

**The People of Israel and the
Christian Church
with particular reference
to the logic of Pauline theology:
An application to the Portuguese-
speaking world**

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Sincerely,

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Abstract

Evangelical Protestant Christianity is known for placing great emphasis on the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith within its soteriology. Even a cursory reading of the literature produced since the Protestant Reformation, reveals that this Pauline doctrine, occupies a central place in their spirituality.

Firstly, the emphasis of this dissertation seeks to demonstrate that there is an obvious continuity between the Reformers thought on justification by faith, and conventional theology; there is an identifiable tradition of spirituality that has passed from generation to generation and been consolidated, especially within Evangelicalism, in the solid establishment of the doctrine.

Consequently justification by faith is at the heart of our understanding in the Epistle to the Romans; I consider that Romans contains a trifold element whereby this doctrine plays a highly important role within Pauline theology. These three, in my viewpoint are justification by faith, relationship and servanthood/priesthood. In other words, they are intrinsically part of a whole as they form the very kernel of Paul's intention in Romans (cf. Rom. 1–5; 5–11; 12–16).

Secondly, in this thesis, a significant body of evidence is presented that shows how modern schools of thought in contemporary scholarship almost entirely subscribe to a view denying the doctrine of justification by faith as established in tradition. Hence, this thesis may serve to preclude approaches, of a more radical teaching which may compromise the Protestant traditional understanding.

Thirdly, therefore this dissertation supplies resources that may be found useful in the wider Evangelical debate about justification by faith for the Portuguese-speaking theological academic world, where to date, a thesis of this nature has not yet been developed.

I have concluded this thesis by pointing out that these findings could play a part in opening up a discussion of the Christological roots of Justification. Finally, I have attempted to combine the doctrine itself and its inherent link to servanthood and priesthood, integrating the Pauline thought, through an evaluation and validation of the role of justification by faith, with its intrinsic contribution to develop a personal, individual but also a collective and communal *relationship with God*.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Thesis rationale

The main focus of this dissertation is to present a relational parallel between *The People of Israel and the Christian Church with particular reference to the logic of Pauline Theology*. If Israel as a people is saved on account of ethnicity, then why was the issue of justification by faith alone, or New Birth, such a Pauline preoccupation? This thesis intends to debate what Paul meant for the relationship of the people of God, devising it from Israel's perceptions and into the Christian perception. This will involve a discussion of the state of play among Pauline scholars including those of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP)¹ and Douglas Campbell's contemporary volume, *The Deliverance of God*.

There may be a sense in which there are at least four schools of Pauline thinking: the Pre-Reformation, the Protestant results of the reformation, developments from that concerning the doctrine of justification by faith, the place of Israel as the original chosen people (i.e. the eschatological views that it entails) and the present NPP. I do not intend to examine each angle. I do wish to apply the findings to the Portuguese speaking world in a form of contextually applying Paul's concepts on justification by faith to an almost post Catholic culture.

¹ From this point forward, any reference to the New Perspectives on Paul will be abbreviated to NPP.

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Salvation and servanthood, according to an alternative perspective taken up by Paul, is something relational, between God and a chosen people, and this is irrespective of ethnicity; accordingly, all who believe are welcome into this relationship because God is the God of all, that is, to both Jews and Gentiles alike. Thus, it appears that both sets of people portrayed in the Epistle to the Romans for example – *Israel and the Christian Church* – misunderstood the basis of their spiritual relationship. For Paul, God's long term aim since the time of Adam has been to restore His original plan for humanity. Consequently, in accordance with His salvific purposes, He established Jesus as the second Adam, in order to provide the means by which this purpose could be achieved.

Paul demonstrates this in his letter to the Romans and thereby illustrates how God Himself played a fundamental role in meeting all the conditions that were necessary, in order for this purpose and the restored relationship which would ultimately follow, to become a reality, in and through Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Thus the Letter to the Romans will serve as a foundation upon which I will build my thesis further. As such, an overall understanding of this book is axiomatic, within the wider context of Pauline theology, as we consider how Paul's perspective impinges upon the question at hand. It will establish the ways in which Paul understands the nature of 'church' in relation to the above theological perspective. From there, the thesis will move toward an exegesis of Romans 12.1-8², which will be interpreted in

² The biblical quotations in this thesis have been taken from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

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light of the preceding chapters and a further exploration of the wider implications that this might hold for the contemporary Christian Church will then be undertaken.

A comprehensive analysis of the NPP will be offered, then, followed by an application for the Portuguese world, thus achieving a good balance on the matter. Thereafter I shall bring into debate the question of *justification by faith* between conventional and contemporary scholarship, examining in particular, Douglas Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*, a recent volume devoted to the demolition of the justification theory as believed by conventional Protestant post-Reformation thinking. The key concept has to revolve around the means of relationship between humankind and God. This is known as 'justification.'

That said, although each has a distinct method of doing so, both the scholarship concerning the NPP and Douglas Campbell's work present a justification theory that is distinctive to ordinary New Testament scholarship. In spite of their differences, they have one thing in common: they completely deny Paul's doctrine of justification by faith as understood by the Reformed school of thought and consequently, they put at risk this doctrine held so dear for this branch of Christianity since the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

On the other hand, as we shall see, the contribution to the debate brought about by both schools of thought became a motivational factor for New Testament scholars to reflect further on the matter, thus drawing different conclusions on the subject of justification by faith. Because of its relevance to the theme approached within this

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thesis, an overview of eschatology will be given, and distinctive schools of thought will be presented to define Israel's positional role within the Pauline corpus, particularly in Romans.

Thus scholastically speaking, and if we are to acquire a good understanding of the term 'relationship' in Paul's thought, it is *conditio sine qua non* for us to obtain a good comprehension of the above subjects. Indeed, Romans 12.1-8—where Paul's theological intention finds its apogee—cannot be articulated fully without reflecting upon them.

Accordingly, we shall initially explore diverse points of view concerning these issues whilst, at the same time, adopting a critical/analytical methodology throughout as we seek to arrive at a credible answer to this very important, yet often misunderstood question. In this way, the debate will follow the usual pattern: introduction, question, substance, argument, counter argument, and conclusion.

