THE DISPOSSESSED INHERIT THE WORLD:
A STUDY OF INCLUSIVENESS IN THE ADOPTION AND INHERITANCE
METAPHORS
OF GALATIANS 3:23–4:7 AND ROMANS 8:14–25

by

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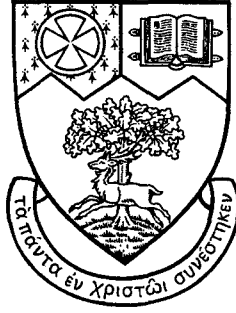
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ABSTRACT

The Dispossessed Inherit the World:
A Study of Inclusiveness in the Adoption
and Inheritance Metaphors of
Galatians 3:23–4:7 and Romans 8:14–25

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Paul, the author of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25, demonstrates in these two passages a new thing for *all* believers in Christ—a clear movement from slavery to adoption as sons to the status of heirs. This movement occurs through the process of adoption into God's family and is characterized by inclusiveness regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or gender. This study will explore the promise that the marginalized can participate in a full, new creation inheritance. According to the promise of Rom 4:13, the dispossessed will "inherit the world." This concept of the new creation so clearly seen in Rom 8—expressed also as inheriting the world in Rom 4:13—is critical for correctly interpreting Gal 3:28, framed as it is in a discussion of inheritance and adoption. For this reason, it is of great benefit to study Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25 together.

Dedicated to...

My family
Brian, Rachel, and Andrew
for their loving support,
good humour and grace,
without which I could not have
completed this thesis.

My "thesis buddies,"
Leslie and Janet,
for their much appreciated help
and prayers, often into the "wee hours."

And to all those who have been denied a voice to claim
their full—present and future—inheritance
as adopted children of God.... for them I have written this.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

1.a   Introduction

It is a common theme in biblical narrative and prophetic literature that God is

aligned with those whom Walter Brueggemann calls the *"dispossessed,* that is, those

denied land, denied power, [and] denied place or voice in history."[1] The dispossessed

can also be defined as those who do not receive an inheritance, or who do not receive an

inheritance unless someone else acts on their behalf. Thus, in an ironic twist, God

ensures that it is the dispossessed who become the heirs, the "meek [who]... inherit the

earth" (Matt 5:5, NRSV).[2]

In Paul's epistles to the Galatians and Romans, the themes of adoption and

inheritance are prominent, particularly in Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25. In Rom 4:13,

the true descendents of Abraham are promised that they "would inherit the world." This

denotes an inheritance that is substantial—even cosmic—in its proportions. It is an

inheritance that is closely tied to the concept of "new creation" (Gal 6:15), which is

central to Paul's thinking.

Paul also takes up the idea of including the dispossessed or outsiders in the

inheritance through adoption. This is emphasized in several ways but most notably in

the ground-breaking statement that "[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer

slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"

(Gal 3:28). Those who are in Christ are then immediately declared to be "heirs

according to the promise" in Gal 3:29. These two verses are framed by an in-depth

discussion of adoption and inheritance which is closely paralleled in Rom 8:14–25.

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[1] Brueggemann, *The Land,* 191.
[2] Unless otherwise stated, all biblical references will be from the NRSV.

In both Romans and Galatians, Paul deals with adoption and inheritance in terms of how it relates to the inclusion of Gentiles. His application of these same principles to slaves and women is central to this thesis. The inclusiveness of male and female as well as slave and free is therefore evident in Paul's discussion of inheritance. There are hints of this already in the OT but it does not come to full realization until life in Christ, as written about by Paul in his epistle to the Galatians (3:26–29). This inclusiveness, while not as explicit in the Romans text, is implicit there as well. The particular focus of this study will be gender inclusiveness.

Slavery is a common metaphor in both of the passages we will examine, and is central to Paul's argument about adoption and inheritance. In addition to the slave/free pair in Gal 3:28, both of the texts contain a metaphorical chain of "slave to son to heir."[3] This progression is facilitated by the process of adoption into God's family.

The good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ was Paul's ultimate focus in all he did and wrote.[4] This investigation will therefore show how it is good news that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, are *all* heirs and have the status of sons who have come of age and that we are *all* adopted into God's own family and therefore have God as our very inheritance. This is tremendously significant.

In light of all this, I propose the following thesis: Paul, the author of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25, demonstrates in these two passages a new thing for *all* believers in Christ—a clear movement from slavery, to adoption as sons, to the status of heirs.

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[3] Gal 4:7; Rom 8:15-17. See Sampley, "Romans and Galatians," 317; and Jones, "Exegesis of Galatians," 480.

[4] It is "a central feature of the apostle's theological vocabulary" (Luter, "Gospel," 369). Robert Banks says the gospel is a major theme for Paul because it "is the fundamental reality that everything, his own life included, revolves around" (*Paul's Idea of Community*, 2).

This movement occurs through the process of adoption into God's family and is characterized by inclusiveness regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or gender.

This chapter will present a description of the methodologies to be used in arguing this thesis followed by an overview of its chapters.

1.b   Methodology

Willard Swartley suggests several important principles that have shaped my view of biblical interpretation. These can helpfully be summarized as *"listening* carefully from *within* the text… *learning* helpfully from *behind* the text [and]… *living* freely from *in front of* the text."[5] Thus, proper and thorough exegesis, criticism, understanding of context, and application can help us be faithful to the message of the biblical text. Swartley also warns that "hanging major positions on a particular—possibly even questionable—meaning of a word, or on one or two texts, should be avoided."[6] This is relevant for an investigation of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25. It is particularly pertinent to Gal 3:28, which, as we shall see, has sometimes been misconstrued specifically in order to endorse a position of gender hierarchy.

In describing what happens in encountering Scripture, Swartley compares the mind-spirit connection of the student with the Word-Spirit connection in which "the word becomes Word through the Spirit" thus dynamically bringing about an opportunity for the student to have a perceptive and intimate bond with God's Word. He goes on to explain why this is vital for biblical interpretation:

> The significance of this understanding for the hermeneutical task is that every method provides only the structure for the study of the Bible. In the context of this framework, an encounter occurs. In the co-creative moment, text and interpreter experience life by the power of the divine

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[5] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath,* 224–25.
[6] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath,* 230.

Spirit. Without this experience, interpretation falls short of its ultimate potential and purpose.[7]

I have certainly found this to be true in studying the biblical texts central to my thesis. This encounter with Word and Spirit has brought depth of meaning to this experience. It is therefore behind the methodology selected for this study.

The approaches to methodology to be used are as follows: feminist criticism; metaphor as persuasion; biblical theology; and a social-historical investigation.

1.b.*i*   Feminist Critical Biblical Interpretation

Feminist criticism will be the primary method used in this study. It will inform all the other methods used. This is because I am a feminist and I am a feminist because of my "belief in a God who is at home in women's realities, who participates in women's experience and who is committed to the vitality and wholeness of all women and men."[8] Along with this, I do not see a feminist critical approach as incompatible with my view of the Bible which is the Word of God to us.[9] I would also say that I am the kind of feminist who uses, in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's words, an "empathic reading" of Paul that seeks to preserve his "liberating voice."[10] This will influence the

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[7] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 224.

[8] Ringe, "An Approach," 157.

[9] Kittredge, "Scriptural Criticism," 260. Concerning this, the question arises as to whether one can have a hermeneutic of suspicion as part of a feminist critical approach and still remain committed to the concept of the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Lynn Cohick considers an "extreme hermeneutics of suspicion, which understands all texts written by men (and most were) to be irredeemably androcentric, patriarchal and misogynistic" to be problematic because it, ironically, contributes to the invisibility of women within the text (*Women in the World*, 22). Perhaps the key words here are "extreme" and "irredeemably." F. Scott Spencer, on the other hand, describes "a doubly faithful stance," one that is at the same time "faithful to God's revelatory word *and* faithful to feminism's critical (including suspicious) view that honestly confronts kyriarchal language and ethos" ("Feminist Criticism," 306, emphasis original).

[10] Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 165. It should be noted that Schüssler Fiorenza herself does not subscribe to such an "empathic reading" of Paul but rather to a "feminist deconstructive rereading." I should also add that it is often important to push a bit further than a purely empathic reading in order to be aware of the patriarchal underpinnings of Paul's context.

interpretive process in that I will look beyond the patriarchal underpinnings of Paul's culture to find those radical and inclusive elements that are beneath the surface.

According to Phyllis Trible, feminism is not "a narrow focus upon women, but rather a critique of culture in light of misogyny."[11] It therefore involves having an awareness of patriarchy, which is "a social-cultural system in which a few men have power over other men, women, children, slaves and colonized people."[12] It is important to emphasize that, in the Bible, God is not seen as ordaining patriarchy. It is rather an underlying system of a fallen world and the cultural context in which the Bible was written. Trible elsewhere suggests we need to be alert to what she calls the "depatriarchalizing principle" of Scripture, which is not something that we, ourselves, do to the biblical text. Rather, there is *already* a depatriarchalizing "hermeneutic operating within Scripture itself. We expose it; we do not impose it."[13]

While feminist critique is not narrowly concerned only with women in the Bible, it does seek to promote their interests and to reveal how the Bible has historically been mishandled with respect to women.[14] Related to this, a feminist critical approach takes care to find those who are invisible and hidden and to hear voices that are silent within the biblical text and then to make them visible and heard.[15]

There is a pronounced thread, weaving throughout the Bible, concerned with

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[11] Trible, *God and the Rhetoric*, 7.
[12] Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 29.
[13] Trible, "Depatriarchalizing," 48.
[14] Spencer, "Feminist Criticism," 289.
[15] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 5. Cohick emphasizes, "A careful reading that attends to rhetoric and polemic can isolate those points at which real historical evidence glimmers through the haze" (*Women in the World*, 22).

bringing hope and justice to the "marginalized and silenced,"[16] to those who have been

oppressed.[17] For the purposes of this study, a major priority will be to seek those who

are invisible and silent, marginalized and oppressed—particularly women—in first-

century society, as well as in both the Old and New Testaments, and in the issues

brought out in Paul's Galatian and Roman epistles. We will see how God, in the Bible,

gives them a voice and a presence. In order to witness how this happens, we will need to

ask the right questions of the biblical text and its socio-historical context. These are

questions that feminist critique provides to us.[18]

1.b.*ii*   Metaphor as Persuasion

In this methodology, we will examine how Paul persuades his readers.[19] One of

the principal ways he does this is through the use of metaphor. Since the use of various

metaphors, particularly those related to the family,[20] is central to Paul's argument in

both Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25, metaphors will be the primary focus of this

methodological approach here.

Francis Lyall provides a helpful understanding of the purpose of metaphors:

"[T]he function of metaphors and analogies both in theology and in biblical writings is

to enlarge understanding by depicting something unknown in terms of something

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[16] Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 7. Schüssler Fiorenza uses this term to refer to those who have been marginalized in the academic and religious worlds, but it can just as well also refer to the oppressed in the Bible.

[17] Swartley observes the following: "Biblical interpreters must learn from the poor, the slave, the disenfranchised, the persecuted, and the oppressed. The eyes of these people have gifts of insight which bring the biblical message into clear focus" (Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 230).

[18] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 27.

[19] This type of examination is often described as rhetorical criticism (Watson, "Rhetoric, Rhetorical Criticism," 1042). In level one rhetorical analysis, rhetoric is seen as "the mere act of persuasion" (Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 17).

[20] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 36.

known."[21] For Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Paul uses metaphors to persuade his readers to consider things in a new way so that they will change their minds about something.[22] As such, they are part of Paul's rhetoric which attempts "to reformulate reality and to provoke new understanding."[23]

It will be important, when examining Paul's metaphors, to not fall into the trap of confusing the metaphor with "the reality or truth to which it points." The risk with this is misunderstanding of Paul's intended message.[24]

The following are the main metaphors that we will be considering from the Galatians and Romans texts: adoption; inheritance; slavery;[25] motherhood (maternal imagery); and paternal imagery, particularly the Fatherhood of God. The two chief metaphors we will examine are adoption and inheritance. Robert Atkins classifies adoption as a "metaphor of inclusion."[26] We will therefore witness how Paul uses this metaphor to persuade his readers of the importance of inclusivity to the gospel.

1.b.*iii* Biblical Theology

A major component of this study will be to carry out a biblical theology of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament concerning the principal concepts we will be investigating: adoption, inheritance, family, gender, and slavery. In doing so, we will see the importance of developing an "acquaintance with the unfolding drama of the

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[21] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 183.
[22] Gaventa, "Our Mother St. Paul," 93.
[23] Black, "Rhetorical Criticism,"183; cf. Porter and Stamps, "Introduction," 17.
[24] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 185.
[25] The slavery metaphor is one of Paul's principal metaphors in these two texts (Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 2).
[26] Atkins, *Egalitarian Community*, 182.

Bible, its major themes, and how the various themes are related and integrated into a whole."[27]

According to Phyllis Bird, one definition of biblical theology includes "the theological ideas contained within the biblical texts, as historical affirmations of faith, described without normative claims (that is, a description of what the biblical writers believed)."[28] However, this can be taken further to highlight a "theocentric (God-centred) reading" of Scripture.[29] A feminist critical approach to biblical theology will help us envisage a theology where patriarchy is undermined and subverted.[30] We will see that the undermining of patriarchy is a common theme as we explore the OT and NT background as well as the Pauline texts which are our main focus. We will also begin to see the seeds of inclusivity already in the Hebrew Scriptures.

1.b.*iv*   A Social-Historic Investigation

In order to better understand where Paul is coming from, it will be necessary to explore the first-century Greco-Roman culture. In this regard, historical criticism and social-science perspectives will be helpful. The first will help us to achieve an "historical awareness" of Paul's time and how this influenced his thinking.[31] In the second, the discipline of anthropology (social or cultural) will help us see that the biblical text "is a product, not just of historical conditioning, but of social and cultural conditioning as well."[32] Once again, the themes of adoption, inheritance, family, gender and slavery will be examined using this approach.

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[27] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 241–42.
[28] Bird, "Feminist Interpretation," 218.
[29] Bird, "Feminist Interpretation," 219.
[30] Bird, "Feminist Interpretation," 223.
[31] Barton, "Historical Criticism," 35.
[32] Barton, "Historical Criticism," 40–41.

1.c   Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 will include a biblical theology of the OT that focuses especially on inheritance and the potential it has for inclusivity. In Chapter 3, we will carry out a socio-historical examination of the themes relevant to our study. Chapter 4 will articulate a biblical theology of the NT in terms of slavery, inheritance and inclusivity. Chapter 5 will explore the concept of adoption in the NT. In Chapter 6, we will carefully consider the two Pauline passages, and particularly Gal 3:28, in terms of inclusivity. The concluding chapter will reflect on ways in which we can apply what we have learned.

Concerning the trajectories she finds in Paul's writings, Sandra Hack Polaski states the following:

> I look not so much to see where they (and their author and first recipients) *stand*. I look to see where the texts *point*! Following along that line from their original first-century setting to our own day, I would argue, is the way to deal faithfully as well as ethically, with the ancient texts we hold as scripture.[33]

With this goal in mind, we will be able to look for evidence in Scripture that the dispossessed are meant to inherit, and that this inheritance is, *indeed*, the world. We will then need to think carefully about what this means for us in our time.

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[33] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 11.

Chapter 2: Inheritance, Adoption and Slavery in the Hebrew Scriptures and Second Temple Literature

In examining both Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25 it becomes clear that the themes of inheritance, adoption and slavery are dominant. It will therefore be helpful to examine these in both the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature. This chapter will provide an examination of the God-centred nature of inheritance as well as looking at the inheritance of women, aliens and slaves. Since these three groups align with the pairs in Gal 3:28, this will help provide a background for that chapter. We will also investigate the broader subject of slavery in the OT as well as considering the extent—if any—to which adoption plays a role in the Hebrew Scriptures. Throughout the chapter, we will see a common thread running, of God's actions on behalf of the marginalized. This will be pertinent to our consideration of inclusiveness within the two Pauline passages in view.

2.a   Old Testament Inheritance

This investigation of biblical inheritance will look at the general principles of inheritance in the Old Testament, particularly the God-centred nature of this inheritance. Additionally, it will focus not so much on those who inherit but on those who traditionally are not included, or are believed not to be included, in the inheritance for one reason or another. These include women, slaves, and aliens (or gentiles). Walter Brueggemann, in his book *The Land*, discusses the centrality of such groups to the biblical story:

> It is striking that an important word for their commonality is
> *dispossessed*, that is, those denied land, denied power, denied place or
> voice in history. The essential restlessness of our world is the voice of the
> dispossessed demanding a share of the land. And that restlessness is a
> precise echo of the biblical voice of the poor (cf. Ex. 2:23–25, 1 Kgs.

12:4). The indignant voice of the prophets announces Yahweh's alliance with the poor against the landed. In our time the voices of the dispossessed seem only threatening and boisterous, but biblical faith is the reminder to us that those boisterous voices may well be the voice of God himself allied always with the dispossessed against the landed.[1]

The dispossessed inherit. This will be the central theme of this examination of OT inheritance as well as the thesis as a whole. And the most important characteristic of this inheritance is that it comes, graciously and plentifully, from God.

2.b How Inheritance Works and Defining the Terms

There are two main categories of inheritance terms in the Hebrew Scriptures. The first includes those words with the root נחל. The usage of terms with this root "through the whole span of Israel's history... both in its substantival and verbal forms conveyed the idea of inheritance, the passing of property from one generation to another."[2] Arthur Mason Brown notes that it referred "almost exclusively [to] landed property" and that because this land inheritance "was determined by divine order, it remained forever a continuous possession of the family to whom it was originally allotted."[3] For the purposes of this thesis, the designation of "family" that is the focus of this permanent possession will refer to the kinship group or מִשְׁפָּחָה[4] rather than the individual family unit (בֵּית־אָב – 'father's house'). This perspective sees inheritance as part of "a corporate land-tenure system as against private ownership" by the individual

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[1] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 191–92. The groups that Brueggemann referenced in this context when he wrote the book in 1977 were: "the young, the black, the poor, and women" (192).

[2] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 23.

[3] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," xxvi.

[4] Christopher Wright considers "kin group" to be a more "semantically appropriate" translation than "clan" for the Hebrew word מִשְׁפָּחָה (*God's People in God's Land*, 48-49).

families.[5] However, these family units had access to the land and were able to pass on

the rights to its usage and productivity ('usufruct') through inheritance. Another aspect

of the נחל terms, then, is as "a right of usufruct which brought with it the concomitant

duties involved in being members of [God's] people."[6] This last point about being the

people of God is vital in understanding נחל since it is predominantly "a theologically

oriented term."[7]

The other main category of inheritance terms comprises those whose root is ירשׁ.

These terms have a different connotation of inheritance than the נחל words. In contrast to

נחל, the use of ירשׁ involves a change in orientation from the normal inheritance path,

"situations where someone other than the usual heir would have to become the heir and

thereby initiate a new line of inheritance."[8] There is also often a theological

understanding of the term, particularly when it is used in a military context to describe

"Yahweh's promise or... judgement."[9]

2.c   The Theology of OT Inheritance

Understanding the inheritance terms and their usage in the Hebrew Scriptures

helps us understand the God-centred nature of inheritance. God is seen as the heart of

the covenant inheritance,[10] both as its subject and object. This theological focus is seen

in how the inheritance system is structured as well as its community-centred and

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[5] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 41. In this system, as described by Osgood, the land would be controlled by the מִשְׁפָּחָה and redistributed to the individual family units every fifty years based on changing needs (idem. "Women and the Inheritance," 41–45).

[6] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 39.

[7] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," xxvii.

[8] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 64. Brown shows this distinction clearly in a discussion of the story of Naboth's vineyard from 1 Kgs 21:1–24 ("The Concept of Inheritance," 64–66). "When Naboth spoke of his property, he called it his inheritance (נַחֲלָה), but when the king took possession of the vineyard after Naboth's death, the writer described his possession of the property by the root ירשׁ" (65).

[9] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 350.

[10] Wright, God's People in God's Land, 4, 15.

inclusive nature and the thread of justice running throughout the inheritance story. The fact that God, a God of justice, is at the centre of the inheritance system means that its structure allows for the dispossessed to inherit.

A primary feature of inheritance theology is that God is the owner of the land inheritance and indeed the whole earth. This can be seen quite clearly in several OT texts including Lev 25:23,[11] Deut 10:14–15,[12] and Ps 24:1.[13] Although it may be the מִשְׁפָּחָה that is given the responsibility of owning and redistribution of the land, it must be remembered that it is *ultimately* God who owns the land. "Basically, the land was conceived to be Yahweh's land. It was the place where Yahweh dwelt."[14] This concept of the land being the place where God was present was central in identifying Israel as God's people.[15] In summary then, Arthur Mason Brown provides a helpful way of understanding "the inheritance of the land.... as belonging either ultimately and absolutely to Yahweh or derivatively and conditionally to his people."[16]

Related to the concept of God as owner of the inheritance, is the awareness that God is the generous giver and provider of inheritance. The biblical support for God as giver and land as God's gift is overwhelming.[17] This giving of the land has "an emphasis on the special relationship between the benefactor and the recipients" which means it is given in the context of covenant (Gen 15:8–20; 17:7–9).[18] Brueggemann brings out the

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[11] See Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 5.

[12] See Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 116–17.

[13] See Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 116.

[14] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 34. Brown cites Exod 15:17 and 1 Sam 26:19 here.

[15] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 30. Wright is discussing Exod 33:1–3, 12–16 here.

[16] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," xxviii.

[17] "Of the two hundred seventy–three occurrences of the root נחל in the Old Testament, there are one hundred eighty-eight instances in which the root refers to the land which Yahweh gave to his people as an inheritance" (Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 28).

[18] Brown, "Inheritance," 374. Wright observes that "the view that Israel's land gift tradition (with its great sweep of promise and fulfillment) must be understood and interpreted alongside and in the light of the

significance of this relational aspect of the covenant and its connection to the land in the following statement about Israel's reflection on the gift of land:

> A land is different when it is given in speaking and received in listening. It is not just an object to be taken and occupied. It is rather a party to a relation. Because the land is the means of Yahweh's word becoming full and powerful for Israel, it is presented as a life-giving embodiment of his word.... The rhetoric at the boundary is that of pure gift, radical grace. There is no hint of achievement or merit or even planning. It is all given by the giver of good gifts and the speaker of faithful words.[19]

Thus God is depicted as the gracious giver of the good gift of inheritance.

Not only is God the owner and giver of inheritance, God is actually the inheritance itself. Since the priests and Levites were not allocated any land along with the other Israelites, they were to consider the Lord to be their promised inheritance (Num 18:20; Deut 18:1–2).[20]

The metaphor of God as inheritance can also be reversed and the people of Israel viewed as God's inheritance. There are 29 instances of words with the root נחל being used to speak of the Israelites "as being the inheritance of Yahweh."[21] The repeated use of words with this root throughout OT biblical history indicates a consistency of thought: "Israel is called Yahweh's נַחֲלָה, and the word conveys the idea that this was a continued relationship between Yahweh and Israel from generation to generation."[22] Some examples of this can be seen in Isaiah and Jeremiah, where the definition of

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belief in the covenant relationship established at Sinai (with its demands and sanctions). Each is indispensable to the other" (*God's People in God's Land*, 15).

[19] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 48. Brueggemann points out Deut 6:10–11 in support of this. "When the LORD your God has brought you into the land that he swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—a land with fine, large cities that you did not build, houses filled with all sorts of goods that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant..."

[20] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 105.

[21] Brown cites all 29 of these texts ("The Concept of Inheritance," 28, n. 2).

[22] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 38.

inheritance includes both people and land as the Lord's inheritance (Isa 19:25; 63:17; Jer 3:19).[24]

Although there is a diversity in how the metaphor of inheritance is viewed in the OT, there is also a continuity which is that God is the focal point. Throughout our discussion of the theology of inheritance in the Hebrew Scriptures, we have seen the consistent focus on God as the centre of inheritance, both as its subject and object, and also as the inheritance itself.

2.d   The Importance of Family and Community in Inheritance

In understanding the OT inheritance system it is also necessary to recognize the centrality of the family. This is because "property in ancient Israel was primarily a family affair."[25] The smallest unit of the family important for understanding the inheritance system was the בֵּית־אָב which most probably consisted of "all the living descendants of a single living ancestor—the rō᾽š-bêṯ ᾽āḇ—with their families, servants, and so forth."[26] However, according to Osgood, it was the מִשְׁפָּחָה that was economically vital in administering the allocation of the land in a community-based system of land tenure.[27] The בֵּית־אָב was still important in this view, but not in the sense of passing on "a landed estate" as an inheritance. Rather, "[w]hat was transferred from one generation to another in Israel...was the *right* of each *bêt 'āb* to a usufruct portion of *mišpaḥa* land."[28] This is what was inherited by the בֵּית־אָב. It is important to appreciate that, in this depiction of how inheritance operated within the family, the function is always a means

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[24] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 4. Isa 19:25 is an interesting passage because it includes Egypt and Assyria with "Israel [the Lord's] inheritance" (CEB) as those who are blessed.

[25] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 1.

[26] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 53. Wright goes on to explain,"The rō᾽š or *paterfamilias* could well be the 'head' of three generations below his own."

[27] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 34, 45.

[28] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 46.

of promoting right relationships. "It is the *relationships*, Godward and humanward, of which property is a function and indicator, which are alone sacred."[29]

The priority of relationship can be seen in how God views Israel as a family. There are several OT texts which portray God as the father to Israel.[30] In particular, in the context of inheritance, God was seen to relate to the people of Israel as father to son.[31] In Exod 4:22, God declares that "Israel is my firstborn son" in instructions to Moses of what he is to say to Pharaoh. Anne Davis observes that God is here proclaiming "*all* the children of Israel... to be his firstborn son."[32] This is key because the firstborn son in Israelite law received a birthright which included a "double share" (Deut 21:17) of inherited property as well as several other privileges and responsibilities.[33] Therefore, the significance of including *all* Israelites "as Yahweh's son and heir"[34] rather than the firstborn or even males cannot be overstated.

Primogeniture is often overturned in the OT.[35] Someone other than the firstborn inherits the birthright in numerous instances including Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.[36] Arthur

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[29] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 141.

[30] Wright points out the following examples: Deut 14:1; 32:5–6, 18–19; Hos 11:1; Isa 1:2; 30:1–9; 43:6; 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:14, 19, 22; 31:9, 20; Mal 1:6; 2:10 (*God's People in God's Land*, 16). It should be pointed out that there are also passages where God is seen as a mother, but this is beyond the scope of the present discussion of inheritance.

[31] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 304.

[32] Davis, "Israel's Inheritance," 81, emphasis added. She also points out that this is not a reference to Jacob as 'Israel' because of the "shift from singular ('son'/'he') to plural ('people')" in this and other passages in Exodus (81).

[33] Davis, "Israel's Inheritance," 93. These include "a special blessing, the office of high priest to his tribe, a position of leadership and authority, and procreative power—all apparently for the role of leading God's people." It may be overstating it to say that all these components were necessarily attached to primogeniture (the rights of the firstborn) in every case. Gilbert Bilezikian maintains "that the practice of primogeniture was observed loosely and ... rights of leadership were not intrinsic to the legislation" (*Beyond Sex Roles*, 207). However, there seems to be some additional responsibility that was generally associated with the firstborn birthright and Davis is able to demonstrate this.

[34] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 12.

[35] Bilezikian, Beyond Sex Roles, 207.

[36] Davis, "Israel's Inheritance," 86–87. cf. 86, n. 27. It should be noted that this does not mean that the firstborn is completely disinherited. They can still inherit along with other sons or receive a bequest (89, 90). See Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 25, for some of the other examples.

Mason Brown suggests that there was actually a practice of ultimogeniture in early Israelite history, where the youngest son was the primary heir, however his logic is faulty on a number of levels.[37] It seems rather that primogeniture existed in Israelite history but that it was often upended as an example of how God is seen to do things.[38] The dispossessed inherit. Or in this case, those with less of a right to be the primary heirs actually *become* the primary heirs. The main point to be gained from this discussion of the subversion of primogeniture is that those who were not traditionally considered to be heirs were often given an inheritance.

2.e.   The Land

The land itself is crucial in understanding inheritance in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is closely connected with the focus on God and relationship that we have already discussed. Brueggemann sees it as "a central, if not *the central theme* of biblical faith... a pursuit of historical belonging that includes a sense of destiny derived from such belonging."[39] He also emphasizes the deep human longing that connects us all with the concept of land, "that a *sense of place* is a human hunger... [and] a primary concern of this God who refused a house and sojourned with his people (2 Sam. 7:5–6) and of the crucified one who 'has nowhere to lay his head' (Luke 9:58)."[40] The land inheritance is thus a way that God connects with people.

The inalienability of the land is also directly associated with God, and

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[37] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 258. Brown's argument is not at all convincing. There is a great deal of pure speculation, such as the idea that Lot is the principal heir as son of the youngest son (259–61). He also for the most part ignores the fact that Benjamin was the youngest son of Jacob, not Joseph (263–69) and more than once identifies Judah as the youngest son of Leah (279, 288) which was not the case (see Gen 30:17–20 for two additional sons). Finally, by his own admission, evidence in the ANE for ultimogeniture is "meager" (274).

[38] A helpful New Testament description of how this works can be found in 1 Cor 1:26–29.

[39] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 3, Emphasis original.

[40] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 4.

relationship with God, as the centre of inheritance. Lev 25:23 demonstrates the clear

connection between God as the land's owner and the land's inalienability:[41] "The land

shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and

tenants." The use of the inheritance term נַחֲלָה also brings out the idea of the

"permanence of Israel's relationship to Yahweh."[42] The story of Naboth's vineyard in 1

Kgs 21:1–16 helps to illustrate the contrasting perspectives of those who viewed the

inalienable land as an extension of relationship with God and those who did not.

Brueggemann comments:

> That of Naboth represents traditional covenantal language in which the
> land is not owned in a way that permits its disposal. It is 'inheritance,'
> which means it is held in trust from generation to generation, beginning
> in gift and continuing so... Naboth perceives himself and the land in a
> covenantal relation, with the relation between the two having a history of
> fidelity which did not begin with him and will not end with him. Thus the
> term "inheritance" insists that the land be understood as a dimension of
> family history. Of course Ahab and surely Jezebel had no notion of that,
> because kings characteristically think everything is to be bought and sold
> and traded and conquered.[43]

From this it is important to recognize that the bond between Naboth and the land is not

as "owner" to "property" but rather as "heir" to "gift."[44] It also becomes clear in the

narrative that this inalienability is a justice issue. The injustices of coveting, theft and

oppression are committed against Naboth but are also directed towards the inheritance

and, indeed, God.[45]

One of the means of maintaining inalienability encompassed in the inheritance

system was the year of Jubilee. At this time, which was to occur every fifty years, the

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[41] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 58.
[42] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 19, n. 29. This is seen in texts such as Exod 34:9 and Deut 32:9.
[43] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 93.
[44] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 96.
[45] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 97; cf. Mic 2:1–2; Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 19–20.

people would return to their מִשְׁפָּחָה (Lev 25:10) and any "property shall be returned" (Lev 25:28).[46] The property in question would have been, in effect, rented out to someone until the year of Jubilee.[47] However, the land could also be redeemed previous to this with a "payment of a value equivalent to the rent for the years that the lease still has to run until the next jubilee."[48] All of this fits with Osgood's conception that the "land was corporately managed at *mišpaḥa* level with individual members being allotted usufructary rights to a portion of the land" and therefore makes the instructions regarding the Jubilee year "entirely comprehensible."[49]

The flip side to redemption and Jubilee is what happens when the people break the covenant with God. The result is dispossession, disinheritance and exile. For a primarily agricultural nation, Christopher Wright declares that this would be "unmitigated calamity."[50] But something interesting happens. Ironically, it is in exile that the people are able to find a true sense of place. This is proclaimed by Jeremiah as "the central scandal of the Bible, that radical loss and discontinuity do happen and are the source of real newness. So he holds what surely must have been a minority view, that the *exiles* are the real heirs. And conversely those who cling to the land are the ultimate exiles."[51] This is in keeping with the theme that the dispossessed inherit. Brueggemann comments: "The Lord of history gives history to the landless who should have no history. He takes the barren as mother of promise. He takes the slaves as bearers

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[46] See Lev 25:8–28 for a fuller description of the practice.

