It is perhaps significant that in Rom 6:2 Paul does not say that sin itself has "died," but rather asserts that believers have died to sin. Sin itself still attempts to control believers and it is of this that Paul warns his congregations. As Furnish puts it, for Paul, "the Lord exercises his power redemptively and not tyrannically. That is the difference between standing under the power of law and the power of grace. For Paul, obedience means surrender to God's power but not abject capitulation to it..."²⁸³

In Paul, justification begins and sustains a journey to a goal, that of acquittal on the day of judgment, when the gift of justification will be fully realized. But since this gift can be lost, it carries an obligation. There is a tension between possession and hope, but for Paul, that hope is firmly grounded (cf. Rom 5:8-9).²⁸⁴ Nothing in all creation has the power to separate the believer from God's love (Rom 8:38-39); yet Paul's warnings about falling away from the faith are meant to be taken seriously.²⁸⁵

the Pauline letters, especially by the logical connective "therefore" (Rom 12:1; 1 Thess 4:1; Gal 5:1).

²⁸² Fung, 282. Cf. Ridderbos, Paul: An Outline of His Theology, tr. by R. H. DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 255-56 and Shreiner, Fulfillment, 203-04.

²⁸³ V. Furnish, Theology & Ethics in Paul (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968) 195.

²⁸⁴ Jeremias, 65.

²⁸⁵ It is uncertain whether Paul perceives God's call and election to be irresistible. There are at least four cases in Romans where the evidence might indicate he does (cf. Gooch, 538). In Rom 9, the Jacob/Esau example can be construed as though Esau had no hope right from the start. And of course, God hardens Pharaoh's heart, and God "hardens the heart of whomever he chooses" (9:18). If humanity is only clay in God's hands, then it has not power to resist God's designs. Though Paul does not openly says

The connection between grace and human responsibility in Paul is due, at least in part, to Paul's perception of salvation-history. Believers live in two realms, the old and the new, at the same time. This means, for Paul, that the reality of the believer's existence does not necessarily measure up to the ideal. The ideal, of course, is that believers do what pleases God. So in Romans 6, Paul indicates that beneficiaries of grace are expected and enabled to live in a manner pleasing to God. Paul insists that such people are not to give themselves over to unrighteousness, since they belong to another. For Paul, it is as inappropriate to serve sin as it is for the slave of one master to be obedient to another. Yet, the apostle also clearly recognizes that this ideal is not always worked out in the realities of day to day existence. Paul is aware that believers still sin and thus he urges his readers to "present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification" (6:19; cf. 12:1,2).

this, there seems to be a sense that the election and call of the one who created all things will come to fruition every time.

Gooch notes that if one examines the Hebrew Bible contexts from which Paul takes his allusions, one is not inexorably led to the view that God's call is irresistible. The Jacob/Esau story relates Esau's desire to give away his birthright for a bowl of soup and Jacob's appropriation of his birthright through deceit. In the elder's service to the younger, human choice or action is thus not absent. One cannot find the notion of an overriding sovereignty of God in the story and it is at least possible to believe that God's statement about the elder serving the younger was a prediction. The potter image is familiar from Isa 29:15-16 (where the point is that people cannot hide their secrets from God) and 45:9-10 (where the point is that no one can question or instruct God). The image in Isaiah obviously expresses God's transcendent power and will. In Jeremiah 18, the author says that just as God has the power to create but also to reject a spoiled piece of pottery, so God has the power to create and reject nations as he wills. But note also that in the passage there are two other claims (Gooch, 539). In vs. 10 God speaks of the good that he intends by his creating, and of evil for a nation only where that nation is itself evil (vs. 8). In Jeremiah the potter story functions as warning. Nations (unlike pots) may reform themselves into conformity with God's purposes. With regard to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, it should be noted that in the Exodus story most often God is said to harden Pharaoh's heart, but Pharaoh is also said to harden his own heart. In 1 Sam 6:6, Pharaoh is again, at least in part, held to be responsible for the hardening of his own heart. As for the view that God's purposes in history will come to pass, this does not necessarily rule out at least some individual human freedoms.

Thus reading Paul's language in its original context allows us (though it does not *require* us) to read Romans 9-11 as a "strong assertion of divine sovereignty which could threaten to override our choices, but which in the end does not do so, or at least not always. That God hardened Pharaoh's heart does not mean that the reader is to assume that this is the customary divine mode of operation" (Gooch, 540). This view cannot be established with any certainty, but it is possible. Given that Paul seems to want his warnings about the very real possibility of falling away from the faith to be taken seriously, Gooch's view is appealing.

Although believers have the help of the Spirit, Paul holds them responsible for how they live. He subscribes to the belief that the "powers which God dethroned *still* want to repossess believers and force them to be their servants."²⁸⁶ The reality for Paul is that the believer has been thrown into the battle between God and the powers of the old age, where the believer must continually decide *for* God. Thus we have Paul's admonitions in Rom 6:12-13 and Rom 12:1.²⁸⁷ For Paul, the Christian must continually decide for God until the complete and final consummation of salvation (cf. Rom 8:18-25). As Ridderbos says, "there is in the 'not yet' the necessity for increasing, pushing ahead on the way that has been unlocked by the 'already.'"²⁸⁸

For Paul, the two sides of human responsibility and divine enabling do not counterbalance each other – the weight falls more on the divine side. In 1 and 2 Corinthians, we saw Paul's instinctive protestations of reliance on grace following statements of human accomplishments: similar sentiments are expressed in Romans. In Romans 8 Paul says that the gift of the Spirit is what makes it possible to carry out the ethical imperatives required of believers. We have seen that the "call" which comes to believers, a call to union with Christ, is for Paul a call that comes without regard to human activity. And in Rom 15:18, Paul refers to what Christ has "wrought through me (κατεργάσατο Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ)," a phrase which grounds what Paul accomplishes in Christ. Christ is the one who works through Paul. That 15:18 immediately follows a verse in which Paul claims that he "has reason to be proud of [his] work for God" (15:17) is significant and it is what we should expect from Paul. After making the claim that he has

²⁸⁶ Bornkamm, Paul, 153. Bornkamm also observes that for Paul, the "old aeon has turned, but in such fashion that a new world situation has not directly and openly begun" (Early Christian Experience, tr. P. L. Hammer [New York: Harper and Row, 1969] 80). Cf. also Furnish, Ethics, 173, who notes that statements that imply Christ's victory over sin do not imply that sin no longer exists, or that it no longer seeks to enslave people. Sin's power has been damaged, but the final victory is still to come.

²⁸⁷ Bornkamm, Experience, 82.

²⁸⁸ Ridderbos, 258. Cf. also the comment of W. Grundmann: "the Christian stands in the tension of a double reality. Basically freed from sin, redeemed, reconciled and sinless, he is actually at war with sin, threatened, attacked and placed in jeopardy by it. He must be called to ἀγιασμός" ("ἀμαρτάνω," TDNT, I, 313).

reason to boast, he immediately gives Christ credit for what he does to "win obedience from the Gentiles." Indeed, Paul's boastful statement is sandwiched between two admissions of dependence on God, for in 15:15 he refers to the "grace" given to him by God, where *χάρις* refers to his apostolic service.

Along with his insistence that "grace cannot receive pay," Paul can speak of a judgment in which believers will be judged for how they discharge their responsibilities. But ultimately the ability to do what is required by the heavenly judge comes, for Paul, from the judge himself. Above we concluded that Paul means for his warnings to be taken seriously. In fact, his convictions about grace require his readers to do so. Far from undermining the principle of *sola gratia*, the idea of a humanity that is actually responsible, not just *apparently* responsible, upholds the principle. Grace is only meaningful to those who are under the threat of certain judgment.²⁸⁹

V. Conclusions

In Romans, the human condition is characterized by humanity's inability to live in a manner pleasing to God. It is because of humanity's sin that "justification" cannot come through the "works of the law." People under the power of sin do not do the works of the law. In Paul's thought, humanity, left to its own resources, has no hope of extricating itself from its desperate plight.

The alternative to compliance with the demands of the law is "justification by faith," a justification made possible by the "gift" of Christ. For Paul, the alternative to the law is the way of grace, but not because of any inherent flaw within the law itself, or because of "legalism." Grace, as manifested in the death of Christ, provides the only viable alternative because people do not do the law and because the law lacks the power to free people from sin; that alternative breaks the power of sin and is not conditional upon works. In Rom 4 Paul makes it clear that salvation cannot depend on works of any kind.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Schrage, 185.

If it is correct to say that Paul finds that attempting to do the works of the law does not lead to life because people are not able to do the law, then the principle of "justification by faith" implies "dependence on God." "Life" comes from outside oneself. Underlying Paul's discussion of justification by faith is the principle that salvation cannot depend on humanity's efforts to live up to God's demands. Salvation is a gift, freely bestowed by God. If salvation is contingent on the ability of humanity to please God, in Paul's view, "grace would no longer be grace." To be justified by faith means that one depends on God, not oneself.

Dependence on God is also implied by the term "call." God's call comes to believers without regard to external considerations. The call of God is sovereign. It is a call without which people cannot enter the Christian community.

As in 2 Corinthians 5, Paul portrays God as the one who initiates reconciliation. God, the offended party, makes the restoration of a broken relationship possible. In Rom 5:12-21, Paul depicts Christ as the one who alone makes possible deliverance from the state of sin common to all humanity. Deliverance from the deadly effects of Adam's sin, freedom from condemnation, justification and a future "reign in life" are all made possible by God. This entire project rests on the fundamental assumption of 5:12-21, namely, dependence on God.

For Paul, the Christian faith consists of continual dependence on God. It is God who grants believers access to the sphere of grace which continually defines their existence (5:1). For Paul conversion results in an existence which is secure and grounded in Christ, an existence which can withstand any force intent on separating believers from the love of God.

Even in their service to God, believers depend on God. Paul argues that all believers are given gifts by which they serve, chosen and apportioned by God as he sees fit.