1.2. A brief background of Romans

Wright understands that Romans is:

... neither a systematic theology nor a summary of Paul's lifework, but it is by common consent his masterpiece. It dwarfs most of his other writings, an Alpine peak towering over hills and villages. Not all onlookers have viewed it in the same light or from the same angle, and their snapshots and paintings of it are sometimes remarkably unlike. Not all climbers have taken the same route up its sheer sides, and there is frequent disagreement on the best approach. What nobody doubts is that we are here dealing with a work of

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massive substance, presenting a formidable intellectual challenge while offering a breathtaking theological and spiritual vision.³

In Wright's view therefore, 'Romans is written not simply to sum up Paul's theology at the end of his main activity nor simply to sort out problems within the Roman church, but in a measure both of those and more.'⁴ Wright perceives 'Romans as the letter in which Paul plants the goal of the mission and the unity of the Church in the firmest possible theological soil': that is, the exposition of the righteousness of God which Wright takes to mean essentially 'the covenant faithfulness, the covenant justice, of the God who made promises to Abraham, with the promise of a worldwide family characterized by faith in and through whom the evil of the world would be undone.'⁵ In fact it is a well-structured letter whereby Romans 1–8 works as the foundation upon which Paul bases his main argument, that is, justification by faith, which represents for him, 'the climax or completion of the theological argument and the bringing into focus of the practical aim.'⁶

³ Nicholas T. Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections', in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 10* (ed. L. E. Keck; Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), p. 395.

⁴ Nicholas T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 234.

⁵ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 234.

⁶ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 234.

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Thus, for Wright, Romans is Paul's masterpiece and is by far his most controversial and complex letter which is to some extent reflected in the prolificacy of scholarly energy that has been expended upon the epistle over the years. It is not possible, therefore, and nor is it my intention, to cover this extensive work here. But it is generally accepted that Romans deals with questions that focus upon such issues, among others, as justification by faith, righteousness, Law, grace, legalism, and the concept of Israel.

As said above, these Pauline doctrines make an important contribution to our understanding of the term 'relationship' as proposed within this thesis. Consequently, each of these issues have been the subject of much discussion and debate in their own right, and this has not always led to agreement between the scholars—indeed, often it is quite the opposite. It is, however, important for us to consider, if briefly, the relevant trends of scholarly thought on these particular issues. To begin with, we will present a short background on the NPP within the Portuguese-speaking world which will serve as a foundational basis for our proceeding discussion and conclusive section thereafter.

1.3. Introduction to the Portuguese-speaking world

The Portuguese-speaking world is quite diverse across the globe. Various areas of Latin America, Africa and Asia find their colonial historic origins in Portuguese colonization, dating back to the fifteenth century. Due to its historic link to Roman Catholicism, the Protestant Reformation was not a welcome development and consequently faced intense opposition from the established Roman Catholic Church. Thus in Portugal and in its former Afro-Asian colonies, the concepts of Protestantism

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and Evangelicalism have been resisted and suppressed as a natural consequence of this very strong Roman Catholic heritage.

Accordingly, in the Portuguese-speaking world, academic scholarship which comes from a distinctly Evangelical-Protestant standpoint is still in its infancy when compared to the Protestant heritage of Germany, Scandinavia and the Anglo-American world, for example. On the same note, however, any form of Evangelical-Protestant academic expression in Portugal is virtually non-existent to this day.

Due to its multi-cultural nature, its geographical location, its early independence (1823), and its strong connection to the U.S., Brazil, however, has been directly influenced by both the Protestant Reformation and the Evangelical Movement which swept through North America since the time of colonization. Nonetheless and although the NPP has been the subject of debate for over thirty years in Europe and the Anglo-American world, Brazil, by contrast, was not very aware of the NPP debate until recently. Nevertheless, in the last five years Brazil has begun to show more interest, with a small number of articles, videos and speeches being made available by certain reformed Brazilian scholars. To date, as far as I am aware, no books or Masters/Doctoral theses have been devoted to this area of study within the Brazilian context.

As a result, to frame the Old Perspective on Paul/New Perspective on Paul debate in terms of the Portuguese-speaking theological world, using solely Portuguese scholarship is virtually an impossible task. The current literature dealing with doctrinal

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issues that specifically relate to this subject is primarily translated from German and/or English into Portuguese (e.g. James Dunn and Peter Stuhlmacher).⁷

Within this thesis, then, I will seek to follow the thread of Portuguese-speaking Protestant scholarship which will serve as a foundational basis for further development. For this purpose, some articles will form the basis of my research, and the issues raised will be contrasted with evidence of current thinking obtained through an interview with a prominent Brazilian Evangelical theologian, Professor Brian Kibuuka.⁸ Accordingly, Brazilian scholarship will thus form the basis of our argument.

1.4. Background to the debate

To summarise the above, the investigation of the New Testament in Brazil and Portugal is restricted mostly to a denominational/confessional locus within the context of theological institutions which centre their focus specifically within so-called Empirical Theology. Because of this confessional context the academic field has not been subject to scrutiny in Brazil. As an example of this, I can cite Douglas Campbell's critique on justification by faith found in his book *The Deliverance of God* which has been subjected to intense debate in the last six years in the U.S., Europe and in the UK, but

⁷ Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's doctrine of Justification: A challenge to the New Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001); James G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, rev. edn, 2008).

⁸ Brian Gordon L. Kibuuka, B.G. L., Interview on Skype on the 20th of March 2015, at 19.30, length 45 minutes.

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which remains virtually unknown in Brazilian and Portuguese Protestant-Evangelical circles.

In addition to this, the lack of knowledge of languages such as English and German have also limited the scope of such discussions, thus aggravating the lack of interaction between Portuguese, Scandinavian, German and Anglo-American scholarship, and thus causing a deep reliance on translated literature which delays the process toward academic maturity.

However, in Brazil, changes have been made recently; in the last few years the Ministry of Culture and Education in Brazil has given recognition to postgraduate theology across the nation, resulting in a few credible biblical studies departments coming into being. It has brought about some openness to academic research regarding the New Testament and, alongside it, the translated literature from English and German into Portuguese has facilitated Brazilian scholars' engagement in the reception of this type of literature, and has given them a better insight on subjects which were inconceivable in the field before.

However, as said above, with little exception, Portugal is still very reliant on Empirical Theology taught at Evangelical/Protestant institutions, as the academic system regarding Christian theology is very much restricted due to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Unless this changes in the near future, only Roman Catholic theological degrees are accredited by the government; consequently, the free

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acceptance of secular faculties and universities to permit the validation of Evangelical-Protestant degrees is a far-off dream.

1.5. Contributions

Thus I quote a few excerpts from the Portuguese writers' perspective as directed towards NPP, beginning with the thesis by Jonas Machado, *Transformação Mística na Religião do Apóstolo Paulo: a recepção do Moisés glorificado em 2 Coríntios na perspectiva da experiência religiosa*.⁹ This thesis dates to 2007 and is the first written consideration on the NPP from Brazilian soil. In an effort to demythologize Paul's theology from his Christian, Protestant, and Theological backgrounds, Machado employs the discussion of Judaism initiated by Sanders to consider how valid the contributions regarding the hallmarks of the Jews toward Gentiles as referred to by James Dunn might be.¹⁰ In fact, this small contribution by Jonas Machado is the first reference in a world of over twenty studies on Pauline theology at the Methodist University of Santo Andre, São Paulo, which brings forth a brief insight on the NPP.