[47] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 217; Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 40, 41. Evidence that it is the usufruct of the land being leased rather than the land being sold is found in Lev 25:16: "it is a certain number of harvests that are being sold to you."

[48] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 41. Brown suggests, "There is no example of the application of this method of redemption in the Old Testament" ("The Concept of Inheritance," 217). However, see the discussion of Naomi below as well as Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," esp. 51.

[49] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 44.

[50] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 4.

[51] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 122–23. See Jer 24:4–7.

of freedom. He takes the desperately hungry as heirs of the new land. And now he takes hopeless exiles as his new people."[52]

2.f   Women and Inheritance

In order to properly address the subject of women and Israelite inheritance, several issues must be investigated. We will examine the question of whether women were considered property and how they fit into the covenant. Furthermore, we will determine what role women played in the Israelite system of inheritance.[53] I suggest that women participated much more actively as heirs and managers of the land than is usually thought.[54]

It is quite apparent that wives were not considered property according to Old Testament laws.[55] In response to a theory that brides were bought with a "purchase price," Wright outlines evidence to the contrary.[56] He also points out "that although trading in human property was perfectly legal at a certain level... a man could not sell his wife—even one captured in war (Deut. 21:14)—nor resell a woman whom he had 'selected for himself,' if he found no pleasure in her (Exod. 21:8, NIV)."[57] Since wives were not considered property, this meant that they also could not be inherited—passed on from father to son. This could well be one explanation for the decrees against

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[52] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 125; cf. Brueggemann, *The Land*, 134 concerning the disenfranchised in Hannah's prayer (1 Sam 2:4–8).

[53] We will look at daughters, widows and women in general to do this.

[54] This is in contrast to "the dominant view of biblical scholarship" which is that women do not inherit within the ancient Israelite system (Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 32).

[55] Burrows, *The Basis of Israelite Marriage*, 32–33.

[56] This includes "the comparative independence of the Israelite wives, the... distinction between the wife and the concubine who *was* bought for money, the wife's continued connection with her father's family, the return of part or all of the *mōhar* to the bride as a dowry, and the sociological fact that the institution of marriage is older than that of sale and purchase" (Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 192); cf. Burrows, *The Basis of Israelite Marriage*, 30–52. He goes into further depth to address this question.

[57] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 192–93. It is, however, important to keep in mind that although "[w]ives were not chattel property... they did not have the kind of free independent equality so sought after in the modern world" (Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 260).

marrying or having sexual intercourse with the wife of one's father.[58]

There is ample confirmation that women were active participants in the covenant relationship. They were to be present "at important occasions of covenant renewal (Josh. 8:35; Deut. 29:11) as well as at ordinary cultic events (1 Sam. 1:3ff)."[59] There was also a fervent injunction that mothers, right along with fathers, were to be respected and honoured.[60] This is significant since covenant was foundational in understanding inheritance.

2.f.*i*   Inheriting Daughters

The issue of the inheritance of daughters is a crucial one which will be considered in depth. In the Hebrew Bible, there are four instances of daughters either inheriting or the question of their claim to inheritance being raised (Num 27:1–11 and Num 36:1–12; Gen 31:14–16; Josh 15:16–19 and Josh 15:16–19; Job 42:13–15). One such case is the account of the daughters of Zelophehad. Significantly, we are given not only *their* names—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah[61]—but also the names of *all* eleven women, each in their perspective narratives.

The book of Numbers recounts how the daughters of Zelophehad come before Moses to request their father's inheritance because he has died without sons. It was, according to Jacob Weingreen, "a case of unprecedented circumstances, for which the

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[58] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 208–9. See Lev 18:8; 20:11; Deut 22:30; 27:20. "If this was in fact the purpose of the prohibition, then it shows that the wife was not to be treated as part of her husband's property, to be inherited along with the rest of his estate on his death... If, on the other hand, the law did not relate to inheritance but merely to intercourse with a father's polygamous wives, it is still not possible to regard the act as an offense against the father's property" (Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 208–9).

[59] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 92.

[60] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 92. Phillips tries to undermine this because he believes "women were not members of the covenant community" (*Ancient Israel's Criminal Law*, 82).

[61] Their names are recorded for us three times (Num 27:1; 36:10; Josh 17:3).

law had made no provision."[62] They are given a favourable response based on the pronouncement of God (27:1–11). Later their male relatives come to Moses to get clarification of how the property can be kept within the tribe and, as a result, the daughters are required to marry within the tribe in order to inherit (Num 36:1–12). They are, however, given the choice to "marry anyone they please as long as they marry within their father's tribal clan" (36:6, TNIV). The account given in the various biblical texts[63] provides evidence of the development of Israelite case-law.[64]

This case is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, it is interesting to compare this ruling with laws and practices of neighbouring cultures, for example the Hittites. Brown states, "The order of sequence was different in the two cultures, and the inclusion of daughters as the first eligible heirs after sons in the Israelite law was a significant Hebraic innovation."[65]

Secondly, the circumstances surrounding the inheritance of these five women help to illustrate the importance of protecting and perpetuating the existence of the tribes and kinship groups in Israelite society since the new directive would ensure that the "tribal territory... would not be diminished."[66] The theological connection is also shown in that the judgment in favour of the daughters comes from God in the form of "a statute and ordinance" (Num 27:11) showing its worth to God. The daughters place a priority on the name of the father within the clan and the text links this with what is a priority to

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[62] Weingreen, "The Case of the Daughters," 519.
[63] Num 27:1–11; 36:1–12; Josh 17:3–6.
[64] Weingreen, "The Case of the Daughters," 520.
[65] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 27.
[66] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 57. This inalienability of the land was related to the fact that the land belonged to God as mentioned above (17–18).

God (27:4, 7), therefore showing their insight and discernment in this matter as confirmed by God.

The narrative of Zelophehad's daughters is also important because it is a justice issue. "The divine ruling which was revealed to Moses acknowledged the justice of the claim made by these young women and directed that Zelophehad's property be transferred to them as his rightful heirs."[67] It is clear that, after this divine injunction, daughters may inherit in Israel. This happens because they have been given a voice by five daughters who have the courage to speak up for what should be done according to the aims of justice.[68] "Numbers 27 presents a narrative in which those with the least power and the most to lose dare to challenge the epitome of authority, God's own spokesperson Moses."[69] These five women—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah—are representatives for those who have been marginalized or neglected by omission in the laws of Israelite society and throughout history. As Katherine Doob Sakenfeld proposes, "Perhaps we too, so many generations later, should seek to learn their names, as symbols of those who challenged power, achieved a measure of justice, and learned something of what those engaged in struggle experience all too often: 'two steps forward, one step back'"[70] In this narrative about inheritance we are therefore witnesses to the struggle for inclusion and justice.

Another situation where a claim for inheritance appears to be made is in Gen 31:14–16 which is Rachel and Leah's response when their husband Jacob consults them

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[67] Weingreen, "The Case of the Daughters," 519.

[68] Gary Haugen, the founder of the International Justice Mission, defines injustice as "abusing power by taking from others the good things that God intended for them, namely their life, liberty, dignity, or the fruits of their love or labor" (*Just Courage*, 46). A justice issue would therefore be one that ensures that people have "the good things that God intended for them.

[69] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 40.

[70] Sakenfeld, "Zelophehad's Daughters," 47.

(Gen 31:4–13) about his plan to leave their father's land as God has instructed him.[71]

The two women make a number of striking statements here. They speak of a "portion or inheritance" (חלק ונחלה), "the money given for us," and "the property [which] ... belongs to us and to our children."[72]

There are several issues which need to be addressed in understanding this complex text. The first is whether Leah and Rachel would have been in a position to inherit, considering the reference to "the sons of Laban" (Gen 31:1).[73] It is possible that this statement is being used figuratively to designate "the general household of Laban," since elsewhere[74] Laban refers to his daughters' children as his own.[75] It has also been suggested that the sons may have been born to Laban after Jacob married Rachel and Leah. This would imply "that before their brothers were born they could have expected an inheritance, but now the sons will inherit the estate" and so it would now be advantageous for Leah and Rachel to go with Jacob.[76]

Another concern regarding Rachel and Leah's standing in society is their accusation that their father "has sold" (31:15) them. Millar Burrows finds it worth noting that this text "does not prove the existence of marriage by purchase among the Israelites, since there

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[71] Sarah Shectman astutely observes that "[t]his is the only instance in the Hebrew Bible of such cooperation among a family, and the case is all the more remarkable given that it is Jacob's family." (*Women in the Pentateuch*, 88–89) The collaborative nature of the discussion gives credibility to the sisters' claim that the property is also theirs and their children's.

[72] Shectman observes that "they claim a right for themselves and their children to Laban's fortune" (*Women in the Pentateuch*, 88)

[73] cf. Gen 30:35.

[74] Gen 31:28, 43.

[75] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 10.

[76] Burrows, "The Complaint," 263. If there were no brothers or they were born after the sisters married, this would lend credence to the theory that these marriages were similar to the ancient Babylonian custom of "*errēbu*-marriage" which Burrows described as follows: "Ordinarily the Babylonian family was thought of as continued by the male descendents. Wife and children therefore belonged to the husband's family. When there was no son, however, the family might be continued through a daughter by taking a husband for her into her father's family as an *errēbu*, comparable to the 'visiting husband' among Palestinian peasants" (261).

would have been no point in complaining if it had been customary for fathers to sell

their daughters."[77] There is "no biblical evidence" for such a practice and, according to

Sarah Shectman, "[r]ather than making an appeal for the return of their brideprice, the

sisters recognize that their marriage to Jacob is the reason behind Laban's wealth."[78]

Katharine Bushnell explores the idea that Rachel and Leah belonged to an

ancient culture where the "usual custom"—in harmony with Gen 2:24—was for a wife

to "remain with her kin."[79] Bushnell also suggests that this type of marriage was

associated with inheritance rights being passed through the wife.[80] Brown also

demonstrates that, according to Nuzi documents, daughters in Hurrian society, the

probable culture of the land of Haran, could indeed inherit when there were no male

heirs.[81]

In addition to socio-historical evidence that this was a claim for inheritance,

there is also biblical evidence. Brown points out that the Hebrew words חֵלֶק and

נחלה occur "together in passages which actually deny the inheritance portion to the

Levites."[82]

One final consideration is from Gen 31:19 where Rachel "stole her father's

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[77] Burrows, "The Complaint," 265; cf. Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 193; Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, para 56.

[78] Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch*, 89.

[79] Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, 24. Bushnell contrasts this ancient Arabic "sadica marriage"—similar to the"*beena* marriage" of Ceylon—with another custom called "*ba'al* marriage (the sort which involves subordination on the part of the wife)" (para 415–417). She is careful to emphasize that what she terms a "matriarchate does not convey to our minds the idea of a rule of women over men; it merely implies the absence of an exclusive government by men,—the existence of that saner, righteous state, in which the governing privilege is invested in the *competent*, without regard to sex" (para 458). Later scholars are likely more accurate in moving away from the term "matriarchal" and describing the probable marriage practices of the time as "uxorilocal" (matrilocal) or "predominantly matrilineal" (Ahmed, "Women and the Advent of Islam," 667).

[80] Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, 23-24.

[81] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 11–12.

[82] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 10, n.1. These include Num 18:20; Deut 10:9; 12:12; 14:27, 29; 18:1; and Josh 18:7.

household gods." Having the *teraphim* (הַתְּרָפִים) in one's "possession... could strengthen

one's claim to the inheritance."[83]

All this evidence together would indicate that Leah and Rachel have some claim to

what is designated in the OT as inheritance. The two sisters use inheritance language in their

discussion of their father's property and their husband does not contradict them nor qualify

their terms. From the perspective of these two women, the property Jacob obtained from

their father was, in some sense, also theirs and their children's. This is essentially what

inheritance means. As well, the sisters' reference to "the property that God has taken

away" and the instruction to Jacob to "do whatever God has said to you" (31:16) show

the theological context which has been shown to be a characteristic of Old Testament

inheritance.[84] This pericope therefore portrays these women as daughters who have a right

to be heirs.

The situation of Achsah differs from the other daughter narratives in that no explicit

inheritance language is used. Nevertheless, her story is significant for our purposes. In the

context of the conquest and land allocation in Joshua and Judges, we find the account of

Caleb's daughter Achsah who, after requesting additional land to what she had already

received from him, has her request granted (Josh 15:16–19; Judg 1:12–15). The request is

need-based.[85] Joseph Fleishman argues that, because Caleb had sons, this should be

considered a dowry instead of an inheritance.[86] The dowry a daughter received usually

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[83] Kidner, *Genesis*, 165; cf. Brown ("The Concept of Inheritance," 226–29) who examines evidence from the Nuzi tablets which would indicate "that the possession of the family gods ensured title to inheritance" (227).

[84] Shectman notes that "through the sisters' alliance with Jacob that Jacob's god, Elohim, ensured that a portion of Laban's wealth passed to Jacob" (*Women in the Pentateuch*, 89) and Brown sees this as an example where "inheritance customs... were subordinated to the writer's purpose of telling a good story about people who submitted themselves to the will of God" ("The Concept of Inheritance," 30, n. 1).

[85] The land she had already been given was in an arid location and she wanted to supplement this with access to water. Nelson, *Joshua*, 189; Matthews, "Female Voices," 9.

[86] Fleishman, "A Daughter's Demand," 354.

consisted of "movable goods, but in certain circumstances, when the family was rich and distinguished, she received slaves and immovable property as well."[87] However, the fact remains that, although it was "not *labeled* 'inheritance,'"[88] Achsah was given *land* which is usually associated with inheritance. And Fleishman himself refers to it as "her inheritance from her paternal home."[89]

Achsah is someone who takes initiative and does not wait around for others to act. She "asked her father for better land because her husband would not ask for her."[90] She is described as someone who has "a mind and will of her own" and who demonstrates "assertiveness,"[91] "force of character," "drive"[92] and "chutzpah."[93] Achsah uses her voice to defend "the honor of her household."[94] In doing so she also sends a vital message about women in Israelite society. Daniel Hawk, in his examination of the accounts of Achsah and the daughters of Zelophehad in the book of Joshua, discerns the following:

> By relating stories about women who possess land, the narrator undercuts the patriarchal network by which property is legitimized and transferred. Together the stories challenge the notion that 'Israel' is to be defined in exclusively masculine terms; severing the male-land equation also cuts the male-Israel equation which undergirds it. If women possess land, women are also Israelites in the most fundamental sense. Like [other biblical] stories... the stories of Achsah and Zelophehad's daughters deal with the extension of Israel's internal boundaries, in this case to those of other gender rather than other ethnicity.[95]

[87] Fleishman, "A Daughter's Demand," 355.
[88] Creach, *Joshua*, 102, emphasis added.
[89] Fleishman, "A Daughter's Demand," 354–55; cf. "inheritance of a dowry" (359).
[90] Schneider, *Judges*, 16. Hawk notes that her husband "Othniel... remains little more than a bit player in the drama, becoming a pronoun as the story completes the transition by shifting abruptly to Achsah" (*Joshua*, 201). This is despite the heroics he displayed earlier (Josh 15:16–17; Judg 1:12–13).
[91] McCann, *Judges*, 32.
[92] Hawk, *Joshua*, 201.
[93] Creach, *Joshua*, 102.
[94] Matthews, "Female Voices," 8.
[95] Hawk, *Joshua*, 200.

Again we see someone's struggle to be included in the Israelite inheritance system and once more there is a favourable response. The inclusion of this story *twice* in the biblical canon is noteworthy and makes a fundamental statement about daughters and inheritance.

We have already seen, in the story of the daughters of Zelophehad, how provision was made in Israel for daughters to inherit where a father had no sons. In the book of Job we seem to have a unique instance where three daughters—Jemimah, Keziah and Keren-happuch—inherited *with* their brothers (Job 42:13–15).[96] It should be mentioned that "in contrast to the otherwise universal custom in Hebrew birth narrative, none of the sons are named; whereas, remarkably, all three daughters are named and commented on." [97] In the last chapter of the book of Job it describes how their father "gave them an inheritance along with their brothers" (42:15). Zafrira Ben-Barak had initially maintained that the phrase "*among their brothers,* does not necessarily mean that their rights were equal to those of the sons."[98] However, in a later work she "argues that the naming of the daughters and the status they garner is noteworthy because usually only the male sons of the *bet'ab* could inherit."[99] Based on linguistic evidence comparing 42:15 with other biblical texts, "there is no indication that the daughters' inheritance was any different than that of the sons."[100]

There are at least two possible reasons for Job to be giving his daughters an

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[96] See Myers et al, "Inheritance," 522, who place this in the category of "other patterns of inheritance."

[97] Janzen, *Job*, 267. cf. Morrow, "Toxic Religion," 274; Machinist, "Job's Daughters," 69, 71.

[98] Ben-Barak,"Inheritance by Daughters," 28, emphasis original.

[99] Wilhelm, "The Daughters Receive," 8.

[100] Wilhelm, "The Daughters Receive," 13–14. Wilhelm, in a student paper presented at the ETS, cites the work of Peter Machinist in order to demonstrate this. I am indebted to Sara Wilhelm Garbers for sending me her paper. Machinist examines several biblical texts which have the phrase "an inheritance in the midst of Y" (Num 27:4, 7; Josh 17:4; 19:1, 9, 49; Judg 18:1; Ezek 47:22–23; Prov 17:2) in order to come to this conclusion ("Job's Daughters," 71–73).

inheritance. Brown suggests that the "passage may reflect a later and more liberal attitude toward women than is reflected in the law of Numbers, or it may only be an exceptional bequest cited to prove the righteousness of Job."[101] However, it seems that *both* factors are operating here. First, there is "accumulating evidence" that women tended to have a higher status in practice than reflected in the actual legal codes of the time.[102] By giving his daughters an inheritance which stands out against the social practices of the time, Job in effect manages to "undo a form of social repression by analogy" and bring about "a redistribution of power."[103] Related to this, Job's act says something about his character which we have witnessed earlier in the book, namely that he is a man of justice who wants to be known for his righteous acts (Job 31).[104] Now, in the act of "giving his daughters an inheritance with their brothers Job demonstrates that he continued a policy of justice and equity in his life which went beyond the normal practice of the ancient world."[105] Once again, justice is an underlying motive for giving daughters an inheritance.

Something also needs to be said about the nature of the daughters' inheritance. Sara Wilhelm's comparison of the text of Job 42 with the reworking of the same story in

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[101] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 18.

[102] Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 298.

[103] Morrow, "Toxic Religion," 274. Morrow qualifies this evaluation of Job's action by stating that "the liberating effect of Job 42:15 can be discounted by observing that a thoroughly patriarchal value seems to be responsible for their new status. It is not because Job's daughters are said to be equal to their brothers, but because of their outstanding beauty that they are given inheritance" ("Toxic Religion," 275). However, although this is a possible implication of the proximity of the statement that the daughters are beautiful to the statement that they received an inheritance, the text does not definitively show that this was the reason for their inheritance.

[104] The whole chapter is a statement of Job's various acts of justice. Interestingly, there is an apparent link between inheritance here as evidenced by the use of the words חֵלֶק and נַחֲלָה in 31:2. Since there is research to "suggest that the appearance of an Ancient Near Eastern book with a prose prologue and epilogue framing an extensive section of poetic dialogue is not unprecedented" we will take the position "that there must be some meaningful relationship between the discourse in the dialogues and the prose frame" of the book of Job (Morrow, "Toxic Religion," 267).

[105] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 585.

the *Testament of Job* also helps to shed light on the biblical passage. In the latter

pseudepigraphal work,

> the author thought it necessary not only to address the daughters'
> inheritance, but to explicitly add to and change this inheritance into a
> heavenly one. This indicates that the canonical version insufficiently (to
> the author's mind) put women in their place. Women in the biblical text
> not only inherit with their brothers (which in itself is very significant), but
> their inheritance is decidedly this-worldly, and as such is empowering.[106]

Because Jemimah, Keziah and Keren-Happuch inherit "while still being embodied as

women" we are able to see the 'already' realized quality of inheritance.[107] This helps us

avoid an approach to spirituality and eschatology denying the material and here and now

practical concerns of life. It also speaks to the redemptive nature of the story, since the

act of bestowing this inheritance was prompted by God's transforming and "restorative"

work in the life of Job.[108] Yet again, God is seen as the originator and motivator of an

inheritance that is directed towards daughters.

We have heard a voice through the Old Testament scriptures—one that is often

not thunderously loud but it is unmistakable nonetheless, especially in the context of a

patriarchal society. It is the voice of God announcing the message that daughters may

inherit. Occasionally, the daughters themselves are given a voice to claim the

inheritance that this message proclaims, for their own sake but also in the name of

justice and the protection of their families. Indeed, when seen as a precursor to the New

Testament passages we will examine in this thesis,[109] this message can be proclaimed as:

'Your daughters *shall* inherit!' Those who are deemed the dispossessed will one day be

heirs of God.

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[106] Wilhelm, "The Daughters Receive," 15.
[107] Wilhelm, "The Daughters Receive," 13.
[108] Wilhelm, "The Daughters Receive," 1. cf. 3, 18.
[109] Especially Galatians 3–4.

2.f.*ii*   Wives and Widows and Inheritance

The status of widows in the Israelite inheritance system is also relevant to our discussion. There is abundant biblical evidence to indicate that widows were vulnerable within this system. Christopher Wright notes, "The large number of injunctions to charitable care for widows underlines their perilous economic position."[110] This is without a doubt a correct representation of the situation for widows. It was one of the functions of the custom of levirate marriage to address this marginalization of widows. In addition to the continuation of the deceased man's name,[111] the levirate practice served to protect "the widow's status within the family"[112] and would have allowed her "to create a future for herself."[113]

One of the underlying assumptions for the levirate custom, then, was that widows were disenfranchised and needed economic protection. While this is in one sense true, another associated presumption—that "there were no provisions enabling the widow to inherit the property of her deceased husband"[114]—may not tell us the whole story. There does seem to be some evidence that, in certain instances in the Hebrew Bible, widows had control of land which had been passed on to them from their husbands.

In exploring the subject of widows and inheritance, it is necessary to ask whether widows can actually inherit land. We will examine two cases pertinent to this. One such

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[110] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 92.

[111] "Through the levirate, as through legitimation, the Jews insured that any heir would be related to the father by blood" (Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 100).

[112] Schmidt, "Inheritance in the OT," 3:43. Davies asserts that "the law would have ensured her protection and support even if she did not have a child as a result of the union" ("Inheritance Rights: Part 1," 144).

[113] Cotter, Genesis, 285. This would be the case with Tamar in Gen 38:1–30, as described here by Cotter. Unfortunately, we have in the story of Tamar (as well as in Ruth 4:6–8) biblical evidence of a brother-in-law or other relative who does not fulfill the levirate duty out of self-interest (Davies, "Inheritance Rights: Part 2," 267–68).

[114] Davies, "Inheritance Rights: Part 1," 138.

is in Ruth 4:3 where Boaz says that "Naomi, who has come back from the country of

Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our kinsman Elimelech." This raises

a number of other questions, most beyond the scope of this study.[115] However, it is clear

from this verse that the property is Naomi's to dispose of and "it is evident... that Naomi

has some claim with respect to Elimelech's land, whether to the property itself or to the

usufruct (the right to use the produce of the land)."[116] With the premise that what was

for sale was not the land itself but the use of the land until the next time it was

redistributed at the Jubilee, Joy Osgood explains the situation as follows:

> Although Elimelech and both his sons had died in Moab, the usufruct of
> the portion of land allotted to him in the previous redistribution was still
> the inalienable right of the surviving members of his *bêt 'āb* even though
> they were women. The land was still regarded as Elimelech's but to
> Naomi as his widow remained the right of disposing of it either to an
> outsider or to a kinsman.[117]

Naomi is therefore given responsibility for what happens to the land. This would

perhaps be why she takes action to protect the land and her family who would stand to

benefit from it.

Another story of a widow which raises questions about land ownership occurs in

2 Kgs 8:1–6. It concerns a Shunammite woman, almost certainly at this point a

widow,[118] whose son Elisha had previously raised from the dead. She has returned from

the land of the Philistines and appeals to the king to have the property in question

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[115] These include the following: "First, how is it that Naomi has control over her dead husband's land so that she can 'sell' it? How did she acquire that control? Why are she and Ruth pictured as impoverished (so that Ruth must go out gleaning) if Naomi owns a piece of land? And by what authority is Boaz announcing what Naomi intends to do about the land?" (Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, 70).

[116] Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, 71.

[117] Osgood," Women and the Inheritance," 51.

[118] Although it is never explicitly stated that she is a widow, her husband is no longer mentioned. Osgood contends that it "seems beyond question" that she is now a widow ("Women and the Inheritance," 29).

returned to her. The narrator twice refers to it as "*her* house and *her* land" (8:3, 5)[119] and when the king restores it to her, he also identifies it as "*hers*" (8:6).[120] The woman in this story tends to be viewed as a trustee of the land for her young son. In any case, she is the one "*exercising control over the land* on behalf of her son until such time as he attains adulthood"[121] and the text emphasizes that, at least in the interim, the land belongs to her. Additionally, we see another woman using her voice to call for justice.[122] From the examples of Naomi and this widow, we can therefore determine "that early Israel was not oblivious to the economic plight of women whose (father or) husband had died but that the provision made was in keeping with the existing social and economic structure of the period."[123]

In Prov 31:10–31 we find a woman whose husband is still alive and yet she is involved in the administration of land usage for her family. She is celebrated for a number of non-traditional endeavours including in 31:16 where she is the one making the decision to acquire a piece of land ("considers a field and buys it" in the NRSV). According to Tremper Longman, this provides a picture of a woman "engaged in real estate and agricultural ventures. She is one who goes out to find land that is worth managing, and then with her own resources she plants a vineyard, again presumably as a business venture."[124] This woman, who is not an ideal but rather a "composite" of commendable women, is shown to be a consummate "manager... of the larger holdings

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[119] Emphasis added.
[120] Emphasis added.
[121] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 30, emphasis added.
[122] Richard Nelson points out that her "petition [is] literally a 'cry' for justice" (*First and Second Kings*, 192)
[123] Osgood, "Women and the Inheritance," 52.
[124] Longman, *Proverbs*, 544.

and economic interactions of the family."[125] Thus, women who are active in purchasing and directing the use of land are among those honoured in this passage.

Women in the Hebrew Scriptures inherited, bought, sold and managed land and its usufruct. Indeed, rather than being viewed as property to be inherited, women are seen to be actively involved in the OT inheritance system—as participants in the covenant relationship, in the use and transfer of land, in the protection of the family name, and as heirs.

2.g   Inheritance and Aliens

Another group often considered completely outside the scope of Israelite inheritance is aliens or gentiles. However, there are instances in the OT Scriptures referring to the inheritance of aliens. For example, Caleb was given an inheritance although there is some evidence his lineage was identified as foreign to the tribe of Judah.[126] In the OT prophetic works we can perceive what is virtually the elimination of "the ancient family land basis" for what will be the new covenant between the people and God. Wright further notes that "[t]his is entailed in the description of its all-inclusiveness, which will bring into full and assured relationship with God categories of people whose position, on a family-land criterion, would have been ambiguous or insecure."[127] Moreover, commenting on Ezek 47:21–23 which specifically refers to the inheritance of aliens, Brueggemann insightfully observes the following:

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[125] Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine*, 85.

[126] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 173–74. cf. Creach, *Joshua*, 101; Hawk, Joshua, 198; Nelson, *Joshua*, 178; and Josh 14:6, 13–14. Marten Woudstra calls the meaning of Caleb's identification as a Kenizzite "a matter of debate." This tribe was considered "among the original, non-Israelite population of Canaan (Gen. 15:19). It may be that this name here simply stands for a descendant of Kenaz, which name occurs among Caleb's descendants (1 Chr. 13, 15). Upon that supposition Caleb was a Judahite by descent" (*The Book of Joshua*, 227).

[127] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 110. See, for example, Isa 56:3–7.

> Now the alien is treated like the native born. The promise is expansive and inclusive. The new history toward the land has a dimension of graciousness in it. The gift of land is now more decisively a free gift without qualification. It is a stunning statement (contrast 44:9) that aliens shall be included.[128]

The aliens, then, have become heirs in this picture of eschatological inheritance.

2.h   Inheritance and Slaves

Slaves in OT times were in some sense considered property, and could therefore be bought or sold[129] or, indeed, inherited. However, there are hints that they themselves may inherit at times. Examples of slaves potentially inheriting are seen in Prov 17:2[130] and in Gen 15:1–6.[131] Another instance where there seems to be the son of a slave who might inherit is in Gen 21:10, concerning Ishmael.[132] Also, outside of the Hebrew Scriptures, there is evidence in ANE law that slaves could inherit after being freed and adopted.[133] This will be particularly relevant to the discussion of inheritance in the Pauline writings.

2.i   Concluding Remarks on Inheritance in the Old Testament

As we look back at what the OT says about inheritance we see that, first and foremost, God is the centre of biblical inheritance and everything else flows out of that centre. We also notice that threads of justice, inclusion and hope are woven through the story. Although the Israelite system of inheritance is firmly situated in a context where it

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[128] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 145; cf. Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 110, as well as Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 167–68 who sees this as passage as evidence that they were to be adopted into the family.

[129] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 260. Wright appreciates that they, as well as women and children, "cannot be called 'property'—legally or socially—without important qualifications and limitations."

[130] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 20.

[131] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 20. Regarding this pericope, Brueggemann asserts, "That model of slave-heir is fundamental to all of biblical faith (cf. Gal. 4:1–7)."

[132] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 58.

[133] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 16.

was sons who inherited the land, there are already hints that it can become more inclusive so that daughters, foreigners and slaves may inherit—if not now then one day. In light of the evidence we have examined here, it was certainly quite probable that Paul, as a scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures, was familiar with the concept of women, aliens and slaves as heirs. This inclusiveness inspires a hope "[i]n the midst of chaos and despair... [which] culminated in the inheritance of the land."[134] Sara Wilhelm presents an inspiring picture of what that will look like:

> A vision of a world in which both the sons and daughters share equally in the inheritance of the kingdom; a world in which patriarchy and oppression are no longer realities. A world in which all are now one in Christ and the distinctions which used to divide Jew from Greek, slave and free, man and woman are boundary lines no more... It is time we respond and grant our daughters and sons a shared inheritance in the restored and redeemed kingdom reality.[135]

Looking forward to our examination of Galatians 3–4, and especially Gal 3:28, this is a hope we will find Paul speaking to for the community of faith.