Paul expects that believers will live lives pleasing to God. "Grace" makes this a possibility. Humanity under the law is subject to sin. But humanity "under grace" is freed

from the power of sin. To be "under grace" is to be empowered by the Spirit to live a righteous and moral life.

It is not at all inaccurate to say that for Paul, dependence on God characterizes the Christian life from start to finish. But, as in the letters examined thus far, this does not rule out the idea that individuals are responsible for their actions. People must respond to God's call, and despite Paul's bold assertions that nothing can remove believers from the sphere of God's favour, Paul allows for the possibility that believers themselves are, at least in part, responsible for persevering in the faith. If they do not persevere, they risk losing their membership in the believing community. Paul's imperatives are grounded in the fact that God makes obedience possible, but believers must continually respond to God's grace.

Chapter Six -- Grace in Philippians

I. Introductory matters

Philippians, though short, may tell us a great deal about the significance of grace in Paul's thought. In Philippians, most of the texts which concern us have to do with the continuing reliance of the believer on God. The number of times which Paul, with great ease, moves from exhortations or statements that focus on human responsibility to statements that seem to imply that God is responsible for the obedience and perseverance of the Christian is most striking. For this reason, I will not follow my usual pattern of discussing "human responsibility" in a separate section. Rather we will ask whether in Philippians we can detect evidence that Paul was aware of a tension between the two poles of human responsibility and dependence on grace. Also, does the fact that Paul places such an emphasis on grace in contexts that have nothing to do with Torah tell us anything about the place of grace in Paul's religious vision?

At the outset, we should note that there are no serious challenges to Pauline authorship today. The destination of the letter is the church at Philippi, a city in the northeast corner of the Roman province of Macedonia.¹ The letter was written by Paul as a response to a financial gift delivered to Paul by Epaphroditus on behalf of the Philippian church (cf. 2:25). There is some debate over the unity of the letter, but in my view, it is likely that Paul wrote the letter as we have it.²

¹ Cf. the account of Paul's initial visit on his so-called second missionary journey in Acts 16:11-40.

² One of the more compelling arguments for the composite nature of Philippians is that based on the difference in tone between earlier and later parts of the letter. See on this F.F. Bruce "St. Paul in Macedonia 3. The Philippian Correspondence," BJRL 63 (1980-81) 260-84. For a plausible statement of the case for the unity of the letter, see R. Jewett, "The Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philippians," NovT 12 (1970) 40-53.

The place of writing has also been debated. The traditional view is that it was written from Rome, while Paul was under house arrest. It has also been argued that Philippians was written from Caesarea, or possibly Ephesus. The traditional view is still the most adequate. Ephesus may be ruled out on the grounds of Paul's use of the loan-word praetorium. The word refers to the headquarters of the praetor. Outside of Rome, it

II. The human condition in Philippians

Of all the letters examined thus far, Philippians has the least to say about the human condition. There are no references to sin as a power which enslaves humanity, or to the law as that which causes sin to increase, such as we saw in Romans. That people sin is, of course, assumed, since Paul warns believers not to act without "selfish ambition or conceit" (2:3) or "murmuring and arguing" (2:14). He describes the world at large as inhabited by a "crooked and perverse generation" (γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης [2:15]). Those whom Paul opposes he refers to as "evil workers" (3:2).³ In 3:17-19 Paul describes a group whom he thinks show by their lifestyle that they are "enemies of the cross of Christ."⁴ Paul observes that their god is their stomach and that they are ruled by their appetites.⁵

Judgment of evil is implicit in Paul's description of the ultimate fate of opponents of the gospel as one of destruction (ἀπώλεια [1:28; 3:19]). Paul believes that, in the Philippians who refuse to crumble under their persecution, the opponents will see a portent

"denotes the headquarters of a provincial governor, but of the governor of an imperial province, the *legatus pro praetore*, who had military units under his command" (Bruce, 263). There is no known instance of its use for the headquarters of a proconsul, the governor of a senatorial province, such as Asia was at this time (Bruce, 263). Caesarea has in its favour that Acts 23:35 says Paul was kept under guard in Herod's praetorium, a building erected by Herod on his artificial acropolis, which presumably had by this time served as headquarters for the procurator of Judea. Paul waited there for two years (57-9 CE) and no doubt thought there was a good chance he would receive a positive verdict (Bruce, 264). Caesarea was, however, a "political backwater." It seems unlikely that there were enough believers there to account for the picture Philippians paints. It provides too restricted a background to account for the joyful tenor of Paul's report that his imprisonment has worked out for the advance of the gospel. Rome, on the other hand, meets these requirements perfectly (Bruce, 265). The date of the letter can be fixed at around 60-62 CE.

³ Thus rather than merely circumcising, these opponents "mutilate the flesh" (3:2). Apparently Paul is referring to a group who insisted on the necessity of circumcision for believers.

⁴ For a helpful discussion of the identity of the opponents in Phil 3:2-4 and 3:17-19, see Jewett, "Epistolary Thanksgiving."

⁵ It may be that he is using a current proverb picked up from Euripides, *Cyclops*, where the speaker refers to "My belly, greatest of all deities" (Euripides, *Cyclops*, 330-40, tr. A. S. Way, Loeb [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912] 553).

of their own destruction (1:27-28). Paul does not, however, expand upon what that destruction entails.

In 3:3-9, Paul indicates that he wants to be "found" in Christ, rather than "having a righteousness that comes from the law." Paul portrays a "righteousness" that comes through faith in Christ as being *alternative* to a righteousness that comes "from the law." The inadequacy of a righteousness which comes ἐκ νόμου for Paul is no doubt implied in his choice of the righteousness that comes by faith, and the fact that he now considers whatever "gains" he had to be "loss because of Christ" (3:7; see the discussion below).

In Philippians, then, humanity is seen as being implicated in sin and in danger of being condemned. Those who have a righteousness that comes from the law will find that it is inadequate.

III. Dependence on God in Philippians

As in all the letters we have examined thus far, Paul believes that people must rely on God for entry into the believing community. In 1:29, he tells the Philippians that God "has graciously granted you (ἐχαρίσθη) the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well...." The agent of the passive verb ἐχαρίσθη is clearly God, since Paul has just said that the Philippians' salvation is ultimately God's doing (καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ [1:28]). Paul goes back a step and says that their belief, which was antecedent to their suffering, was itself a gift of God. Apparently we are to think that for Paul, people would not come to faith were it not for God working within them.⁶ This

⁶ Here Paul is focusing on God's role as a means of encouraging the Philippians to endure suffering. Since for Paul, πίστις is not primarily a complex of doctrines, but is rather "trust," the genitive in the phrase τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου in 1:27 is a genitive of source rather than an exegetical genitive. "Faith" then would be that which comes from the preaching, or hearing of the gospel. This is consonant with what we see elsewhere in Paul. In 1 Cor 4:15, Paul says that he became the Corinthians' father "through the gospel" (διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). In 1 Cor 15:1, 2 Paul says that it is by the gospel that they are saved (δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε), and in 15:11, belief is contingent upon the preaching of the gospel (Friedrich, "Glaube und Verkündigung bei Paulus," Glaube im Neuen Testament, G. Strecker, et al, eds. [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag,

would seem to be foundational to Paul's soteriology and is further evidence that "grace" for him is much more than a polemical tool brought out when dealing with the question of the law and admission to the church.

3:2-9 is the only place in Philippians where the idea of dependence on God appears in a discussion of Torah-observance.⁷ In 3:2, in reference to Judaizing opponents, Paul warns the Philippians to "beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh." *κατατομήν* ("mutilation of the flesh") is a play on the word *περιτομή*. Paul characterizes his opponents as mutilators rather than performers of a solemn religious rite and claims that, unlike them, "it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (*οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες*)."

σάρξ is used here to portray a humanity that does not do what Paul has claimed believers do. Believers worship God by the Spirit⁸ and they "boast in Christ Jesus (*καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*),"⁹ whereas those who rely on the flesh do not. It seems unlikely that Paul means to set up a strict contrast between a reliance on self which

1982] 107). Cf. also Rom 10:14 and esp. 10:17 ("so faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ"). As Friedrich says, "die Anrede Gottes durch beauftragte Boten versetzt den Menschen in die Lage, glauben zu können. Von sich aus, ohne daß er von Gott angesprochen wird, kann niemand glauben" (107).

⁷ I have included a discussion of these verses under the heading "Initial Dependence on God" since for Paul, one cannot become a member of the Christian community without exercising faith in Christ.

⁸ One need not choose between a locative and instrumental sense for *πνεύματι* here -- the two concepts overlap in this case.

⁹ Hawthorne, 128, suggests that relying on the flesh refers to striving to achieve an adequate status before God, but without the realization of the need for dependence on the mercy and grace of God. Cf. Martin's suggestion that "confidence in the flesh" is simply another way of "expressing the innate tendency on the part of the religious person to obtain a standing before God, and to secure, by one's own effort, approval and acceptance with him" (*Philippians*, TNTC, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987] 143). M. Silva, *Philippians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988) 171, explains it as putting confidence "in oneself, in one's natural achievements." Cf. also Laato, 259 (*Paulus und das Judentum: Anthropologische Erwägungen* [Åbo: Åbo Akademis förlag, 1991]) and Gundry, 14. It seems, however, that Paul does not mean to set up a contrast between a reliance on self that denies the need for God's mercy and grace and reliance upon God in this passage.

totally disregards God's mercy and grace, and reliance on God in this passage.