Yet another peripheral approach on the NPP is entitled, *Amor Divino na Carta aos Romanos: Análise Histórica, Exegética e Sistemática da entrega de Cristo em textos*

⁹ Jonas Machado, 'Mystic Transformation in the Apostle Paul Religion: the reception of the glorified Moses in 2 Letter to the Corinthians from a religious experience perspective', (São Paulo: Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Methodist University, 2007), pp. 14-18.

¹⁰ Machado, 'Mystic Transformation in the Apostle Religion: the reception of the glorified Moses in 2 Letter to the Corinthians from a religious experience perspective', pp. 14-18.

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*selecionados*¹¹ by Ângela Zitzke, supervised by Uwe Wegner who is a member of the Superior School of Theology of São Leopoldo, in the Southern region of Brazil. It is worth mentioning that this region is deeply influenced by Germanic culture and so there is a good ethnic relation between this institution and the universities of Heidelberg, Marburg and Wittenberg in Germany. Using Romans 3.21, Zitzke analyses the contributions of the NPP in her interpretation of the law, without, however, delving deeply into the matter.

Other brief input into the NPP was brought by Izidoro Mazzarolo, yet it is as superficial as Zitzke's. In *Carta de Paulo aos Gálatas, da libertação da Lei à filiação em Jesus Cristo*,¹² Mazzarolo presents a fundamental question on the NPP, stating that Christ embodies freedom from the law and its old paradigms, and that the new life in Him overcomes all forms of segregation, whether this segregation is to do with cultural or social principles, gender or religion.¹³

However, new doors have opened, revealing a glimmer of hope that Brazilian academics may contribute to the debate on the NPP. Recently, respectable Brazilian

¹¹ Ângela Zitzke, 'Divine Love in the Letter to the Romans: Selected Texts covering a Historical, Exegetical and Systematic Analysis on Christ's Abnegation', (São Leopoldo: EST Faculty Press, PhD Published Thesis, 2011), pp. 305-335.

¹² Izidoro Mazzarolo, *Paul's Letter to the Galatians, Freedom from the Law and Filiation in Jesus Christ* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paulinas, 2015), p. 168.

¹³ Mazzarolo, *Paul's Letter*, p. 168.

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scholars such as André Leonardo Chevitarese, Pedro Paulo Funari and Gabrielli Cornelli have brought into debate theological issues within reputable secular universities such as the University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), the University of Campinas in São Paulo (UNICAMP) and the University of Brasilia, (UNB).

In this way, much of the prejudice felt by governmental institutions, especially within the field of human sciences (e.g. Humanities, Philosophy, Reformed Theology, Historical Christianity, and so on), has been downgraded through the influence of these eminent scholars; their input has brought about new insight into the field, and topics previously unconsidered have become the subject of study and investigation. A recent example of this is the study of the historical Jesus which has become a matter of intense debate.

Furthermore, international relations with Richard Horsley, John Dominic Crossan and Martin Goodman have brought the opportunity to revisit the Jewishness of Paul and promote debates in the field of the NPP. However, the concentration of research on the study of Jesus and the incipient nature of the analysis has not allowed a deeper approach to the topic. In any case, the analysis of Judaism by Jacob Neusner, and the Jewishness of Jesus by Geza Vermes and Martin Goodman—all well-known in these secular circles—may allow the inclusion of brief questions raised by the NPP.

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Again, recent publications such as *Judaísmo, Cristianismo, Helenismo: ensaios sobre interações culturais no Mediterrâneo Antigo*¹⁴ have introduced a new paradigm shift in the field of non-confessional studies, approaching subjects of academic nature. Alongside this publication, the article 'Fronteiras culturais no Mediterrâneo Antigo: Gregos e Judeus nos Períodos Arcaico, Clássico e Helenístico'¹⁵ continued discussing the relations between Judaism and Christianity. However, while it seemed to point to a better understanding of Paul's Jewishness it resulted in nothing. Even in the new book *Cristianismos: Questões e Debates Metodológicos*¹⁶ the question of the NPP has not been discussed at all.

In sum, it is perceptible within the Brazilian scholarly work on Paul—at least with regard the scope of the NPP—that the contributions tend to be superficially approached only for theological reasons. For this reason, there is a further field yet to be explored in the field of the NPP research.

¹⁴ André L. Chevitarese and Gabrielli Cornelli, *Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism: Essays on cultural interactions in the Ancient Mediterranean* (São Paulo: Annablume Publishers, 2007).

¹⁵ André L. Chevitarese and Gabrielli Cornelli, *Cultural Frontiers in the Ancient Mediterranean: Greeks and Jews in the Archaic, Classic and Hellenistic Period* (São Paulo: Magazine Politeia, História e Sociedade, 2004), pp. 69-82.

¹⁶ André L. Chevitarese, *Christianity: Questions and Methodological Debates* (Rio de Janeiro: Kliné Publishers, 2011).

1.6. The debate's influence

Having presented an overall background on the NPP on Brazilian soil, we shall now turn our attention to exploring the question about what kind of effect the NPP has had on the Portuguese-speaking theological debate. We need to investigate whether the NPP has had a positive or negative impact upon this distinctively cultural theological milieu or not. In order to fully answer this, it will be helpful to first consider a historical overview of the Portuguese-speaking world and its relation with the theology as understood by the Evangelical branch of Christianity.

To begin with, Christianity faces a crucial question: what exactly is the position of the Law of Moses within the new dispensation of grace? Indeed, this will be the kernel of this thesis below. It will be argued in the proceeding chapters that it revolves around a theological discussion carried of a practical application which finds its apogee in the development of the doctrine of justification, as taught by Paul in the letters of Romans and Galatians.

As such, the argument centres its attention in the expression “ἔργων νόμου” (works of the Law), which occurs eight times in these letters: two times in Romans (Romans 3.20, 28), and six times in Galatians (Galatians 2.16; 3.2, 5; 3.10). In this thesis it will be argued that the expression carries out a negative connotation, which differs from the viewpoint exposed by the NPP.

Within Reformed Christianity this expression ‘works of the Law’ has been looked upon in a negative sense and understood as part of Paul’s polemic against the Jewish

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system of salvation by works and human merit. Accordingly, Paul is understood to use this expression to refer to those Jews who seek to gain merit before God. So, it will be argued that Paul's solution in developing the doctrine of justification corroborates the fact that it was never God's intention to provide salvation through the observance of the Law of Moses. Indeed, it will be shown that in Pauline thought, the whole human race is corrupted by sin which resulted in the fall and as a consequence of this, unable to fulfil the demands of the Law.