2.j   Inheritance in Second Temple Literature

Second Temple Literature, including the deuterocanonical books, presents a diversity of views on inheritance. Some of these agree with what we have seen to be OT themes on inheritance and some present a contrasting picture. For example, there are several texts which show inheritance as coming from God.[136] For the descendents of Aaron, "the Lord himself" is the inheritance.[137] The people of Israel are seen as God's inheritance.[138] A contrasting perspective shows inheritance to be from God but referring

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[134] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 204. Brown is here commenting on Ezek 48:29 and 36:8–12.

[135] Wilhelm, "The Daughters Receive," 18.

[136] See Sir 24:8; 36:16 and 44:21–23. The latter also demonstrates an association with covenant. See 2 Macc 2:4, 17 for how God gives or returns the inheritance as well as 4 Macc 18:3 for a reference to "a divine inheritance."

[137] Sir 45:22.

[138] 2 Esd 3:16, 45.

to "immortality,"[139] a concept not found in the Hebrew Scriptures. There are also several references to women connected with inheritance.[140] One notable example is Judith, a widow who inherits property, including land and livestock, from her husband, "and she maintained this estate."[141] So in the Second Temple writings we find further support for God as the focus of Israelite inheritance as well as the inheritance of women.[142]

2.k   Slavery in the OT

The subject of slavery has already been considered in connection with OT inheritance. However, since it is a matter of great significance in both Gal 3–4 and Rom 8, it is important to look at some of the other issues concerning slavery in ancient Israel. One factor which is necessary to state at the outset is that "neither God nor Israel originated slavery."[143] In fact, Israelite slaves were considered as "already belonging to Yahweh, owing to his having brought them forth from Egypt" and therefore they were not to be treated harshly.[144] "Yahweh's manumission of Israel" through the Exodus was considered an extremely important chapter in their history[145] and has continued to resonate with slaves even in more recent times.[146] Additionally, slaves in Israel were to

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[139] 2 Esd 7:17, 96.

[140] Three of these are in Josephus: *Ant.* 17.321–22 in which Salome inherits by testament; 16.66 in which sons receive an inheritance from their mother; and 4.174–75 concerning the daughters of Zelophehad. The latter contrasts with the biblical account (Num 27:1–11) in that the daughters do not initially present the question but a male representative of the tribe does. An account which seems to correspond to the pronouncement given to the daughters of Zelophehad is in Tob 3:15 where Raguel's daughter Sarah says, "I am my father's only child; he has no other child to be his heir." Tob 3:17; 4:12–13; 6:12 and 14:13 all provide details which correspond to the instructions given in the account of Zelophehad's daughters.

[141] Jdt 8:7; cf. Jdt 8:22 where she refers to the land that has been desecrated as "our inheritance." cf. Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 13, n. 1.

[142] The Greco-Roman understanding of inheritance will be examined in the next chapter.

[143] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 59.

[144] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 181–82. This is referring to Lev 25:39–55, especially vv. 42, 55.

[145] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 326.

[146] This is particularly true of American slavery of the 19th century. These "slaves identified with Israel's bondage in Egypt and expressed their yearning to be free," often in the lyrics of spirituals (Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 56).

be considered human beings before property.[147] Israelites were to empathize with the

marginalized, including slaves. Wright states, "Indeed, it is precisely in this area—

namely, Israel's attitude toward slaves and other classes of oppressed and vulnerable

people—that their foundational tradition of national delivery from slavery through the

Exodus had its most profound ethical impact."[148] It is therefore not surprising that this

attitude should be reflected in laws concerning the treatment of slaves.

William Webb outlines several areas of Israelite law where slaves were given

humane treatment "relative to [the] original/broader culture." These include "seventh-

day rest for all slaves (Ex 23:12)" and "refuge and safety for foreign runaway slaves

(Deut 23:15; cf. Ex 21:26–27)."[149] Some interesting issues are also raised in the laws in

Exod 21. In 21:21 slaves are declared "the owner's property" whereas in 21:20 we find a

regulation which is "entirely unparalleled in ancient Near Eastern law codes in making a

person's treatment of *his own* slave a matter of public judicial action."[150] And Exod

21:26–27 is "equally unparalleled in protecting the male or female slave from arbitrary

assault by the master."[151] Both of these passages have the inherent assumption that a

slave could make a legal claim for justice and this corresponds to Job's words in Job

31:13–15.[152] However, not all the laws were as edifying to slaves as these were.

Furthermore, in practice the nation of Israel often fell short, becoming a place of slavery

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[147] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 243; cf. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 473.
[148] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 240.
[149] Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, 44. Other examples of humane treatment are: "provisions for slaves upon release (Deut 15:12–18)" and "denouncement of slave traders (Deut 24:7; Ex 21:16; cf. 1 Tim 1:10)." It should be noted that Webb here has a similar list of areas where the laws could have further movement in order to become even more humane towards slaves.
[150] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 241.
[151] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 243.
[152] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 243–49. Contra Phillips, "Some Aspects of Family Law," 358.

under Solomon.[154] "The very land that promised to create space for human joy and

freedom became the very source of dehumanizing exploitation and oppression."[155]

What is needed now is redemption. We have seen that "there were certainly

protective measures to mitigate the system" but slavery still existed.[156] However, in the

laws of the Sabbath year and the Jubilee we find redemption already at work.[157] And we

can look ahead to the redemption message of the New Testament, as described by

Swartley:

> By fulfilling the humanitarian purpose of the Sabbath, rest and equality
> for the servants, Jesus inaugurated a continuous practice of Sabbath,
> sabbatical, and jubilean ethics, thereby also abolishing even the Old
> Testament pattern of servitude. For no one can continue to have servant-
> slaves if one continuously practices the sabbatical year, in which servant-
> slaves are released.[158]

We will also hear the redemption message of freedom for slaves resounding in the

writings of Paul.

2.1   Adoption in the OT

As we anticipate delving into the Pauline passages on adoption in the NT, it is

necessary to investigate whether there is any relevant background material in Early

Judaism, including the Hebrew Bible.[159] The question, then, is whether there actually

was adoption in early Jewish law or practice. Also, since our consideration of the

concept of adoption is for the purpose of later examining the Pauline metaphor we will

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[154] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 85; cf. 10–11; 1 Kgs 4:1–6; 5:13; 9:15–22.

[155] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 11.

[156] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 260.

[157] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 64. "Jewish law... provides the broadest and richest content for the concept" of redemption (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 157).

[158] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 191.

[159] Specifically, concerning the Greek term υἱοθεσία ('adoption as sons'), "just because [it] is a Hellenistic term of adoption does not mean it always stands for a Hellenistic institution of adoption (Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 61).

need to look at two important aspects found in Paul's concept of adoption: succession and the act of being made fully a part of a new family.[160]

One key issue is that adoption is simply not part of the ancient Israelite legal system. Laws concerning adoption do not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures,[161] nor in the Talmud.[162] Also, Paul's adoption term, υἱοθεσία, does not occur in the Septuagint.[163] Nevertheless, although there were no Jewish adoption laws, it would be expected that they at least had knowledge of the concept from neighbouring cultures[164] since adoption definitely was a part of other ANE legal codes.[165] Instead of adoption then, Israelite law addressed the concern of a man who died without children through the levirate marriage custom.[166] Francis Lyall points out that "[t]his is the closest analogy to adoption in Jewish law, but since it presupposes the death of the 'adopter' (the person whose line is to continue), it has no relevance as a source of the Pauline metaphor."[167]

Despite the fact that there were no Israelite adoption laws, there are certain instances within the Hebrew Bible which some have seen to be cases of adoption. We

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[160] Lyall helps clarify this:

> Adoption must... be distinguished from concepts of succession, although it is often connected with it. Succession is a matter of title to property; adoption is a matter of membership in the family. In neither fosterage nor succession does the individual, *ipso facto*, become part of the family or represent the family for religious purposes. In other words, an individual may succeed to an estate because he is a member of the family of the deceased. That membership is the nexus between himself and the succession, but it is not a reversible equation. Under some circumstances such as where there is no direct heir (cf. Eliezer of Damascus and Abraham, Gen. 15:2), a person who is not a member of a family may succeed to an estate. Such succession does not make him part of the family of the deceased. That would require adoption (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 69–70).

[161] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 309; Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 49–50; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 67, 69, 70.

[162] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 309. Interestingly, there are no adoption laws in Israel until "the Adoption of Children Law 1960" (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 70).

[163] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 75; Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 49–50.

[164] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 67.

[165] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 111; Feigin, "Some Cases of Adoption in Israel," 193.

[166] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 63, n. 9.

[167] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 72.

will look at four of these here. The first occurs in Gen 15:2–3 where Abraham says of

Eliezer of Damascus, "a slave born in my house is to be my heir." The text here does not

clearly indicate that Eliezer is to continue Abraham's line of inheritance.[168]

Additionally, if this pericope corresponds to ancient Nuzi adoption texts,[169] it would be

problematic because, in Pauline theology, "an adopted son... could never lose his rights

or forfeit his adoption privileges or inheritance" as could happen in the Nuzi law.[170] For

the next three examples,[171] James M. Scott suggests there is evidence "*[p]erhaps... of a

Hebrew adoption formula.*"[172] However, there are contextual limitations in each case. In

the case of Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh in Gen 48:1–22, there are some

characteristics of adoption.[173] While it is true that Ephraim and Manasseh were already

fully part of Jacob's family,[174] the point can be made that by making them his sons

rather than grandsons, their father Joseph becomes the primary heir.[175] The case of

Moses and Pharaoh's daughter in Exod 2:10 appears to be an example of fosterage,

especially because Moses does not seem to view himself as an Egyptian.[176] In the story

of Esther being taken as a daughter by her uncle, Francis Lyall proposes that this could

not have been adoption since Mordecai was likely a eunuch.[177] It has also been

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[168] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 74. Lyall states that it is nothing more than "the disposal of Abraham's goods."

[169] This is disputed (Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 199).

[170] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 199.

[171] Gen 48:5–6; Exod 2:10; Esth 2:7,15.

[172] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 74, emphasis added. cf. 75.

[173] For instance, giving them his name and the "simulated birth in passing the children through his knees" (Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 111); cf. Feigin, "Some Cases of Adoption in Israel," 193, for the latter.

[174] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 74.

[175] Evidence for this is in the fact that Joseph is given "the first-born son's right to a double portion of inheritance" (Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 120–21); cf. Gen 48:22.

[176] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 74–75; Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 200.

[177] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 76.

suggested that "as a woman she could not have continued the family line."[178] However, in light of what we have observed regarding women and inheritance in the OT, this reasoning is flawed.[179]

There is yet another OT text which seems more promising in its correspondence to the Pauline adoption metaphor. In 2 Sam 7:14, the Lord says concerning David, "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me." Several scholars have seen this to be an example of an adoption formula.[180] This text in its context therefore seems to include both succession and the act of bringing someone fully into a family. Another similar passage is Ps 2:7,[181] although this one could well be speaking of natural parenting rather than adoption. A related concept to both of these, and one with particular relevance for the Pauline passages we will examine, is that of 'sonship.'[182] This is because it regards the relationship between a father and son as a reflection of the relationship between God and God's people.[183]

There is also possible evidence of adoption in some of the Second Temple writings. In response to the fact that Philo never uses the word υἱοθεσία, Scott observes that both Philo and Josephus use other terms of adoption.[184] A Jewish colony in Elephantine (Egypt) in the 5th century B.C.E. has an apparent instance of "manumission

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[178] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 200; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 76.

[179] See in particular the discussion of Zelophehad's daughters above (21–23).

[180] Scott demonstrates this with lexical and contextual evidence (*Adoption As Sons of God*, 100–2); cf. Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 315–16; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 78.

[181] "I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you.'"

[182] "Indeed, the theme of *sonship* has a remarkable and powerful trajectory, not only in the Old Testament (see below) but also throughout the whole canon of Scripture (e.g. Matt. 5:9; Luke 6:35; John 1:12; 11:52; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:14; Heb. 2:10; 12:5–8)" (Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 50); cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 79.

[183] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 50.

[184] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 75–81. For example, Philo uses other words in *Mos.* 1:32–33 (75–76); Josephus and Philo both refer to "imperial adoptions" (79; cf. 80); and Philo *Agr.* 6, refers to another possible adoption using a metaphor of grafting.

to adoption" in the phrase "My son shall he be" in Hebrew.[185] Finally, Scott

demonstrates how the 2 Sam 7:14 adoption formula is employed "eschatologically" in

several Second Temple writings[186] to provide a "national expectation of divine

adoption."[187]

So, was there adoption in ancient Israel? Opinions vary on its existence and

importance. Some assert that there was definitely adoption in ancient Jewish practice, if

not in the laws.[188] In terms of Pauline adoption, Burke sees more of "a Graeco-Roman

background" for Pauline adoption, with Jewish law and practice being less relevant.[189]

The description of the Jewish relationships and practices as something "akin to

adoption"[190] is perhaps more helpful but is still not satisfactory for understanding the

Pauline metaphor. Trevor Burke observes the following:

> The debate about background cannot be separated from the complexity of
> Paul's own background, which is a rich tapestry of Jewish, Roman and
> Greek cultures. To try to separate these in the quest to determine which
> one Paul was most likely to have used for his adoption metaphor is
> difficult and should not be simplistically reduced to an "either or"
> conclusion.[191]

We will therefore also need to look beyond Jewish law and tradition, to the other

cultures with whom Paul and his audience engaged, in order to find the main source for

his adoption metaphor.

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[185] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 85.

[186] "... either to the Messiah (4QFlor. 1:11), to Israel (Jub. 1:24), or to both (TJud. 24:3)" (Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 104).

[187] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 117.

[188] For example: Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," 309–19; Feigin, "Some Cases of Adoption in Israel," 193–94; Davies,"Inheritance Rights: Part 1," 141, n. 11. Scott, in a chapter called "Adoption in the Old Testament and Eary Judaism," presents a comprehensive investigation of biblical passages and Second Temple literature to support his view of the importance of adoption in the OT (Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 61–117.

[189] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 29; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 78–80.

[190] Brown, "The Concept of Inheritance," vi.

[191] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 30.

2.m   Final Conclusions

In this biblical theology of the inheritance, slavery and adoption themes in the Hebrew Scriptures, we have clearly heard the message that the dispossessed inherit. As we look to the New Testament including the Pauline epistles, two further messages will be announced: that those who are slaves will be freed and that *all* those who are in Christ will be adopted as heirs of God.

Chapter 3: A Socio-historical Background of Galatians and Romans

3.a   Introduction

In order to demonstrate the chain from "slave to son to heir"[1] that is central to

this thesis it is important to understand the laws and traditions associated with the

process of adoption and inheritance. Scholars of the NT are acknowledging the

importance of understanding Paul with respect to his social and historical context in

order to facilitate the interpretation of his writings.[2] This chapter will therefore present a

social-scientific approach, examining the history, culture and laws of Greco-Roman

society in the first century CE, in terms of certain relevant issues. This will include an

analysis of inheritance and adoption practices in the Greco-Roman period.

An overarching theme which needs to be appreciated is the centrality of the

family in adoption and inheritance law and practice. Because of the emphasis in this

study on inclusiveness, it is important to understand these practices within the context of

social status, race, and gender. In terms of social status, the issue of slavery is

particularly relevant to an examination of Galatians and Romans. This is because it is

used both in its metaphorical sense as a topos and in its literal sense as part of the human

condition in the first century. An awareness of gender issues is also necessary for

understanding inheritance and adoption. For these reasons, this chapter will consider the

following subjects: setting; family; women; slavery; adoption; and inheritance. This

socio-historical investigation will also give insight to a central premise of this thesis:

that the dispossessed inherit.

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[1] Sampley, "Romans and Galatians," 317; cf. Jones, "Exegesis of Galatians," 480.

[2] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 36. "It is not possible to understand a person and his activities apart from the times in which he lived. This is especially the case with Paul. In responding to the call of Jesus he did not withdraw from the world about him; rather, he found himself thrown more violently into it (Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 4).

3.b   Setting

In order to achieve a better understanding of the socio-historical background of

Pauline adoption and inheritance, it is necessary to determine the setting. The setting

will give a basic understanding of the context of Paul's letters to the Galatians and

Romans. The areas that will be examined here include the time period and geographical

areas under investigation; the people who made up the churches to whom the letters

were sent; and the legal system(s) underpinning the practices that Paul was referring to

in the metaphors of these two letters.

3.b.*i*   When?

The time period which will be considered in this chapter is influenced by the

time when Paul wrote the two letters in question. Most scholars give a date in the mid-

first-century CE for each of them, with Galatians being written first. It seems likely that

Galatians was written "some time in the late 40s or early 50s"[5] and Romans in the late

50s CE.[6] However, a wider-ranging reference than this decade or so is required in order

to understand the culture and laws influencing Paul's writing. The great majority of the

material examined in this study will therefore relate to the broader Greco-Roman period.

3.b.*ii*   Where?

The geographic location which was the context of the letter to the Romans is

fairly straightforward as it is addressed "[t]o all God's beloved in Rome" (Rom 1:7).

The area Paul had in mind when writing his letter "[t]o the churches of Galatia" (Gal

1:2), on the other hand, is the focus of much greater debate among scholars. Two

different areas of Asia Minor are possible: a northern area which was identified as

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[5] Morris, *Galatians*, 22. Fee estimates the date as somewhere in the mid 50s (*Galatians*, 4-5).
[6] Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 46–48. cf. Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 3.

"Galatia" and a southern area which was sometimes generally referred to as "Galatia" in Roman practice.[8] We cannot know for certain which it is.[9] Whatever the case, it does "not seriously affect our present enquiry"[10] since both areas came under the Roman legal system.

Another question concerning geography is whether the epistles were addressed to people in urban or rural areas. Wayne Meeks emphasizes that the Christian mission was primarily focused on urban areas in its first few centuries.[11] Nevertheless, by the beginning of the second century, Pliny the Younger was writing the following: "It is not only the towns, but villages and rural districts too which are infected through contact with this wretched cult."[12] This observation illustrates the geographical diversity of the Pauline ministry.

3.b.*iii* Who Was in the Churches?

This diversity that Pliny noticed in geographical impact extended also to age, status and gender: "A great many individuals of every age and class, both men and women, are being brought to trial, and this is likely to continue."[13] Another early observer who had a negative, yet telling, view of the Christian church of his time was Celsus who commented on the "woolworkers, cobblers, laundry workers and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels who enticed children and stupid women to come along."[14] However, we must recognize that there were also people of wealth and status in the

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[8] Morris gives in-depth evidence in favour of each theory but prefers the Southern Galatian view (*Galatians*, 15–20). cf. Fee, *Galatians*, 3-4.
[9] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 42. Meeks sees the evidence leaning toward the Northern Galatian view.
[10] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 229. Lyall states this in the context of not finding "the North Galatian theory compelling."
[11] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 8.
[12] Pliny, *Ep* 10:96; cf. Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 349.
[13] Pliny, *Ep* 10:96; cf. Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 349.
[14] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 3:44, quoted in Segal, *Rebecca's Children*, 97; cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 51.

Pauline churches.[15] There were both men and women in this category including the "Greek women and men of high standing" of Beroea (Acts 17:12), Phoebe (Rom 16:2), and Lydia (Acts 16:14–15). There were also slaveowners and slaves[16] and likely people who had been manumitted or their descendents.[17] Understanding who belonged to the synagogues Paul visited on his journeys also gives an idea of who belonged to the churches. They were "composed of native Jews, proselytes, [and] God-fearers in the process of converting."[18] Even beyond the dichotomy of Jews and Gentiles, Paul's letters were directed "to all the various nationalities within a very heterogenous empire."[19] Often, entire households belonged to the churches and these were diverse in themselves.[20] We can therefore see that the early "church like the larger society, is stratified"[21] and essentially represented each aspect of Gal 3:28—Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female.

3.b.*iv* Which Legal System?

It is useful to appreciate which legal system Paul had in mind when he was discussing his adoption metaphor. I will demonstrate that the evidence points to the Roman legal system in this regard.

It has already been demonstrated in Chapter 2 of this thesis that the Jewish law is not sufficient to provide understanding of the Pauline adoption metaphor although some would argue that it is central.[22] Two other points can be made here concerning the

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[15] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 57–62.

[16] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 63–64.

[17] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 73.

[18] Segal, *Rebecca's Children*, 97.

[19] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 25.

[20] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 221, n. 2.

[21] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 53.

[22] See 40–42 above. James Scott (*Adoption as Sons of God*), as discussed there, is the main proponent although he "attempts to situate the background of *hiouthesia* against a *single* Old Testament text, 2

Jewish Law. One is the suggestion that Gentile converts would have had a "limited" awareness of the Jewish legal system.[23] While this was likely to have been the case, Paul freely discusses Jewish Scripture, laws, and history throughout his letters from which we can assume they had had some teaching on this.

The Greek legal system seems to have been "the least likely of all the systems as a probable source."[25] This is because it was a much more diverse system than the other systems, reflecting the local background of each particular area.[26] Another factor is that Greek adoption had been used increasingly less in the centuries leading up to the mid-first-century CE.[27] In addition to adoption, Greek law does not adequately describe inheritance as seen in the writings of Paul.[28] So, while "provincial law had some influence on Roman law,"[29] it is the latter which had the predominant impact on Paul's writings on adoption and inheritance.

The legal system of "the Roman Empire... was a unified system of justice."[30] Roman law as a basis for understanding Paul's adoption metaphor "is the better

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Samuel 7:14" (Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 29); cf. Theron who argues for the potential that Pauline adoption "was basically a Jewish rather than a pagan concept" ("'Adoption' in the Pauline Corpus," 7).

[23] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 8.

[25] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 8; cf. Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 104, and Hester, who considers "Greek adoption... a pale shadow of the Roman concept" (*Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 69).

[26] Hester expresses it as "the sum of its parts" (*Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 8). This view is contra Moore-Crispin who maintains that "despite its lack of codification and despite local differences, [it] can easily be identified as a system" ("Galatians 4:1–9," 204). Burke notes that this is "on the basis of two manuscripts from Graeco-Egypt (POxy 1206; PLip 28)" and also "that most of the Greek data are drawn from the fourth century BC" (*Adopted Into God's Family*, 58); cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 89, and Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 44, for the latter point.

[27] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 90.

[28] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 15. Also, "Athens had no systematic corpus of civil law" (Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 34).

[29] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 9, n. 2. Walters advocates for an emphasis on the Greek law ("Paul, Adoption," 43). He points out a comment in a letter from Trajan to Pliny in support of this: "each city should conform to its own law" (Pliny, *Ep* 10:112–13; quoted in Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 43) although he also acknowledges that "Roman law did form an overarching structure."

[30] Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 153–54.

evidenced"[31] and "most developed."[32] It is noteworthy that the adoption term υἱοθεσία

occurs most often in Paul's letters to the Roman church.[33] In fact, he uses this "metaphor

only in letters to communities directly under the rule of Roman law."[34] Paul himself was

a Roman citizen[35] and "Roman law was a prized possession of the citizen."[36] He was

already proficient in one legal system which would have been a benefit to him in

appreciating another.[37] The fact that "adoption in its Roman form" was being practiced

more and more in all parts of the Roman empire is further evidence.[39] With not only

adoption but also inheritance[40] and quite likely certain aspects of slavery, the Roman

system does a better job of accounting for the Pauline material in that it correlates better

with the metaphors.[41] We see, therefore, "the balance of weight coming down in favour

of the Roman" system of law.[42]

The preponderance of evidence in favour of the Roman legal system as a

foundation for the Pauline metaphors of adoption and inheritance is considerable.

However, the Greek and Jewish legal traditions seem to have at least some influence as

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[31] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 95.

[32] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 105; cf. Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 9, 21.

[33] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 61; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 109; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 23–24, 97–98.

[34] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 61; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 82, 98.

[35] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 62; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 109; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 25, 82.

[36] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 82.

[37] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 239, 244.

[39] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 62; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 83.

[40] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 15. Lyall observes that "the break between the adoptee and his former family is total in Roman but not in Greek law. The relationship with the new family is similarly total in Roman but not in Greek law" (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 98).

[41] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 41; cf. p. 42 for an examination of 1 Cor 7:21–22 in this light and p. 46 for several other texts concerning slavery.

[42] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 46, n. 1.

well. We must recognize that "Paul's own background... is a rich tapestry of Jewish, Roman and Greek cultures."[43]

3.c   Family

The family was the venue for adoption and inheritance in Greco-Roman society.[44] In the Pauline corpus, the whole church is construed as 'the household of God,'[45] and Paul's concept of adoption is "but one of a series of legal metaphors drawn from family life."[46] Like adoption, the majority of the issues dealt with in this chapter have family as the context.[47]

3.c.i   The Character of the Greco-Roman Family

The idea of family in Greece and Rome was much broader than what we think of family today but would more appropriately be termed 'household.' The Roman *familia* went beyond the nuclear family to include "all persons and objects under the legal power (*patria potestas*) of the male head of the family."[48] The Greek term "*oikos* refers to people related by blood, marriage, and adoption and to the property held by the family, including slaves."[49] However, slaves were considered outright "property of the *oikos*" which differed from the Roman *familia* where in several ways they were

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[43] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 30; cf. 46–47; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 105; Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 21.

[44] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 12. This would also apply to the family in Israel (see 15–17 above). It was also "the most central and enduring institution of Greek society" (Lacey, *Family in Classical Greece*, 9), and "the most specific expression of human identity was found in the Roman family" (Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 63; cf. 65).

[45] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 77.

[46] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 87.

[47] Inheritance, slavery, and the status of women would certainly fit into this category.

[48] Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 6. It "comprised a husband, wife and their dependents (natural children, slaves [freedmen, freedwomen]) and their offspring" (Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 65).

[49] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 21, n. 5. Aristotle saw it as "the smallest unit of the state... which is comprised of the three elements, the male, the female and the servant" (*Politics*, 1.1:3–6; quoted in Lacey, *Family in Classical Greece*, 15).

considered "members."[50] The *familia* was arranged hierarchically, with the head of the family (*paterfamilias*) at the top of this "pyramid" and everyone having a place and specific roles and obligations to go along with it.[51] It was patriarchy in the truest sense of the word.

3.c.*ii*   The *Paterfamilias*

In the Roman *familia*, the head of the household (*paterfamilias*)[52] had complete legal control (*patria potestas*) over "every member" of his household.[53] This control did not end until his death[54] "unless deliberately broken by certain legal procedures."[55] Notably, since a woman "remained under her father's jurisdiction and legally therefore in his familia until his death," this meant that she would not be under the *potestas* of her husband.[56] However, the Roman *paterfamilias* still had further reaching authority than in Jewish or Greek households.[57] The Greek family was also a patriarchy and "the master of the *oikos*" was known as the "*kyrios*."[58] This could only be a man, although women would be temporarily responsible for the household in cases of the absence of her husband or his death until the time that an heir could take over.[59]

The paterfamilias had several areas of responsibility that belonged to him alone. He had the power to decide whether or not to keep any infants that were born to him or

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[50] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 21, n. 5

[51] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 64; cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 30.

[52] He was "the oldest surviving male ascendant" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 107).

[53] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 107. "As the head of the household the paterfamilias was the one primarily responsible for maintaining peace and concord within his own family" (Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 64).

[54] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 107; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 93, 120.

[55] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 99.

[56] Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 61. We will discuss the two types of marriage in the next section (3.c.*iii*).

[57] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 120.

[58] Lacey, *Family in Classical Greece*, 21.

[59] Lacey, *Family in Classical Greece*, 21–22.

his household. If they were rejected, it would mean exposure or sometimes infanticide.[60] Since religious worship was of great consequence to the Roman *familia*, it was the *paterfamilias* who "acted as priest," a role which was connected with his being the authority figure of the family.[61] He was also responsible for ensuring that this was continued after his death by obtaining an heir. The *paterfamilias* was therefore responsible for maintaining the both the "inheritance within the family" and the cultic observance. This would, in some cases, require arranging an adoption.[62]

3.c.*iii* Marriage

Roman and Greek marriages were much alike in several ways[63] whereas Jewish marriage differed from the Greco-Roman pattern in a few fundamental ways.[64] The purpose of marriage was to produce children[65] although we will see later in the chapter that this was not as applicable for Roman marriage in the period under our consideration because of the option to adopt.

Roman marriage customs are especially relevant to two key issues of this thesis: the status of women and inheritance. In Roman society, there had been a movement away from an earlier type of marriage where the authority (*manus*) over the woman had passed from the *paterfamilias* to the husband.[66] This practice gave way to one called *sine manu* where the wife remained under the authority and in the family of her father

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[60] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 35.

[61] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 83–84; cf. 91.

[62] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 91.

[63] These would include the arrangement of the marriage by family, dowry payment, and divorce (Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 61).

[64] Such as "Jewish concern with endogamy, as compared to the Roman focus on status and rank, and the acceptance of polygyny" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 81). On the monogamous nature of Roman marriage, see Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 101.

[65] Lacey observes of the Classical Greek household that the "*oikos* without children was also not fully an *oikos*" (*Family in Classical Greece*, 15).

[66] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 35, 100; Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 103; Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 61.

and was not considered part of her husband's family.[67] This *sine manu* type of marriage "gave many Roman women of the imperial period with deceased fathers an unusual legal autonomy."[68] Additionally, this marriage arrangement may have been considered advantageous to the family of the husband since, at his death, his wife would not inherit his property.[69]

3.c.*iv* Guardians

Another family concept related to both women and inheritance, and one which occurs in the Galatians passage (4:2), is the guardian (*tutela*) who was usually a male relation (agnate). Infants at the death of their paterfamilias would require a guardian[70] until they reached puberty and were able to father children themselves.[71] Women, in some cases, were required to have a guardian their whole lives.[72] The institution of guardianship was intended to prevent a woman or a child (when grown) from "squandering... [or] disposing of family property."[73] By the time of Paul's writings, legislation eliminating "the automatic guardianship of agnates over women" had been enacted and this allowed for some women to be "released... altogether from the

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[67] "This second... form of marriage gradually prevailed over the former" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 103). This change happened around 150 BCE (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 29).

[68] Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 61. (However, see Section 3.c.*iv* below on women and guardians). Also, a wife's dowry was restored to her at the death of her husband or divorce and the *sine manu* institution "could protect a daughter from the whims of her husband and allow her to retain close ties with her blood family" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 100).

[69] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 101.

[70] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 113. "It was a necessary institution, involving administration of property" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 115).

[71] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 114.

[72] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 113. In Greece, "[c]itizen women were perpetually under the guardianship of a man, usually the father or, if he were dead, the male next-of-kin. Upon marriage a woman passed into the guardianship of her husband in most matters" (Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 62).