Nevertheless, reliance on the flesh does exclude reliance on *Christ*. Note that in this passage, Paul documents his life as a law-observant Jew as being potential grounds (which he rejects) for "boasting in the flesh" (cf. 3:4-6), thus indicating that this is the kind of boasting of which his opponents were guilty. It therefore seems likely that "boasting in the flesh" in 3:3 is a reference to boasting both in doing what the law requires and in being *born* a Jew of impeccable descent, as Paul was.¹⁰

Note that in 3:4-6, Paul enumerates the reasons for which he might have confidence "in the flesh": he was "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews," and with regard to law-observance, he was "a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless."¹¹ Yet all these gains, Paul now considers to be loss. Phil 3:7 ([ἀλλὰ] ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν) is the pivotal verse in the section.¹² Paul's whole life became oriented around Christ; hence for Christ's sake, the things of his old life were considered to be loss.¹³ In 3:7-8, Paul sets his old life over against his new life in a manner which indicates that once he became a believer in Christ he saw the incompatibility between having what he calls a "righteousness of my own (ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην)" which is ἐκ νόμου (v. 9) and a righteousness which comes through faith.

These verses repeatedly set a negative evaluation of his prior way of life against a positive description of his new experience, a contrast which Paul reiterates in the most

¹⁰ Cf. Laato's observation that σάργξ "bezeichnet ferner alle angeborenen und erworbenen Vorzüge des Saulus (V.5-6)" (259).

¹¹ This verse seems to contradict a passage such as Gal. 3:10-14 where Paul assumes that the law cannot be successfully kept. See on this, chapter five, p. 154, n 57.

¹² Cf. J. B. Polhill, "Twin Obstacles in the Christian Path: Philippians 3," *RevExp* 77 (1980) 363.

¹³ So O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 385, against Hawthorne, 136, who takes δία here to mean "because of."

forceful of terms.¹⁴ One must not conclude that Paul regarded Jewishness in itself as offensive. Yet, through his conversion, Paul came to the belief that his former way of life would not lead to "knowledge" of God (cf. 3:10).¹⁵ Paul's change of mind can be displayed as follows:¹⁶

<u>The Old Life</u>	<u>The New Life</u>
these I have reckoned a loss	for Christ
I reckon all things loss	for the value of knowing Christ
I have lost all things	for whom [i.e., for Christ]
I reckon them dung	that I may gain Christ

As we noted above, in verse nine, Paul expresses the desire "to be found in him (Christ), not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ...." The participle ἔχων is probably best understood not as causal, signifying that Paul will be found in Christ *because* he has the righteousness that comes from God rather than his own, but rather as modal. It thus indicates the manner in which he will be found perfectly in Christ -- as one who does not have a righteousness of his own.¹⁷

The "righteousness" which comes from God is not a kind of moral achievement, since it is said to come ἐκ θεοῦ, in contrast to being "mine." It has to do with a status of being "in the right" and thus means that the recipient of this righteousness is acceptable to God (cf. Rom 3:21).¹⁸ The expression "from God"¹⁹ highlights its nature as a gift, that is, as

¹⁴ Silva, 179.

¹⁵ Sanders points out that Paul does not here say that boasting in status and achievement is wrong because boasting is itself improper. Rather, such things "became loss because, in his black and white world, there is no second best. His criticism of his former life is...that he put confidence in something other than faith in Jesus Christ" (Paul, the Law and the Jewish People [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983] 44). But see the discussion of Sanders below.

¹⁶ Silva, 180.

¹⁷ O'Brien, 393.

¹⁸ O'Brien, 396. Despite arguments to the contrary, δικαιοσύνη in 3:9 is best understood forensically and relationally. The contrast with "a righteousness of my own that comes from the law" makes a forensic/relational understanding of the term here likely. Yet, even though "righteousness" here refers to being in a right relationship with God

that which does not depend on acts of conformity to demands of the law. This righteousness instead depends on "faith in Christ (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ)" (3:9).²⁰ The righteousness which has its origin in God is appropriated by faith. The phrase τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει at the end of 3:9 is not redundant, but is in fact emphatic, again calling attention to the human response to God's justifying action.²¹

In this verse we see in miniature Paul's views on the human condition and God's answer to this condition.²² The verse implies that humans are alienated from God, that God has taken the initiative, and that humanity must respond to this initiative. This response takes the form of "faith," which, in the context, can be defined as trust in Christ for the necessary righteousness "from God" along with a renouncing of grounds for confidence in one's own accomplishment as a means to securing a righteous status before God. With Beare, we can say that faith is "not a claim upon God, but a confession of total

(which means that one is acceptable before him) it also implies that God is acting righteously in power to make such a status a possibility.

J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*, SNTSMS 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 149-51 argues that "acceptability" is not a suitable meaning for δικαιοσύνη, since it is inadequately supported from other literature. Also, a significant difference in meaning of one word in one verse is unlikely where two righteousnesses are contrasted as to their sources. Ziesler's solution is that δικαιοσύνη is fully ethical in both occurrences in 3:9. Against Ziesler, O'Brien argues that there is no linguistic objection to understanding the term in relational categories and thus having to do with God's putting people in right relationship with himself. It is only a "mathematical type of consistency" that demands that δικαιοσύνη in vs 6 and its two instances in vs 9 should have the same connotation (O'Brien, 396-97, n. 83).

¹⁹ Taking ἐκ θεοῦ as denoting the origin of the righteousness which is appropriated by faith.

²⁰ Here, as elsewhere, I take Χριστοῦ to be an objective genitive. See the discussion above, pp. 100-01. Silva, 187, notes that Paul never speaks unambiguously about Christ's faithfulness, but he does speak of individuals believing in Christ. Moreover, Silva, 187, notes that unambiguous grammatical forms should be used to interpret ambiguous ones.

²¹ Hawthorne, 142, calls attention to the fact that this is in keeping with Paul's style, noting that in Gal 2:16 Paul does what he does here, though in a more cumbersome manner. There Paul repeats three times the phrase "faith in Christ," referring each time to the human response to God's action.

²² Cf. Hawthorne, 142.

dependence upon God."²³ "Faith in Christ" results in being "found in him" (3:9a), that is, "incorporated in him, and united with him to such a degree that all that Christ is and has done is received by the person who trusts in Christ."²⁴

This faith might itself be thought of as a work. As we noted above, however, Paul believes that even the ability to believe is a gift from God. Thus, knowing God (3:10), and even "attaining to the resurrection of the dead" (3:11), are gifts of God, appropriated by what is itself ultimately a gift of God.

What then is ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην? Silva sums up his views on v. 9 by saying that here "Paul asserts that true righteousness is obtained by abandoning one's own efforts and exercising faith."²⁵ Karl Barth says that what Paul is opposing is the idea that "in order to increase one's own righteousness and improve one's self-produced condition, it was necessary to *add* this and that from what the Jewish religion had to offer on these lines...."²⁶ Although ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην for Paul consisted of doing what the law required, it is quite another thing to say that Paul is here objecting to doing works of the law as an attempt to earn favour with God that completely ignores the grace of God. Sanders argues that, in fact, Paul's contrast is only between two dispensations. The righteousness that comes by the law is of no value because it is of the old dispensation. "*Real righteousness* (the righteousness of or from God) is through Christ. It is this concrete fact of *Heilsgeschichte* which makes the other righteousness wrong, not the abstract superiority of grace to merit."²⁷

Note, however, that if Paul is not contrasting a "merit theology" to a "theology of grace," he is nevertheless contrasting compliance with the law's demands, thought to

²³ Beare, 119.

²⁴ Hawthorne, 142.

²⁵ Silva, 187. Cf. O'Brien, 394-95.

²⁶ Barth, The Epistle to the Philippians, tr. J. W. Leitch (London: SCM, 1962) 100.

²⁷ Sanders, Law, 140.

produce "my own righteousness," and faith, which sees righteousness as given by God. The phrase "a righteousness of my own that comes from the law" in vs. 9 implies that some were seeking a righteous standing before God through performance of the deeds required by the law. Phil 3:2-11 starts with the "givens" of Jewish status, but it reaches its zenith with accomplishments that were required by Torah. There is more at stake here than a "dispensational shift." As Gundry observes, it seems unlikely that salvation history alone accounts for all that Paul says, let alone the feeling with which he says it. What we see here reflects "an autobiographical shift as well as a dispensational shift."²⁸ The long list of items in Phil 3:2-11 points not only to the error of missing God's righteousness in Christ, but also to a perception on Paul's part that the righteousness is not obtained through doing what the law demands.

As Paul describes it, his "own righteousness" is a righteousness based on scrupulous performance of the law's demands.²⁹ Paul has indicated his own claim to a righteousness that is ἐν νόμῳ (vs. 6) by listing his own qualifications as a Torah observant Jew, indicating that his "own righteousness" is a righteousness that comes from fulfilling the law's demands. It is this righteousness that he contrasts with τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ

²⁸ R. H. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Biblica* 66 (1985) 13.

²⁹ Against Barclay, 244, who argues that it is better to understand "my own righteousness" as an expression of *limitation* rather than an expression of *achievement*. Barclay maintains that this passage demonstrates that "faith in Christ involves the acknowledgment that the grace of God overturns human expectations and traditions, including Jewish traditions and Jewish cultural norms" (*Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* [Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1988]). To be sure, the gospel does this for Paul, but that does not exhaust the meaning of this passage. Barclay makes his mistake when he seems to seize on the fact that most of Paul's Jewish privileges listed here are by birth, not accomplishment. Therefore, Barclay concludes, ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην must be a reference to merely human characteristics. The fact remains, however, that they are not all human characteristics. "Righteousness under the law" (3:6) is an all-encompassing expression covering not only what Paul was by birth, but a wide range of activities which Paul clearly formerly viewed as being positive *accomplishments*.

δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει,³⁰ and it is on the God who provides this righteousness that the believer depends completely.

In our discussion of grace in earlier chapters, we considered Paul's use of "call" vocabulary. The only occurrence of such language in Philippians is found in 3:14: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly (or "upward") call of God (τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ) in Christ Jesus (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ)." The syntax of this verse is somewhat difficult. The genitive τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ is perhaps exegetical, yielding the sense "the prize which consists of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus," in which case it might refer to God's call to enter the kingdom. However, the problem with identifying the call with the "prize" is that this would be a most unusual use of "call" for Paul, since he usually does not speak of God's call as that which is pursued by people. Most likely, κλήσεως is a subjective genitive and is itself a reference to the call which makes people a part of the believing community. In that case the prize is that which is "announced or promised by the call."³¹ Although Paul does not state what the prize is, if it is distinct from the call, more than likely we are to think of it as the culmination or consummation of salvation (cf. 3:20-21).³² The most important point for us to note is that Paul here uses "call" in such a way as to imply dependence on God (though Paul also portrays himself as one who pursues the prize).