As expected, the reaction against the NPP in Brazil was not different from the rest of the academic world. Therefore, in Augusto Nicodemus Lopes, a graduate from Westminster Theological Seminary in the U.S. and senior lecturer at Andrew Jumper Postgraduate Centre, the NPP finds its most eminent opponent in the Portuguese-speaking world. In his brief critique on the NPP,¹⁷ and underpinned by Donald A. Carson, John Piper, Ligon Duncan and Sinclair Ferguson, Lopes follows the same line of thought as found in conservative reformed scholarship which suggests that in Pauline thought, salvation can never be attained by the works of the Law.

¹⁷ Augusto Nicodemus Lopes, 'A nova Perspectiva sobre Paulo: um estudo sobre as 'obras da lei' em Gálatas', *Fides Reformata* 12.1 (2006), pp. 83-94. However, it must be said that there is not much new material in his brief approach that has not been dealt with in detail elsewhere.

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However, Brian Kibuuka juxtaposes Lopes' ideas, replying that it is exactly what James Dunn drives at in his book on the NPP.¹⁸ In this manner, Kibuuka says that due to his strong influence among conservative and reformed evangelicalism, Lopes' approach has literally nullified any scope of research on the NPP within its context; in Kibuuka's opinion, Lopes incurs a mistake by not making a distinction between Sanders' fragile and at the same time radical viewpoint, and that exposed by James Dunn and N.T. Wright.¹⁹

Kibuuka goes as far as to say that this uncritical demonization of the NPP by Lopes generated a fundamentalist rejection in evangelical circles and made an immediate impact on both those at the Andrew Jumper Postgraduate Centre as well as among students of the Graduate Program in Science of the Religion at the Mackenzie Presbyterian University of São Paulo. According to Kibuuka both institutions marginalised the subject avoiding a more significant approach brought about by the debate in Europe and U.S., which for him offers a more appropriate reading of the Judaism of Paul's time and a critical approach to the old consensus offered by the Reformation.²⁰

¹⁸ Personal communication with Kibuuka (interview on Skype). Kibuuka foretold the Portuguese edition of James Dunn's volume on *The New Perspective on Paul in Brazil*.

¹⁹ Personal communication with Kibuuka (interview on Skype).

²⁰ See Kibuuka's *Preface* to the Brazilian edition of James G. Dunn, *A nova perspectiva sobre Paulo* (São Paulo: Academia Cristã, 2011), p. 21. It is fairly obvious that Kibuuka favours a more profound analysis of the NPP before launching a critical eye on it. For him, Dunn's volume on the *New Perspective* is an excellent testimony of Dunn's contribution to contemporary discussion about Paul.

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I would like to call attention to another point which motivated the Brazilian rejection of the NPP. Brazilian scholar Leonardo Moraes says that the focus of the NPP is eminently ecumenical²¹ and bases his argument on the following statement by N.T. Wright, which I paraphrase:

The doctrine of Paul on justification by faith compels the churches, in their current state of fragmentation, to ecumenical duty. It is not fair that a doctrine which gathers the same family in Christ (cf. Gal. 2) may be used to accuse others of belonging to a different family, just because of matters of interpretation.

In other words, for Wright, ‘the doctrine of justification is not merely a doctrine about which Catholics and Protestants can agree after strenuous ecumenical commitment. Justification is an ecumenical doctrine, which condemns grouping within the churches declaring that all believers in Jesus belong to the same family. The doctrine of justification is, in fact, the great ecumenical doctrine.’

Personally, I think that Moraes has in mind Wright’s redefinition of the doctrine of justification by faith. Wright asserts that when Paul wrote about justification, his concern was corporative, national, racial and social—not individual and salvific. Justification, Wright says, does not refer to soteriology or to the doctrine of salvation. It fits more specifically into the category of ecclesiology. Thus for Moraes, this

As said by Kibuuka during the interview, the launching of this work will certainly stimulate new research and critical positioning of Portuguese readers.

²¹ Leonardo Moraes, ‘Uma Réplica Exegética à Nova Perspectiva Sobre Paulo em Gálatas’, (Unpublished M.Th. Dissertation, Lisbon, Instituto Bíblico Português, 2015), p. 10.

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redefinition of the doctrine of justification by faith is the greatest and most immediate danger introduced by the NPP.²²

However, it remains to be investigated to what extent this ecumenical proposal is conceived by Wright. Has he in mind solely Christianity? Or is he implying that Jews may be included in this ecumenical alliance? Is Wright given to understand that Jews are recognized as having an ecumenical and not an interfaith relationship with God? If so, by faith in whom?²³

Depending on whom Wright refers to, I am not against his conception in this regard. I consider that a Christian is a Christian regardless of the confession to which one belongs. Above all, this thesis argues that a personal *relationship with God* is that which defines a Christian and thus, in my personal view, one's confessional Christian orientation or denominational label is not even taken into account in the New Testament. Jesus himself says: '... I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (cf. Mt. 16.18). Clearly, Jesus is speaking about people, of a living and corporative organism, an invisible and undivided spiritual body, composed of people from all nations and languages and not of a physical building or denominational label.

In fact, in Pauline thought, justification by faith means a life of fruit and personal *relationship with God* which is defined by one's personal commitment to His divine will.

²² Wright, *What Saint Paul*, p. 119.

²³ This issue will be dealt with in more detail later on.

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In sum, σωτηρία in Christ and κοινωνία with God is something mystical, empirical and spiritual, which involves Jesus' Lordship being grounded through a personal and deep intimacy with God. Paul's gospel, then, cannot be confined to a confessional or denominational label. That said, its proclamation seeks to confront people with its message, but in factual terms, it is God who judges who is or who is not a Christian.

However, I understand that faith and relationship in Pauline thought is confined to Christianity alone and cannot go beyond the borders established by the New Testament. Paul's message is categorical; for him, Jesus via the Church is the only possible way to nurture a *relationship with God*. Thus ecclesiology is of supreme importance to Paul; admittedly for him the church role model is a Bible-based one, guided and established in accordance with the apostolic doctrine (cf. Acts 2.42; Rom. 1.16; Eph. 5.23-32).

This is probably the biggest hurdle faced by the NPP school of thought whose approach implies salvation by means of Christ's faith or Christ believing in one's place. The NPP distorts the New Testament's whole picture by implying a dual-covenant soteriology whereby salvation for the Jew can be attained by means of "getting in" and "staying in" via covenantal nomism, and a 'Gospel of Grace' as a saving provision for the Gentiles.²⁴ However, as will be shown in the subsequent chapters, this concept it is completely foreign to Paul's mindset.