[73] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 114.

requirement of guardian's authorization... [in order to] manage their own property and affairs."[74]

3.d Women

In Gal 3:28, one of the three pairings that Paul speaks to is "male and female." It will therefore be advantageous to address the issue of gender in the socio-historical context of the time he was writing, specifically the status and role of women. In this regard, it is important to recognize that there were already "moderate liberative tendencies at work in the period" which resulted in "a movement toward greater social freedom for women (not toward 'liberation' in the modern sense) that was happening already in Roman society and in which Christianity... participated."[75] Also, because, as we shall observe, women have often been obscured in history, there is a risk in assuming that they were merely peripheral in Greco-Roman society. Instead, this discussion of the status of women in that period will take Lynn Cohick's view "that women were dynamic participants in their environments, shaping and being shaped by it."[76]

3.d.i The Invisibility of Women in Greco-Roman History

It goes without saying that there is a much greater male than female presence in Greco-Roman historical data "and almost everything is presented from a male perspective."[77] This phenomenon has aptly been identified as "women's invisibility."[78] One reason that women's history from this period is frequently hidden is the fact that

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[74] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 115; cf. Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 3.

[75] Osiek et al (*A Woman's Place*, 2) write that "Christianity *partially* participated" (emphasis added) but I believe that this does not fully reflect the influence of the early Christian movement and writings. The biblical authors, including Paul, made use of the culture and traditions of the time and in several instances took them further or portrayed them in a new light. This thesis will demonstrate how this was done in Gal 3–4 and Rom 8.

[76] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 25.

[77] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 14.

[78] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 67. Their invisibility varied depending on geography, time period and status.

military and political accounts are favoured, both in ancient and modern times. This

meant that certain groups "were excluded by sex or class from participation in the

political and intellectual life of their societies" and from adequate and accurate

representation in the literature.[79] This is most notably seen Greek society with its

magnificent artistic, philosophical and intellectual works. Concerning this, Sarah

Pomeroy notes that "rarely has there been a wider discrepancy between the cultural

rewards a society had to offer and women's participation in that culture." [80] In general,

Roman women were not excluded from "social, political and cultural life" to the extent

that Greek women were.[81]

One caution which needs to be made regarding this issue: there is a risk that an

imprudent use of a hermeneutics of suspicion actually "renders ancient women

invisible—the very thing the modern author was hoping to avoid!"[82] The present study

is aware of the need to "isolate those points at which real historical evidence glimmers

through the haze."[83] The ultimate purpose is the same as that expressed by Joan Kelly:

"Women's history has a dual goal: to restore women to history and to restore our history

to women."[84] This emphasis on restorative inclusion will be at the forefront of our

examination of Paul's writings on inheritance and adoption.

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[79] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, ix. This is not to say that women were completely absent from the literature of the time. "Women pervade nearly every genre of classical literature, yet often the bias of the author distorts the information. Aside from some scraps of lyric poetry, the extant formal literature of classical antiquity was all written by men" (Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, x).

[80] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, ix.

[81] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, x. However, "the prevailing scholarly opinion that some Roman women, at least, were emancipated likewise needs revision."

[82] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 22. This type of hermeneutic "understands all texts written by men (and most were) to be irredeemably androcentric, patriarchal and misogynistic."

[83] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 22; cf. Osiek et al on having "confidence in the possibility of the historical reconstruction of the lives of early Christian women" and the need "to pay careful attention to how the representation of women is affected by genre, metaphor, novelistic tendencies, and ancient *topoi* (literary themes)" (*A Woman's Place*, 244–45).

[84] Kelly, "The Social Relation of the Sexes," 1.

3.d.*ii* How Women were Viewed

The fact that women were in many respects hidden in Greco-Roman society is also reflected in how they were perceived by that society. There were often conflicting messages given.[85] A common view in Greco-Roman and Jewish thinking of the time was that women were inferior to men[86] and "second class citizens."[87] Lynn Cohick astutely observes, "Even as on the playground today, the worst thing that can be said to a boy is that he is a girl, so too the ancient world humbled male opponents by identifying them as women."[88] The primary value of Greek women was in "fertility and sexual attractiveness" and so they were often shown in "youthful bloom" in works of art.[89] On the other hand, women were often loved and honoured, as evidenced in the Laudatio Turiae, a beautiful tribute from "a husband to his beloved wife of forty years."[90] Also, by the time of Paul, there had been forward movement and women were

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[85] Cohick says of a daughter in Greco-Roman times: "She is fully part of the family... and she is less desired than sons... Often she will receive some education, but she is also to remain confined in the home to preserve her chastity. The literary evidence leans toward a more negative picture of a daughter as a liability, while the epigraphic and epistolary evidence suggests that at the individual family level, many parents loved and cared for their daughters—if they chose to raise them. In most cases, a daughter was destined to marry; to die a virgin was to die having only half lived" (*Women in the World*, 64).

[86] Josephus declares that, according to Scripture, "A woman is inferior to her husband in all things" (*C. Ap*, 2.201). Cohick points out that "this law is not identified by Josephus, nor can modern interpreters discover to what he was referring" (*Women in the World*, 83–84). The Greek physician Soranus, concurring with Aristotle and Zenon the Epicurean, considered that "the female is imperfect, the male, however, perfect" (*Gyn* 3.3). Cato, in a speech written by Livy, warned husbands that "the moment they begin to be your equals they will be your superiors" (Quoted in Ilan, *Integrating Women*, 129).

[87] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 110; cf. 113.

[88] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 22.

[89] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 129. "[T]hey were considered 'old' and less valuable" when they were no longer able to have children (205).

[90] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 109. Here is an excerpt from this first century BCE Roman funerary inscription: "(31) When you despaired of your ability to bear children and grieved over my childlessness, you became anxious lest by retaining you in marriage I might lose all hope of having children... So you proposed a divorce outright and offered to yield our house free to another woman's fertility... You declared that you would regard future children as joint and as though your own, and that you would not effect a separation of our property... (40) I must admit that I flared up so that I almost lost control of myself; so horrified was I by what you tried to do... To think that you had been able to conceive in your mind the idea that you might cease to be my wife while I was still alive... (44) What desire, what need to have children could I have had that was so great that I should have broken faith for that reason and changed certainty for uncertainty?... You remained with me as my wife, for I could not have given in to

gaining some freedoms they had not had in earlier times.[91] However, it must also be

recognized that it was only the beginning of this movement and so women were still

considered inferior and excluded in many ways.

3.d.*iii* Women and Status Differences

Status differences were significant in Greco-Roman society, especially the

distinction between slave and free. Status differences even superseded gender

differences.[92] An example of this found in the NT is the notable fact that Prisca's name

sometimes comes before her husband's in Acts and the writings of Paul, which likely

meant she had a more prominent status.[93] However, the two factors acted on each other

in a complex manner. As Jennifer Glancy observes, "the experience of slavery was

conditioned by gender and sexuality. At the same time, a person's experience of what it

meant to be male or female was conditioned by the accident of slavery."[94] Interestingly,

"there is no evidence that any sense of solidarity was formed between free women and

female slaves, based on sex or the common features of their situations."[95]

3.d.*iv* Women and the Public and Private Spheres of Society

In Classical Greece, there was a noticeable distinction between males and

females when it came to public/private life. Sarah Pomeroy gives an apt description of

the situation: "male is to female as *polis* ('city-state') is to *oikos* ('family, household,

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you without disgrace for me and unhappiness for both of us" As quoted in Cohick, *Women in the World*, 109–10.

[91] "[I]n some parts of the Empire... they were able to participate in public, commercial, and religious life, own property, and have a relatively independent existence. Public thinking and practice moved in a more tolerant direction" (Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 110). In both Greek and Roman culture, "[a]s the Hellenistic era progressed,... a married woman's "right to self-determination against paternal authority began to be asserted" (Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 129).

[92] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 22; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 20–21.

[93] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 59.

[94] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 9.

[95] "In fact, the opposite seems to have been true. Women owned slaves, both female and male, and women slaveholders, as far as we can tell, were no less brutal or authoritarian than men toward their own slaves" (Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 96).

estate'), as public is to private."[96] Hellenistic-Jewish thought on the issue was similar.[97] However, there was definite movement away from this by the first century CE, especially among women of higher status.[98] Women were becoming increasingly involved in public life. This was particularly true of Roman society where Robert Banks notes there were "wider opportunities for women to engage in public life. Roman noblewomen were able to move around more freely in public than their Greek counterparts, to receive some education in moral and other subjects, and to belong to women's societies."[99]

3.d.*v*   Women's Participation and Influence in Society

There is a close association between the issue of public and private spheres and the extent to which women participated and had influence in Greco-Romansociety. It is important to address this issue because participation will be a key aspect in understanding what we can glean from the study of Galatians and Romans, especially in terms of application.[100] In first century Greco-Roman society, there were several areas where we see women participating and having influence. Women were involved,

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[96] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 14; cf. 18. It should be noted that matters were complicated by the fact that the rules were different for slaves: "a female can not only work out of doors, but she can also perform personal services for the respectable wife that allow the latter to keep her distance from men who are strangers (Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 22).

[97] "Market places, and council chambers, and courts of justice, and large companies and assemblies of numerous crowds, and a life in the open air full of arguments and actions relating to war and peace, are suited to men; but taking care of the house and remaining at home are the proper duties of women" (Philo, *Spec. Laws*, 3:169).

[98] "Classical Greek ideals surrounding matrons—that the wealthy elite remain secluded in their homes— slowly gave way to the Roman picture of a virtuous woman participating in certain public settings" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 29); cf. 72–73. An example of this could be seen in women's presence at meals in the public sphere (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 88).

[99] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 157.

[100] This will be particularly relevant to the question of whether the inclusivity of Gal 3:28 has an application which is only spiritual in focus or whether it also encompasses practical concerns. The concept of table fellowship will be central in that discussion.

although usually not in leadership and innovation, in religious and cult activities.[101]

Women and girls undoubtedly had less access to education than males. However, in

certain circumstances women were able to be educated[102] and would have greater access

to education if it was being provided in their home.[103] There were even cases where

women would oversee education going on in their homes.[104] Women such as Lydia

(Acts 16:14), were involved in the trade of goods and various other areas of

commerce[105] and, although this was associated with elite status—at least at that level—

there were also women in other social classes active in this arena.[106]

Related to, and yet surpassing any of these areas in importance, is the system of

patronage. It involved "public and private benefaction [and] grew and flourished at this

time."[107] Women "participated heavily in the patronage system on both sides, as patrons

and as clients."[108] Several "social changes" leading up to the first century BCE

contributed to the rise of patronage among women.[109] By means of "the vehicle of

euergetism"[110] women were able to attain "prominence" in society.[111] Some of the target

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[101] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 24–25; Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 223.

[102] For example, Jewish girls were sometimes given training in Scripture (Sus 1:3). On this, cf. Cohick, *Women in the World*, 22, 55.

[103] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 85.

[104] "The Roman matron influenced the earliest stages of education if the family employed an instructor, as wealthy families could afford to do" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 45). Pliny the Younger, in a letter to a mother (Corellia Hispulla), gives her advice on arranging instruction for her son (*Ep* 3:3).

[105] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 24; cf. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 200. They "both retained administration of their property and were actively engaged in businesses on their own and thus had funds at their disposal" (Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 163).

[106] "The evidence from Pompeii reveals women active in a variety of businesses and trades" (Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 201).

[107] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 285.

[108] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 194; cf. 199.

[109] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 286–87; 286, n. 4. For instance, due to several wars in this time period, "[w]omen controlled their family's wealth as never before, with fathers, sons, and brothers off to war, exiled, or dead" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 286).

[110] Defined as "public benefaction" in Cohick, *Women in the World*, 286.

[111] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 298.

areas of women's patronage were: other women,[112]guilds[113] and religious institutions,[114] the manumission of slaves,[115] and political influence.[116] A good NT example of patronage is seen when Paul "relies on the wealthy and influential Phoebe" (Rom 16:1).[117] The issue of wealth is important because it meant that it was predominantly elite women who could participate in this practice. However, we can see that some women indeed were able to be active in public life through the medium of patronage.[118]

3.d.*vi*   Concluding Remarks on Women

When examining the issue of women in Greco-Roman society, we are confronted first with the relative invisibility of women. We also receive "mixed signals" concerning what women may and may not do.[119] Digging deeper, Cohick finds that "[i]n general, the data reveals that underneath the proscriptions for a dutiful daughter, submissive wife, and steadfast mother we find educated daughters, independent wives, and powerful mothers."[120] We need to keep in mind as we continue the discussion in this chapter and as we consider the question of inclusivity in terms of Galatians and Romans throughout the thesis, that there were certainly barriers and restrictions that women had to face in first century society.[121] However, there was also movement beyond these barriers—in society, the early Church, and in the lives of individual women.

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[112] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 199.
[113] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 200–201. (Although it was a small percentage.)
[114] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 203–4.
[115] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 130.
[116] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 199.
[117] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 216; cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 60; Cohick, *Women in the World*, 301–2.
[118] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 298.
[119] "For example, wives are to be silent, yet they have a voice in religious festivals. Women should stay at home and spin wool, but many women are busy earning a living in the marketplace. Plutarch enjoins the wife to be seen only with her husband, but numerous statues of women praise their public deeds with no mention of any man, husband, father, son, or brother" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 285).
[120] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 30.
[121] For instance, related to the issues of slavery and inheritance.

3.e Slavery

Whereas in modern society slavery, although it unquestionably exists, is "labeled a 'crime,'"[122] in the first century it was a given—a "social reality" which no one questioned.[123] Ancient Greece and Roman Italy, because of the percentage of the population which was enslaved, both fit the description of a "slave society."[124] Greco-Roman slavery can also be described as an "institution."[125]

Since "slave" and "free" is another pair in Gal 3:28 and slave is a part of the slave-son-heir chain we will consider in the chapters on adoption and the Galatians/Romans comparison, it will be beneficial to consider what slavery and freedom meant in the first century. We will therefore explore how slaves were viewed and treated, as well as the issues of gender, sexual availability and manumission.

3.e.i How Slaves Were Viewed

Legally, a Roman slave was considered "a thing, a *res*,"[126] virtually "less than human."[127] Slaves in the Greco-Roman society were often seen in "corporeal terms,"[128] in essence "as *sōmata doulika*, slave bodies."[129] Slaves were also deemed to be "chattel," property which could be purchased and sold,[130] with usufruct available for

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[122] Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 2.
[123] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 259.
[124] Sandra Joshel defines this as more than 20 percent (*Slavery in the Roman* World, 7–8).
[125] "'Institution' means an organization of roles that include conduct—how people should behave or are imagined to behave. It refers, too, to a system of practices and ideas that are socially sanctioned and maintain the continued existence of the institution" (Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 10–11). Jennifer Glancy calls it "the ubiquitous ancient institution of slavery" (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 3).
[126] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 35; cf. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 55–56; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 11; Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 38.
[127] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 284. A slave would also have been seen as "an animal with a voice" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 260).
[128] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 38.
[129] They were often referred to as such on wills, bills of sale, and other documents (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 7, 10).
[130] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 56; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 36.

their owners' exploitation.[131] And yet, there was also the sense that slaves were viewed

as "persons"[132] who possessed, at least on some level, "humanity."[133]

3.e.*ii*   How Slaves Were Obtained

There were several means by which people were enslaved in the Greco-Roman

period. The most common was being born to a slave mother.[134] Other methods of

obtaining slaves included: kidnapping or capture in war;[135] buying and selling slaves in

the slave trade;[136] and self-sale or sale of one's family.[137] Another common practice

was to obtain slaves through exposure.[138] This practice has interesting implications for

some of the other issues in this chapter. The *paterfamilias* of a family had the right to

determine whether or not a child would be exposed or raised.[139] Often, infants were left

in locations known to be areas where people would go to find abandoned children.

There was a "hope that the child would be found" combined with an awareness that

there was a high risk of death.[140] If they survived, these children were quite frequently

taken to become slaves.[141] Girls were exposed much more regularly than boys[142] and,

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[131] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 152.

[132] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 11; cf. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 56.

[133] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 284; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 74.

[134] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 74.

[135] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 77, 79

[136] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 86. Glancy observes that the actual process of trading in the slave market was degrading and humiliating for those being sold.

[137] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 37. Glancy argues that this method was not that common (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 84).

[138] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 140; cf. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 108. Glancy notes that exposure is second only to slaves born from a slave mother as a source (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 75). Although it was commonly practiced in the Greco-Roman context, it is "uniformly condemned in Jewish literature" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 41) and does not appear to be practiced by Jews (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 34). Not many of the early Christian writings are explicit in prohibiting infant exposure. One that does is the *Sibylline Oracles*. Additionally, the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Didache* both ban infanticide and abortion (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 76).

[139] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 108.

[140] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 38; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 75. The risk of death was high even for non-exposed infants at this time in history. Freeborn infants remained so and there was the potential that they could later be reclaimed (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 36).

[141] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 8.

for many of these infants, a common fate was to be prostituted as they grew.[143]

3.e.*iii* The Nature of Greco-Roman Slavery

For a Greek or Roman slave, as for one in any slave society, "work was what they did all day."[144] Slaves were identified by, and even identified themselves by the kind of work they did.[145] A slave was completely under the control of and "at the disposal of... his master's will."[146] Slaves could be found in a wide variety of occupations, including those with a great deal of responsibility, like management and financial stewardship.[147] In fact, slaves did virtually any kind of work. However, there were certain things free persons were not willing to do as seen in "the ancient and ubiquitous reluctance of the free-born to 'do the washing-up.'"[148] In Paul's travels, as he visited homes and attended the city marketplaces, he would have come in contact with slaves of both genders of various urban occupations.[149]

Another characteristic of slavery relevant to our discussion is the fact that slaves could not own property.[150] However, a slave could be given a *peculium*, "a fund... which

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[142] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 40; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 75.

[143] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 140. I prefer to use the term "prostituted" in these circumstances rather than "become prostitutes" which implies they would have some sort of choice.

[144] Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 163.

[145] Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 162–63.

[146] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 125. Regarding this point, Lyall cites Rom 6:15–23.

[147] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 57, 187; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 27 Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 42.

[148] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 180.

[149] These would have included "craftspeople, prostitutes, managerial agents, and domestic slaves, including those whose domestic duties included sexual obligations" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 40; cf. 42). .

[150] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 133.

he was at liberty to use."[151] Notably, it could also be used by slaves to buy their

freedom.[152]

3.e.*iv* The Treatment of Slaves

Greco-Roman slaves were often treated harshly. This applies to what was

expected of them in terms of workload.[153] Their masters also had the right to cruelly

punish them.[154] Demosthenes observed that a slave "is answerable with his body for all

offences."[155] Slaves could be physically struck "by just about anyone" and it was not

considered an affront to them but rather to their owners.[156] Slaves could be tortured and,

in fact, "their evidence was not admissible *except* under torture."[157] An example of

slaves being tortured for evidence is seen in a letter to the emperor Trajan from Pliny the

Younger, describing how he determined that "it was all the more necessary to extract the

truth by torture from two slave-women, whom they call deaconesses."[158] Slaves were

sometimes given brands, scars or identification collars to keep them from running

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[151] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 38; cf. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 188–89; Cohick, *Women in the World*, 265; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 133. "Technically it belonged to the master, was revocable at his will and was part of his assets, but the slave had day-to-day disposal of it" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 188–89). Slaves could also own other slaves.

[152] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 265; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 38.

[153] "To put it crudely, but not inaccurately, slaves were the machines of their day" (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 27).

[154] "The slaveholders' right to abuse their slaves at will was almost beyond question" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 14). cf. Cohick, *Women in the World*, 283. Punishments such as beatings and whippings "must be understood to apply to both sexes" (Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 102).

[155] Demosthenes, 22:55, quoted in Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, 93. This is from the 4th century. However, it was an attitude unchanged from the 1st century.

[156] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 260. "Abuse of a slave was an attack on the slaveholder's personal dignity, an injury from which slaves were immune because slaves did not possess dignity in their own right" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 12; cf. 14).

[157] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 275, emphasis original. However, their interrogators were required to have "a *prima facie* case of some kind before slaves could be interrogated, some prior evidence for them to refute or corroborate."

[158] Pliny, *Ep* 10:96. Glancy points out that "Pliny chose to torture enslaved Christian leaders not because most Christians, or most Christian leaders, were slaves. Rather, he chose to interrogate slaves because their bodies were liable to torture. Freeborn persons were exempt from such treatment" (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 131).

away,[159] amongst the latter of which some have been found with Christian symbols in

later centuries.[160] Slaves were also susceptible to capital punishment in its "crueler

forms," including crucifixion.[161] Cohick acknowledges "that slavery allowed for upward

mobility in that freed slaves often rose in the social order" but emphasizes that this

should not take away from the harsh manner in which slaves were often treated.[162]

3.e.v   Gender and Slavery

Gender plays an important part in helping us understand first century Greco-

Roman slavery. There were more male than female slaves in Roman households.[163]

Female slaves were "[l]owest on the social scale."[164] Their work was not valued as

much as that of male slaves.[165] What they *were* valued for was their sexual

productivity.[166] More males attained "freedom and social prestige,"[167] at least in part

because they were manumitted earlier.[168] And yet, in spite of all of this, male slaves

were also disadvantaged in how they were viewed since, as Jennifer Glancy describes,

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[159] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 260.

[160] For example, a bronze collar from the fourth or fifth century with an inscription reading: "I am the slave of the archdeacon Felix. Hold me so that I do not flee" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 9; cf. 88).

[161] Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, 93–94; cf. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 273. Finley also mentions burning alive and wild beasts, and this is in the context of those other than slaves who were at risk to such atrocities—for example, Christians.

[162] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 283.

[163] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 194; cf. Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 101.

[164] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 259. Female slaves lacked honour in society. They "lived with a state of perpetual shame" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 27) or, as Osiek et al express it, a "female slave can lay no claim to chastity or shame... Her honor cannot be violated because it does not exist" (*A Woman's Place*, 97).

[165] Female slaves "often lacked marketable skills" in comparison with males and therefore did not have as many opportunities to advance (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 257).

[166] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 74; cf. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 20, re: "wet nurses."

[167] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 257.

[168] "[M]ale slaves were often manumitted around thirty, but female slaves were unlikely to be manumitted until menopause, which for many women took place in their late forties (and many women would have died before they reached that age)" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 17).

"the male slave endured the permanent status of a boy, excluded from maturing into the category of manhood."[169]

3.e.*vi*   Sexual Availability and the Prostituting of Slaves

Greco-Roman slaves, both male and female,[170] were expected to be sexually accessible to their owners and any others who received the owner's consent.[171] This "unrestricted availability in sexual relations... is treated as a commonplace."[172] For Glancy, this brings up questions in relation to the Pauline churches: "Given the ubiquity of the sexual use of slaves, Paul would inevitably have encountered slaves whose obligations included sexual relations with their owners and those to whom their owners permitted sexual access."[173] What did this mean for slaves who belonged to the Church? They "must have often found themselves in nearly impossible situations, being instructed to live according to a strict moral code and finding it impossible to do so."[174]

Another related issue is the prostituting of slaves. Slavery and prostitution were

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[169] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 24; cf. 25.

[170] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 21; Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 151; Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 103.

[171] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 257; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 21; Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 103, 249.

[172] Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, 95; cf. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 151; Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 104. This is frequently reflected in ancient literature where we find one male slave stating: "For fourteen years I pleasured him; it is no disgrace to do what a master commands. I also gave my mistress satisfaction" (Petronius, *Satyricon* 75.11; quoted in Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, 96). We also find evidence of this attitude from the perspective of a slaveholder in Horace: "[Y]ou have in hand the servant girl or little household slave... the love that pleases me is ready and available" (*Satirae* 1.2.116–19). For men in the Jewish community, however, sexual relations with female slaves were discouraged (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 275).

[173] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 58.

[174] Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 249. This issue will be dealt with further in the next chapter, a NT Biblical Theology.

"often inextricably linked together."[175] It was considered "a legitimate male prerogative" to have sex with a prostitute.[176]

Also associated with the issue of sexual availability, slaves were not permitted to marry but they *could* have "an informal marital arrangement known as 'cohabitation' (*contubernium*)."[177] These were often "monogamous, lasting slave unions"[178] but they were not considered legally valid.[179] Any children born in such circumstances would belong to the owner[180] and a male slave would not be considered the father.[181]

3.e.*vii* Manumission and Living as a Freed Person

By the first century, things had progressed to the point where large numbers of slaves were being manumitted.[182] They were often freed through an owner's will.[183] Manumission "terminated the slave's status as property."[184] It could be enacted for the

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[175] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 282; cf. 283. Exposed infants were often raised or sold into slave prostitution (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 38, 40; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 55; Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 140) and "most prostitutes were slaves or were pimped by men who had legal control over them" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 283). It provided "great profit to the owners of female slaves" (Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 192; cf. Cohick *Women in the World*, 282–83).

[176] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 282. This was also true for Greek men (Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 90). Once again, we find evidence of this attitude in Horace: "Seeing one such, a person whom he knew issuing from a whorehouse, Cato gave forth with this godlike utterance: 'Praised be you for your virtue! When lewd lust swells the veins, here is the place where young men should go and not seduce other men's wives'" (*Satirae* 1.2.31–32).

[177] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 193; cf. Cohick, *Women in the World*, 261; Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 28.

[178] Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 62.

[179] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 193; Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 98. There was a motivation for a slaveholder to allow these unions, because the couple "likely worked harder and were happier" (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 261).

[180] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 261; Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 193; Osiek et al, *A Woman's Place*, 98.

[181] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 28.

[182] This involved "vast numbers of freedmen and freedwomen" (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 93); cf. Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 20. However, it was not the "majority of slaves" who were freed and many, but not all of these became citizens (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 94). Slaves put a great deal of effort into trying to attain manumission (Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 20).

[183] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 264.

[184] Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 42.

purpose of marriage.[185] There were certain benefits to an owner who intended to manumit, including honour and slaves who worked harder in order to gain freedom.[186] There is some evidence of Christians in later generations manumitting slaves.[187]

After a slave was freed, the relationship with the former owner continued in quite a defined manner. The owner was now a patron to the freedperson.[188] The freed individual continued to owe acts of service (*operae*) to the patron[189] as well as an attitude of *obsequeium*.[190] Patrons also had responsibilities to those who had been freed, including providing for them in need.[191] However, "the legal system generally favored the patron"[192] including being entitled to receive the freedperson's estate.[193] In cases where someone was freed through redemption, the freedperson was required to pay back the price of redemption and, until then, was "under his redeemer's control."[194]

3.e.*viii* Concluding Remarks on Slavery

We know from the NT writings and from other sources that there were slaves in the early church, whether or not their numbers were high.[195] Because of this, and "[b]ecause the image of slavery is so powerful in the New Testament" it has been useful to consider certain issues concerning first-century slavery and "to explore the life of the

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[185] This was most often for a female slave to marry a male owner (Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 61; cf. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 51) although it was also possible for a male to marry a freed female slave (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 52).

[186] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 264.

[187] See Glancy's discussion of *P.Kell.*G. 48 (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 92) and Harrill's discussion of Ignatius, *Ad Polycarp* 4:3 ("*Ignatius*, Ad Polycarp").

[188] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 40. The explicitly defined nature of this relationship was fairly "unique in Roman law" and resonates with 1 Cor 7:21–22 (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 40; cf. 41). There were also freedpersons in Israel (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 42; cf. Acts 6:9).

[189] Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 46; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 43; Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 195.

[190] According to Lyall, this includes but also goes beyond just "respect" (*Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 43).

[191] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 44.

[192] Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 45.

[193] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 43.

[194] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 169.

[195] Pliny, *Ep* 10:96.

average...slave."[196] Some of the questions that have been raised here will be examined

further in the discussion of the NT and Pauline writings in future chapters.

3.f   Jews and Gentiles in the Greco-Roman Period

Of the three pairs in Gal 3:28, "Jew" and "Gentile" is the one that Paul takes on

most explicitly in the surrounding context as well as in Romans. In both Romans and

Galatians, Paul deals with adoption and inheritance in terms of how it relates to the

inclusion of Gentiles. Paul's application of these same principles to slaves and women is

central to this thesis. The relationship between Jews and Gentiles in Greco-Roman

society is a broad topic so, for the purposes of this thesis, I will mainly limit the

discussion to the issue of Jew and Gentile within the synagogue and the Church.

3.f.*i*   Jews and Gentiles in the Synagogues

Jews were very much a part of the Greco-Roman world.[197] Gentiles who wished

to adhere to the Jewish faith (known as God-fearers or "semiproselytes") were in an

ambiguous position in the synagogues, "since they were no longer pagans but were not

yet Jews."[198] Those who did not receive circumcision were viewed "as second-order

members"[199] and did not receive a full welcome.[200]

3.f.*ii*   Jews and Gentiles in the Churches

We must keep in mind that Christianity was originally a Jewish sect.[201] In many

ways, according to N.T. Wright, Jewish and Gentile Christians had *"the same story."*[202]

However, Wright recognizes that, while Jewish and Gentile Christianity were not

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[196] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 259.
[197] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 28; cf. Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 153.
[198] Segal, *Rebecca's Children*, 98.
[199] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 112.
[200] Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 232.
[201] Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 344, 453–54.
[202] Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 150, emphasis original.

completely different, they were also not identical.[203] There were a number of issues

which needed to be maneuvered in establishing churches which had both Gentile and

Jewish Christians.[204] Because Paul had a history of relationships with both Jews and

Gentiles, he was "the ideal person to analyze and solve the problem of Christianity's

Gentile future by coming to terms at a decisive moment with its Jewish past."[205] The

Christian faith was therefore able to bring together Jew and Gentile and to develop into

something exceptional. Alan Segal perceives that "[t]he crucial factor in its success was

the ability, which was virtually unique among Jewish sects, to convert Gentiles from a

variety of milieus outside Judea and to transform itself into a single group unifying Jew

and Gentile."[206]

3.f.*iii*   Concluding Remarks on Jews and Gentiles

Paul was able to see the potential for unity within diversity concerning the issue

of Jew-Gentile relations. This will serve us well in applying the same concept to the

other components of Gal 3:28.

3.g   Greco-Roman Adoption

Adoption as an idea and practice is described in ancient legal systems as well as

those of today.[207] Most notably for our purposes, the adoption metaphor was an integral

component of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25. It was portrayed by Paul as a "treasured

status"[208] for the recipients of these letters. It is therefore helpful to understand what the

concept meant to Paul and his Greco-Roman audience.

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[203] Wright, *New Testament and the People*, 472–73.

[204] These included instructing Gentiles on certain concepts unfamiliar to them—for example apocalypticism—and working through differences in understanding how people were to relate to each other (Segal, *Rebecca's Children*, 99).

[205] Segal, *Rebecca's Children*, 99.

[206] Segal, *Rebecca's Children*, 96.

[207] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 67.

[208] Finger, Reta Halteman; quoted in Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 65.

3.g.*i*   The Purpose of Adoption

There were several reasons why adoption was important within the Roman Empire. To begin with, there was a high rate of mortality at this point in history.[209] This contributed to, but was not the only reason for, "the notorious infertility of the Roman upper class."[210] The other main reason for that was the avoidance of responsibility for child-raising.[211]

For a Roman family, there were two main purposes to adopt. The main motive was passing on the inheritance of the *paterfamilias*[212] and the "perpetuation of the family line" and family name.[213] This was also true in Greek culture.[214] The other major purpose for adoption was to preserve the family cult, "so that the adoption family would continue to be represented before the family god."[215]

3.g.*ii*   The Process of Adoption

James Walters summarizes the three options available to a Greek man who wanted to adopt as follows: "he could adopt an heir himself (adoption *inter vivos*); he could name an heir in his will (testamentary adoption); or he could leave the selection of a suitable heir to his family after his death (posthumous adoption)."[216] Any of these would provide an heir for the adopter.