IV. Continuing Dependence on God and Human Responsibility in Philippians

Philippians vividly demonstrates what we have already seen in Paul. Both dependence on God and human responsibility are integral parts of Christian existence.

For Paul, the ability to persevere comes from the power of God which works in the believer. Early in the letter Paul says confidently that ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον

³⁰ Westerholm, 115.

³¹ Silva, 202. Cf. also Hawthorne, Philippians, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983) 154-55.

³² Cf. Silva, 202.

ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (1:6). For Paul, the Philippians came to faith because God began a "good work" in them. The "good work" of 1:6 is probably a general term referring to the salvation of the Philippians, which, in Paul's view, is God's doing from start to finish. The Philippians began their life of faith because of the grace of God, continue in it because of the grace of God, and will complete it by that same grace. The impression is unavoidable that, for Paul, Christian existence is entirely contingent upon the grace of God. In vs. 6 at least, it "is not because of their splendid record that Paul is assured of the ultimate completion of the process, but because God does not leave his work half done."³³ Here, as in 2:13, the Christian life is portrayed as beginning and ending with God.

However, alongside statements such as this Paul can also highlight the importance of the believers' own efforts. In 1:5-7, Paul makes two references to the Philippians' efforts. In 1:5, he reveals that he thanks God for the Philippians "because of your sharing in the gospel (ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον) from the first day until now." The Philippians have continuously shared (or better, "participated")³⁴ with him in terms of their sympathy with him, their willingness to suffer with him (cf. 1:29), and their support of him (cf. 4:15-18). In 1:7 Paul praises the Philippians for their "sharing in God's grace" with him. Here the NRSV adds the possessive "God's grace," but it is not present in the Greek. Paul simply says that they are "fellow-sharers" τῆς χάριτος. χάρις is sometimes taken to refer here to divine grace as it is made manifest in salvation.³⁵ It seems more likely, however, that "fellow-sharers in my grace"³⁶ is a reference to the Philippians'

³³ Caird, 107.

³⁴ κοινωνία refers to a relationship of having things in common.

³⁵ So J. H. Michael, The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928) 14, who translates it as "the grace divine" and H.A.A. Kennedy, "Philippians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, W. R. Nicoll, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprinted 1980) 420.

³⁶ On taking the μου with χάρις see Lohmeyer, Der Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930) 25 and Silva, 53.

sharing in the χάρις which Paul received in order to carry out his apostleship.³⁷ Silva notes that Paul characteristically uses χάρις in reference to his apostolic ministry. A general reference ("sharers in divine grace") does not do justice to the parallel expression in v. 5 (ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν), which also has in view Paul's gospel ministry. Thus the "grace" to which Paul refers in this verse is given to Paul to enable him to serve God.

Divine enabling is the primary focus in 1:9-11. In 1:9, Paul prays that the Philippians' love might "overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight" so that in the eschatological day of Christ they might prove to be "pure and blameless" (1:10). Paul then adds a qualifying phrase, "having produced the harvest of righteousness (καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης) that comes through Jesus Christ (τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) for the glory and praise of God" (1:11). The "harvest of righteousness," that is, an ethical life,³⁸ is attributed to an agency outside of the Philippians themselves,³⁹ in this case, Christ. How exactly Christ enables the Philippians to live righteous lives, Paul does not say, but

³⁷ So Silva, 53; Lohmeyer, 26; G.B. Caird, Paul's Letters from Prison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) 108; J.F. Collange, L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Philippiens (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1973) 47. O'Brien, 70, takes it to mean that "God in his grace had prompted the Philippians to alleviate Paul in his imprisonment, so that they were not shamed or intimidated by the bonds of their apostolic founder." Beare, 52, takes it as a reference to the divine grace which enables Paul "in and through his imprisonment to defend and vindicate not himself alone but the gospel which he preaches." In a similar fashion, Hawthorne, 23, takes it to be "the special favor of God in the form of a spiritual gift or an ability given to individuals to accomplish certain specific tasks." Moffatt, Grace in the New Testament (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1931) 166, takes it as the grace that bears Christians through trouble, though this is less likely.

³⁸ Here καρπός clearly is ethical, but it is less clear if δικαιοσύνη is ethical or relational. Beare, 55, takes the view that righteousness is relational, but that it bears ethical fruits. Ziesler takes the view that it is a genitive of origin, since it is used that way elsewhere (cf. Prov 11:30; Amos 6:13; Jas 3:18). δικαιοσύνη is thus a reference to abstract righteousness and καρπός is its concrete manifestation (Ziesler, 151). It could also be exegetical, "the fruit that consists of right conduct" (Silva, 60-61). Silva also notes the parallel in 2 Cor 9:10, "the harvest of your righteousness (τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν)." Although the genitival construction is ambiguous, it seems that Paul is alluding to Hos 10:12 (LXX) which clearly refers to moral conduct. Whether the genitive is a genitive of origin or exegetical, it seems quite certain that an ethical interpretation of δικαιοσύνη is correct.

³⁹ The verb must be supplied, as in the NRSV's "comes."

the thought is loosely parallel to that of Gal 5:22 with its reference to the "fruit of the Spirit," that is, fruit which is produced by the Spirit.⁴⁰

Phil 2:13 is perhaps the strongest statement in the letter about divine enabling, but, like 1:6, it is juxtaposed with an exhortation that takes seriously human responsibility (2:12). These verses have been of key importance in various theological debates of the past and present,⁴¹ since they raise the question of the relation between divine enabling and human responsibility. In 2:12, Paul says to the Philippians μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε. The verb κατεργάζομαι here means to "bring about, produce, and create."⁴² It is in the present tense, highlighting that there ought to be continual effort on the part of the Philippians to work out their salvation. But what, exactly, is it that the Philippians are to "produce"?

The meaning of "salvation" in 2:12 has been the subject of some discussion. It has been suggested that it refers to the corporate health of the believing community in Philippi.⁴³ However, although σωτηρία is used corporately in 1:28, even there it is quite possible to see a reference to salvation in a theological sense as opposed to a more general meaning of "health" or "wholeness."⁴⁴ In fact, of the fourteen occurrences of the word in the undisputed letters,⁴⁵ not one requires the translation "health" or "wholeness." Most of

⁴⁰ Cf. also Eph 5:9: "for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true."

⁴¹ Collange observes that "La compréhension de ce verset a été trop influencée par la polémique catholico-protestante sur le synergisme et sur la grâce" (98).

⁴² BAGD, 421.

⁴³ So, e.g., Martin, 103.

⁴⁴ Martin, arguing for a corporate interpretation of 2:12-13, notes that σωτηρία can mean "wholeness" as well as "salvation" and that it finds corporate application in 1:28 (103). On this view, 2:12 is a statement concerning the health of the church. Salvation comes from God, but Christians are responsible to "work out" the corporate health of the body.

⁴⁵ Rom 1:16; 10:1, 10; 11:11; 13:11; 2 Cor 1:6; 6:2 (twice); 7:10; Phil 1:19, 28; 2:12; 1 Thess 5:8,9.

them demand the theological sense, that is, personal salvation.⁴⁶ Salvation is experienced, and will be experienced, by individuals who are part of a community, but it is unlikely that Paul means to emphasize here the corporate community. The fact that *κατεργάζεσθε* and *ἑαυτῶν* are plurals does not give a corporate sense to 2:12, but rather indicates that *all* the believers at Philippi are to heed Paul's word.⁴⁷

The reference to past obedience at the beginning of 2:12 is intended to encourage the Philippians to follow Paul's new directives in a spirit of obedience to God.⁴⁸ This, given the nature of the church as a community, must be done in relationship to other believers.⁴⁹ The idea that Paul is here speaking of a "working out" of one's salvation within a community fits in well with the context, since 2:1-18 is primarily concerned with community life.⁵⁰

Since *κατεργάζομαι* can mean "to bring about" or "produce," it would be difficult to find a stronger statement in Paul of human responsibility in Paul. It is "impossible to tone down the force with which Paul here points to [the believer's] conscious activity in sanctification."⁵¹ What, then, is the relationship of vs. 12 to vs. 13, where Paul says *θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ*

⁴⁶ Silva, 136. So also O'Brien, 278-79.

⁴⁷ O'Brien, 279, against Hawthorne, 98 (cf. also Collange, 97-98 and Michael, 100-02) who maintains that since both the verb and the reflexive pronoun are plural, Paul is thinking of corporate, not individual action. Cf. also S. Pedersen ("Mit Furcht und Zittern, zum Verständnis von Phil. 2,12," *Studia Theologica* 32 [1978]) 29. Deidun, 66, observes that if God works *τὸ θέλειν* within the community, "how else could he possibly do so than by intervening in the hearts of individuals?" (*New Covenant Morality in Paul* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981]).

⁴⁸ *μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου* (Silva, 141-42, Pedersen, 17-21, Hawthorne, 100).

⁴⁹ "Salvation" is a comprehensive term spanning past, present, and future. Note also that elsewhere in Paul, an eschatological orientation is used to encourage believers to live ethical lives in the present (cf. 1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:9-10).

⁵⁰ Against Hawthorne and others, the emphasis on corporate life in the context does not make a corporate interpretation of 2:12-13 more likely. The point of 2:12-13 is that there are implications of salvation that bear on the life of the community.

⁵¹ Silva, 138.