²⁴ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine*, pp. 93-133.

1.7. A contribution to the Portuguese-speaking world

Before moving toward a discussion of the NPP in detail, I must say that not all of the NPP principles are necessarily negative. It has been the general consensus in Brazil that the NPP stirs us up to explore Paul's context more profoundly; this diversity of thought drives us back to the Pauline text itself. In virtue of this, Portuguese Pauline scholarship in Brazil may approach Paul with an open eye and sound scepticism regarding new paradigms which may appear, and with an eagle-eyed approach, it needs to discern Pauline texts which suddenly may look new again.

With regard to Portugal, though the free acceptance of secular faculties and universities to permit the validation of Evangelical-Protestant degrees is a far off dream, it is not impossible. As seen above, recent developments in the field of Pauline studies (e.g. as seen in Brazil) have led to a renewed interest in studying this kind of subject from an academic standpoint, and though at first sight Portugal's context does not look very promising, it can experience a change in the not-too-distance future, hopefully.

Moreover, the interaction between Brazilian and Portuguese scholarship may be key to unlocking this. Recently, seminars and meetings promoted by Brazilian Reformed publishers have been held on Portuguese soil, and the Portuguese Bible Institute—an institution accredited by the North-West University, a Christian Reformed institution in South Africa—is also an exception to the rule in Portugal in this regard.

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Having said that, this thesis proposes a twofold contribution to the Portuguese-speaking academic field—*most especially in Portugal*—with regard to the NPP and other subjects discussed in it. Firstly, it may function as a pedagogical tool whereby these issues may be learned, studied, approached and discussed in more detail.

Secondly, this thesis, aims to be a resource for others to use, whether with academic or pastoral aims in mind. Though the scope of this thesis is necessarily broad, the centrality of its subject (i.e. *relationship with God*) to so much Christian spirituality means that it touches on a broad range of interests. It is hoped that there is, in the coming pages, a piece of work that is both interesting and useful to readers from inside and outside the Evangelical Protestant traditions.

Thus it is without doubt that there is a further field yet to be explored in the field of the NPP research, and the publishing of this thesis in Portuguese will serve to stimulate both Brazilian and Portuguese scholars to research further into the subject and to gain new insights in relation to justification by faith. The same can be said of Campbell's volume, *The Deliverance of God*, which is still fairly unknown within Portuguese Evangelicalism in general. This thesis envisages a new paradigm shift in this regard, most especially in Christian Pentecostal circles, and this includes Brazil, where matters of academic nature are still regarded as something redundant and pointless.

Again, though this thesis builds up its argument in four main sections, (The New Perspective on Paul, Douglas Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*, Eschatology, and the subject and nature of Israel), our main train of thought relates to *relationship with God*

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within the Pauline Corpus, primarily in Romans. As such, this fourfold approach functions only to corroborate the debate on justification by faith whereby my ultimate goal may be achieved, that is, to present the intrinsic link between *relationship with God*, divine justification and priesthood in Paul's thought which, to me, reaches its apogee in Romans 12.1-8.

In sum, this thesis has a twofold preventive purpose: in academic terms it works as a safeguard against an unorthodox approach to justification by faith, and at the same time will help Portuguese scholarship to be conscious of viewpoints which may jeopardise a doctrine held so dear by Evangelicalism in general in the future. Having offered a brief insight of the Portuguese-speaking academic world I shall present the main point of contention of the NPP starting with a brief background.

Chapter Two: An Overview on the NPP and OPP Debate

2.1. The Old and New Perspective on Paul, an introduction

The concept of the New Perspective was first introduced by E.P. Sanders in 1977 with the publication of the book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.²⁵ We shall now consider this work with specific regard to the implications that it holds for the Epistle to the Romans. For Horrell, 'vigorous debate continues, between the so-called "Old Perspective on Paul"²⁶ and "New Perspective on Paul,"²⁷ and fundamental historical

²⁵ Richard Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), p. 187, n. 93. Wright for example understands Sanders' contribution in this direction to have been nothing short of revolutionary and, for Bell, this publication laid the foundations for a completely new way of interpreting Paul. Bell, however, whilst acknowledging Sanders' undoubted contribution to the overall debate, agrees that Sanders' work has had great influence in the Anglo-Saxon theological world, but refuses to label the NPP as a 'bright post-Sanders epoch' (cf. Nicholas T. Wright, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, p. 373). Certainly Bell's theological background plays a great influence on his opinion; he is a committed Lutheran and was trained in Germany.

²⁶ James G. Crossley, *Reading the New Testament: Contemporary Approaches* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 97. The 'Old Perspective on Paul' is a label typically given to scholarship on Paul which is influenced by Lutheranism and which holds that Paul's theology was an alternative or reaction to a supposed emphasis on the individual earning their salvation. Paul instead stressed salvation or justification through faith (*alone*) and God's grace.

²⁷ Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 97. The 'New Perspective on Paul' is a reaction against the Old Perspective which is inspired chiefly by the work of E.P. Sanders. New Perspective scholars have tended to emphasise the role of grace in early Judaism and downplay the idea that Judaism was a

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and theological issues are felt to be at stake. However, it is worth noting that there is considerable diversity of interpretation of Paul on both sides of the debate; there is no single 'old' or 'new' perspective. 'Also worth considering is the extent to which, despite their vigorous opposition, prominent versions of both schools share a structurally similar analysis of Paul's theology in relation to Judaism in arguing, though in different ways, that there really was substance to Paul's criticism of Judaism.'²⁸

Following its entry of into the academic world, the so-called "New Perspective on Paul" argument has been the subject of intense debate among certain individuals,²⁹ and indeed for Horrell, several aspects of this new perspective form the central focus of dispute between classical Protestantism or what could be called the "Old Perspective on Paul",³⁰ and the adherents of the New. Below is a brief overview of the essential NPP argument and although it is not my intention to interact with this in detail on account of the volume of material that has previously been devoted to it by others, I

religion whereby the individual earned their salvation. One feature of the New Perspective is the idea that Paul was reacting against nationalism in early Judaism. NPP is also an attempt to understand Paul and his writings (and generally the entire New Testament) throughout a new system of thought within Paul's own context, rooted in the basic architecture of biblical eschatology and deep research on the rabbinic tradition, mainly of Second Temple Judaism writings and some other valid contemporary resources of those days.

²⁸ David G. Horrell, *An introduction to the Study of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), p. 97.