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[209] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 108; Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 132.

[210] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 132; cf. 111; Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 9.

[211] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 9. Many people did not feel the need to have children, since adoption was available (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 104). This was, in fact, so extreme that laws were enacted to encourage people to have children (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 104).

[212] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 54.

[213] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 9; cf. Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 65, 71.

[214] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 90; Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 50.

[215] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 69; cf. Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 71; Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 9.

[216] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 47; cf. Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 103; Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 5.

In Roman society,[217] we find two categories of adoption. "The first procedure,

adrogatio, was used only for a person who was already *sui juris* (legally independent),

while the second, *adoptio*, was for a person who was still *in potestate* (under a *pater*

familias)."[218] *Adrogatio* involved the continuation of the adopting family and the

termination of the family from which the adopted person came.[219] It was never

commonly practiced[220] and *adoptio* was considered "much more satisfactory socially

and sacrally... because it meant that no family or its religious cult was being wiped

out."[221] Other features of Roman adoption were that only a citizen could adopt or be

adopted[222] and that most adoptees were adults.[223] Individuals would allow themselves or

their sons to be adopted in order to maintain or raise their status.[224]

Although there are some similarities between Greek and Roman adoption, Lyall

also identifies a key difference to keep in mind as we move forward to consider the

Pauline adoption metaphor: "[T]he break between the adoptee and his former family is

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[217] It should be noted here that there are some limitations in the application of Roman sources describing adoption, including that "adoptions mentioned in Roman literature typically involve the ruling elite. Thus the literary sources tell us little about the prevalence of adoption in Roman society at large." However, "the issues they present are not forbidding in light of our purpose: to search for underlying assumptions that shaped Roman law rather than to seek to establish specific legal practices and procedures that were operative in particular times and places" (Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 51–52).

[218] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 54; cf. Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 67–68; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 105–6; Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 111–12; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 84–85, 87. In either type of adoption the adoptee was put under the *potestas* of the *paterfamilias* (Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 52).

[219] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 67.

[220] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 53.

[221] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 68. Also, by the time of Paul, *adrogatio* could only be done in Rome (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 85).

[222] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 90. This applied also to Greek adoptions.

[223] Rawson, "The Roman Family," 12. This was because "by then, chances of survival were greater and the adopting father could see what he was getting as a son and heir." cf. Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 66.

[224] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 54.

total in Roman but not in Greek law. The relationship with the new family is similarly total in Roman but not in Greek law."[225]

3.g.*iii* The Status of the Adoptee

Associated with this total connection with the new family is the nature of the adoptee's new status. Gaius, the second century jurist, wrote of their legal standing, "Adopted sons... in their adoptive family are in the same legal position as real sons."[226] An adoptee was given honour[227] and "shared the same privileges as naturally-born sons."[228] On the other hand, the adopted person was subject to the authority and discipline of the adoptive father, "a status akin to that of a slave."[229]

3.g.*iv* Adoption from Slavery

It was possible for a slave who had been manumitted to be adopted.[230] Although not as customary as adopting a relative, "under some circumstances even a slave or an infant raised from a dungheap could be ascribed the status of a son."[231] In the *Gnomon des Idios Logos*, an Egyptian legal guide written around 170 CE, we find reference to adoption of exposed infants, who would have in many cases been destined to become slaves.[232] Lyall notes, "Adoption of a slave was rare, and making a slave an heir was usually done only to throw on him the disgrace of a bankrupt estate. However, we can

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[225] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 98–99; cf. Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 69, 71.
[226] Gaius, *Inst* 2:136. See Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 53.
[227] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 30.
[228] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 71.
[229] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 87.
[230] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 126.
[231] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 37.
[232] "Whenever an Egyptian takes a child from the rubbish heap and adopts him as a son, after (the Egyptian's) death, his estate shall be docked a quarter" (*Gnom.* 41; quoted in Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 115).

note that for the Christian slave there was no conceptual barrier to thinking of himself as the son or heir of God.[233]

3.g.v Women and Adoption

Roman women were not able to adopt since they could not be the *paterfamilias* nor have *potestas* over other people who were free.[234] Greco-Roman adoption of females was rare mainly because it "was so regularly focused on perpetuating the line."[235] Also, since the Greek laws for inheritance were complex, fathers with only daughters might adopt a male heir instead.[236]

Another issue which will be of interest when discussing Paul's adoption metaphor is the adoption terminology used. Kathleen Corley examined several Greek texts using various forms of adoption formulae. Five of the sixteen who were adopted were female[237] and different terms were used for them than for males. The term υἱοθεσία was not used for female adoptees.[238]

3.g.vi Concluding Remarks on Adoption

It is quite clear that the Roman concept of adoption was well-defined and had numerous correlations with the Pauline metaphor. It is quite likely that Paul's audience

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[233] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 126.

[234] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 11; Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 53.

[235] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 54; cf. Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 21, n. 2; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 103–4; Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 69. "Of the thirty-six known cases of adoption at Athens, three were of girls" (Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 122). However, by the second century Gaius reported that "women too are commonly adopted before the praetor, or in the provinces before the proconsul or legate" (Gaius, *Inst* 1:101).

[236] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 103.

[237] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 117.

[238] For example, "[t]he formula for the adoption of females is κατά θυγατροποίαν... In fact, the term υἱοθεσία does not occur in reference to a female, but only when a male adoptee is in view" (Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 110). There is another term used in a document called P Oxy 3271 from 47–54 CE. "It is the fragment of a petition, that of a woman, Isidora, who is the daughter by adoption (κατά τεκνοθεσίαν) of Dionysios. This is the first attestation of this word in Greek, and the Macquarie editors call it a 'ghost word', and suggest that its use may reflect the inappropriateness of υἱοθεσία applied to a woman" (Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 116).

would have resonated with these allusions to such a well-known idea and practice.

3.h   Greco-Roman Inheritance

Inheritance in the first century was, in many respects, exclusionary. That is, there were certain groups of people who could not inherit—or at least without restrictions— simply for being in the category of slave, female or foreigner. Once more these are the groups that will be considered with regard to Gal 3:28. An investigation of how inheritance operated in the first century, particularly in terms of restrictions on certain groups, is therefore appropriate.

3.h.*i*   The Greco-Roman Understanding of Inheritance

Inheritance is defined as "the total assets forming the estate of a deceased person."[239] There are two main types of succession in the Greco-Roman inheritance system. Testate succession involves a "valid will" made by the deceased which outlines to whom the property will pass, either those who are already legal heirs or those whose only claim to inherit is through the will.[240] In intestate succession, the inheritance was passed on to the heirs based on a specific order and conventions.[241]

Roman inheritance, in particular, has a number of features which are relevant to our discussion. It is agnatic, meaning that it is passed through male relations. The

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[239] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 101. The term for inheritance in the New Testament and Paul's letters is κληρονομία and the term for heir is κληρονόμος.

[240] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 102. The will "was used to make sure that a man's property was distributed according to his wishes. If he had no heirs, he could name a man heir in his testament. The heir would then succeed universally to the testator's possession upon his death" (Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 15).

[241] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 118; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 102. The following is a description of that order: The first to succeed were the *sui heredes* or the deceased's sons, grandchildren by the sons, or a wife married *cum manu*. The second to succeed...was the *proximus agnates*, the closest relative linked by males. The third to succeed... were clansmen" (Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 54).

concept of *paterfamilias* was agnatic[242] and each male in the line would expect to receive an equal portion of the inheritance.[243]

The heir was a central concept within the Roman inheritance system[244] and is notable for "having legal existence during the life of his predecessor."[245] "Birth, not death, constituted heirship."[246] This continuity involved perpetuating the ancestor's "legal personality... and the family cult (the *sacra*)."[247] Another important concept in Roman law was "universal succession."[248] This involved passing on the *hereditas* ("the whole estate") including all of "the goods, rights, and duties which the heir assumes."[249] The idea of "joint heirs" (Rom 8:17) can also be drawn from Roman law, which takes into account situations where there were "joint 'universal successors'" according to the will of the testator.[250]

3.h.*ii*   The Connection Between Adoption and Inheritance

As stated above, one of the motives for adoption was to pass on the family's inheritance. Scott states, "The adopted son became at once the legal and necessary heir of his adoptive father, as he severed ties with his natural family."[251] In both Greek[252] and

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[242] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 107; cf. 98.

[243] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 132.

[244] "The *heirs* are those who take the estate by operation of the rules of intestate succession, those who have a 'right,' independent of the will of the deceased" (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 102).

[245] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 102; cf. 109–10. This contrasts appreciably with the Jewish system since "the 'heir' in Jewish law does not exist until the death of his ancestor. In Roman law the concept of heir is more profound" (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 102–3). Gaius writes that they are "in a certain sense thought of as owners even while their parent is alive" (*Inst* 2:157).

[246] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 111.

[247] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 108.

[248] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 20.

[249] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 18. This is a distinguishing feature of Roman law in comparison with Greek and Jewish: "Although Roman law is like Greek and Jewish law in the designation of the inheritance as landed property of immovable goods, it goes a step further and conceives of the inheritance as the total estate which is passed on to the heirs" (Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 19).

[250] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 120; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 114. This concept will be examined further in the next chapter on New Testament Biblical Theology, also considering Eph 3:6 and 1 Pet 3:7.

[251] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 7.

[252] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 50.

Roman[253] law, adoption and inheritance were undeniably connected "for a common

reason: the continuation of the Roman *familia* and the Greek *oikos*."[254]

3.h.*iii* Women and Inheritance

Although women had certain inheritance rights in both Greece and Rome, it is

best to describe these as limited. In Greek law, the role of a "brotherless"[255] woman,

called an ἐπίκληρος,[256] "was to transmit the oikos of the dead man to his yet unborn

descendants via his daughter and a near-kinsman."[257] Thus, instead of an heir, a woman

was more of a channel of the inheritance.[258]

The Roman system of inheritance contrasted with the Greek in that women could

inherit; "daughters were entitled to an equal share."[259] However, this was only in

situations of intestacy[260] and women also "had more legal restrictions on how to use

their wealth."[261] These were mainly through the enactment of the Lex Voconia in 169

BCE which "restricted the wealth that could be inherited by upper-class women."[262]

Males overall had the advantage in Greco-Roman inheritance and they would

"be more likely to be favored in a testamentary succession."[263] Also, it was likely rare

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[253] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 52.

[254] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 55.

[255] Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 19.

[256] This meant "'heiresses'; literally 'attached to the property'" (Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 123).

[257] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 49. Walters notes that adoption was beginning to replace this in the fourth century BCE. cf. Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 25.

[258] "[T]he estate went with her, not to her" (Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights,"103).

[259] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 52.

[260] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 42; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 106–7, 120.

[261] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 43.

[262] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 162; cf. Cohick, *Women in the World*, 76; Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 106–7; Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 121, 125.

[263] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 107; cf. 120.

that women or girls would have been adopted for the purpose of inheriting property, especially with the restrictions involved.[264]

3.h.*iv* Slaves and Inheritance

As it was for women, there were restrictions on slave inheritance. In fact, a slave had no "legal right to a patrimony, to inheriting or transmitting a family name or other symbolic capital."[265] A slave could eventually become the heir of a family through adoption,[266] but first needed to be manumitted for this to happen. There were also legal constraints on manumission, such as the *Lex Fufia Caninia*, which set limitations on the number of slaves an owner could manumit.[267]

3.h.*v* Inheritance and Peregrines

Peregrines were noncitizen aliens who lived within the Roman Empire. They "could neither be heirs of, nor take in any way from, a Roman citizen."[268] Only citizens themselves had the right to inherit property from other Roman citizens.[269]

3.h.*vi* Fiduciary Trust

In the preceding discussion of inheritance, certain groups have legal constraints put on them so that they may not inherit. These restrictions can be to becoming an heir but also to receiving anything in a legacy.[270] There were strict rules concerning

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[264] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 108; cf. 120.

[265] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 25; cf. Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 62.

[266] Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 54.

[267] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 125–26. There were also age restrictions. In most cases, a slave needed to be at least thirty years old in order to be manumitted (Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 195) and an owner needed to be at least twenty (Cohick, *Women in the World*, 264).

[268] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 121; cf. Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 136.

[269] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 61.

[270] Another group in this category were the "unborn generations" who could not be left anything in a will (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 126). They were known as "'uncertain persons' *incertaie personae*" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 121).

"[m]aking heirs and giving legacies" and they could be "void if wrongly carried out."[271]

However, within Roman law there was "a means of getting around" this obstacle called

fideicommissum ('trust').[272] Lyall observes the following:

> In Roman law the precise function of the fiduciary trust was to allow
> persons who were otherwise barred by the ordinary law from
> participating in an inheritance. It was accomplished by the testator
> requesting, but not ordering, the heir to do such and such or to give
> something to so and so. In short, performance of the request was
> committed (*commissum*) to the faithfulness (*fides*) of the heir—hence,
> *fidei commissum*.[273]

A description of this practice in Justinian's *Institutes* gives insight into what it meant for

those who had been restricted from receiving an inheritance.[274]

3.h.*viii* Concluding Remarks on Inheritance

Women, slaves, foreigners and "unborn generations"[275] had restrictions placed

upon them so that they could not receive a full inheritance or legacy from the father

(*paterfamilias*). They relied on the faithfulness of the heir to pass it on to them. The

resonance of this concept with Gal 3–4 is noteworthy.[276] A fuller understanding of the

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[271] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 121.

[272] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 125. The *fideicommissum hereditas* referred specifically to a "trust of the inheritance" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 126).

[273] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 136.

[274] "Legacies or inheritances given by trust had originally no binding legal force, because no one could be compelled against his will to do what he was merely asked to do. As there were certain classes of persons to whom testators were unable to leave inheritances of legacies, when they wished to effect these objects they used to trust to the good faith of some one who had this kind of testamentary capacity, and whom they asked to give the inheritance, or the legacy, to the intended beneficiary; hence the name 'trusts', because they were not enforced by legal obligation, but only by the transferor's sense of honesty" (Justinian, *Inst* 2.23.1).

[275] Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 126. Crook shows how the practice of *fideicommissum hereditatis* is able to address restrictions inherent in laws concerning all four of these groups (*Law and Life of Rome*, 125–26).

[276] Greer Taylor suggests that Paul uses the concept of the *fidei commissum* in presenting his inheritance metaphor ("The Function," 58-59). However, Richard Hays refutes Taylor's argument by pointing out errors in his biblical and documentary evidence (*The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 215-19). At the same time, Hays acknowledges that "[t]he analogy works out so neatly as an explanatory device that one might wish Paul *had* thought of using it, because it would clear up the logic of his argument so well" (*The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 219, emphasis original).

Greco-Roman inheritance system is therefore helpful as we prepare to study Galatians and Romans in more depth.

3.i   Conclusion

Robert Banks makes the following observation which is quite relevant to this inquiry: "In the Roman Empire of Paul's day distinctions along national, social, and gender lines existed. Those who had a common nationality, were free, male, or Roman citizens possessed real privileges, if also responsibilities."[277] Paul and his audience would have been aware of these attitudes, as well as the Greco-Roman understanding of issues such as slavery, adoption and inheritance. This social historical investigation will therefore give us a solid foundation for further study of the Pauline metaphors of adoption and inheritance.

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[277] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 109.

Chapter 4: A New Testament Biblical Theology of Inheritance and Slavery

4.a   Introduction

The concepts of inheritance and slavery are two of the links in the "slave to son to heir"[1] chain. As such, it is necessary to examine what the Bible says about them. This chapter will provide a New Testament biblical theology of inheritance and slavery. It is important to look at these concepts thematically in terms of the whole of Scripture in order to more fully grasp what is being said in the Pauline epistles. Swartley observes,

> One of the major errors in biblical interpretation is failure to relate a given passage of Scripture to the overall message of Scripture. It is therefore necessary to take seriously the message of the Bible as a whole and compare Scripture with Scripture. This requires acquaintance with the unfolding drama of the Bible, its major themes, and how the various themes are related and integrated into a whole. The meaning of any part cannot be arrived at apart from the message of the whole.[2]

This will then help lay the groundwork for our study of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25.

In this chapter, we will also continue to examine the issue of concern—finding inclusivity through Paul's adoption and inheritance metaphors—through the lens of feminist criticism, with particular emphasis on how this impacts the marginalized, including women. To do this, as Letty Russell suggests, it is essential to "listen... for the voices of members of the early Christian communities: 'the low and despised in the world' who were called by God (1Cor. 1:28)."[3] It is also important to consider the questions that we "bring to the text" and use them in our search for inclusivity.[4] We must of course remain aware of instances where the text appears or is exclusive and wrestle with what that might mean.

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[1] Sampley, "Romans and Galatians," 317; cf. Jones, "Exegesis of Galatians," 480.
[2] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 241–42.
[3] Russell, "Twists and Turns," 84.
[4] Spencer, "Feminist Criticism," 291.

Because family and property are important foundations for understanding inheritance in the NT, we will first examine these. Additionally, the following issues will be considered with reference to the NT Scriptures: inheriting the kingdom of God; the meek inheriting the earth; Jesus as the Son and heir; joint heirs; women in the Pauline corpus; and slavery.

4.b   Family in the NT

The theme of family was central to Paul's teachings.[5] He demonstrated this centrality by speaking of the household or "family of faith" (Gal 6:10).[7] Paul frequently used family terms, such as ἀδελφοί, to refer to fellow believers.[8] The "language of kinship and affection" and mutually loving relationships between Christians and the Father was prominent in his writings.[9] It is significant that we find evidence in the words of Jesus that his family are those who are committed to the will of God (Mark 3:34–35).[10] This establishes a "new community or fictive kinship group around Jesus."[11]

4.c   How Property is Viewed in the NT

In the OT, inheritance has a lot to do with property and possessions. In the NT, we see a re-visioning of attitudes toward property and therefore a modification of the concept of inheritance. Gordon Fee demonstrates that there are two areas in which this change is particularly noteworthy: (1) justice for the oppressed and (2) the advent of the kingdom of God.

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[5] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 56.

[7] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 50; Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 119.

[8] Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 51. Banks points out that this term regularly refers to both female and male believers.

[9] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 169–70.

[10] "And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'" cf. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, 56.

[11] Dewey, "'Let Them Renounce," 34. Achtemeier says of this account, "Its point is not so much the exclusion of his relatives as the wider inclusion into his family of all who follow him" (*Invitation to Mark*, 65).

> It is within this twofold framework—the revelation of God as the One who brings justice to the poor and the inauguration of God's Rule in the ministry of Jesus—that we must view the New Testament texts on money and possessions. Poverty *per se* is not being glorified, nor is wealth condemned. In the new age a whole new order has been inaugurated, with a new way of looking at things and a new value system.[12]

There is clearly some consistency with the OT understanding of property, but also a broadening of emphasis.

A biblical understanding of what it means to be 'poor' is necessary to fully appreciate the subject of property and wealth. It "refers not merely to those in economic poverty. The 'poor' are the powerless, the disenfranchised, those whose situation forces them to be dependent on the help of others. Thus it includes especially the widow and the orphan, as well as the alien."[13] This is significant because, in understanding who is marginalized by this impoverishment, we can also recognize who will be welcomed by a move toward inclusivity.

The NT has a great deal to say about property, riches and poverty. These are subjects addressed both implicitly and explicitly throughout the gospels and the writings of Paul and others.[14] Neither Jesus nor Paul was against having or using possessions in and of themselves. Jesus accepted the generosity of several women who "provided for" him and his disciples (Luke 8:1–3)[15] and he required that adult children would provide for their parents in obedience to the law (Mark 7:9–13).[16] Paul expected people "to work

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[12] Fee, *The Disease*, 43, emphasis original.
[13] Fee, *The Disease*, 39–40.
[14] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine them in any detail here.
[15] Fee, *The Disease*, 43; Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 27. Craddock observes, "Given the seductions and traps of money and power, it is not only commendable but remarkable that they found ways to put both money and power in submission to the gospel" (*Luke*, 107). Schaberg calls them "models of sharing" ("Luke," 279).
[16] Fee, *The Disease*, 43; Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 27.

with [their] hands" to earn a living (1 Thess 4:11–12)[17] with the goal of "pleasing

God."[18] But to Paul "the possession of property [was] a relative matter" in view of the

parousia[19] and his passionate pursuit of the gospel consistently formed his views on

financial matters.[20] Similarly, "for Jesus wealth and possessions were a zero value. In

the new age they simply do not count. The standard is sufficiency: and surplus is called

into question."[22]

Because of this new perspective on property, the expected response for the

follower of Jesus was giving (Luke 12:32–34).[23] The early church in Acts was

characterized by generosity and sharing with those in need (2:44–46).[24] Fee describes

this as follows:

> The early church was not communal. But they were the new
> community—the new people of God. Hence no one considers anything
> owned to be his or her own possession. The coming of the Spirit that
> marked the beginning of the new order had freed them from the need of
> possessing. Hence there was sufficiency, and no one was in need.[25]

It is noteworthy that, if many Christians in the early church were giving much of their

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[17] Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 35; cf. 1 Thess 5:14.

[18] Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 59. Indeed he laboured hard to support himself (1 Cor 4:11; 1 Thess 2:9).

[19] Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 39. See 1 Cor 7:29–31.

[20] Everts, "Financial Support," 296.

[22] Fee, *The Disease*, 44. "Jesus was not interested in any new theories about the rightness or wrongness of possessions in themselves, about the origin of property or its better distribution; rather he adopted the same scandalously free and untrammelled attitude to property as to the powers of the state, the alien Roman rule and its Jewish confederates. The imminence of the kingdom of God robs all these things of their power *de facto*, for in it 'many that are first will be last, and the last first'" (Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 30, emphasis original).

[23] Fee emphasizes the teaching from this text that "because God thus accepts and secures us, we can freely sell our possessions and give to the needy" (*The Disease*, 42). Craddock observes the following concerning the literary context of the passage: "Turning from grave warnings about covetousness and anxiety, Jesus calls for a liberation from both in acts of generosity" (*Luke*, 165)

[24] Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 33. This attitude is maintained in other early Christian writings such as the *Didache*: "Do not turn away from the needy; rather, share everything with your brother, and do not say: 'It is private property.'" (*Did* 4:8) Basil the Great also conveys this as a priority: "If only each one would take as much as he requires to satisfy his immediate needs, and leave the rest to others who equally needed it, no one would be rich – and no one would be poor" (Basil, quoted in Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 2).

[25] Fee, *The Disease*, 14–15.

property away, this would have affected how inheritance was viewed. For Paul, this

generosity expressed itself in equity and justice (2 Cor 8:13–15)[26] as well as

contentment (Phil 4:11–13).[27]

Strong warnings are given in the NT to not value material goods too highly—in

other words, above God. One such warning is "You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matt

6:24) because it leads to a situation where "one comes to trust in something other than

God."[28] In particular, the rich are cautioned about the risk of placing too much

importance on their wealth. Examples of such warnings in the gospels are: the parable of

the rich "fool" given in response to a question on family inheritance (Luke 12:13–21);[29]

the statements of "woe" to the rich following the beatitudes in Luke (6:24–26);[30] the

negative effects of "the lure of wealth" in the parable of the sower (Mark 4:19); and

Jesus' lament of how difficult it is "for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven"

(Matt 19:23–26).[31] Concerning the latter, Clement of Alexandria wrote about how a rich

person who had gratitude for God's gifts and provided generous service to others *could*

inherit the kingdom.[32] In the epistle of James, there are two strong warnings to the rich

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[26] Hengel sees this "appeal to generosity and hospitality... [as] already traditional in Judaism" (*Property and Riches*, 39).

[27] Contra Hengel who sees this as "self-sufficiency" in Paul (*Property and Riches*, 54).

[28] Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 145; cf. Fee, *The Disease*, 42.

[29] "This craving to hoard not only puts goods in the place of God... but is an act of total disregard for the needs of others" (Craddock, *Luke*, 163).

[30] Fee says of these "that Jesus sees possessions in the old age as doing the possessing, not being possessed. Possessions tend to tyrannize or lead to a false security. Hence some of His strongest words move in this direction" (*The Disease*, 43).

[31] cf. Mark 10:23–27; Luke 18:24–27. "Jesus' point is that it takes a miracle for the rich to be saved, because they are secure in their possessions" (Fee, *The Disease*, 43).

[32] "For he who holds possessions, and gold, and silver, and houses, as the gifts of God; and ministers from them to the God who gives them for the salvation of men; and knows that he possesses them more for the sake of the brethren than his own; and is superior to the possession of them, not the slave of the things he possesses; and does not carry them about in his soul, nor bind and circumscribe his life within them, but is ever labouring at some good and divine work, even should he be necessarily some time or other deprived of them, is able with cheerful mind to bear their removal equally with their abundance. This is he who is blessed by the Lord, and cared poor in spirit, a meet heir of the kingdom of heaven, not one who could not live rich" (Clement, *Who is the Rich Man*, 16:3–4).

not to oppress or alienate the poor (2:1–7; 5:1–6).[33] It is significant here that God is said to choose the poor "to be heirs of the kingdom" (Jas 2:5).

Brueggemann observes that "[t]he radical inversion of landed-landless arrangements is evidenced in the teaching of Jesus. It is clear in his concise but enigmatic statements which reject the world of grasping and affirm the world of gifts."[34] Thus, the key to a biblical view of property is a reversal of what and whom society values as well as treating the marginalized with generosity rather than oppression. This lays a foundation for the inclusiveness of inheritance we will see in the NT writings as a whole and the Pauline epistles in particular, always with God as the centre.

4.d Inheriting the Kingdom of God

It is useful to see the main inheritance that the people of God receive in the NT as the kingdom of God.As James Hester says, "Indeed, things like eternal life, salvation and blessing are practically synonymous with or facets of the Kingdom. Therefore, the Kingdom can be described as the general Inheritance under which all other inheritances can be grouped."[35] Inheritance of God's kingdom, as well as these other aspects, will then be considered with this perspective in mind.

There are several NT texts which refer specifically to inheriting the kingdom of God.[36] They describe who does and does not inherit the kingdom. In Gal 5:21,[37] 1 Cor

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[33] See Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 47–48.

[34] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 172.

[35] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 40.

[36] Hester provides a list of the examples that will be examined here (*Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 40).

[37] "One's final standing before God, Paul contends, is directly related to whether or not a person lives in the flesh or in the Spirit" (McKnight, *Galatians*, 270). Leon Morris notes, "*Inherit* brings out the point that people in the kingdom do not earn their place; it is a gift to them from him who died" (*Galatians*, 172, emphasis original).

6:9–10,[38] and Eph 5:5[39] a list of behaviours is given which would preclude someone inheriting God's kingdom—"grasping qualities that remain incompatible with the Christian's status as part of God's new creation."[40] In another example in 1 Corinthians, Paul states that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (15:50).[41] As mentioned above,[42] Jas 2:5 shows how the poor—characterized as "rich in faith" and "those who love him"—inherit the "promised" kingdom.[43] The narrative of the sheep and goats in Matthew's gospel provides a further connection to the marginalized since those who inherit are the "blessed" ones (25:34) who have cared for the needs "of the least of these" (25:40, 45).[44] The marginalized and those who serve them are both welcomed into the kingdom of God—a truly inclusive inheritance.

All three Synoptic gospels record the story of the rich man (Matt 19:16–30; Mark 10:17–31; Luke 18:18–30) who comes to Jesus asking him, "Good Teacher, what

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[38] Gordon Fee indicates that in this instance the kingdom of God refers to the "not yet" in contrast to 1 Cor 4:20 which discusses the "already" (*The First Epistle*, 242).

[39] Regarding the Ephesians text, F.F. Bruce recognizes that an important feature of such warnings is that people "are not, indeed, left without hope; the gate of repentance stands open" (The *Epistles*, 371). He links this with the parallel passage in 1 Cor 6:9–11, with its hopeful conclusion: "And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (6:11).

[40] This refers to 1 Cor 6:9–10 (Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 90). Interestingly, Hays also uses the term "grasping" to refer to such actions: "By grasping for material advantage now, the Corinthians are jeopardizing their far greater reward in the coming age" (Hays, *First Corinthians*, 96).

[41] Thiselton writes that "Paul does *not* mean that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God *because of its fragility or physicality*; he means that God requires *holiness in place of sin*" (*First Corinthians*, 286, emphasis original). However, Fee's position is that "likely it refers simply to the body in its present form, composed of flesh and blood, to be sure, but subject to weakness, decay, and death, and as such ill-suited for the life of the future" (*The First Epistle*, 799).

[42] See 87 above.

[43] Their place in the kingdom community is unassailable: "within a community measured by the preaching and teaching of Jesus—the poor should hold a position of honor, since they have been honored by God" (Johnson, "The Letter of James," 192).

[44] "[T]he needy brother or sister is not restricted to Christians... for *adelphoi* is dropped in 25:45 and is sometimes used elsewhere in Matthew of any person whose need calls for response (5:22–24, 47; 7:3–5)" (Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," 456).

must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18).[45] In each of these accounts, Jesus' words equate inheriting eternal life with entering "the kingdom of God."[46] The man's "question is flawed... One 'does' in order to earn, not to inherit."[47] He is given an invitation to fully trust in God but instead he puts his wealth above God, a form of idolatry.[48] God must, by definition, be the centre of the inheritance of eternal life.

The assurance in Rom 4:13 that Abraham and his progeny "would inherit the world" amplifies the definition of inheritance. It allows us to see inheritance as land expanded infinitely so that what we inherit will be the new creation in its entirety, "the whole restored cosmos."[49] In this way, it "looks ahead... to the majestic prophecy of 8:17–30."[50] Additionally, the reference to Abraham's descendents will come into play in the investigation of Gal 3–4.

In Hebrews there is another examination of promised inheritance (6:11–18). The language of "oath" (6:16, 17) and "the unchangeable character of his purpose" (6:17) brings out "the steadfastness of God's promises"[51] and resonates with the concept of "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ."[52] The underlying assumption that the promise to Abraham involves an already/not yet abiding in the presence of God is important here. Hester describes the message of this passage as follows:

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[45] Each of these contains Jesus' words about the difficulty for a rich person to come into the kingdom of God.

[46] Matt 19:24; Mark 10:24,25; Luke 18:24, 25; cf. Matt 19:23 where he uses the phrase "to enter the kingdom of heaven." The two terms are synonymous (Williamson, *Mark*, 183).

[47] Craddock, *Luke*, 213.

[48] Craddock, *Luke*, 213–14. He misses out on what are "[f]or Luke, the abundant and multiplied blessings for the dedicated disciple... all in terms of relationships (v. 29)... the history of the church as the family of God confirms the fulfillment of this promise. Those who have interpreted the Christian life as a materialist success story find no support in the Gospel of Luke" (Craddock, *Luke*, 214–15).

[49] Wright, "New Exodus," 31.

[50] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness: Book 1*, 366.

[51] Long, *Hebrews*, 77.

[52] Gal 2:16; 3:22; cf. 2:20 (CEB).