τῆς εὐδοκίας? First, we should note that the imperative in vs. 12 depends upon the indicative of vs. 13, as indicated by the γάρ.⁵² If vs. 12 is the strongest statement of human responsibility in Paul, it would also be difficult to find a stronger statement concerning God's work within the believer. In vs. 13, we see that Paul believes that God makes possible both the desire to do right and the desired behaviour itself. The imperative of vs. 12 is made possible by God working in the Philippians and is in fact implied by the very fact of their salvation. Indeed, it is another example of the Pauline "reflex" to immediately qualify statements that seem to attribute to, or require of, believers some achievement. Believers live lives pleasing to God because, literally, "the one who works the working and the willing in you is God."⁵³ Note also that the final ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας ("according to his good pleasure") also points to God's sovereignty.⁵⁴

In any interpretation of 2:12-13 one must be cautious not to emphasize one verse to the neglect of another. Paul is very explicit about both human responsibility and divine enabling. Deidun, it seems to me, explains well the relationship between 2:12 and 2:13. Vs. 12 confronts the believer with a task that is "exacting and decisive." The Christian must, Deidun says, "labour to effect his salvation." On the other hand, as Deidun maintains, "his labouring, on which his salvation depends, is in the last analysis pure

⁵² So, e.g., Deidun, 65 and Silva, 139.

⁵³ Cf. Silva, 139.

⁵⁴ Most commentators take this a reference to the fact that God acts in accord with his "good pleasure" (εὐδοκία can be translated "favour," good pleasure," or perhaps "wish, desire" [BAGD, 319]). Hawthorne takes exception to this view, noting that there is no modifier for the word and that εὐδοκία can be used of men of "good will." Moreover, since the context is a call to harmony, it is preferable in Hawthorne's view to see it as a reference to the good will to which Paul wishes the Philippians to aspire (101). However, Paul's stress on unity does not militate against the usual interpretation of ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας. ὑπὲρ, according to Louw and Nida, can be a "a marker of cause or reason, often with the implication of something which has been beneficial" as in Rom 15:9 and 1 Cor 10:30 (Louw and Nida, 781). Here, then, God's "good will" can very much be seen as the reason behind his working in the Philippians.

receiving, for it is *another*, God himself, who both creates and sustains his will and action, when he freely yields to God's activity."⁵⁵ Salvation is thus both "gift and task."⁵⁶

Certainly Paul intends his exhortation of vs. 12 to be taken seriously. He reminds the Philippians of their responsibility to "work out" their salvation. The implication is that they are not compelled to do so, and that they can resist the work of God within them. It is, admittedly, an argument from silence, but Paul does not say that God's will for humanity can be fulfilled with or without human cooperation.⁵⁷ For Paul, assurances of divine enabling, even assurances as seemingly absolute as Phil 2:13, which is obviously intended to encourage the Philippians, do not rule out some form of human participation.

There are still more references to human responsibility in close proximity to references to divine enabling in Philippians. Note 3:9-14, where, in 3:9, to which we referred above, Paul expresses complete dependency on God. Rather than be found having a right standing before God which comes from doing that which the law requires (see above), Paul says that he wants to have a righteousness "that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God..." and thus implies that he is completely dependent on God.

In 3:12, Paul remarks, "Not that I have already obtained (these things), or have already been made perfect (τετελείωμαι), but I continue my pursuit in the hope of also taking possession (of them), of that for which⁵⁸ I was taken hold of by Christ."

⁵⁵ Deidun, 68.

⁵⁶ Deidun, 68.

⁵⁷ Cf. J. L. Houlden, Paul's Letters from Prison (London: SCM, 1977) 86.

⁵⁸ Assigning ἐφ' ᾧ a telic sense. The alternative is "seeing that," assigning a causal sense to ἐφ' ᾧ. The choice between a causal or telic sense for ἐφ' ᾧ is difficult to make. The causal sense is apt, because of Paul's consciousness of the constant working of God's grace in the lives of believers. On the other hand, a telic sense accords well with Paul's statements elsewhere which indicate that Christ has chosen his church for the purpose of making it righteous (cf. also Phil 1:10-11). The problem with taking ἐφ' ᾧ causally is that there are practically no certain instances in Gk. literature where ἐφ' ᾧ is used as an equivalent of the causal διότι. Therefore, the telic sense is more likely here. Volf is of the opinion that regardless of how one translates ἐφ' ᾧ, the "main point of the clause would still be to show Christ's seizing of Paul as definitive for Paul's own attaining the goal"

Apparently there were those in Philippi that Paul felt needed reminding that Christian perfection was a state not attained in this life. Note that in the same sentence in which Paul makes reference to his own relentless pursuit,⁵⁹ he speaks of not having been made perfect (passive voice), presumably by God,⁶⁰ and speaks of attempting to "make the prize his own" (καταλάβω) because he has been "taken hold of by Christ." Here, as elsewhere, Paul juxtaposes human effort with the divine initiative with relative ease.

In 3:13-14, Paul again juxtaposes reliance on God with human responsibility. "But -- one thing (I do)."⁶¹ What that "one thing" is must be inferred from the following words. Paul asserts that he has not attained a state of perfection, but that he does pursue it relentlessly. He forgets the things of his previous life which he considered gain (cf. 3:4-9) and strains ahead. ἐπεκτείνω, which can be translated "forge eagerly ahead," has the sense of stretching out, straining toward something.⁶² Paul portrays himself as a runner who knows how distracting a backward glance can be and who knows what it means to "press on to the goal" (14a). Yet he also alludes to the divine initiative in salvation in his reference to the "upward call" (cf. the discussion of ἄνω κλήσεως above).

The pattern continues in vv. 15-16, but in relation to belief. Paul exhorts the mature⁶³ to "be of the same mind (τοῦτο φρονῶμεν)," putting the responsibility to think correctly

(Paul and Perseverance [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990] 256). This is not as obvious to me as it is to Volf. I think we can say that Paul was confident that he would attain the goal, but the question Volf asks of the passage, that is whether or not Paul thought he *could* fail to attain the goal, is simply not in focus.

⁵⁹ This is expressed in several ways in vv. 8 and 11, such as "gaining Christ" (v. 8) and "attaining to the resurrection of the dead" (v. 11).

⁶⁰ The reference seems to be to an eschatological perfection. Cf. H. Koester, who maintains that here the word "designates the possession of the qualities of salvation in their entirety, the arrival of heaven itself" ("The Purpose of the Polemic of a Pauline Fragment" (Philippians III) NTS 8 [1961-62] 322).

⁶¹ ἐν δέ: the verb must be supplied.

⁶² BAGD, 284.

⁶³ Gk. τέλειοι. It is assumed by Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953) 153; Beare, 130-31; Koester, 323; Martin, Philippians, 140 and A. T. Lincoln, Paradise Now and Not Yet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 93, that Paul is, in τέλειοι, using a catchword of his opponents in an

squarely on the shoulders of the Philippians. He wants everybody to hold the same view: that Christian perfection remains a goal in this life. Yet, in the next sentence, he says that "if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you (καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει)." Paul is apparently certain that his position represents the truth of the matter, and that the differences of opinion that do exist can be remedied by a revelatory act of God. ἀποκαλύπτω is the same word used by Paul in Gal 1:16 of the revelation of the gospel given to him by God. While on the one hand Paul seems to hold his readers responsible for right belief, on the other, he recognizes that humans are dependent upon a divine act in order to believe as they ought.⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, in 3:16-17, Paul again stresses human responsibility, urging his readers to "hold fast to what we have attained" (3:16). Not only that but Paul urges the Philippians to "become imitators of me" (3:17).

The final juxtaposition of human responsibility and divine enabling is found in Phil 4:11-13. Though Paul and the Philippians apparently had what was, on one level, a *societas* type of relationship,⁶⁵ he wants them to know he does not view their gift simply as one more commercial partnership transaction. In 4:11-13, Paul "transposes the transaction onto another level, into a larger vista, where it can now be seen in the context of Paul's own conduct and God's purposes in Christ."⁶⁶

ironical sense and includes himself among the perfect. It is quite possible that Paul is using it in a different sense than that of the cognate verb τετελείωμαι in v 12, and here means "spiritually mature." This removes the problem of Paul, after the denial of vs. 12, including himself among the τέλειοι in vs. 15 (O'Brien, 435). On the other hand, that Paul could without doubt include himself among the spiritually mature is surely indicated by his call for the Philippians to "join in imitating me" in vs. 17!

⁶⁴ The thought here seems to be similar to that of Eph 1:17, where the author prays that a spirit of wisdom and revelation (ἀποκαλύψεως) might be given to the congregation so that they might know more of the Christian hope and destiny.

⁶⁵ In a society or "association," the expenses incurred by one of the partners in his work on behalf of the partnership are to be reimbursed by the remaining partners. The association may have provided a model of what it meant to have a community founded in Christ. See on this J. P. Sampley, Pauline Partnership in Christ (Fortress, 1980).

⁶⁶ Sampley, 56.

In 4:11, Paul assures the Philippians that he is not complaining because of want or lack of anything. He has no reason to feel abandoned. On the contrary, he has learned to be content (αὐτάρκης) in whatever state he is in. Paul is not, however, referring to the "self-sufficiency" of the Stoics. Seneca said "the happy man is content with his present lot, no matter what it is, and is reconciled to his circumstances" (de Vita Beata, 6.2). If Paul has borrowed the term, he has transformed it into something rather different. The Stoic "self-sufficient" man, of whom Socrates is held up as prime exemplar, faces life and death with resources found within himself. While Paul seems to take responsibility for his self-sufficiency and contentment in all circumstances in 4:11-12, in 4:13 he again shows that for him human effort and divine enabling go hand in hand. Paul finds the secret of living not deep within himself but in his union with Christ (cf. 1:21). Unlike the Stoic, Paul is not αὐτάρκης through patient discipline and concentrated effort. Rather, in 4:13, he claims that "I can do all things (πάντα ἰσχύω) through him who strengthens me (ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με)." This statement must be taken in context. The πάντα is not a reference to literally everything to which Paul might conceivably set his mind, but neither is it to be restricted to Paul's apostolic tasks and responsibilities that he can fulfill only as he is dependent on God.⁶⁷ Here πάντα is probably a reference to the varied circumstances in which Paul finds himself in the service of God, since in vs. 12 he asserts that he has experienced "what it is to have little... and what it is to have plenty." ἐνδυναμόω means "to cause someone to have the ability to do or to experience something,"⁶⁸ but 4:13 does not specify the source of "strengthening" as Christ or God.⁶⁹ However, Paul is very much

⁶⁷ Martin, Philippians. 164.