²⁹ Exponents of the NPP would similarly include: E. P. Sanders, 1977; Nicholas T. Wright, 1997; 2005; James Dunn, 2005; Michael Thompson, 2007.

³⁰ Exponents of the OPP would include, for example, Seifrid, Bell and Kim *et al.*

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will nevertheless try to distil the key issues from it and present them systematically, in an overview format.

Notably, New Testament scholarship has been profoundly marked by E. P. Sanders, especially through his revolutionary research on first-century Judaism and by his comparison of the 'patterns of religion' he found in his analysis of the Second Temple writings (200 BCE–CE 200)³¹ on one hand, and the terms used by the apostle Paul in his letters to the first-century believers on the other. Sanders settled a significant shift in Pauline Studies, promoting a distinct view regarding Paul's relation with the other Jews of his time, and proposing a different understanding for some key Pauline concepts such as justification, salvation, Law and righteousness, thus paving the way for the New Pauline Perspective to develop, and providing the core foundation for all its multiple branches.

2.2. E.P. Sanders' background

Although Sanders is often credited for providing the root for the NPP, he was not thoroughly new in his argument. In fact, various authors before him have argued about the classical view of Paul brought by Lutheran tradition and other reformers, especially on their perception of Paul's view of Judaism

³¹ Mainly the Tannaitic Literature (33–238), the Dead Sea Scrolls (239–321), and the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (329–418), as referenced in P.M. Sprinkle, 'The Old Perspective on the New Perspective: A Review of Some Pre-Sanders' Thinkers', *Themelios* 2 (Spring 2005), pp. 29-30.

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Indeed, the reaction to Luther's picture of Judaism started in 1894 through C.G. Montefiore, a distinguished Jewish reformer, who denounced firmly 'the tendency of Christian theologians to paint Judaism as a dark shadow, against which Paul's theology could brightly shine.'³² Montefiore argued that the rabbinic literature placed value in repentance and living by faith 'as high as Paul', presenting a merciful God willing to forgive atrocious infractions to the law to all that showed repentance. Furthermore, the works of W. G. Kümmel and Paul Althaus³³ tend to assert distinctions between Paul's conversion and Luther's Reformation discovery and also on their doctrines of justification.

Through his article, K. Stendahl prepares the ground for Sanders when he firmly asserts that New Testament scholars should interpret Paul in terms of his own day's religious environment, and firmly discourages Pauline exegetes from reading the experience and teaching of Paul through '*the lens of Martin Luther's 'introspective' struggle.*'³⁴

³² F. Thielman, 'Law' in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid; Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), pp. 529-542, 530.

³³ Paul Althaus, *Paulus and Luther uber den Menschen* (Michigan: G. Mohn, 2nd edn, 1951), as referenced in Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*, p. 42.

³⁴ Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (London: SCM Press, 1977), pp. 78-96.

2.3. E. P. Sanders' 'Covenantal Nomism'

In his work, *'Paul and Palestinian Judaism'* (1977), E. P. Sanders argues that the Second Temple 'pattern' of Judaism was not a predominately legalistic religion based on good and bad works. Rather, he proposes that Palestinian Judaism relied on God's election of Israel and grace toward His people. Sanders used the term 'Covenantal Nomism' to qualify this 'pattern of religion' which he defines as, 'the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression.'³⁵

Afterwards, he adds 'one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant.'³⁶ Sanders defends that Paul was misunderstood on the classic Reformation and his main point of contention is the Lutheran classical view that, Paul was arguing in his writings against a 'legalistic' Jewish culture that seeks to earn salvation by 'self-works of righteousness', asserting instead, that Paul was actually combating Jews that were flaunting or 'boasting' by imposing their national pride as the covenantal God's 'elected' and 'chosen' one's.

Sanders suggests a new interpretation for Paul's mention of the Jewish 'works of the Law' as referring exclusively to 'their national boundaries', the tri-fold:

³⁵ Ed P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 75

³⁶ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 75.

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circumcision, Sabbath-keeping and dietary laws. For Sanders, Judaism was not, at that time, a 'legalistic merit works religion', but a religion of grace.³⁷ Their 'works' were not undertaken to earn salvation but to show that they were God's covenant people, nothing else. In that sense, Sanders states that the traditional dichotomy 'faith *versus* works' is not present in Paul's writings but 'Jewish boundary practices *versus* the all-inclusive instruments of faith' (i.e. which allow Gentiles into the covenant) were—a complete rupture, on this point, with the Lutheran core view of Paul. If 'covenantal nomism' was the primary category under which Jews understood the law, then when Jews spoke of obeying commandments, it meant that they were 'keeping the covenant' rather than acting out of legalism.

Indeed, Sanders' work becomes the accepted view among some scholars, providing information about the historical context of the New Testament, which in the view of the NPP, affects our Western perception of Judaism. Arguably, some say, Sanders sweeps away some unbalanced caricatures against Judaism which were developed during the last centuries based on a dogmatic Lutheran perspective on Paul. In sum, Sanders lifted up the importance of first-century Jewish understanding of the structure and pattern of the law throughout the redemptive history because, as argued

³⁷ As we shall see, this is especially embraced further by James D. G. Dunn, which made a tremendous effort on this particular point, defending that the Pauline expression 'works of the Law' means 'the marks of Jewish privilege', and the 'boasting' of the Jews often criticized by Paul is not about self-confidence but rather Jewish confidence. See through his approach on the text of Gal. 2.16 and Gal. 3.10-14, in James D. G. Dunn, *Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law* (cf. Gal 3.10-14), in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2009), pp. 215-41.

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by either those that are pro- or anti-Sanders (in particular), or the NPP's view (in general), this point has massive implications for our perspective and interpretation of Paul's interaction with other Jews of his time, and consequently of Paul's intentions and doctrine. Concept

2.4. Justification, an introduction to the NPP and OPP concept

Accordingly, I must now turn to consider the issue of justification by faith which will, in turn, be considered within the context of Jesus himself and within Pauline and Lutheran thinking, with this overview being brought to a conclusion, with a general synopsis of the law in relation to these related issues. Consequently, each of the theoretical positions held by the NPP make an important contribution to our overall understanding of the term *relationship with God* and are, as such, of fundamental importance to the proposal of the current work.

Michael Bird says that in Paul's thinking, 'justification predominantly functions to address the anthropological problem of human sin, it explains God's contention against human wickedness, articulates the change of status from condemnation to vindication that occurs in the dispensation of Christian faith, and explicates the inability of the law to provide means of salvation.'³⁸ Additionally, 'Justification is the act

³⁸ Michael Bird, *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification and the "New Perspective"* (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2002), p. 4.