These promises are the same as those God made to the Israelites, namely that the children of God would enjoy peace and a full life, dwelling securely in a land given to them by God, with God as their Protector and Overseer. The Promise might be inherited now, but the fulfilment of the Promise is yet to be fully accomplished.[53]

The fundamental characterization of biblical inheritance as relating to God's presence is seen elsewhere in the NT. The author of Revelation gives us a glimpse of the new heavens and earth which are to come (21:1–7). Here God declares, "Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children" (21:7). What is above all stressed in this passage is that God makes his home with us; indeed, the presence of God is depicted as the main part of the inheritance—"He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples" (21:3). God is ultimately at the heart of biblical inheritance. The inclusive emphasis of this text is seen in the expansion of the Davidic promise of 2 Sam 7:14 "to *all* people."[54]

4.e   The Meek/Humble Will Inherit the Earth

A key statement about who inherits is found in the beatitudes: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5). It is an allusion to Ps 37:11[55] and also has associations with other early Christian writings.[56] It is important to note that, while there is an ethical component to the beatitudes, this "does not... overshadow the elements of consolation and promise"[57] and of "celebration."[58]

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[53] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 41.

[54] Rowland, "The Book of Revelation," 721, emphasis added. Rowland indicates that this concept "is central to the eschatology of other parts of the New Testament as well (e.g., Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6)."

[55] "But the meek shall inherit the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity." See Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 125, 128; France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 60, 62; Hare, *Matthew*, 38; Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 40.

[56] "[B]e gentle, for the gentle will inherit the land" (*Did* 3:7). See Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 126; Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*, 361.

[57] Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 44. Allison notes that the beatitudes "are separated from the main body of imperatives. This is because 5:3–12 functions less as demand than as blessing." cf. Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount*, 20.

So who are the meek or humble who inherit in Matt 5:5? Most significantly, they are *not* "the same as 'weak' or 'harmless' or 'spiritless'" *nor* is a meek person "a timid soul who lives in mortal fear of offending his fellow creatures."[59] Evidence for this is in the use of the same word (πραΰς) for Jesus in Matt 11:29; 21:5, as well as for Moses in the LXX (Num 12:3).[60] We see rather, that the meek in Matt 5:5 are characterized in two main ways. Firstly, they are seen to be humble before and submitted to God. They are powerful because "[t]hey surrender their will to God so completely *that God's will becomes their will*."[61]

The second sense is that of those who have been humbled, who are marginalized or oppressed. The idea that they are oppressed can be seen clearly in the close association of the beatitudes with Isa 61:1–7.[62] The meek are the ones who are "*socially and economically poor or powerless*."[63] However, the word "powerless" should once again not be taken to mean that they are 'weak,' but rather, that they stand in contrast to the power-grabbing and "strident" of society.[64] In the phrase "gift and grasp," Brueggemann insightfully illustrates this. There is a contrast between the humble acknowledgement that the inheritance is graciously given by God and the insatiable

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[58] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 34. cf. 35. The reason for the celebration is "because God is acting graciously to deliver us from our poverty and captivity into God's reign of deliverance, justice and joy."

[59] Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount*, 20.

[60] Hare, *Matthew*, 38–39; cf. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 47; Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," 179; Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount*, 20. Additional indirect evidence is in the use of the verb ירשׁ which gives an active sense to the act of inheriting in Ps 37:11, the verse quoted in Matt 5:5 (Brueggemann and Miller, *The Psalms*, 239).

[61] Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount*, 21, emphasis original; cf. 21; Hare, *Matthew*, 39; Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 40.

[62] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 34–35, 40; cf. Gundry, *Matthew*, 69. Additional support for the idea that the meek are the marginalized is in the similarity of the words for 'poor' and 'humble/meek' in Hebrew (Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*, 360; Gundry, *Matthew*, 69).

[63] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 40, emphasis original. "This reading takes the psalm... as a promise and guarantee of land for those who seem to have no means (except the claims of morality) whereby to acquire land" (Brueggemann and Miller, *The Psalms*, 249).

[64] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 39; cf. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 43.

clawing after power, material wealth and property characteristic of the self-made.[65]

Familiarity with Phil 2:2–11 also demonstrates the disparity between the power hungry

and the humble example of Jesus Christ. It is clear then that Matt 5:5 speaks "of

injustice that will be corrected by God's justice in the coming kingdom."[66] This

overthrow of injustice is a "reversal of this-worldly ideas of kingship."[67] It replaces

exclusivity with inclusivity—a promise that the "dispossessed"[68] (those who were

formerly in some way prevented from inheriting) will indeed inherit the whole earth.

This promise, by definition, speaks of an eschatological fulfillment in the "new earth"[69]

but also includes for here and now "an application to the Christian world mission" in

terms of justice and as described in the Lord's prayer.[70]

In summary, the meek are those in humble circumstances who have been

disenfranchised in some way by society, who desire to submit themselves to God's will,

and who possess a triumphant future. This, as Brueggeman declares, is the good news of

God's kingdom: "There is only trust in the promise of a land of rest and joy. But surely

such a gift is a scandal!"[71] Moreover, the more that we—as the body of Christ—work

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[65] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 183.

[66] Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 128; cf. Brueggemann and Miller, *The Psalms*, 249.

[67] Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," 179. This reversal of situation for the humble is also seen elsewhere in Matthew: "So the last will be first, and the first will be last" (20:16) and "All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted" (23:12); cf. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 48.

[68] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 191.

[69] Isa 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1; cf. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 128, on the concept of the "new earth" in Matthew. Davies claims that there are only two mutually exclusive options as to what the inheritance is referring: either to "the land of Israel in a transformed world, in the Messianic Age or the Age to Come, or to... entering the Kingdom... [which] transcends all geographic dimensions and is spiritualized" (*The Gospel and the Land*, 362). However, this does not take into account that the redeemed new earth will be part of the eschatological kingdom of God.

[70] Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 128. "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).

[71] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 196.

for justice and the inclusion of the marginalized, the more this future inheritance can be drawn into the present.

4.f   Jesus as Son and Heir

Unquestionably, the recognition that Jesus Christ is *the* son and heir is at the heart of NT inheritance.[72] Hester notes that in the provocative narrative of Mark 12:1–12,[73] "Jesus identifies himself as God's Son and Heir… The parable is a warning to the leaders and people of Israel that they cannot have the inheritance without first accepting the Son and Heir."[74] These two concepts are clearly expressed in Heb 1:2 where Jesus is "appointed heir of all things" by God and so brought into focus as the centre of inheritance,[75] even shown to be "creating his own inheritance."[76] This is profoundly important but the author of Hebrews moves even beyond this and "we may be thankful that the imagery of inheritance is expanded to encompass all Christians."[77] There is a narrowing of scope to the one heir and then a widening of scope as Hester further observes: "The many are found in the One, and the One represents the many. The many have no claim to the Kingdom, to the Inheritance, outside of the One."[78]

Jesus as the Son and heir is the culmination of the salvation story—the "Heilsgeschichte." The promise of land inheritance is woven through but sometimes only dimly seen in the biblical history of Abraham's sojourn, the exodus, conquest and

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[72] "This connexion of Sonship and Heirship, grounded in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is the significant feature of the New Testament concept of Inheritance" (Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 38).

[73] cf. Matt 21:33–44; Luke 20:9–18.

[74] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 37–38. It should be noted that Jesus does not explicitly state that he is the son and heir. But it is clear both to the audience of the time and of today who the characters in the parable represent (Williamson, *Mark*, 214).

[75] Brown, "Inheritance," 374.

[76] Long, *Hebrews*, 15.

[77] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 106.

[78] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 50. This is in the context of a discussion of Gal 3:16 (Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 49–50).

exile. Hester states, "Then God sent His Son who brought the future into the present so that the man in Christ has guaranteed present possession of the Inheritance. However, he must wait for the full Inheritance with hope. In Christ, the promised eternal Inheritance is already present but not yet fully possessed."[79] And the focus is once again on God who is "as He is known and encountered in Christ and the Kingdom... the inheritance of the children of God."[80]

One final consideration is that Jesus Christ is the faithful Son and heir. It will be helpful to look at Romans 3 in this regard. This text does not explicitly deal with inheritance. However, N.T. Wright points out several features which has relevance for our discussion. This is seen in the use of ἐπιστεύθησαν in 3:2. "The word 'entrusted' is always used by Paul in the same sense that it bears in secular Greek: to entrust someone with something is to give them something which they must take care of and pass on to the appropriate person."[81] In 3:3, τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ refers to "the determination of the covenant God to do what he has promised."[82] The message of Rom 3: 21–31 is that *the Messiah, the faithful Israelite, has been faithful to death*[83] and his motivation for this is "the fulfillment of the active will and purpose of the covenant God."[84] We can therefore find "Jesus' faithfulness to His Father" to be completely trustworthy.[85] One can see the resemblance between the actions of the faithful Son and the fiduciary trust concept.

4.g   Joint Heirs

If Christ is the heir then it is significant that we, as believers, are "joint heirs"

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[79] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 44.
[80] Hester, *Paul's Concept of Inheritance*, 40.
[81] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness: Book 2*, 837.
[82] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness: Book 2*, 838.
[83] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness: Book 2*, 841.
[84] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness: Book 2*, 842.
[85] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 140–41. See 1 Cor 1:9; Heb 10:23.

(Rom 8:17) with him.[87] Also noteworthy is the fact that this doctrine is established on another depiction of God's presence, this time through the Spirit who "dwells in you" (Rom 8:9, 11).[88]

Two other NT texts which also use a form of συγκληρονόμος illustrate the inclusivity at the heart of the joint heirs concept. In Eph 3:6, "the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." The subject of inheritance was introduced earlier in the epistle where it was "lauded profusely" (Eph 1:11, 18).[89] There are several elements in this verse which indicate that this inheritance has a greater inclusiveness and unity within diversity. There is firstly a widening of "[t]he messianic promise... to embrace all peoples."[90] Secondly, the word σύσσωμος designates that Gentiles and Jews are all part "of the same body."[91] This, in turn, points to the fact that within the church—the one body of Christ—there are no "privileges" to which Gentiles do not have access.[92] They are "full participants."[93] So while it is true that the distinctions of 'Jew' and 'Gentile' remain, they do not restrict their participation in the church, which has relevance for gender and slave/free as well. This is indeed good news.[94]

Women are identified as "heirs of the gracious gift of life" along with their husbands in 1 Pet 3:7. The recognition of this by the husband, as well as the

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[87] As mentioned in Chapter 3 (77), this and the other texts examined here illustrate the Roman concept of "joint 'universal successors'" (Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 120).

[88] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness: Book 2*, 1022.

[89] Martin, *Ephesians*, 41. For instance, " the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints" (1:18).

[90] Martin, *Ephesians*, 41.

[91] "This is the first (and only NT) occurrence... It might be regarded as appropriate that a new word should be coined to express so revolutionary a concept as the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God on the same footing as Jews" (Bruce, *The Epistles*, 316); cf.Liefeld, *Ephesians*, 80.

[92] Bruce, *The Epistles*, 316.

[93] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 204; cf. Liefeld, *Ephesians*, 80.

[94] As exemplified by the phrase "through the gospel."

"consideration" and "honor" he is to show her, is linked to his prayer life.[95] The idea of participating together comes from the responsibility involved in being given an inheritance: "An heir is one who receives an inheritance and manages it."[96]

Because Jew/Gentile and male/female are two of the categories in Gal 3:28, it is helpful to see the inclusivity of Eph 3:6 and 1 Pet 3:7, emphasizing that inheritance is for all.

4.h   Paul and Women

Since gender plays such an important role in feminist criticism, and also for understanding the question of inclusivity in the Pauline texts to be investigated, we would do well to briefly[97] look at the role of women in the Pauline epistles. We discover, as with other biblical concerns, that there seem to be "different signals" given concerning the place of women, with some passages presenting as "liberationist" and others appearing "more hierarchical in emphasis."[98] However, even in one of the texts often considered more hierarchical (1 Cor 11), women are given instructions as to how they should pray and prophesy (11:5) and "[p]rophesying is necessarily a public act."[99] Kenneth Bailey is able to demonstrate, using linguistic and cultural evidence, that

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[95] "The authoritarian husband or domineering male fundamentally fails to understand God and the gospel—so much so that his prayers, which depend from beginning to end on God's grace, may also be 'hindered'.... For how can he call upon the grace of God when he refuses to acknowledge that he is a sharer in that grace with women?" (Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 89).

[96] Kroeger and Spencer, "1 Peter," 787.

[97] This is of course a much bigger subject and I cannot begin to do full justice to it in this short section.

[98] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 164. Rom 16, 1 Cor 7, Gal 3:28 are examples of the former and 1 Cor 11 and 14 are often considered as examples of the latter. If the disputed Pauline works are included, the Ephesian and Colossian household codes and some texts in the Pastoral Epistles would come under this category.

[99] Bailey, "Women in the New Testament," 3. Concerning this text and 1 Cor 14:34, Katherine Bushnell astutely observes that "a description by the person as to how a thing may be done nullifies the force of a seeming denial by that same person of that deed" (*God's Word to Women*, para 242). In other words, Paul cannot be forbidding women to prophesy or pray out loud (in 1 Cor 14:34) if he is (in 1 Cor 11:5) telling them *how* to do these things.

Phoebe has a strong leadership role in Rom 16:1–2.[100] With "near certitude" that the

apostle Junia (Rom 16) is female, "women appear on nearly all, if not all, levels of

leadership in the NT Church."[101] Many more examples can be cited but the fact remains

that, if we open our eyes to such instances, "women played prominent roles in the early

Christian missionary movement," including in the Pauline churches.[102] As seen in

passages such as Rom 16, Paul valued women as his fellow workers—on an equal basis

with men—and acknowledged their pivotal role in his mission. This will be pertinent

when we consider what Gal 3:28 might have to say about women's participation in the

church.

4.i   Slavery in the NT

The metaphor of slavery is dominant in the Galatians letter[103] and also plays an

important role in Romans. The Pauline corpus and "Christian writings" as a whole "in

fact contribute to our understanding of slavery in the Roman Empire."[104] For these

reasons it will be useful to investigate the subject of slavery in the NT.

It is important to recognize that the word δοῦλος is best translated 'slave' rather

than 'servant.' Otherwise the contextual impact of the word for the original audience is

not fully grasped.[105]

The issue of whether slavery is ordained by the NT texts is a critical one.

Throughout Christian history, many have claimed that slavery is condoned in

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[100] Bailey, "Women in the New Testament," 2–3.
[101] Bailey, "Women in the New Testament," 5.
[102] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 177; cf. 177–78 for several examples of prominent women in Paul's writings.
[103] Tsang, *From Slaves to Sons*, 2.
[104] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 7.
[105] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 124.

Scripture.[106] Two questions need to be considered when examining a slavery passage:

(1) Is the passage prescriptive or merely descriptive of the way things were? and (2) If it

is prescriptive, is it meant to be "a timeless, universal mandate" or is it "conditioned by

prevailing practices and specific situations" with the purpose of "regulating."[107] We

must also recognize that some of the instructions concerning slavery are "motivated…

by a concern that the gospel not be defamed."[108]

Slavery is often seen as a negative force in the NT. For example, Rev 18:10–15

brings out "the bitterness of the slave trade."[109] This negative attitude toward slavery

continues to be seen in the early church, in the writings of Gregory Nazianzen who saw

the origin of slavery and freedom in the Fall.[110] As we shall see below, slavery can also

be placed in a positive light in the NT but only in terms of being a slave to God or to

Christ or in the example of Christ himself.

The matter of what the NT says about slavery is often complicated by what

appears to be "mixed signals"[111] or messages about this and other issues. An example of

this is where Paul, in a seeming reversal of Gal 3:28, quotes Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30

("But what does the scripture say? 'Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the

slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman.'"). A few things

could be said about this here. First, Paul is speaking allegorically , something he himself

acknowledges in 4:24. Second, because of Paul's primary motivation, he "might not

care if he contradicts himself as he searches for new words to carry the power of the

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[106] Texts such as 1 Cor 7:20–24 have been interpreted in support of this (Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 36).

[107] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 201–2.

[108] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 202. This would also apply to other issues, such as instructions concerning women.

[109] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 11; cf. 85–86.

[110] Nazianzen, *Hom* 14:25, quoted in Hengel, *Property and Riches*, 5.

[111] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 54.

gospel message."[112] And, as part of feminist criticism, it is vital to continually listen "for

unheard and marginalized voices in the texts."[113]

The NT says several things about the treatment of slaves. Some of these, of

course, are simply descriptions of what life was like for a slave in the Greco-Roman

period. The punishment of slaves, often severe, is assumed in many of the narratives and

teachings that refer to slaves. Jennifer Glancy lists several "injuries to slaves' bodies"

seen in the parables of Matthew.[114] In the household code of Col 3:22–25, slaves are

called to be obedient to their masters[115] and here and in Eph 6:5–6 there is a "most

striking modification of wider cultural values in the... articulation of a theological basis

for [this] submission."[116] In 1 Pet 2:18–25 we find a clearer expression of compassion

for the plight of slaves,[117] a case where Sharyn Dowd states that "the author counseled

nonviolence (which was a way of demonstrating one's moral superiority over the

oppressor) and alluded to the ultimate justice of God, who vindicates the abused

(2:23)."[118] For masters, because they have a "Master in heaven" (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1), they

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[112] Russell, "Twists and Turns," 91.

[113] Russell, "Twists and Turns," 91. Much more could be said about this passage but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to do so. Letty Russell's essay, for one, provides a fascinating discussion.

[114] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 119; cf. 102, 118. "Slaves are seized (*kratēsas*, 18:28; *labontes*, 21:35; *kratēsantes*, 22:6), imprisoned (18:30), treated with dishonor (*hybrisan*, 22:6), beaten (*edeiran*, 21:35; *typtein*, 24:49), cut in pieces (*dichotomēsei*, 24:51), handed over to torturers (*paredōken auton tois basanistais*, 18:34), consigned to a place of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' (24:51, 25:30), killed (21:35, 22:6), and stoned (21:35)." Slaves are also susceptible "to violence by third parties" as seen in the account recorded in all four Gospels of the slave whose ear is cut off (Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 11).

[115] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 140.

[116] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 144–45. Concerning this passage, and with a further application to similar NT texts, Ralph Martin observes: "Modern readers of these verses... need to recall the historical circumstances of the first-century world and be on their guard lest they ask questions of New Testament writings that do not come within the purview of the authors. Slavery is a case in point. Otherwise we shall be amazed (and maybe scandalized) that the call here in Ephesians as elsewhere is one to obedience and not to revolt. The latter course would have been suicidal, given the power structures of Greco-Roman society" (*Ephesians*, 73).

[117] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 149.

[118] Dowd, "1 Peter," 371. However, Dowd also provides the following caution concerning the words of this text: "They are still quoted to women of all ages, children, and elderly men who are being abused in their homes. Such advice is a misappropriation of the message of 1 Peter, which was written at a time

are to behave towards their slaves with justice and fairness and in a non-threatening

manner. These instructions would mitigate "the power of life and death" that a master

had over a slave.[119]

One specific area of slave treatment that needs to be addressed is the sexual

availability of slaves. In the last chapter, we saw that slaves were required to be sexually

available to their masters. Given this mind-set, it is surprising that there are no NT texts

which *explicitly* address "the sexual obligations of slaves to their masters."[121] However,

there is evidence in 1 Cor 11:1–16 that Paul is actually permitting *all* women, including

slaves and prostituted women, to veil so that they would not have to "signal

availability."[122] Also, there is a clear implication in 1 Cor 7:2–4 that husbands and wives

are to be sexually exclusive to each other. By the late third century, the writings of

Lactantius instruct that "Christian men should not have sexual partners other than their

wives, not even slaves."[123]

Jennifer Glancy suggests that in 1 Thess 4:3–6 Paul is giving "instructions to the

male Thessalonian Christians to find morally neutral outlets for their sexual urges"

which, in the culture of the time, would have included with slaves.[124] What is meant by

the word σκεῦος ('vessel') has been long debated.[125] However, Glancy does not take

into account that in Paul's writings, and Scripture as a whole, inanimate objects are

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when the victims of abuse had no options." Osiek and Balch also maintain that "slaves are in the vulnerable position of having no recourse when abused" (*Families in the New Testament World*, 190). Glancy to some extent concurs with this (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 150), but suggests that "Osiek and Balch overstate the lack of recourse" that slaves would have had available to them (*Slavery in Early Christianity*, 149).

[119] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 37.

[121] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 49.

[122] Westfall, "The Symbol of the Veil." Slave owners would have been resistant to this but it would have indicated Paul's intent to honour these marginalized women and to allow them to protect themselves from sexual advances, at least while praying and prophesying in the house churches.

[123] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 58.

[124] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 60.

[125] Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians*, 51–53.

often used as metaphors or analogies for people and God. Also, Paul's own Jewish

upbringing as well as the potential for the Thessalonians to be exposed to "Jewish

sensibilities" would argue against it.[126]

In the NT, sin is often seen as enslavement.[127] The option of slavery to sin or to

God is given in Rom 6:12–23. This was depicted as a change in master.[128] Freedom is

also a prevalent image in the NT Scriptures. In 1 Cor 7:22, the "freed person belonging

to the Lord" corresponds to the Roman concept with the Lord being the patron.[129] On

the other hand, "Jewish law... provides the broadest and richest content for the concept"

of redemption."[130]

In Paul's letter to Philemon, he does not specifically request him to manumit his

slave Onesimus. However, he does something more significant—he puts forward a new

way of looking at slaves. "Paul provides a series of new names for what Onesimus now

is: 'my child'; 'once useless, now useful to us both'; 'my own heart'; 'beloved brother...

both in the flesh and in the Lord'."[131] This allows for a paradigm shift where slaves and

masters can see each other on equal terms—brothers and sisters—and leaves room for

possible manumission and also for further reform.

Another revolutionary idea in the NT is that Jesus identifies with the suffering of

slaves.[132] This is especially seen in Phil 2:6–11 which describes how Jesus himself took

"the form of a slave" (2:7). Glancy observes, "Voluntary lowering of status was

regarded with horror... The Christ hymn depends on recognition of the shocking

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[126] Cohick, *Women in the World*, 280–81.
[127] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 36; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*,184–85.
[128] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 185. In 1 Cor 7:22, the master is Christ.
[129] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 42.
[130] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 157. See 1 Pet 1:18–19 on redemption from "futile ways" (Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 175).
[131] Perkins, "Philemon," 363.
[132] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 57, 194.

humiliation and definitive vindication of one who originally and ultimately bore a God likeness."[133] In this way, Jesus places himself right with the lowest of the marginalized.

Although the NT message about slavery is complex, in several ways it opens the door to a new way of living. It does so firstly by providing a narrative which slaves and other disenfranchised people can resonate with, "the cry for freedom and justice from the underside of history." [134] It also provides several clear signals of the radical way we are to view and behave toward each other. Swartley shows that "[t]he biblical imperative of love forbids oppressing anyone, especially the slave. It leads one to regard the slave no longer as a slave, but as a beloved brother or sister. Christianity ends slavery by abolishing positions and roles in which some people 'lord it over others.'"[135] We see here a movement ever closer to the place where "[t]here is no longer Jew or Greek,... slave or free,...male and female; for all of [us] are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

4.j   Conclusion

The question of what NT inheritance means for the Christian believer has been a driving force in this chapter. Francis Lyall gives a helpful summary of the essence of the NT message for the followers of Jesus the Messiah:

> [T]he inheritance of the Christian is the totality of God's goodness to him, including the promise of eternal life and of heaven. However, Christians are heirs of God now, without waiting for a death. By the indwelling Holy Spirit there is a form of identity or unity of personality between the Christian and God. As members of the family of faith Christians are, in a sense, coowners with God of God's property and joint heirs with Christ.[136]

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[133] Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 101.
[134] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 58.
[135] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 204.
[136] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 117.

We perceive that the core of NT inheritance is God in Christ and we have also been introduced to the concept of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

As we move forward to carry out an overview of Pauline adoption and a comparative investigation of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25, we will continue to ask questions concerning the heir Jesus Christ. These questions, as Brueggemann illustrates, will give a "voice... [to] the question of the entire Bible. Can he do the hard thing? Can he bring freedom out of slavery, life out of death, fertility out of barrenness, rivers out of desert (Isa. 41:18),... joy out of sorrow (John 16:20)? Can a sojourner receive an eternal possession?"[137] In this way, the voice of the dispossessed will be heard through the word of God.

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[137] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 23.

Chapter 5: An Examination of Biblical Adoption and Inclusivity

5.a   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the inclusive nature of adoption in

the NT. In order to do this, various authors and their contributions to this subject will be

considered. The literature on adoption included here will be predominantly from the

discipline of biblical studies and theology, but there will also be a few examples from

areas such as pastoral theology and popular literature.

There are five occurrences of the word υἱοθεσία in the NT, of which four are in

the undisputed epistles of Paul (Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4) and the fifth is from Eph

1:5. While Ephesians is not undisputed, itplaces itself in the context of the Pauline

letters and therefore needs to be read as a part of the Pauline canon.[1] Other reasons for

including it in the following discussion are that it is considered Pauline by some of the

authors who will be looked at and it will help round out a study of NT adoption.[2]

Robert Atkins classifies adoption as a "metaphor of inclusion."[3] As such, it is

central to Paul's rhetoric. He relies heavily on this metaphor to help him persuade the

Galatians and Romans of his message that all, regardless of ethnicity, status, or

gender—are to be included in Christ and in the family of God as full heirs and

participants in the new creation community.

The 'slave to son to heir' chain in Gal 4:7 and Rom 8:15-17 will continue to be a

consideration in this chapter. The 'son' link will be of particular concern because of its

association with adoption, as will the process of adoption itself which is what connects

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[1] Walters identifies it as "Paulinist" ("Paul, Adoption," 42).

[2] Scott states that "the use of υἱοθεσία in Eph. 1:5, occurring as it does incidentally in an exegetically difficult passage (vv. 3–14) in a letter of disputed authenticity, may be drawn into the discussion marginally for the purpose of comparison" (*Adoption As Sons of God*, xv, n. 6).

[3] Atkins, *Egalitarian Community*, 182.

the chain together. The chain itself is an inclusive concept in that it shows that *all*, including slaves, can belong to God's family and have access to inheritance through the process of adoption.

Some general issues concerning NT adoption will be considered in this chapter but the primary emphasis will be on issues of inclusion of the marginalized and oppressed through a feminist critical lens. In both Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25, the metaphor of adoption is framed according to the Jew/Gentile dichotomy and the quest for unity and cooperation between these groups. Much of the literature on adoption we will be examining addresses how Paul moves from a discussion of this issue to bring in slavery and gender as well. Since the division between male and female, and particularly the persistent exclusion of the latter, is a central concern of our time, gender is a primary area of focus for this study.

This chapter will include an investigation of the following issues related to the inclusiveness of adoption: a definition of adoption; God as our Father; the family of God; Christ the Son; the baptism of Jesus as adoption; the Spirit of Adoption; Jews and Gentiles; slavery; gender matters; and full rights of inheritance. We will conclude with a consideration of how this all can be applied to Christian life in community.

5.b   Adoption Defined

Adoption is a legal term defined by Lyall as an "act that changes the personal status of a child in relation to his natural parent(s) and constitutes the relationship of parent and child between him and some other person or persons." This act has "a

continuing effect in the changes it brings about in the statuses of... the natural parent(s),

the child, and the 'new' parent(s)."[4]

5.c   God as Father

Each person of the Trinity is central to the adoption texts in the NT.[5] Through

adoption, God the Father claims us as daughters and sons.[6] In Eph 1:3–5, the divine will

of God the Father for us is anchored in our adoption.[7] There is also, of course, the

incomprehensible privilege that all those whom have been adopted by God as daughters

and sons may call God "Abba, Father."[8]

Trevor Burke claims that some have demanded "that the term 'father' should be

discarded altogether" (although his evidence for this claim, at least in this instance, is

shaky at best).[9] He is also against using terms such as 'mother' to supplement the idea of

'father.' However, he does not make his case for this. This is especially true considering

that he explores the maternal language and imagery, including of childbirth, in the midst

of the Rom 8 adoption passage.[10] The question of the place of the term "father" is an

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[4] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 67. It should be noted that the term 'child' for the purposes of Lyall's writings, as well as the Pauline epistles, would also apply to an adult child.

[5] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 72.

[6] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 88.

[7] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 43.

[8] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 96. Burke is discussing Rom 8 in this particular place, but this also applies to Gal 4:6. Scott observes inclusivity in the cry of "Abba! Father!"—extended from Jesus to *all* adopted believers in Gal 4:6. This expansion of the adoptive Fatherhood of God to all in the faith community is also witnessed Jub 1:23–24 (*Adoption As Sons of God*, 137–40).

[9] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 73. Burke is citing Sally McFague here but he does not give a page number. This is problematic because she does not, in fact, appear to be advocating that the term "father" be "discarded altogether" as he claims. For example she writes, "The models of God as mother, lover, and friend offer possibilities for envisioning power in unified, interdependent ways quite different from the view of power as either domination or benevolence. I believe these models are uniquely suited for theology in a nuclear age and could serve as well to *recontextualize* the present dominant metaphor of *father* in a parental rather than patriarchal direction.... The kind of power associated with the models of mother (*and father*), lover, and friend is indeed love" (McFague, *Models of God*, 20, emphasis added. cf. 84, 181). Burke, therefore, seems to be misrepresenting McFague. It should also be noted that this discussion of McFague does not deny that others have called for the elimination of the term "father" in certain situations, including in evangelization directed towards people of Muslim faith.

[10] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 186–87.

important one in the overall discussion of the adoption metaphor. The concept of

fatherhood is key in understanding the extended adoption metaphor. However, it must

be emphasized that this is *not* because of any ontological maleness in the concept of

father, but rather because fatherhood was placed in a central position by Paul in

developing the adoption metaphor.

5.d   The Family of God

Adoption allows the believer to leave behind their former status and become

forever part of God's family, with all the responsibilities and privileges that entails.[11]

Burke expressively portrays the new family of God as "a vibrant, dynamic *organism*, the

household of God."[12] Family unity and inclusiveness are brought out in Rom 8:29 where

the sonship of both Christ and Christians is emphasized with Jesus "as the preeminent

son among a large and growing group of siblings."[13]

It is into this divine lineage that those outside are adopted, providing them with

an "*already*-claim" for inheritance, contrasted with the allegations of Paul's opponents

that the members of the Galatian church "were *not yet* full heirs of Abraham."[14] These

outsiders who become part of God's family include those considered "aliens" and they

are therefore included "not because they are lineal descendents of Abraham"[15] but

because they have been adopted by God the Father.

Unfortunately, not all scholars have such an inclusive and freeing view of

adoption into the family of God as we have seen here. Wayne Grudem defines adoption

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[11] Lyall, "Roman Law in the Writings," 466.

[12] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 82–83. Stevenson-Moessner suggests that adoption is equivalent with being "at home in God's family" (*The Spirit of Adoption*, 100, emphasis in original).

[13] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 139–40.

[14] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 64, emphasis original.

[15] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 98.

as *"an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family."*[16] While this may sound similar to other definitions of adoption, Grudem has a distinctive understanding of what it means to belong to God's family. This is exemplified in the title of an essay he recommends on "the New Testament teaching on the church as a family" called "The Church as a Family: Why Male Leadership in the Family Requires Male Leadership in the Church as Well."[17] Male leadership plays a central role to Grudem for both the family and the church and would therefore define how adoption is actually lived out in both. It would certainly put constraints on how women and girls are welcomed—or not welcomed—into certain areas of church life.