⁶⁸ Louw and Nida, 676. Louw and Nida suggest as a possible translation, "I am able to face anything by the one who makes me able (to do it)."

⁶⁹ That Paul is referring to divine enabling is beyond question. The TR adds Χριστῷ at the end of the clause (ⲛ² D² (F G) Ψ ℞ syr), but the reading adopted by NA²⁶ is better attested (ⲛ* A B D* I 33. 629. 1739). "Christ" was probably added to clarify the subject of ἐνδυναμοῦντί.

aware that his ability to serve God in whatever circumstances he finds himself (cf. 4:12) comes from outside himself.

What, then, are we to make of this phenomenon in Paul? Why would Paul, despite a clear emphasis on human responsibility in the life of faith, continually speak of divine enabling? Why does Paul continually return to the believer's dependence on God's grace? The verses above reveal that "grace" is never far from Paul's mind. As noted above, 2:13 is another example of Paul's almost instinctive tendency to qualify statements about human achievements and responsibility with statements that at least imply, if not explicitly refer to, dependence on God. It would seem such an idea is always lurking just beneath the surface of Paul's consciousness. He cannot refer to human effort without immediately being led to refer, in some way, to dependence on divine resources. Clearly then, divine enabling, understood as God's grace, factors directly into Paul's account of the belief, ethics, and attitudes of the Christians, and, as such, it has fundamental importance in Paul's religious vision.

V. Conclusions

In Philippians, Paul demonstrates very clearly the importance of grace in his thought. Where Paul does deal with law observance he implicitly contrasts it with dependence on God. To "know Christ," to possess the righteousness that comes "from God," one must exercise faith. Observing the law alone will not suffice.

All through the letter, in contexts where the Jewish Torah is not in view, Paul stresses complete reliance on God. For Paul, the Christian becomes a member of the believing community and continues to be a member of the community because of God's working. It is impossible to deny that for Paul, grace is more than a merely polemical device used against opponents who have a differing view of its significance. This is not to say that Paul does not use the idea of dependence on God in polemical contexts. Obviously he

does. The point is that it is much more than a "tool" for Paul; it is fundamental to his theology and fundamental to the believer's life in community.

Yet, as we have also seen, Paul does not stress grace to the exclusion of human effort in the life of believer. Philippians is especially striking in this regard. Over and over, Paul juxtaposes dependency on God with human effort. It seems that for Paul, one cannot have the latter without the former. For Paul, grace, as it is expressed in divine enabling, and human efforts are not mutually exclusive. However, it does seem as though there is a hint that indeed Paul is either aware of at least *some* tension between the two, or, more likely, aware that some perceive the two as in tension, and thus we see his characteristic reflex. Grace and human responsibility are not equally represented in the life of the Christian. For Paul, the weight falls on the divine side. Paul seems to view grace as providing the foundation for human efforts to serve God. For him, being able to do what God demands, that is, being able to "work out" one's salvation, is ultimately a function of God's grace (cf. esp. Phil 2:13). That is why he exhibits the "reflex" which we see not only in Philippians but in other letters, such as 1 Corinthians, where he attributes his accomplishments as an apostle to grace, and 2 Corinthians, where, for example, he sees God's grace as responsible for the believers' generosity.

Chapter Seven -- Conclusions

To determine the importance and function of the concept of grace in the letters of Paul, we have examined texts which have to do with dependence on God at the time of entrance into the Christian community and texts which relate to dependence on God throughout the life of the believer. Despite the fact that we did not focus exclusively on the issue of the law in relation to the church, this study points us in the direction of answers to questions about Paul's views of the role of grace in relation to the Jewish Law.

I have endeavored to show throughout this study that, against the views of a number of Pauline scholars, Paul's view of grace is not only central to his ideas about justification and salvation, but permeates many important aspects of his religious vision including his ethics and ecclesiology.

I. The Function of Grace in Pauline Texts

A. The human dilemma

Throughout this thesis, I have addressed the question, to what is divine grace a response? The answer, broadly speaking, is the human dilemma which is variously described in the apostle's letters. In 1 Thessalonians, it is an existence characterized by ignorance of God, the fate of those who live in this "darkness" is the wrath of God.

Although the relationship of the church to the Torah is not a main theme of the Corinthian letters, we find Paul's claim that life under the law leads to death. The apostle perceives unbelievers' minds to be veiled, incapable of seeing the significance of the Christ event. They are unable to see the light and will answer for their trespasses. Death, the enemy of all, will be overcome only by Christ.

In Galatians, the role of the law becomes more important. Non-Christians, Paul says, both Jew and Gentile, are subject to τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, that is to say, to the law and pagan "gods." Thus both Jews and Gentiles are in bondage. Gentiles are portrayed as being in servitude to beings which in fact are not "gods" at all, and Jews who

are not Christians are seen as in bondage to that which, because of human weakness, cannot bring life. Paul is pessimistic about humanity's ability to do the works of the law.

Being "under the law" is seen by Paul as being under bondage since the law imprisons people in their sins. The law makes demands of people but cannot empower humanity to meet those demands. Those who seek to be justified by the law are, in fact, under a curse because they do not and cannot keep the law. Justification and the ability to live in a manner pleasing to God come only through faith in Christ.

When we turn to Romans we see that, as in Galatians, Paul does not take issue with the law only because it is observed in a spirit of legalism or because it promotes Jewish ethnocentricity (although it does so). Here we see Paul's belief that people do not do what the law requires and thus they do not receive the life promised for those who meet its demands. This belief is again directly attributable to Paul's pessimism about humanity's ability to do the law. All humanity sins, whether as a result of willful transgression or because of the power of sin. Humanity is unable to extricate itself from what, in Paul's view, is a desperate situation.

It is because of sin that "justification" does not come through the "works of the law." In Paul's thought, humanity has no hope of extricating itself from its desperate plight and thus faces the condemnation of God.

Philippians has comparatively little to say about the human dilemma, though what it does say is consistent with Paul's other letters. Those who are opponents of Christ will face certain judgment. Although the law is not the main subject of the letter, Paul's discussion of his pre-Christian background and practices reveals the same view offered in Romans and Galatians: observing the requirements of the law does not lead to life.

B. Grace as the answer to the human dilemma

There is no mention of the "Gentile problem" or "justification by faith" in 1 Thessalonians, but Paul makes a number of references to dependence on God as sustaining

the believer's life from start to finish. This perspective is not, significantly, occasioned by a concern over the place of the law in the life of the Christian. Paul says little here about the gratuitousness of the divine saving act; 1 Thessalonians lacks statements which either explicitly or implicitly underscore divine grace.

It comes as no surprise that in 1 and 2 Corinthians the answer to the problem of the human condition is again to be found only in Christ, the expression of God's grace. Also important to note is that in 1 and 2 Corinthians, the importance of grace, apart from the question of justification by "faith" or "the works of the law," is quite pronounced. Grace is not emphasized over against the law. Nevertheless, in these letters, it is clear that for Paul, the whole of Christian existence is characterized by dependence on God. The gratuitousness of salvation and continued existence in Christ is underscored in a manner not seen in 1 Thessalonians.

Specifically, dependence on God is implied in Paul's references to the call which comes from God. That Paul believes the call comes without regard to human qualifications, either good or bad, underscores the gratuitousness of the salvation to which people are called. People become members of the believing community because of God's work within them, Paul reminds the Corinthians, regardless of their social status.

The importance of grace is also evident in Paul's awareness that his apostleship was given to him despite his history as a persecutor of the church, a history which should have disqualified him as an apostle. Recall that although Paul claims that he has "worked harder" than the other apostles, he immediately amends this by saying that in fact "it was not I, but the grace of God that is in me" (1 Cor 15:10).

1 and 2 Corinthians give us the impression that this is central to Paul's self-understanding. He believes that what he is, he is by a creative act of God. Paul's profound state of dependence is also evident in 2 Cor 12:7-10, where, whatever the identity of Paul's "thorn in the flesh," we see that it made Paul intensely aware of his need to

depend on God's grace. Far from being a mere tool for Paul to drag out when he needs to defend his views on the role of the law, grace is for him foundational to being "in Christ."

Paul's reminders to the Corinthians that their own accomplishments have nothing to do with their own abilities should not be overlooked. Whatever "gifts" they have come from God, freely chosen and apportioned by him alone. God equips the Church (the "body" of Christ) to serve God. Even Christian generosity, for which Paul congratulates the Corinthian believers, he believes to be a gift of God (2 Cor 8, 9).

For Paul, it is axiomatic that continuing existence as a member of the Christian community is contingent upon the operation of grace. The Christian lives life in complete dependence on God. Since believers are but fragile earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7), they must rely completely on God's power. In his discussion of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-21), Paul makes what appears to be a conscious effort to show that salvation and life in the new age are made available entirely at God's initiative.

In letters in which a debate over the significance of the Torah plays a minor role, Paul stresses reliance on God's grace time and time again. This serves to underscore the fundamental importance of the concept for Paul. Grace is not a mere corollary to justification by faith. It is thus in these letters where we see the first glimpses of the fundamental nature of dependence on God.