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whereby God creates a new people, with a new status, in a new covenant, as a foretaste of the new age.³⁹

Therefore in Paul's thinking, traditionally, justification has basically two main elements; it is understood to have both a soteriological and an eschatological aspect, which can be existentially experienced in the form of an inaugurated eschatology, which will ultimately reach its final conclusion with the *parousia* of Jesus Christ or with the manifestation of God's Kingdom in its fullness (cf. Rom. 8.39-40; Phil. 1.6).

However, as we shall see, recent scholarship has challenged this historical understanding and has led New Testament theology to view the concept of justification and the other issues noted above, from a divergent perspective. Undoubtedly, no Pauline concept has been more questioned and put to the test than justification by faith. This must be due to the intrinsic weight and influence that justification exercises upon Paul's thoughts, but also because it functions as the basis upon which Paul builds his whole doctrinal structure. Having said that, justification by faith will be at the core of our debate, and for the purpose, the NPP and other contemporary views on the theme will be used as the means whereby I shall build up this whole section.

Michael Thompson, a proponent of the NPP understands that, 'justification is *not* something new',⁴⁰ that is, it is not a Lutheran idea and he therefore understands that a

³⁹ Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, p. 6.

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basic premise of Paul's arguments within Galatians and Romans, proves this point (cf. Rom. 4; Gal. 3.6-9). Consequently Abraham, David and other faithful Old Testament characters were acceptable to God, on account of their faith which was expressed through their trust in his promises and a belief in His Word, and thus they responded to the grace given to them.⁴¹ James Dunn underpins Michael Thompson saying, 'justification was not Luther, or even Paul who first made the discovery about God's justice and justification, but the great spiritual writers of the Old Testament.'⁴²

However it would appear that notions of *unmerited favour as opposed to justification* were in some sense related to the concept of sacrifice and obedience, which further implies the existence of relationship which was in turn, further reflected in a distinctive lifestyle. This idea was underscored and cemented with the introduction of the Levitical system brought into effect at Sinai, as part of the Hebrew's election package, a system to which King David himself was subject, but which nevertheless, did not imply universal acceptance of every Jewish individual as a result of what might be called an accident of birth (cf. Jn 8.32-47; Rom. 2.17-29).⁴³

⁴⁰ Michael Thompson, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2002), p. 6. Italics author's own.

⁴¹ Thompson, *The New Perspective*, p. 6.

⁴² James Dunn and Alan M. Suggate, *The Justice of God* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1993), p. 16.

⁴³ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 147-150. According to Sanders, Jewish tradition holds that ultimate salvation is assured to the Jews on account of their original election at Sinai (cf. Rom. 11.25-32). However, this view appears to be at odds both with Jesus' words at John 8.31ff. and Paul's at Romans 4 and 9.6-8. In this respect, the true descendants of Abraham and indeed the true Israel, is

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With this understanding, Thompson and Dunn tend to imply that Paul was not reinterpreting or rediscovering an ancient Hebrew doctrine that had been lost in the mists of time or eclipsed by legalism within a Judaic setting, but was simply, restating something of which the Jews of *his* time, were already, well aware.⁴⁴ However to imply that New Testament ideas connected with the concept of justification find their origins within a generalised and well understood Old Testament framework is quite another matter, and is, furthermore, a substantial leap to make.

More precisely, there appears to be far greater emphasis placed upon Jewish national failure which is made explicit throughout the prophetic oracles that have as their foci the idea of judgement on account of this failure, as opposed to what might be called “oracles of justification” on account of a generic Hebrew acceptance before God

the Israel of faith and not the Israel of natural descent. This is further attested by God’s acceptance of various non-Jews even during Old Testament times on account of their faith alone (i.e. Rahab of Jos. 2; Ruth; and Namaan of 2 Kgs. 5). However this statement does not imply that God has permanently cast off the national Israel because Paul makes clear that He has not (cf. Rom. 11.28-29), but rather, on account of the Gentiles, they have momentarily stumbled (cf. Rom. 11.25). But by the same token, the reference of Romans 11.26 to ‘all Israel’ does not imply *every Israelite*, but rather denotes those Jews who—through faith—accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah (cf. Isa. 7.3; Acts 4.12). It is in this way that both believing Jews and Gentiles will collectively become the Israel of faith (cf. 1 Cor. 12.12-13; Gal. 3.26-29). See also Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 719-732; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Leicester: Apollos, 1988), pp. 420-422.

⁴⁴ Thompson, *New Perspective*, p. 6.

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(e.g. Deut. 9.6; Isa. 6.5; 30.10; Ezek. 11.19; 18.31; cf. also Ezra 9.5-15; Acts 7.51; Rom. 3.10-18).

So, although the idea of acceptance on the basis of one's faith may not be new,⁴⁵ that faith needs to be consistent with the divine requirement and for this reason it is not blind, abstract or arbitrary but is rather, obedient to the Word of God (cf. Rom. 8.1-4). Consequently, although the theoretical idea of justification may be implicit within the law (e.g. Lev. 18.4-5; Deut. 6.4),⁴⁶ the reality clearly turned out to be what might be called an impossible dream, that is, it fell far short of the ideal which is abundantly

⁴⁵ Hans D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 114. The idea that Justification was not by works of the Law was hardly a Pauline *novum*, but was an accepted premise in early Christianity. See also Ed P. Sanders (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 519), '...the general conception that one is saved by faith was completely common in Early Christianity'. However, and though I believe the concept was there, I am of the opinion that Paul structured and developed the concept further; it was part of his divine call (cf. Acts 9.1-15).

⁴⁶ Richard Bell, *No One Seeks for God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 1.18–3.20* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), p. 5. Paul's line of thinking in Romans 3.27-30 is that justification by works, if that were possible, would give rise to boasting in one's achievement (Rom 3.27-4.2). But such boasting is excluded by the Law of faith. For Justification is by faith apart for the works of Law. From this point Paul establishes the universality of justification by alluding to Deut. 6.4 LXX. But Deut. 6.4 acts more as a confirmation of justification by faith and not as the fundamental basis of justification by faith. If it were the essential basis, why would Paul not make use of it earlier in his argument? Likewise Romans 4 shows that justification by faith is in harmony with Scripture, developing the idea of Rom. 3.31b νόμον ἰστώμεν.

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evidenced throughout the Old Testament, finding its fullest expression in the conquest of the North by the Assyrians and the exile of the South, to Babylonia (cf. Deut. 9.4-6, 28.58-68; Jer. 31.31-34; 2 Chron. 36.15-21; Ezra 9.5-15; Rom. 3.28; Gal. 2.16; 3. 11, 24; Heb. 10.1-18). When this was coupled with the difficulties encountered during the Post-Exilic experience, it strengthened the development of the Messianic expectation, which for the New Testament contributors found its fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth (e.g. Rom. 8.1-5).