5.e   Jesus Christ the Son

The sonship of Jesus is closely connected to the adoption of the believer,[18] making a way for those who are disenfranchised to become enfranchised and to also themselves become sons of God.[19] The adopted sonship of Jesus allows believers to recognize their unity with him and with each other.[20]

5.f   The Baptism of Jesus as Adoption

Michael Peppard shows how the term 'son of God' resonated with Roman

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[16] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 736. Grudem includes an entire chapter (37) on the subject of adoption in his textbook on Systematic Theology.

[17] Poythress, "The Church as a Family." Grudem specifically recommends Poythress's essay (*Systematic Theology*, 741, n. 5). Grudem is also one of the editors of the book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* in which the Poythress essay appears. It can be seen from this recommendation as well as elsewhere in *Systematic Theology* that Grudem takes a male authority view of marriage and family (cf. 459).

[18] Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship," 230. Interestingly, Galatians and Romans are where Paul most often makes reference to Jesus being the Son of God—eleven out of fifteen times in the undisputed epistles (Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship," 222; cf. Hurtado, "Son of God," 903). It should also be noted that Hurtado sees that "[t]he divine sonship of believers in both the Romans and the Galatians passages is clearly derivative of Jesus' sonship" ("Jesus' Divine Sonship," 230).

[19] Hurtado, "Son of God," 905.

[20] Matthew Lowe, in his review of Michael Peppard's *The Son of God*, observes that Peppard "often asks the helpful question of how sonship unites Christians with Christ and/or how it divides them" (Review of *The Son of God*, 4).

culture in reference to the emperor[21] and that, overwhelmingly, this "divine

relationship... was propagated by adoption through the Julio-Claudian 'dynasty.'"[22]

This, as Matthew Lowe observes in reviewing Peppard, "enables readers to glimpse

Rome's investment in adoption as a vital component of its cultural discourse, the better

to evaluate Mark's narratival adaptation of the metaphor 'Son of God.'"[23]

Early Christians resonated with the baptism of Jesus and saw in it a parallel to

their own baptism and adoption to "divine sonship."[24] Furthermore, they saw themselves

as part of the same family, in a relationship of fictive kinship with each other and with

Jesus Christ.[25]

The use of an adoption metaphor for Jesus does not take away from the concept

that he was begotten of God since "Jesus' status as 'son of God' was grounded in

multiple claims"[26] and there was a mixing of these metaphors in other areas of the New

Testament as well.[27]

One of Peppard's main objectives is to show what has been lost in the movement

away from the concept of the divine adoptive sonship of Jesus Christ in early Christian

writings.

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[21] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 28.
[22] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 48.
[23] Lowe, Review of *The Son of God*, 1.
[24] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 97. "During the early centuries of Christianity... baptism epitomized the divine sonship of the begetting/birth, of adoption, of death, and of resurrection" (146). Contra Burke who is careful to emphasize his position that Jesus himself was not adopted (Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 104, 106).
[25] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 126–27.
[26] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 49. Peppard goes on to say that, "there were dynastic considerations in depicting him as a son of David, who himself was a royal son of God; his miraculous infancy and childhood narratives suggested a divine begottenness from birth; and his baptismal experience suggested an adult divine election or adoption."
[27] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 132, 134. For example, Peppard shows how this is done in Luke. The metaphor also goes beyond showing Jesus as a 'son of God' who is exactly like the emperor; he is rather a far superior alternative since "this counter-emperor will rule not in the spirit of the bellicose eagle, but in the spirit of the pure, gentle, peaceful, and even sacrificial dove" (Peppard, *The Son of God*, 123; cf. 131).

> In the earlier texts, Christ is imagined *alongside* the Christian being baptized. Christ was the 'firstborn' of a large family, to use Pauline language; and the Christian follows his lead. But in the later texts, Christ becomes distanced. He is not the 'firstborn' older brother, standing in the Jordan and the one being baptized; he is the 'only begotten,' in the sky above. He was naturally begotten, the rest are adopted—and since that split, the ideology of the Christian family has never been the same.[28]

This development has therefore brought about a distancing from the former identification we had with Christ and his adoption.

5.g   The Spirit of Adoption

The Holy Spirit is also vital to an understanding of Pauline adoption. Burke describes how Rom 8 "is saturated with the language of the Spirit."[29] In Rom 8:15 the Holy Spirit is πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας (the "spirit of adoption")[30] which is an appropriate name, being so fundamental to the process of adoption.[31] In Rom 8:23, we witness the Spirit acting so we also can be included in participating with the Son of God in his adoption.[32]

5.h   Jews and Gentiles

The fact that adoptive sonship is extended to all Gentiles, no matter what their status or gender,[33] helps show the expansive movement of Paul's argument. Adoption creates a wider, fuller access for Gentiles.[34] Adoption is directly associated with the baptism ritual of initiation and brings about a transformation from slave to son by which

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[28] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 171.

[29] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 135. Burke notes that "references to the Spirit exceed that of all other chapters in the New Testament."

[30] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 256.

[31] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 261.

[32] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, 259.

[33] Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 69.

[34] Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship," 227. See Rom 1:5. Burke notes that "*huiothesia* functions inclusively—adoption into God's family (Eph. 2:20; Gal. 6:10) joins Jews and Gentiles into one household" (Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 99).

Gentiles become Abraham's descendents.[35] There is therefore a close connection of this process to Gal 3:28 with its context of baptism. The relationship between Jews and Gentiles, now unified in Christ and both welcomed into the family of God through adoption, provides a launching point from which the faith community can move towards the full inclusion of slaves and women as well.

5.i   Slavery

James Cook reveals a pronounced emphasis on the "helpless and hopeless slaves for whom adoption meant deliverance out of the house of bondage."[36] Those who have been disenfranchised and left without hope are included in God's adoption and are indeed given hope through God's loving grace.[37] Adoption therefore benefits the adoptee, bringing freedom from debt and slavery.[38] The freeing of slaves indicates a movement for those who have been marginalized from exclusion to inclusion in God's family, one step in the chain from slave to son which allows them also to be heirs.

5.j   Gender Inclusiveness

5.j.*i*   Exclusive versus Inclusive Adoption Language

There are several gender matters related to the concept of adoption in Paul's letters. One issue of concern is the question of exclusive language in the Pauline adoption texts. James Scott scrupulously investigates the background and use of the world υἱοθεσία in Pauline literature. Foundational to Scott's study is his translation of

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[35] Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 76.

[36] Cook, "The Concept of Adoption," 141.

[37] Cook, "The Concept of Adoption," 140.

[38] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 58. Slavery and adoption are contrasted in both Galatians and Romans (Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 65).

υἱοθεσία which he states in the Hellenistic period "always denotes 'adoption as son' and

never merely, as commonly supposed, 'sonship.'"[39]

Corley suggests that the abundance of male language in Gal 4:1–7 (υἱός,

υἱοθεσία, and υἱοί) points to gender-exclusivity.[40] From this as well as the documentary

evidence, she comes to the conclusion that "υἱοθεσία is indeed a gender-exclusive term

that excludes women from the experience of being made sons by adoption."[41] She

claims that Paul cannot both be using a term that refers to "male adoptees" and also have

"a mixed group with both men and women in view."[42] His decision to use this particular

word is therefore "not the center of an egalitarian theology."[43] In light of all of this,

Corley maintains that a woman "must have maleness conferred on her before she can be

made a son."[44]

In this, Corley fails to take into full account that υἱοθεσία is a metaphor. Because

it stands for something else, a woman does not literally need to become a son in order to

be one of those adopted by God. She does not need to have *all* of the features of

adoption apply in order for the adoption metaphor to be completely meaningful for her.

This involves recognizing the privilege and honour that went along with being adopted

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[39] Scott, *Adoption As Sons of God*, xiv; cf. 267. Scott has carefully inspected the entire semantic field of the word and found that, amongst Greek adoption terms, υἱοθεσία is fairly prevalent (*Adoption As Sons of God*, 55; cf. 3). He also points out the mitigating factor of "Rhodes perhaps skewing the evidence" (*Adoption As Sons of God*, 55).

[40] Corley states, "The priority of men over women in the laws of succession in antiquity as well as the gender-specific use of υἱοθεσία in inscriptions and documentary papyri supports this interpretation" ("Women's Inheritance Rights," 120).

[41] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 98–99.

[42] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 116. It should be noted, however, that if Paul is trying to show that women are given the status of sons and that this is a new thing then he would indeed use the term υἱοθεσία.

[43] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 99; cf. 121.

[44] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 121; cf. 99. Contrary to Corley, McGinn counters this by stating "that the illustration of a woman being adopted "as 'son-heir' does not require her to become male, but rather affirms that her inheritance will be an equal portion with the other heirs. When God saved Israel from slavery in Egypt, *all Israel* was rescued, not just the men" ("Feminists and Paul," 32).

sons.[45] Additionally, adoption was a relatively uncommon practice for men as well, so that many men would also be marginalized by Paul's use of the term.[46] This would especially be true for any who were slaves since they could not be adopted while they were still slaves.

The question of gender-inclusive or -exclusive language is a critical one, not only in terms of translation but also in terms of how women are viewed in relation to adoption and the family of God. When Paul uses the words υἱός ('son') or υἱοθεσία ('adoption as sons') in Galatians and Romans, he is clearly using gender-exclusive terms. However, particularly in Galatians, he is using them within a context of inclusivity. There is a paradox here—one that Paul seems to be intentionally putting forward. The very fact that he is using exclusive terminology and then describing the inclusivity, the removal of barriers to inheritance in Gal 3:28, makes the inclusive statement *all the more* impactful. As Polaski notes, "[t]he grammar may be gender-exclusive, but the image it invites us to imagine reaches beyond generic sameness to a celebration of diverse mutuality."[47] She later observes the following:

> If, as has often been argued, the lower strata of society comprised the bulk of Paul's congregations, then for males and females alike the promise of "adoption as sons" would sound as a word of hope, beyond the reality of their present physical circumstances. Freedom, responsibility, investment with an inheritance—all these can only be promised to believers through the gender-exclusive metaphor of sonship... In Christ God offers all persons—Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—the privileged status that can only be described as "sons of God."[48]

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[45] Stegall, *The Full Rights*, 243–44. She provides a detailed and helpful list, with biblical texts, of several of these privileges. These include: the love and promises of God, inheritance, and unity in Christ (*The Full Rights*, 255). Stegall's book is lay treatment of how all believers, male and female, are given "the full rights of sons" (Gal 4:5). She uses this term, translated as 'adoption' in other translations of the Bible, from the 1984 NIV to bring this out (*The Full Rights*, 254).

[46] McGinn, "Feminists and Paul," 30.

[47] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 71.

[48] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 71–72.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has observed, "The text uses this metaphor in order to profile the freedom, inheritance, and independence of the new status of baptized persons as 'sons.'"[49] Paul is describing adoption and inheritance as it was experienced in the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures with which he and his readers were familiar, as primarily focused on males. However, right in the middle of this discussion (Gal 3:28) he throws in a description of the inclusive nature of our status in Christ, where divisions based on race, socio-economic status and gender are torn down. With all this in mind, I follow the lead of Hurtado[50]—that υἱοθεσία is best translated in a certain way for exegetical and academic purposes, for our purposes 'adoption as sons.' However, for liturgy and Bible translation for lay participants, it is more appropriate to speak of the adoption of "children" or "sons and daughters."

5.j.*ii*   Inclusion of All Women

Romans 8:29 addresses the circumstances of believing women who "would not have mapped on to the all-male social practice of Roman adoption."[51] Peppard eloquently depicts how Christ as the "firstborn" transforms the situation to bring in those who were formerly not included:

> In Paul's cosmic vision, the privileged son of the father—the
> πρωτότοκος—is instead engaged in the process of making more children
> for the father, of increasing the size of the family. This son is
> paradoxically eager to share and thus dilute his inheritance; this behavior
> is decidedly 'foolish' by worldly standards, but for Paul, it shows the
> power of Christ through his mercy.[52]

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[49] Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 162.

[50] Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship," 218, n. 2. Thus, in his article, "Son of God," Hurtado asserts that in the context of Galatians "one can, with the NRSV, translate *huioi* as 'children'" (905).

[51] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 140. Peppard notes that these women, according to 2 Cor 6:18, "presumably were considered to have filial relationships with God."

[52] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 140.

In this way, those who formerly would not have access to the privileges of a full inheritance, do so now because of adoption. The Son graciously and generously shares his inheritance will all, including all women.

Adoption is an "emancipatory," welcoming act. It "is the process that explains how Gal. 3:28 is accomplished" and this is only through "the Liberator, Christ himself."[53] Since, in Gal 3:27–28, females and males are included on an equal basis,[54] therefore *all* who trust are welcomed into the household of God through adoption and according to the will of God.[55] In a stunning way—through the incarnation and the cross—God takes on the perspective of all those who have been disenfranchised and abandoned in their lives, and then brings about their rescue by adopting them.[56] This situation shows God to be vulnerable, expressing, in the words of Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, "not only anxious yearning as Adoptive Parent, but pain as Relinquishing Parent and abandoned agony as Forsaken Child."[57]

5.j.*iii* A Feminist Theology of Creation

Women are adopted into God's family now, but Rom 8 shows us that there is more to look forward to. Sheila McGinn declares, "Creation is eager for human salvation, i.e., adoption of both women and men as God's children and heirs to God's

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[53] Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 108.
[54] Hurtado, "Son of God," 905.
[55] Hurtado, "Jesus' Divine Sonship," 232.
[56] Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 91–92. In Christ's cry on the cross, Stevenson-Moessner sees a connection "with the primal wounding of both the adoptee and relinquishing parents."
[57] Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 92. Stevenson-Moessner is careful to emphasize that, although the adoptee may feel a sense of abandonment, her choice is to use "the language of relinquishment rather than abandonment [which] moves us away from blaming the birth mother, who is in many ways a victim herself" (92). She also notes that God has experienced rejection and abandonment by human beings in the fall (95).

freedom and glory."[58] This, in turn, is closely linked to the foundation of feminist

theology: "Human liberation, including the liberation of women and other marginalized

persons from structures of domination, is the undergirding principle and goal of feminist

theology."[59] With this kind of liberation, elitist thinking and behaviour destabilized. This

and other features of feminist theology have much in common with Paul's creation

theology and his adoption concept, as seen in Rom 8:18–23.[60]

5.k   Full Rights of Inheritance

An important benefit that the adoptee receives is the full rights of inheritance.

"Paul's argument in Gal 3:1–4:7 depends fundamentally on the adoptee's absolute right

to inherit. Because the apostle shows that the Galatians are in fact already 'sons,' he

establishes their status as full heirs by faith without circumcision or the Law."[61]

Additionally, those who are adopted children are now heirs of God and fellow

heirs with Christ. This is seen in both Gal 4:1–7 and Rom 8:14–17.[62] This means that we

have the same inheritance as Christ..

5.l   Conclusion

One of the most important illustrations of adoption in the Christian faith tradition

is Chapter 12 of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This creed, quoted below,

eloquently conveys the theology of adoption as expressed in the letters of Paul, and

Francis Lyall shows how it is able to do so despite the fact that it was written more than

two hundred years before the Adoption Acts were enacted in the United Kingdom.

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[58] McGinn, "Feminists and Paul," 32. "When humans are adopted as God's children and become heirs to God's freedom and glory, creation likewise will find its fulfillment in the freedom and the glory of God (McGinn, "Feminists and Paul," 34).
[59] McGinn, "Feminists and Paul," 33.
[60] McGinn, "Feminists and Paul," 33.
[61] Walters, "Paul, Adoption," 56.
[62] Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs*, 70.

> All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father yet never cast off, but are sealed to the day of redemption and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.[63]

The inclusion of "[a]ll" as members of God's family, with all "the liberties and privileges of the children of God" that that would entail, are two of the meaningful truths brought out in this Confession.

Wrestling with some of the preceding themes has been valuable in helping to develop a feminist theology. Such a theology will be able to frame a Pauline understanding of adoption in terms of the liberation of women and others who are marginalized, as McGinn has recognized,[64] with outsiders being welcomed into the family of God.[65]

In order to apply many of the concepts put forward in this chapter, it is necessary to move beyond a soteriological understanding of Pauline adoption to an ecclesiological approach,[66] which involves the actual living out of the inclusive principles of adoption in community with others.[67] As Kathryn Stegall has articulated so well, this is all about "the entire business of living by faith."[68] Because this involves the *full* participation[69] in the community of faith of *all* those who have been adopted, regardless of ethnic origin, socioeconomic status or gender, it is indeed good news.

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[63] Quoted in Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 68.
[64] McGinn, "Feminists and Paul," 33.
[65] Corley, "Women's Inheritance Rights," 98.
[66] Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 99.
[67] Peppard, *The Son of God*, 137; Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 100, emphasis in original.
[68] Stegall, *The Full Rights*, 250.
[69] Contra Grudem who recommends Poythress, "The Church as a Family." In Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 741, n. 5.

Chapter 6: Inclusiveness and New Creation in
Galatians 3:23–4:7 and Romans 8:14–25

6.a   Introduction

In the previous chapter on adoption, it was emphasized that through adoption

believers in Christ also receive an inheritance. In this chapter, we will examine two

crucial questions: Who inherits? and What kind of inheritance do they receive? Do we

define this inheritance solely in terms of salvation, or does it have implications beyond

soteriology to encompass social and ecclesiological issues? This chapter will establish

that there is ample evidence in the Galatian and Roman letters that inheritance goes

beyond soteriology to impact every area of the Christian life and even the whole of

creation.

In order to address this question, I will once again be using a feminist critical

approach to biblical interpretation—one that that is centred on what I believe about God.

I heartily concur with Sharon Ringe's description of "belief in a God who is at home in

women's realities, who participates in women's experience and who is committed to the

vitality and wholeness of all women and men."[1] I would also define my own personal

approach to feminist criticism as one that is, in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's words, an

"empathic reading" of Paul that seeks to preserve his "liberating voice."[2]

Cynthia Briggs Kittredge observes that, according to a feminist biblical

interpretation, "concerns for the full inclusion and participation of women in the life of

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[1] Ringe, "An Approach," 157.

[2] Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 165. It should be noted that Schüssler Fiorenza herself does not subscribe to such an "empathic reading" of Paul but rather to a "feminist deconstructive rereading." I should also add that it is often important to push a bit further than a purely empathic reading in order to be aware of the patriarchal underpinnings of Paul's context.

faith benefit... the whole Christian community."[3] This is a primary goal of this chapter and we will see that this goal originates in the scriptural text itself. Another goal is to bring to light any women who may be hidden or invisible in the biblical texts.[4]

Sandra Hack Polaski suggests that a faithful approach to interpreting scriptural texts will discover their trajectories in addition to where they are situated—the ways in which they help us look beyond themselves.[5] This method will assist us in examining the Galatians and Romans texts, particularly Gal 3:28, whose context focuses on the first pair (Jew and Gentile) but also calls us to further consideration of how the other two pairs can be addressed within the church.

In this chapter, we will consider the importance of being "in Christ" and the fact that *all* who are in Christ are recipients of the promised inheritance. We will then take a closer look at the inclusive and expansive nature of that inheritance. Other issues that will be addressed are: slavery and freedom; Jews and Gentiles; the importance of table fellowship; circumcision and baptism; the obsolescence of patrilineal descent; and maternal imagery. A thorough investigation of gender inclusiveness in Gal 3:28 will be followed by a discussion of new creation.

6.b   "In Christ"

In Gal 3:23–4:7, the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ('in Christ Jesus') is central to the text, occurring in 3:26, where it is related to how we are sons ("children" in NRSV) of God, and 3:28, where it defines our oneness as believers. It also occurs earlier in the chapter in 3:14, where it is the means by which the Gentiles receive "the blessing of Abraham." This phrase does not occur in Rom 8:14–25. However, it does occur in 8:1–2

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[3] Kittredge, "Scriptural Criticism," 260.
[4] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 5; cf. 17, 25.
[5] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 11; cf. 87.

and in 8:39, thus framing the chapter with references to the reality that we are no longer under condemnation in Christ (8:1)[6] and to God's love for us in Christ Jesus (8:39). These passages work together to show that being in Christ is vital for the members of his church. In fact, it is "the first and most important thing to be said about us."[7] It means that there are no more barriers between Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free persons, and males and females.[8] It means there is now a radical inclusiveness which is possible because the faith community "is no longer defined by physical fatherhood."[9] Significantly, in both Galatians and Romans, being in Christ also impacts our everyday lives because we are "to live out" the truth that we *are* in Christ.[10]

6.c *All*-Inclusiveness

There are several indicators that the message of Gal 3–4 and Rom 8 applies to all. One is the word πάντες ('all') which again occurs in Gal 3:26 and 3:28. James Dunn notes that what is being emphasized in 3:26 and its parallel in Rom 8:14 is that Gentiles have *already* become sons of God.[11] The clear link between Gal 3:26 and 3:28 shows that *every* believer is a child of God, including both females and males.[12] And because sons are heirs, the all-inclusiveness also applies to inheritance (Gal 4:7; Rom 8:17). However, God's generous redemptive activity moves even beyond the adoption of believers as sons who inherit to expansively encompass the entire creation (Rom 8:22–23). The *all* includes not only *all* believers but *all* of God's creation.[13]

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[6] See Barrett, *A Commentary*, 145.
[7] Gaventa, "Is Galatians," 276.
[8] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 94.
[9] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 41–42.
[10] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 159; cf. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 82.
[11] Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 202. In Rom 8:14, the word is ὅσοι ('as many as') translated as "all who" in the NRSV.
[12] Fee, *Galatians*, 139–40.
[13] Thompson, "'Mercy upon All,'" 214; cf. Gaventa, "Romans," 313.

6.d   Inclusive Inheritance

Although land is the typical OT concept of inheritance, it is also an effective way to represent God's inheritance in the NT. Brueggemann notes, "Land is for sharing with all the heirs of the covenant, even those who have no power to claim it. Something about land makes one forget them, makes one insensitive to them."[14] Thus they become the dispossessed. The dispossessed are those who are prevented from receiving a full inheritance for some reason, who require someone to be a voice for them and act on their behalf so that they can inherit—someone who will make them heirs.

The one who makes the children heirs is the Father. It is the Father's "good pleasure" (Luke 12:32) to graciously give his children the kingdom inheritance.[15] Through the process of adoption, people move from being slaves to sons of the Father, who are then identified as his heirs (Gal 4:7; Rom 8:15–17).[16] Richard Longenecker observes that God's redemptive goal "has always been to bring his people to a full realization of their personal relationship with him as sons and to a full possession of their promised inheritance."[17]

Gentiles and Jews alike also have a claim to this promised inheritance as they are deemed "Abraham's offspring" (Gal 3:29).[18] The inclusive nature of inheritance is brought out in the fact that *all*—both female and male—have the same "legal status of

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[14] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 66; cf. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 156, on the use of land to depict inheritance in Romans. Land is a helpful way of understanding inheritance in Paul's writings because of its this-worldly nature and the expectation of "living faithfully in history" (Brueggemann, *The Land*, 178).

[15] Thompson, "'Mercy upon All,'" 206.

[16] Sampley, "Romans and Galatians," 316, highlights the "slave to son to heir" chain in these two texts. cf. Fee, *Galatians*, 156.

[17] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 177.

[18] Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 208; Fee, *Galatians*, 144; Morris, *Galatians*, 124; Trible and Russell, "Unto the Thousandth," 3–4.

son" in the presence of God and that this status includes inheritance.[19] It is particularly

noteworthy that Gal 3:28 ("There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or

free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus") is

framed by the language of heirs and inheritance (3:18; 3:29; 4:1; 4:7). The Gal 3:28 text

will be examined carefully later in this chapter, especially with respect to the question of

gender inclusiveness.

The matter of what the inheritance looks like is also central to our discussion.

N.T. Wright observes that, in Rom 8, the land inheritance has become the entire

redeemed cosmos—the new creation.[20] Daniel Kirk aptly designates this as a "new

creation inheritance."[21] The basis for this understanding of inheritance as the whole

creation is found in Rom 4:13: "For 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." Abraham's true descendents are to inherit the world.[22] This is, indeed, a

generous, expansive inheritance.

The language of renewed creation and inheriting the world in Romans often has

the sense of a future event that has not yet happened. However, there is also clearly a

now nature to our inheritance which is in tension with the not yet. In Rom 8:17, for

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[19] Osiek, "Galatians," 334. Elizabeth Castelli ("Romans," 291) contends that the use of gender-exclusive inheritance terms has the effect—although not necessarily intentional—of marginalizing women. Carolyn Osiek, on the other hand, points out that with this term, daughters are given an equal inheritance status with sons that they would not otherwise have.

[20] Wright, "New Exodus," 30.

[21] Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 156: "Those who are in Christ will see with their eyes the consummation of God's love for them in the resurrection glory of the new creation inheritance."

[22] Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 136, 145; Wright, "New Exodus," 31.

example, we look forward to our future glorification with Christ but we are *already* God's heirs and co-heirs with Christ.[23]

6.e   Slavery and Freedom in Christ

The slavery metaphor and the contrast of slavery and freedom play an important role in both Galatians and Romans, including in the context of the inheritance discussion. Those who were formerly not in Christ were enslaved under the law which is depicted as a prison guard (3:23).[24] In contrast to the Jews, who were enslaved by the law, Gentiles were enslaved by what Gordon Fee calls "enslaving 'powers'" as spoken of in Gal 4:3.[25]

However, through the liberating effects of Christ's death and resurrection, the powers that enslave have been overthrown.[26] As a result, we are no longer slaves and the revolutionary words of Gal 3:28 indicate that the division between slave and free is no longer of any consequence.[27] Slaves are not only emancipated but actually become part of God's own family through adoption[28] and have "full freedom of mature sonship" and access to all that comes along with that status.[29] That includes rights to an inheritance from the Father. Not only this, but we—as former slaves ourselves—can look forward to a time when the creation itself is released from its bonds of slavery. This will be a cause

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[23] Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, 117. Daniel Kirk notes, "This already–not yet possession of the Spirit of resurrection sonship embodies Paul's bifurcated eschatology" (*Unlocking Romans*, 138).

[24] Barrett refers to "the law of sin and of death" (Rom 8:2) as "a tyrannical master" and the same could be said for Gal 3:23 where, "before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law" (*A Commentary*, 146).

[25] Fee, *Galatians*, 146–47; cf. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 188. Kahl refers to them as "universal polarities" ("No Longer Male," 44). The NRSV translates τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου as "the elemental spirits of the world."

[26] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 44; Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 188.

[27] Morris, *Galatians*, 122.

[28] Thompson, "'Mercy upon All,'" 214.

[29] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 176.

for great rejoicing after a long period of waiting, longing and lamenting (Rom 8:21–23).[30]

The words of freedom in Galatians and Romans need to, in turn, have an impact on how we live and relate to each other. We are to actually "become slaves to one another" in love (Gal 5:13) which brings about a "subversion and 'conversion' of the hierarchical polarity of slave and free."[31] The concept that "there is no longer slave or free" (Gal 3:28) can also have an impact socially. Lewis Johnson, in his essay on Gal 3:28, suggests that the epistle to Philemon "in principle provides just grounds for the abolition of slavery itself."[32] While it is commendable for Johnson to come to this conclusion, it is ironic given that he is opposed to the overturning of "role distinctions" between women and men.[33] He therefore would not see the same potential to abolish male hierarchy in Scripture as he does for the abolishment of slavery.[34] This demonstrates that the question of how we can apply these biblical truths in our lives today is an important one.

6.f   Jews and Gentiles

The issue of Jewish and Gentile relations within the church is of fundamental importance in both Galatians and Romans. It was particularly significant to Paul because he considered his calling and mission to be to the Gentiles.[35] The dominant matter of

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[30] This passage resonates well with the poignant words of Frederick Douglas in his description of the slave spirituals of his time: "[T]hey were tones, loud, long and deep, breathing the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains" (Quoted in Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 56–57).

[31] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 47.

[32] Johnson, "Role Distinctions," 159.

[33] Johnson, "Role Distinctions," 160.

[34] Johnson's essay will be examined further in the section on gender inclusiveness in Gal 3:28 later in the chapter.

[35] Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 9.

concern for him was that Gentiles could be included in God's people.[36]

A major problem that needed to be confronted in the Galatian church was that the Jews were treating the Gentiles "as second-class citizens in the church."[37] The context for this, according to F. F. Bruce, was the historical "cleavage between Jew and Gentile."[38] Wayne Meeks points out another critical issue for Paul—that he considered that both Gentiles *and* Jews without Christ were enslaved and were therefore both outsiders.[39]

The solution, for Paul, was reconciliation between Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ.[40] This reconciliation is brought about by a God who "shows no partiality" between Jews and Gentiles (Rom 2:11).[41] Now, both Jews and Gentiles can be the sons of God[42] who is the Father of both.[43] This all can happen through the adoption of both Jews and Gentiles as children of God. Marianne Meye Thompson observes that this adoption is "now expressed in the language of family and inheritance, and testifies to God's faithfulness to the Jews, the children of Abraham, and God's mercy to the Gentiles, also the children of Abraham."[44] Thus, through the love and mercy of God, Gentiles and Jews can have true unity and the promise of God's inheritance.

6.g   Table Fellowship

Related to the Jew/Gentile issue, the issue of whether or not members of

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[36] Fee, "Male and Female," 174.

[37] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 82. This issue will be discussed further in the section on table fellowship (125–27).

[38] Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 188.

[39] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 96.

[40] Gaventa identifies this as a central purpose of Paul's epistle to the Romans ("Romans," 315). Fee observes that, in Galatians, "through the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit... the ground has been leveled" between Jewish and Gentile believers ("Male and Female," 174).

[41] The impartiality of God is brought out in both Galatians and Romans (Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 168). An example in Galatians would of course be Gal 3:28.

[42] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 115.

[43] Thompson, "'Mercy upon All,'" 207–209.

[44] Thompson, "'Mercy upon All,'" 215.

divergent groups can come together at a common meal is crucial for our study of inclusiveness in the Galatian and Roman letters. This is well demonstrated in the situation at Antioch that Paul recounts to the Galatians.

6.g.*i*   The Confrontation at Antioch

In Gal 2:11–14, Paul tells of a conflict he had with Cephas (Peter) at Antioch because Peter had given up eating with Gentiles. This was something that clearly was of great consequence to Paul. Scholars are nearly unanimous in declaring that this passage was central to the message of Galatians and had social and ecclesiological implications for those who embraced the good news of Jesus Christ.[45]

The heart of the matter was that Jews and Gentiles were once again being separated into two groups.[46] The gospel was therefore at riskand Paul was concerned—perhaps even furious—enough to confront Peter publically (2:14).[48] This was clearly not only a spiritual issue but one that impacted church life in Galatia. It applies to the Jew/Gentile pair of Gal 3:28 but also has unmistakable relevance for the other two pairs. Jewish scholar Daniel Boyarin astutely poses the following question: "If Paul took 'no Jew or Greek' as seriously as all of Galatians attests that he clearly did, how could he possibly—unless he is a hypocrite or incoherent—not have taken 'no male and female' with equal seriousness?"[49]

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[45] One example is Gordon Fee who says that this passage "has altogether to do with the inclusion of Gentiles as full and equal members of the people of God" ("Male and Female,"175); cf. Fee, *Galatians*, 78–79; Boyarin, "Paul and the Genealogy," 22; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 65, 72; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 161; Morris, *Galatians*, 81; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 86; Reiher, "Galatians 3:28," 274; Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 210; Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28," 176; Taussig, *In the Beginning*, 74.