Unlike its brief appearances in the Corinthian letters, the law plays a prominent role in Galatians along with "justification by faith," but it is important to note that the "justification" texts in Galatians serve to illustrate again Paul's belief that believers are dependent upon God for salvation. It is fair to say that, since justification is portrayed as a gift given independently of human efforts to obey the law, dependence on God underlies Paul's statements about justification by faith. Thus, these texts can be seen as informing the reader not only about Paul's views on the Gentile problem and how he uses a concept such as grace to defend a theological position, but also about how the concept of

justification is shaped by his beliefs about grace. Justification is thus not a minor thread in Paul's thought, since it itself is seen as an expression of God's grace. It is rather an important thread in the tapestry of a believer's life in Christ, a tapestry which exists only because of grace.

In Galatians, Paul claims it is God who has called the Galatians into a "state of grace," a "place" where they continually experience God's favour (Gal 1:6). It is because of grace that believers are no longer subject to "the elements of the world." The promise granted to Abraham (in a covenant initiated by God), which finds its fulfillment in the church, depends not upon performance of the works of the law, but rather on God's sovereign will.

As we would expect, Galatians insists that those who are freed from the law and the flesh are to live in a manner pleasing to God. But Paul makes it clear that the believer is able to live a moral life because God makes it possible to do so. God frees people to live selfless lives of service, exhibiting the "fruit of the Spirit." The ability to live such a life results from the eschatological gift of the Spirit.

For Paul, it is clear that without God's help, people would be unable to extricate themselves from their plight. In Galatians, we see that Paul believes that people would not have become believers were it not for God taking the initiative. 4:9 says it succinctly: if the Galatians had not first been known by God, they would never have known him. It is axiomatic that for Paul, people "get in" and "stay in" the community only because God calls them and empowers them.

In Romans, a letter which also devotes a good deal of space to the law, but which lacks the sharply polemical tone of Galatians, the alternative to life under the law and its condemnation is again "justification by faith," a justification made possible by the "gift" of Christ. For Paul, the alternative to the law is the way of grace, not because of any inherent

flaw with law itself, or because of "legalism." Grace is *the* alternative to the law because the law, with its requirement for human compliance, does not lead to the desired end: life.

As in Galatians, the principle that salvation cannot depend at all on humanity's actions underlies Paul's discussion of "justification by faith." Salvation is a gift, freely bestowed by God. If salvation is contingent on the ability of humanity to please God, in Paul's view, "grace would no longer be grace" (Rom 11:6). Thus, the "justification" texts in Romans readily fall into the larger pattern of dependence on God.

In Romans, as in earlier letters, dependence on God is implied in the vocabulary of "call." God's call comes to believers without regard to external considerations. The call of God is sovereign and without this call, people do not enter the Christian community.

As in 2 Cor 5, in Romans Paul portrays God as the one who initiates reconciliation. God, the offended party, makes the restoration of a broken relationship possible (Rom 5:1-11). Christ, Paul says, died for the "ungodly" (Rom 5:6). This Christ event was set in motion "while we were still sinners" (Rom 5:8). In Rom 5:21-21, Paul portrays Christ as the one who delivers humanity from its plight, but, most importantly for our study, it is significant that the apostle once again presents this deliverance as originating with God.

As we would expect, in Romans the life of faith is seen as one of continual dependence on God. For example, it is God who grants believers access to the sphere of grace in which they continually exist (5:1). Conversion ushers one into a secure existence. Paul's utter and complete confidence that God will maintain this state is evident in his claim that nothing can separate believers from the love of God (cf. 8:35-39).

Paul again indicates that in their service of God and each other, believers depend on God. These various abilities, by their very nature as "gifts," serve to highlight again the importance of grace in Paul's religious vision. One does not serve only by means of one's "natural" abilities, but because God makes it possible.

In Philippians, Paul demonstrates very clearly the importance grace plays for him. Where Paul does deal with law observance he implicitly sets reliance on God's grace over against it. Paul believes that to "know Christ," to possess the righteousness that comes "from God," one must exercise faith, and not a "righteousness of [his] own, based on law" (Phil 3:9).

All through Philippians, in contexts which do not relate directly to the role of the law in the church, Paul stresses complete reliance on God. For Paul, the Christian becomes a member of the believing community and continues to be a member of the community because of God's doing. In Philippians too, grace is more than a merely polemical device used against opponents who have a differing view of its significance. Dependence on God's grace is once again portrayed as being fundamental to the believer's existence. It is seen in the fact that God calls people into the community and gives them the ability to live as God intends. In all Paul's letters, grace spans the entire existence of the believer.

C. The relation between human responsibility and grace

When we come to the difficult subject of the relation between human responsibility and grace, we must begin by noting that in 1 Thessalonians, Paul does not give much indication that he perceives there to be a tension between dependence on God and human activity. Human activity in 1 Thessalonians is described as reception of the divine gift and subsequent living in a manner "worthy of God" as made possible by God.

As we noted, in 2 Corinthians Paul insists on the voluntary nature of giving, yet says that the very ability to give is a gift of God. This suggests that Paul does not believe that God overrides the human will. Although God makes certain behaviours possible, they still require human cooperation. It is significant that although Paul places a great deal of emphasis on dependence on God and particularly on God's power to see believers through to a favourable judgment, he implies that believers themselves are able to frustrate God's intent for Christians. Falling away from the faith seems, for Paul, to be a real possibility.

It would seem that the occasion for an exhortation determines whether Paul emphasizes God's power to preserve believers or the possibility that if believers fail to live in a manner pleasing to God, they will fail to finish the race. This observation notwithstanding, it is certain that Paul believes that one will remain a believer only through dependence on God.

Paul, of course, speaks not only of divine enabling and human responsibility, but also of reward. This, we noted, leads to the question, "How can grace receive pay?" and it must be admitted that Paul does not answer it explicitly. However, he was probably aware of this problem, since he constantly returns to the idea that all that one does depends on grace, especially in his "yet not I" claim. If Paul were asked to formulate an answer to how grace might receive pay, I have little doubt he would say that, ultimately, all, including the payment itself, is of grace.

In Galatians, Paul also assumes that God does not override the human will. In Galatians, as in the other letters we examined, though Paul attributes the good believers do to a divine impetus at work within them, he also assumes that believers can frustrate the work of the Spirit by, for example, returning to the deeds of the "flesh." Hence the need for exhortation, the continued stress on the importance of human responsibility, and the use of the idea of reward for a life well lived. There is, in Paul's thought, a relationship between the ongoing effort of the believer and the operation of grace. Paul is clear that it is the latter that makes the former possible. However, Christians, he implies, must always *decide* to let grace operate in their lives. In other words, all is of grace, but grace is not irresistible. Christians can choose to cooperate with God, and if they do so, they will be rewarded.

Grace in Galatians does not mean that one can live as one pleases: the ethical component of faith cannot be ignored. To "believe" means also that one will act correctly, that is, that one will exhibit the "fruit of the Spirit." God makes possible what is right, but Christians must choose to do it. That, it seems, underlies Paul's exhortations. Paul is very

much aware that the active agent in the Christian's life is God -- that is why he says in 2:20 that Christ lives in him. But Paul believes that Christians must allow Christ to live in them. As he puts it in 5:16, they must choose to "live by the Spirit." Recall that in Galatians, Paul argues against works demanded by the law as a means to securing life, since humanity in the "flesh" does not keep the law. Only with the eschatological gift of the Spirit can believers produce "fruit" pleasing to God.

As in the other letters we examined, in Romans the operation of grace, through which believers are called into the community and enabled to serve God, does not imply that grace itself is irresistible. Paul consistently portrays a picture in which human responsibility and divine enabling apparently go hand in hand, where the latter does not override the former. Paul expects that believers, within this dialectic, will live lives pleasing to God, and in fact he exhorts them to do so, a fact which raises the question of the relationship between the "indicative" and the "imperative" with respect to grace.

This relationship, I concluded in Romans, can be explained by the observation that Paul's imperatives are grounded in the fact that God makes obedience possible. It is true that believers are continually required to respond to God's grace, but for Paul, the accent falls on the divine side. "Grace" makes the ethical life of the believer possible. Without existence in Christ and the gift of the Spirit, there would be no ethical life. Humanity is subject to sin. But humanity "under grace" is freed from the power of sin, and to be "under grace" is to be empowered by the Spirit to live a moral life.

This observation perhaps gives us a clue to understanding the relation of grace and the thought that Christians will be rewarded for doing well. First, we should remember that the references to judgment have an undoubted paraenetic purpose: they are intended to encourage right behaviour in believers. Second, the fundamental place of grace in the Pauline theological matrix should not be ignored. That believers will be judged favourably is a function of grace, since Paul believes that it makes possible right behaviour. Reward

for doing right, therefore, ultimately finds its source in God. This does not, however, mitigate human responsibility, since Paul still believes that people must respond to God's offer of salvation and gift of the Spirit.

In Philippians, Paul also does not stress grace to the exclusion of human responsibility. Philippians is especially striking in this regard, since Paul very often juxtaposes dependency on God with human effort. Paul does not seem to believe this to be an insurmountable paradox, although it does seem that in Philippians there are hints that Paul is aware of the paradox. Thus we see his tendency, when referring to human accomplishment or effort, to refer immediately to God's working within the believer. In Philippians, as elsewhere, grace and human responsibility are not counterbalanced, since for Paul, the balance tips towards the divine. Paul views grace as providing the foundation for human efforts to serve God. For him, being able to live up to the "imperative" is ultimately indicative of the fact of God's grace (cf. esp. Phil 2:13).

D. Summary

Grace is a crucial element in Paul's religious vision. Paul believes it to be a fundamental component of the matrix of the believer's life, past, present and future. To fail to recognize this is to fail to recognize how the "justification texts" fall into a pattern scattered widely throughout the Pauline corpus.¹ We see at work in these texts something that is not merely a concept of convenience. Grace is, rather, an idea so fundamental that it shapes the polemical texts. In other words, Paul's understanding of grace causes him to reject "works" of any kind as preconditions for the exercise of grace, in this case manifested as "justification." Grace is not simply a useful part of his arsenal in the battle

¹ Hübner's discussion of works in Paul does not bring into sharp enough relief the fundamental importance of grace in Paul since grace, as that which makes possible salvation and all good works, permeates the Pauline letters. Grace and works are not so much opposing poles -- it is works outside of Christ which do not please God. Works, which God makes possible, are pleasing to God.

against what he perceives to be a wrong-headed reliance on "works of the law." Paul rules out dependence on "works of the law," but does not do so because he thinks that observance of the law leads to "legalism," but, rather, because people do not, despite good intentions, do the law.

Thus, Paul does not believe that salvation comes through the law, but not only because, as Sanders says, the "salvation of the Gentiles is essential to Paul's preaching; and with it falls the law; for, as Paul says simply, Gentiles cannot live by the law (Gal. 2.14)."² Sanders and Räisänen (who also insists that Paul moves from solution to plight) do not take adequate account of Paul's pessimism about all humanity's ability to keep the law.³ This, as well as his beliefs about the efficacy of Christ's self-giving, is why the apostle is loathe to allow salvation to be contingent on this ability. Sanders fails to allow sufficiently for this element of Paul's thought: Paul insists on the primacy of grace in part because of his conviction that salvation cannot rest on anything people do.⁴ Paul would naturally have a "problem" with the law because the law does not give people the ability to do what it demands. But Paul does not drive a wedge between works and grace, as Räisänen says:⁵ in fact, Paul is acutely aware that it is the latter that makes the former possible. Thus, against Räisänen, anthropological concerns do colour what Paul says about the law and grace.

Because of humanity's inability to do the law, salvation cannot be contingent on any human activity; it is a gift. God calls people to be members of the believing community regardless of what people "do" and without regard for their social standing or religious

² E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) 496.

³ Dunn also only takes part of the picture into account. Paul does indeed rule out ethnocentrism, but his critique of the law and works of the law goes beyond this, as we have seen in preceding chapters.

⁴ Räisänen also fails to account for this emphasis in Paul.

⁵ Räisänen, "Der Bruch des Paulus mit Israels Bund," The Law in the Bible and Its Environment, Timo Veijola, ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 170.

commitments. Justification is entirely a work of God. Faith, which implies obedience, is the believer's continuing response – itself made possible by God – to God's offer of salvation and to divine resources which make possible compliance with the ethical demands of the gospel.

If grace were merely a polemical tool, it is unlikely that we would see so repeatedly what I have called the Pauline "reflex" -- his instinctive qualification of statements about human accomplishments by insisting that God is the effective agent behind what is done. This reflex is a direct result of the elevated place grace finds in Paul's religious vision.

II. Grace and Human Responsibility

Above we noted that the idea of complete dependence on God does not rule out the idea of human responsibility. Interpreters have long felt the tension between Paul's references to grace and his insistence on human responsibility and also on reward for pleasing God.

To the question, "Does Paul perceive a tension between grace and human responsibility?" the answer is a qualified "yes." It must be a qualified "yes" because he does not betray the same level of discomfort at the paradox as do some of his interpreters. He is aware of it, as we see from his claims that ultimately anything he accomplishes is God's doing. Paul's "yet not I" reveals that although he thinks that people are responsible for living life in a manner pleasing to God, he is aware that what they do, they do because God makes it possible.

We have throughout the discussion ruled out that for Paul, believers are like leaves swept along in the irresistible wind of the Spirit. He does not assume that people must *necessarily* follow the leading of the Spirit. The exhortations in his letters themselves evidence his awareness that people who possess the Spirit can be anything but led by the Spirit. The very existence of moral instruction and the fact that Christians can fall away imply that the individual has a role to play. Since he assumes that people are responsible

moral agents, he holds them responsible for doing what is right, which they cannot do if they do not submit to the Spirit.

Despite his overwhelming insistence that the believer depends on God's grace, Paul is not a theological fatalist who believes that human actions and experiences are determined by a divine will that effectively rules out human responsibility. Paul does not believe that grace is irresistible and he seems to believe, at least in the case of individuals, that God will not override the human will.⁶

Paul does not, unfortunately, offer an unambiguous explanation of his views on this subject, which he would no doubt think is, as Schnackenburg puts it, an "ultimately impenetrable mystery of co-operation between God and man...."⁷ However, despite Paul's lack of an explanation, I think it worth underscoring that for Paul the accent falls on the divine side. His tendency to qualify statements of human achievement with a reminder that it is really God's grace that has been the active force is an example of this. That this is so is evident from the observation that Paul obviously intends his paraenetic texts to be taken seriously and yet demonstrates that he believes that human achievements and effort find their ultimate origin in the divine realm. People can frustrate the work of the Spirit, but when they allow themselves to be led "by the Spirit," God's purposes will be accomplished.

One should remember that where Paul presents as alternatives performance of works (or the "works of the law") and grace, he does not find fault with attempting to do the works of the law, *per se*. His concern, as we have noted, has much to do with his belief that people do not adequately do the works of the law. Paul never quantifies this, saying

⁶ I think it necessary to make a distinction between God's purposes for individuals and God's purposes in history, though I recognize that "history" is made by the actions of individuals, or groups of individuals.

⁷ R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, tr. J. Holland-Smith and W. O'Hara (New York: Seabury Press, 1979) 272.

that if a person breaks one commandment he is guilty of all. He does, however, believe that people do not adequately do what the law asks of them and thus the law does not bring life.⁸

When, as he does in Romans, Paul extends his argument to include works in general he does not disparage works because they lead to pride, or because they can be done in a spirit of "legalism"; it is because, for Paul, salvation cannot depend on "fleshly" performance of divine requirements. Salvation cannot depend on works, or "grace would no longer be grace" (Rom 11:6).

This brings us back to the problem that if even the very ability to live and persevere are said to come from God, how can Paul say that life in such grace receives a reward? There have been several unsatisfactory answers to this question.

First, since Paul so clearly does speak in various contexts of judgment on the basis of works, be it for reward or regarding one's ultimate destiny, judgment by works should not be rejected as a remnant of Paul's Jewish background which Paul has carelessly failed to harmonize with his Christian viewpoint.⁹ Some, apparently trying to avoid any hint of synergism in Paul's theology, argue that for Paul works function as evidence of salvation.¹⁰ Whether this is a legitimate extension of what Paul says could be debated, but it is worth noting that Paul himself does not use this language.

Sanders does not believe that there is an incompatibility between grace and works in Paul. He believes that in this Paul is typically Jewish. As noted above, Sanders errs in his underestimation of the significance of grace in Paul and in a failure to appreciate the full

⁸ Certainly this does not answer all the questions we might ask of Paul. He, unlike the author of Hebrews, does not explicitly address the issue of the sufficiency of the sacrificial system of the Hebrew Bible.

⁹ O. Pfleiderer, Paulinism: A Contribution to the History of Primitive Theology, vol. 1, tr. E. Peters (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877) 270-71.

¹⁰ Cf. Gundry, "Grace," 11; Laato, 200 and E. Jüngel, Paulus und Jesus (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1967) 66-70.

extent of Paul's pessimism about "flesh" and its abilities to please God. We must conclude that Paul believes that grace plays a more fundamental role in the age inaugurated by Christ than it did in the previous age. Grace was not unknown in Judaism. Sanders has shown that decisively. But to argue that "grace" and "works" have the same role in Judaism and in Paul would not be accurate. Westerholm is correct that Paul, in light of beliefs about the death of Christ for humanity's sins, had an overriding reason to make grace all-important and to see humanity's endeavours to keep the demands of the law as ineffectual. Such was not quite the case in Judaism, where human capacities were viewed more positively than in Paul. God's grace is far from ignored in Judaism, but neither is it thought that human efforts are to no avail. Thus, generally speaking, Judaism does not "share Paul's perception of the need for *exclusive* reliance on God's grace."¹¹ That Paul does believe grace to be of such fundamental importance has been borne out by this study.

Of course, there is no denying that for Paul, eternal life or destruction is in some sense dependent on what one does. Nevertheless, with Barclay, we agreed that in a context such as Galatians, Paul saw the divine indicative in "peculiarly dynamic terms -- it was not simply a matter of what God *had* done (in election, etc.) but what he *continued to do* in and for the believer."¹² In Galatians, Paul expresses this by reference to the Spirit, the means by which God's power and presence are mediated to believers. By describing submission to the Spirit through the metaphor of walking in or by the Spirit, Paul manages to convey a sense of constant divine power while simultaneously maintaining the force of his moral imperatives.¹³ This idea is evident in every letter we have examined, though the terminology will differ. But in all, there is the idea that believers must submit to God, and that God will make it possible, through the indwelling Spirit, to live the life he demands of

¹¹ Westerholm, Israel's Law, 148.

¹² Barclay, 227.

¹³ Cf. Barclay, 227.

them. There is a moral dimension to faith, but faith itself and the ability to live up to the ethical demands of faith are themselves gifts.

We must admit that Paul's terminology is not consistent. He can refer to his "work" or that of other believers,¹⁴ instead of referring to God's "work" within and through believers. Nevertheless, we repeatedly see that the good works that God requires of believers, he makes possible. This, it seems, is Paul's answer to the problem. Paul does have a view of reward for service -- but the idea of being rewarded for doing good is tempered by the idea that what works believers do, they do because of the inner working and empowering of God. In other words, the demand for Christian "works" is predicated on Paul's experience of grace. This is the theological category which so completely colours Paul's religious vision. Grace, for Paul, is the determinant of the believer's entire existence in Christ. Without the various manifestations of grace in the Christ event, the gift of the Spirit, and in judgment, humanity would be without hope. It is only from those who are God's "new creation" that appropriate works -- not the "works of the law" -- are possible. It is as though, for Paul, "works" are only acceptable if they are brought about by divine means. Thus, for the apostle, the defining characteristic of life in Christ is dependence on God.

¹⁴ Cf. Rom 15:17; 1 Cor 3:13-15; 15:58; 16:9-10; 2 Cor 1:24; 10:16; Gal 6:4; Phil 2:30.

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