[46] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 65

[48] Fee, *Galatians*, 79; Morris, *Galatians*, 81; Reiher, "Galatians 3:28," 274.

[49] Boyarin, "Paul and the Genealogy," 22.

6.g.*ii* The Importance of the Meal in Church Fellowship

Unified table fellowship was essential to Paul. By his response to Peter in Gal

2:11–14, he showed that "he knew of the meal's power to work for the integration of

differences."[50] Hal Taussig has examined the concept of table fellowship in early church

congregations as a "social experiment" where they used a common cultural phenomenon

to bring about a revisioning of community in terms of gender, ethnicity, status and

religion.[51] This practice gave access to a common table for many who would not usually

have shared a meal.[52] For Paul, Christian unity was unavoidably linked to who was

willing to eat together.[53] According to Philip Payne, table fellowship ensures that people

are not excluded "from any privilege or position in the church" based on the group to

which they belong.[54] This will have particular relevance when we investigate the subject

of gender in Gal 3:28.

6.h Circumcision or Baptism?

Another matter connected with the Jew/Gentile issue is whether circumcision or

baptism is the preferred entrance ritual into the Christian community. The Galatian and

Roman epistles illustrate that Paul overwhelmingly favours baptism over circumcision

for several reasons.

Circumcision physically marks off people into distinctive groups whereas, with

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[50] Taussig, *In the Beginning*, 74.

[51] Taussig, *In the Beginning*, 174; cf. 71 and 146. In the context of Rom 14–15, which also deals with food and meal issues in relation to Jewish and Gentile differences, Kathy Ehrensperger finds a "concrete testing ground of what otherwise would be a purely theoretical faith." Such a faith "is either practical or it is nothing at all" ("New Perspectives on Paul," 238).

[52] Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 71.

[53] Taussig, *In the Beginning*, 179. Meeks declares that, for Paul, the community/unity pictured in the ritual experience of baptism "ought to be visible...in the Supper" (Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 159).

[54] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 83.

baptism, such markers no longer play a part.[55] Circumcision therefore takes believers

backwards because they are trying to fulfill the law when they do not need to any

more.[56] The rite of circumcision also excludes and overlooks women[57] whereas baptism

is inclusive and makes way for "full participation" of both women and Gentiles in the

faith community.[58]

However, Paul's most convincing line of reasoning against circumcision as an

entrance rite to Christian community is almost certainly the new creation argument in

Gal 6:15: "For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation

is everything!" This concept is foundational to Paul's letter to the Galatians and its

influence will be seen more clearly when we look at new creation and its relationship

with inheritance and gender.[59]

6.i   The Obsolescence of Patrilineal Genealogy

There is a noticeable movement, in Galatians and Romans, away from a system

of genealogy that is dependent on male biology to one that is God-centred. Paul uses

imagery of matrilineal descent and adoption to emphasize this God-centredness.

Traditionally, to be a descendent of Abraham meant male descent, passed on

from father to son.[60] Both Gal 3:23–4:7[61] and Rom 8:14–25[62] have background material

in which Abraham is identified as the progenitor of the line to which all believers

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[55] Boyarin, "Paul and the Genealogy," 20; Kahl, "No Longer Male," 48; cf. Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 71.
[56] Fee, *Galatians*, 140.
[57] Fee, *Galatians*, 141; Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28," 177. Brigitte Kahl refers to circumcision as an "exclusively male" issue ("No Longer Male," 38).
[58] Fee, *Galatians*, 141; cf. Payne, *Man and Woman*, 93; Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 210. Atkins points out the "universality of baptism as an entrance ritual" (*Egalitarian Community*, 117).
[59] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 210.
[60] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 41.
[61] The background material on Abraham for Gal 3:23–4:7 is given in the earlier part of Gal 3.
[62] The background material on Abraham for Rom 8:14–25 is given in Rom 4.

belong. However, in neither case is this lineage shown to be determined physically.[63]

There is a redefinition of Ἀβραάμ... τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ ('Abraham's seed' in Gal 3:16

and Rom 4:13) which is in the person of Christ, giving rise to a "strictly christo-centric

spermatology."[64] Male genealogy is truly on its way out. Both Jews and Gentiles have

their genealogy reconfigured away from male descent.[65] Christ has brought about the

obsolescence of patrilineal lineage.

With this shift in focus away from male descent, Paul uses several images which

incorporate the idea of matrilineal genealogy. One reason for this would be that, in first-

century culture, power over the family line was held by the father and so the concept of

matrilineal descent would be seen as a subversive reversal of that.[66] In Gal 4:26–28,

within the context of his allegorical comparison of Hagar and Sarah, Paul contrasts

"non-biological motherhood as children of 'promise'"[67]—as represented by the formerly

barren Sarah giving birth to Isaac—with what he previously described as *biological*

fatherhood under the law. Of primary importance in Paul's writings is the fact that

"Jesus' story is a narrative of matrilineal descent."[68] It is not the anatomy of the male

that determines human destiny, but rather our adoption in Christ—the true Seed—by the

Father.[69]

In overturning the old model of genealogy in his writings, the apostle Paul's

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[63] Eisenbaum, "A Remedy," 112–13.

[64] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 41. The repeated overturning of primogeniture in the OT also assists in the subversion of any reliance on patrilineal descent (Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 69).

[65] Eisenbaum, "A Remedy," 116.

[66] Eisenbaum, "A Remedy," 123.

[67] Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 68.

[68] Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 108. This is true even if Gal 4:4 is not referring to the virgin birth, as noted by Morris, *Galatians*, 215; Osiek, "Galatians," 334–35. Paul, in any case, is clear throughout the rest of Galatians and Romans that human male biology is simply not seen as necessary in the descent of Christ.

[69] Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 110. Stevenson-Moessner shows how adoption is contrasted with the OT concept of the male seed (103).

argument is not always easy to follow but it is always focused on the good news *in Christ*. This good news allows for and, indeed, calls for an overturning of patriarchy and the narrow definition of male descent. Concerning this, Brigitte Kahl observes the following: "In his rereading of the Genesis story in Galatians 3–4 Paul develops a concept of fatherhood and motherhood that could be a nightmare to anyone interested in 'orderly' patriarchal categories and cultural practices."[70] Since inheritance is so closely tied to genealogy, the shift is therefore from an inheritance that is narrow and rigid to one that is wide and inclusive.

6.j   More Maternal Imagery

The examples of maternal descent discussed in the previous section are not the only mother imagery used by Paul in Romans and Galatians. Mother and birth terms stand out as dominant in Gal 4,[71] including a maternal metaphor that Paul uses of himself. In Gal 4:19, the apostle addresses the Galatians as "[m]y little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." This would have identified Paul with women[72] and would therefore have been a humbling image for him to use of himself.[73] It is therefore quite an unexpected and noteworthy occurrence.[74]

In Rom 8:22, Paul—once again notably[75]—uses a maternal metaphor in the midst of his discussion of inheritance and adoption, when he announces that "the whole

[70] Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 72.
[71] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 42–43.
[72] Osiek, "Galatians," 336. "Perhaps a man willing to use such an image is not as alienated from women's experience as Paul is often made out to be."
[73] Gaventa, "Our Mother St. Paul," 96. Gaventa observes here that "when Paul presents himself as a mother, he voluntarily hands over the authority of a patriarch in favor of a role that will bring him shame, the shame of a female-identified male. Still, maternal imagery becomes effective precisely because it plays on hierarchical expectations." cf. Kahl, who connects Paul's humility in this verse with Christ's humility and voluntary weakness on the cross ("No Longer Male," 45–46). Gaventa notes that, other than when he calls God Father, Paul uses motherhood imagery more frequently than father imagery ("Our Mother St. Paul," 90).
[74] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 24–25.
[75] Burke, *Adopted Into God's Family*, 186; Gaventa, "Romans," 318; Peppard, *The Son of God*, 136.

creation has been groaning in labor pains until now." The surrounding context in Rom 8:18–25 highlights the hope of *new* creation in a meaningful way that shows the birth pains to be worthwhile and productive.[76]

Beverly Roberts Gaventa suggests that Paul uses the maternal metaphor, as he does other metaphors, to persuade his readers to consider things in a new way so that they will change their minds about something.[77] One of the things he is doing here is attempting to encourage an intimate relationship with his audience.[78] However, I would argue that he has another objective in Galatians and Romans: by using gender-inclusive metaphors, Paul is emphasizing the inclusivity of the good news of adoption, inheritance and new creation for all, regardless of gender.

6.k   Gender-Inclusiveness in Galatians 3:28

The words of Gal 3:28—"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"—are considered a powerful statement of equality and "border-transgressing unity" for all, including women.[79] Klyne Snodgrass calls this biblical text "the most socially explosive statement in the New Testament."[80] These assessments are not overly extravagant. We will show here that Paul's declaration has the potential to revolutionize Christian life. For our purposes, we will here be examining the issue of gender.

It is essential to emphasize that this text is framed by Paul in the language of

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[76] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 84–85.
[77] Gaventa, "Our Mother St. Paul," 93.
[78] Gaventa, "Our Mother St. Paul," 94–95. This is particularly true of Gal 4:19.
[79] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 38; cf. Briggs, "Galatians," 218.
[80] Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28," 161, 168.

inheritance.[81] A question then to be asked is: What does Gal 3:28 tell us about what an heir is and what an heir inherits?

6.k.*i*   Status and Relationship in Galatians 3:28

Many believe that Gal 3:28 is a pre-Pauline baptismal formula.[82] However, this is not undisputed.[83] Whether or not it is, these words are still a central and foundational element of Paul's writings[84] and "his life championed their truth."[85]

One view of Gal 3:28 is that it has only to do with salvation. Typical of this perspective is S. Lewis Johnson Jr. who maintains that this text exclusively concerns a person's "spiritual status in Christ."[86] While no one would deny that Gal 3:28 has a spiritual meaning, to limit it to this aspect raises serious concerns.[87] We will examine several reasons in this section showing why it is impossible to interpret Gal 3:28 purely soteriologically with no social implications.[88] In essence, this position is repudiated by the context of Gal 3:28.[89]

One key point to be made is that women and slaves in Israel were *already* considered part of the covenant community, so Paul would have been declaring nothing

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[81] 3:18; 3:29; 4:1; 4:7. See 122 above.

[82] Briggs, "Galatians," 218; Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 65.

[83] Morris states that it is therefore "precarious to build anything on the possibility" (*Galatians*, 120–21).

[84] Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 58–59.

[85] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 89.

[86] Johnson, "Role Distinctions," 159; cf. 163 where he states, "All are equal in Christ, the church, and family, but the phrase, 'in Christ,' refers to the mystical and universal, the representative and covenantal union of all believers in the Lord." Johnson's position is extremely problematic. His dualistic view of Gal 3:28 denies the impact of being 'in Christ' on our everyday lives. Another concern with Johnson is his repeated assertion that his is "the historic orthodox interpretation of the text" (154; cf. 163, 164). Especially in light of the numerous problems with this position, this seems quite arrogant. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza is correct in stating that "malestream exegesis has sought to explain away Gal. 3:28's radical theological claim to equality or to evaporate it" (*Rhetoric and Ethic*, 149).

[87] Longenecker, *Galatians*, 157. Robert Atkins observes, "Salvation is conceived in the context of participation in the church and in the promises of God" (*Egalitarian Community*, 182).

[88] Gasque, "Response," 189.

[89] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 98.

new if he was only talking about coming to faith.[90] Related to this, there were no expectations that being male or free was a requirement to be a follower of Christ, but there were problems with the Jew/Gentile question in this regard.[91] In fact, because of his calling to the Gentiles, Paul was especially focused on the latter issue, although he still took the other pairs seriously.[92]

It is obvious that Gal 3:28 has not eradicated distinctions.[93] There is a rich diversity between human beings and there are also human, patriarchal structures which continue despite what Paul has announced. However, while these distinctions still exist, the words of Gal 3:28 level out "values and structural norms imposed on these distinctions."[94] Johnson, perceiving the existence of role distinctions within the church, asks whether "distinction of roles of believers within that equality necessarily violates that equality."[95] In response to this, Philip Payne comments, "If such distinctions of roles are based on the gifts and callings of individual believers, they would not violate that equality." However, exclusion according to gender *would* certainly harm that equality.[96]

It is evident that the truth of Gal 3:28 impacts not only spiritual status, but also social status and relationships. We have already seen this in Paul's response to Peter at Antioch over table fellowship. This incident indicates that his goal for the churches of

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[90] Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28," 178; cf. Fee, "Male and Female," 176; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 79, who also includes Greeks among those who would have been considered as already having salvation.

[91] Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28," 179.

[92] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 75; Fee, "Male and Female," 174.

[93] Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, 207; Fee, "Male and Female," 177, n. 11; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 85, 86; Reiher, "Galatians 3:28," 276.

[94] Fee, "Male and Female," 177, n. 11.

[95] Johnson, "Role Distinctions," 161.

[96] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 102; cf. Reiher, "Galatians 3:28," 276–77.

Christ is "complete social integration."[97] With the reconfiguring of relationships, patriarchal modes of encounter must also be challenged and "no structures of dominance can be tolerated" any longer.[98] This also meant that there were consequences not only for women but for men who bought into this paradigm. If they were free men, they would likely have to give up honour in order to foster equality with others—something which would have been remarkable for that time.[99]

6.k.*ii* Full Participation in Church Life

The proper application of Gal 3:28 would allow for women to participate fully in the life of the church. Any limitations on this would simply detract from the ideal intended for the church in the verse.

There are two parallels for Gal 3:28 in the NT: Col 3:11 and 1 Cor 12:13. In both of these, practical matters of church life are dealt with.[100] The male/female pair only occurs in Gal 3:28, which is noteworthy because it could have been left out but was not.[101] All indications are that this text was intended to have significant ecclesiological consequences for women—that is, in terms of who are the people of God and how they interact with each other in the practical life of the church.[102] This would make sense since Paul was speaking to and about women, as members of the Galatian church, about baptism—the rite of entry into the faith community. His concern would be how this faith community lived out that faith.

The practicality of this Pauline saying is also unmistakable when we consider it

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[97] Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 144.
[98] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 213.
[99] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 218; cf. Fee, "Male and Female," 180.
[100] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 80; cf. Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 189.
[101] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 39.
[102] Fee, "Male and Female," 174, n. 5; Reiher, "Galatians 3:28," 272.

in the context of the promises to Abraham (Gal 3:14; 3:29) which Johnson takes to be merely spiritual.[103] However, Payne rightly points out that *all* of the blessings to Abraham—and through him to the covenant community—in Gen 12:2–3 are of a practical and social nature rather than spiritual.[104]

Further evidence of the functional nature of Gal 3:28 is seen in the rabbinical prayer—a precursor of which was thought to be behind the formulation of Gal 3:2– where male Jews give thanks for not being born a Gentile, slave, or woman.[105] What is interesting is that members of these three groups did not participate in study of the law and so the prayer emphasized how they were excluded from the opportunity from studying the law. The understanding would be that, if this prayer was being renounced by Paul, those who had formerly been excluded from such activities would now be included.[106]

In his assertion that "role distinctions" are not eliminated in Gal 3:28, Johnson indicates that there are restrictions as to what women can do in the church, including prohibitions on certain types of authoritative ministry and preaching.[107] In restricting ministry and leadership in any way, one risks flouting the Pauline teaching on the proper practice of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12:7.[108] For Payne, recalling the context of the Galatian epistle and the narrative of the incident at Antioch gives a further rationale for

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[103] Johnson, "Role Distinctions," 163.

[104] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 98.

[105] Bruce, *Epistle to the Galatians*, 187. Bruce notes that the earliest extant versions of the prayer have the word "'brutish man' [bôr] instead of 'slave.'" There is also a similar Greek parallel to this prayer.

[106] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 84, 85.

[107] Johnson, "Role Distinctions," 160; cf. 162.

[108] "Those excluding women from church leadership either assume that God never gives women certain gifts of the Spirit such as teaching and administration, or they restrict the use of those gifts even though Paul explains that the gifts are for the common good" (Payne, *Man and Woman*, 99). In addition, we know that women were *using* their ministry gifts in the early churches (Gasque, "Response," 190–91). Romans 16 gives a good snapshot of such ministering women, with Phoebe the deacon and benefactor (16:1-2), Junia the apostle (16:7), and Prisca (16:3), Mary (16:6), Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis (16:12) who are all described as co-workers in Paul's mission.

encouraging women to use whatever leadership and ministry gifts they might have: "Galatians 2:11–14 shows how strongly Paul would have reacted if anyone had used 'role distinctions' to exclude Gentiles or slaves from leadership roles in the church."[109]

Those who promote limitations on women's ministry would also set restrictions on the preaching of the good news. In response to this, Susie Stanley justifiably wonders if we can "separate the good news of the gospel from the fact that the 'freedom found in Christ' includes the freedom for all believers, men and women, to share that good news?"[110] In answer to that, it is inconceivable that Paul would want to restrict the preaching of his beloved gospel in any way.

Paul himself was an example of one who fully embraced not only Gentiles but slaves and women in all areas of church life and ministry.[111] He was able to apply the truth of Gal 3:28, that there was no longer male and female, in his own life and ministry.[112]

All of this evidence points to the full inclusion of women in the church. This means that women, as well as men, need to be welcomed not only as members of the faith community but as participants, wholly dedicated to the good news of Jesus Christ.[113]

6.k.*iii* New Creation and Ethics in Galatians 3:28

In both Galatians and Romans, Paul is revealing how God is doing a new thing

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[109] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 97.

[110] Stanley, "Response," 181–82. James Dunn likewise observes that "it is highly unlikely that he would have allowed gender or social status as such, any more than race, to constitute a barrier against any service of the gospel" (*The Epistle to the Galatians*, 207).

[111] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 89

[112] Jewett mentions the women of Rom 16 in this regard (*Man as Male and Female*, 145).

[113] The concept of women's "full participation" in church life and ministry is one that Payne repeatedly emphasizes (*Man and Woman*, 81, 93, 97;cf. 85, 99).

in providing adoption and inheritance to those in Christ.[114] It is therefore not surprising that we find evidence of new creation in Gal 3:28. This is indicated by the phrase ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ('male and female') which is also used in the LXX of Gen 1:27 and therefore alludes to creation there and a new creation in Gal 3:28.[115] Philip Payne describes how this new creation looks in terms of Gal 3:28:

> Central to this new creation is the new 'Israel of God' (Gal 6:16) that gives no privileged status to Jews over Gentiles, to free persons over slaves, or to men over women. They are all one in Christ Jesus, redeemed from sin and the law by Christ and welcomed into the family of God. All now live in Christ, freed from control by the principles of the world and heirs of God's promises to Abraham. No one is a second-class citizen or excluded by ethnic-religious background, economic status, or gender from any position or privilege in the church.[116]

New creation therefore has an impact on our ethical conduct—how we interact with and treat each other in community.

Love is the basis for right conduct in the Pauline writings. In Gal 5:13–14,[117] we are called to love each other by becoming "slaves to one another"—in essence, we are to take on one of the marginalized positions in Gal 3:28.[118] The ethics of this love has no place for ethnic, status, or gender discrimination in the church.[119] Rather, ungodly patriarchy is transformed "into patterns of active mutuality and solidarity."[120] If we hold true to Paul's inspirational words in Gal 3:28, our ethics will assuredly be transformed.

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[114] Payne says of the new creation theme in Galatians that it is "always pointing to the new life in Christ lived through the Spirit" (*Man and Woman*, 92).

[115] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 92–93. Inexplicably, Johnson finds support for the idea of the "distinction between male and female" in the creation account, whereas Gen 1:27 emphasizes that male and female have the *same* role ("Role Distinctions,").

[116] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 104.

[117] cf. Rom 13:8–10.

[118] Ward Gasque, referring also to Gal 5:1, declares the following: "There is a law higher than the law of liberty: it is the law of love" ("Response," 191).

[119] Payne, *Man and Woman*, 101; cf. Kahl, "No Longer Male," 47, who highlights Gal 5:6: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love."

[120] Kahl, "No Longer Male," 46. Kahl says we are to base this transformation on "the historical and parenetic sections of Gal. 1–2 and 5–6."

6.k.*iv* Conclusion to Gender-Inclusiveness in Galatians 3:28

Mary Ann Tolbert says concerning the Pauline saying found in Gal 3:28 that "the open incorporation of believers of all races, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds into full and equal partnership in the traditional contract of God to Abraham and the Jewish people was an act of outrageous inclusivity."[121] It is a pity if this outrageousness is not taken to its full potential by those who are in Christ.

Galatians 3:28 is contained within Paul's exploration of adoption and inheritance. Therefore, when one limits the scope of Paul's pronouncement, it says something about what that inheritance is. It is an insult to the loving Father who adopts us and gives us our inheritance to make it into something less than the vast and immeasurably good thing it is. Instead, let us fully implement Paul's vision of unity and equal fellowship in Christ.[122]

6.1 Inheritance and the New Creation Vision

We have seen in the previous section that the concept of new creation is found within the phrase ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ in Gal 3:28. In this and other ways—including the proclamation in Gal 6:15 that "a new creation is everything!"—the vital message of new creation is heard throughout the Galatian epistle.[123] Gordon Fee suggests that an inclusive embrace of Gentiles, is "[d]eeply embedded" in the new creation context of Gal 6:15 and in the message of Galatians.[124] This is certainly also true of Paul's letter to the Romans.[125]

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[121] Tolbert, *A New Teaching with Authority*, 184–85.
[122] Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 147.
[123] Gaventa, "Is Galatians," 278.
[124] Fee, "Male and Female," 177.
[125] Fee, "Male and Female," 177, n. 13. Fee observes that Rom 15 shows that "the eschatological inclusion of the Gentiles with Jews as one people of God [is] its main point." Longenecker observes that

In the new creation, male and female become sisters and brothers,[126] a family, a community, a "new humanity."[127] And in this new kind of family, there is no place for a perspective that allows men to have sole authority over women.[128] What does have an important place in the new creation is an eschatological table fellowship which proleptically brings the not yet into the already. Fee gives us a vivid picture of how this looks: "[I]n the gathered community only 'new creation' practices are welcome: thus husbands and wives, masters and slaves, Jew and Gentile all feast together in anticipation of the great final eschatological banquet."[129]

And in the new creation community there is also inheritance. It is, as Daniel Kirk portrays it, "the resurrection glory of the new creation inheritance."[130] This inheritance will of course have its consummation in the future renewal of all things. However, it undoubtedly also invades every aspect of Christian life and community in the here and *now*.

6.m Conclusion

The promise is given to us as Abraham's true descendants that we "would inherit the world" (Rom 4:13). If the word 'only' needs to be used to describe this inheritance—in that it *only* applies to our salvation—then it is, indeed, a *small* world that we inherit. In complete contrast to this, the letters of Paul show our inheritance to be vast and infinite, invading every area of our lives and the life of the church of Christ. It

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the renewal of God's people and the entire creation in Christ and the Spirit is a major theme of chapters 5–8 in Romans (*Introducing Romans*, 408); cf. Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 90.

[126] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 91.

[127] Fee, "Male and Female," 185; Gasque, "Response," 189.

[128] Fee, "Male and Female," 185. Fee asserts that such a "male-authority viewpoint... reject[s] the new creation in favor of the norms of a fallen world."

[129] Fee, "Male and Female," 182.

[130] Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 156; cf. Kahl, "Gender Trouble," 67–68, for how resurrection is associated with the concept of new creation in Galatians.

is a world where *"[t]here is no longer* Jew or Greek, *there is no longer* slave or free, *there is no longer* male and female; for *all* of [us] are *one in Christ Jesus.*" It is a "new creation inheritance"[132] that is meant for *all*. Anything less than this shrinks the world we inherit for both women *and* men and is thus an insult to the Giver of this good gift.

As stewards of God's good gift of inheritance we are called to move forward, to work together as women and men in Christ towards the full implementation of Paul's spectacular vision in Gal 3:28.[133] Jim Reiher tells us that, looking back, we can see a historical movement—from Paul's early efforts to bring about liberation for the Gentiles, to the massive endeavour leading to the 19th century abolition of slavery. Now, in our time, we hear the call to work towards the liberation of women from the bonds that have kept them subject to men including, sadly, in the church.[134] Such a trajectory will lead to the undermining and subversion of patriarchal systems in our world, and in our churches, that oppress and subjugate the marginalized.[135] This is the true work of God's justice. What can we then do other than to heed this call?

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[132] Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 156.

[133] Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, 147.

[134] Reiher, "Galatians 3:28," 273; cf. Tolbert, *A New Teaching with Authority*, 185.

[135] Fee, "Male and Female," 183: "This does not abolish the system, but carried through by Philemon, it dismantles the significance given to it (and in this indirect way, of course, heads toward the dismantling of the system itself!)."

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.a   Overview

We have learned much from our investigation of Gal 3:23–4:7 and Rom 8:14–25 in terms of adoption and inheritance. Paul intended for these concepts to be inclusive. Now we need to consider how we can apply what we have learned in the life of the church of Jesus Christ.

This concluding chapter will include reflection on six concepts related to the application of inclusiveness to our lives in community: contextualization; ethics; liberation; application to life and ministry; unity; and the world we inherit.

7.b   Contextualization

In order to transform the principles that we have seen so clearly displayed in these two Pauline epistles into something that can be applied in today's church, there must be an awareness of the differences in culture and worldview between then and now. The challenge to offer "appropriate analogies and explanations requires both sensitivity and creativity."[1] We have determined that an essential underlying principle in Paul's writings is inclusiveness. This must then take a central place in how we apply the good news Paul has announced to us.

7.c   Ethics

Inclusivity is a matter of ethics. There is a "deeply practical mutual responsibility which pervades both Old and New Testament ethics."[2] Closely tied to ethics is justice. We have seen that there is a biblical basis for social justice within the Christian community. The marginalized and the oppressed must be welcomed into this

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[1] Atkins, *Egalitarian Community*, 189.
[2] Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, 113.

community with open arms. It is also their inheritance. In fact, Jesus framed it in a way that it is primarily and ultimately *their* inheritance: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5).

7.d   Liberation

In many ways, we are in bondage to hierarchical and sinful social structures. They were a part of the empire culture of Paul's first-century world and they are still very much a part of our world today. Swartley discusses how this is true in terms of the biblical teaching concerning both the Sabbath and women and how this provides us with a better understanding of liberation:

> The biblical texts teach the true purpose of the Sabbath, correct abuses of the Sabbath, and show how Jesus fulfills the purpose of the Sabbath. Similarly, the biblical texts teach that humanity, male and female, was created in God's image: they also show how redemptive history, climaxing in Jesus, restores woman to her true worth in God's image. In both cases, biblical revelation frees that which is intrinsically good from cultural and historical bondage, occasioned by humanity's fall. Liberation, therefore, is an appropriate description of the influence of biblical teaching on both these issues.[3]

With this in mind, we can work toward liberating not only people but the societal structures and "elemental spirits of the world" (Gal 4:3) that enslave them. We can proclaim freedom in Christ.

7.e   Application to Life and Ministry

The opportunity for application of the results of this study for Christian life and ministry centres around the inclusive nature of inheritance and adoption in the two Pauline texts we have examined. The bountiful message of inclusivity is communicated not only through these two metaphors but also through motherhood, fatherhood, and

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[3] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath*, 198.

slave imagery. This inclusive nature of the adoption metaphor and its relevance for the early church is noted by Robert Atkins:

> Adoption terminology... is used by Paul as a metaphor of inclusion. The disparate cultural backgrounds and social levels of the participants in the Pauline church presented a complex problem to the early church. Paul justifies his participation and the participation of Jewish and Gentile Christians by using adoption terminology. Salvation is conceived in the context of participation in the church and in the promises of God.[4]

In is worthy of note that Atkins uses the word "participation" twice as well as using the word "participants." The inclusion of everyone—regardless of ethnicity, status, or gender—in God's new creation community cannot *but* be participatory. Paul's use of this and other metaphors therefore helps to persuade his readers that *all* are to receive a full inheritance which includes the opportunity—even the responsibility—to participate in the kingdom work of God. Both women and men participate in the new creation community.

Moving forward, there are several ways in which the principles we have gleaned from Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans can be applied in the Christian community. The goal will be to promote inclusiveness as well as opportunities for full participation of *all* Christian believers within every area of the church, including all areas of ministry. Both males and females need to be included and encouraged to participate in *all* spheres of church life.

There are also things we can learn from Paul's devotion to his calling. Polaski helps us to imagine the following:

> What if... we take Paul as someone who demonstrates intense focus on his particular calling from God? If we read Paul this way, we can believe that God calls some persons, even ourselves, specifically to ministries of

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[4] Atkins, *Egalitarian Community*, 182.

economic or gender inclusiveness the way Paul was called as apostle to the Gentiles. Then Paul becomes not a deterring force but a model.[5]

In recognizing our own calling, we can thus appreciate what part we might have to play in promoting inclusiveness in the church and society. This is particularly meaningful to me because God has given me a heart for gender inclusiveness and it is an important element of my calling.

7.f   Unity

According to Wayne Meeks, the commitment to participate together in a common meal, as exemplified in the incident at Antioch, is representative of a commitment to unity. He declares that "it was not merely a purely spiritual unity in the ritual meal that was at stake, but also the social unity of the church."[6] The willingness to fellowship with each other and be in comm*unity* is therefore crucial to the well-being of the church. Not only that, unity is transformational. In the same way their unity transformed the world of the early Christians, we are also called to transform our world –the one that is our inheritance—in unity.[7]

7.g   The World We Inherit

There is a reason that the declaration "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28) is framed in the context of adoption and inheritance. *All* are freed from slavery, *all* have access to adoption by God, and *all* then have rights to the full inheritance that God intends for us.

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[5] Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction*, 75.
[6] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 161.
[7] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 191.

The message of Rom 4:13 is that God wants us *all* to have the biggest possible inheritance. We are Abraham's descendents and we are destined to "inherit the world." As Brueggemann affirms, "The promise is expansive and inclusive."[8] This is good news. If our inheritance is limited in any way, then what kind of an inheritance is that? When we limit our inheritance we are limiting God, since God is our inheritance. And if our inheritance is limited merely because of our gender, status or ethnicity—distinctions that have been done away with in Christ (Gal 3:28)—then that is catastrophic.

The table has a central place in God's new creation community. We earlier noted Fee's picture of this: "[I]n the gathered community only 'new creation' practices are welcome: thus husbands and wives, masters and slaves, Jew and Gentile all feast together in anticipation of the great final eschatological banquet."[9] God calls out to the dispossessed, the marginalized, and the outsiders: "Come to my table!" And we, in turn are urged to call out: "Let everyone come to the table so we can feast there together with the whole family of God who is our Father, with Christ our brother, and with the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of our adoption."

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[8] Brueggemann, *The Land*, 145.
[9] Fee, "Male and Female," 182.

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