Accordingly within this type of framework, Wright is of the view that for many Jews of Jesus' time, though they were back in Israel, they still psychologically considered themselves to be in exile—a view that was no doubt compounded by the fact that they remained subject to foreign powers throughout the restoration period and beyond. Additionally, this was a state of mind that obviously persisted up to New Testament times, and which, coincidentally, also goes some way to explain the disciples' question to Jesus concerning this very Jewish nationalistic issue (cf. Luke 2.25; 24.19-21; Acts 1.6).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Nicholas T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God)* (London: S.P.C.K., 1992), pp. 268-269.

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But be this as it may,⁴⁸ the precise nature of the exile to which Wright refers must not be understood within a geographical context, but is rather spiritual in nature because for him:

⁴⁸ Though I do not necessarily fully agree with the theory of the continuance of exile as proposed by Wright, I must nevertheless acknowledge his understanding on account of the fact that this perception was undoubtedly and inextricably linked into the Jewish psyche and theological thought of Jesus' time. It may also have persisted up to and beyond the time of Paul, for example, cf. Lk. 2.25, 24.13-21; Acts 1.6-7. However, as Seyoon Kim rightly notes, the idea of a continuance of exile is more correctly understood within the context of a spiritual estrangement. Thus, Kim sees a hiatus between Galatians 3.10 and 3.13-14, which raises the theological issue, and for him, 'Wright is unable to explain satisfactory how the two verses are connected with both the foregoing verse 10 and the following 13-14 as interpreted in terms of Israel's exile and restoration. Verses 11-12 constitute vital steps in Paul's argument in the passage from verse 10 to verse 14. Therefore, unless Wright convincingly explain the connection of verses 11-12 with 10 and 13-14, the interpretation of verses 10, 13-14 in terms of Israel's exile will remain questionable.' As such, 'even it is granted that the majority of the Jews during the New Testament period held to a well-articulated and coherent theory of the Babylonian exile still continuing, the view of Wright that in Gal 3.10, 13-14 Paul represents the theory is questionable.' For Kim the root of the problem is the expression in Gal. 3.10, upon which Wright builds his theory. According to Kim, 'Paul's use of Ὅσοι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν rather than simply the Jews denotes Paul's intention to draw attention to a generalized conclusion from the proof-text of Deuteronomy and apply it to others as well as the Jews. These others he had in view must have included both the Jewish Christians agitators (cf. Gal. 2.16), and the Galatians (i.e. gentile) Christians attracted to the agitators (cf. Gal. 3.2, 5). If so, here he had already left behind the thought of Israel's exile or at least, driven it into the background!' Please, see Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 137-138. See also Hans J. Ekstein, *Verheissung und Gesetz: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Galater 2.15 – 4.7* (WUNew Testament 86; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), p. 123. I therefore propose that unless the hiatus is

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Paul declares in Romans 2.17-24 that the Jews cannot be defined by race. Their racial boast – *that national Israel is inalienable the people of God* – is extremely undercut by the continuance of Israel's exile state. The existence of sin within Israel means that she cannot be affirmed as she stands. But supposing, says Paul in 2.25-29 – there exists some true Jews, in whom the New Covenant promises of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are coming true? Whether they are racially Jews or not, whether they are circumcised or not, they will be regarded by God as the true covenant people. This is the doctrine of justification.⁴⁹

Others, however, hold different opinions. William Wrede, for example, holds that making justification the centre of Pauline thought distorts the whole picture,⁵⁰ whereas Thompson is of the view that, 'justification is not at the core of the Gospel', apparently because it is not dealt with elsewhere in Paul's letters.⁵¹ However, in this regard the apparent marginalisation of the importance of the concept of justification in Paul's mind, and especially in relation to Romans, is to miss the point somewhat because clearly without such a focus Romans would lose the majority of its significant impetus.

In view of this, Michael F. Bird contrasts with both Wrede and Thompson because for him, 'there is no question that Paul confronted individuals with the gospel of the saving power of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection to liberate persons from sin,

solved, the physical, nationalistic and geographical exilic arguments fall to the ground and consequently the curse of Galatians 3.10-14 is to be correctly interpreted not as a physical or geographical one, but rather, as signifying a spiritual separation, referring as it does to: a) The Jews' inability, as well as that of the Gentiles, to keep the Law perfectly; b) The idea that both Jews and Gentiles have fallen short of divine favor and consequently are under God's wrath; c) Their redemption being effected solely through Christ's death of vicarious atonement.

⁴⁹ Wright, *What Saint Paul*, p. 127. Please see also David G. Horrell, *An Introduction*, p. 89.

⁵⁰ William Wrede, cited in Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, p. 20.

⁵¹ Thompson, *New Perspective*, p. 6.

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death and judgement. For Paul, the Pastor, quite evident in Romans and Galatians, is concerned with the unity of Jews and Gentiles.⁵² Thus, for Bird:

... justification by faith is Paul's most concrete theological expression of the gospel, but it is also his most potent weapon to argue for the union of Jews and Gentiles in one Church, enjoined together in a single table-fellowship, worshipping the same Lord, partakers of the one Spirit, having a shared faith, united by the bond of baptism, reaching out in a common mission, and pursuing the things that make for peace and mutual encouragement.⁵³

Consequently, Paul, in a similar way to Luther, sought to express these implications against a backdrop of first-century Judaism and of the sixteenth-century Western Church. For Paul, the doctrine of justification by faith could be understood as God's way of making a person acceptable through Jesus. Romans 5.1, for example, underpins this thought: 'therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' As such, this justification is a gift and does not rely upon a person's righteousness, but is rather an instantaneous and supernatural event that occurs when someone believes, repents, and confesses their sins (cf. Rom. 3.23-26; 10.8-13). For Luther, the doctrine of "justification by faith" was 'the principal doctrine of Christianity', and consequently, if the doctrine of justification is lost, 'all true Christian doctrine will be lost.'⁵⁴

It would seem therefore, that the idea of justification by faith is closely linked to the concept of *Heilsgeschichte* in Pauline thought (cf. 2 Cor. 5.17-19) but having said

⁵² Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, p. 33.

⁵³ Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, p. 34.

⁵⁴ Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 4.

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this, Bultmann for example understood justification in existential terms, and thereby divorced the idea of Heilsgeschichte from that of justification.⁵⁵ Käsemann in response to Bultmann, has stated that is not necessary to drive a wedge between salvation history and justification. Indeed, quite the opposite is the case:

Sie (die Rechtfertigungslehre) ist der Schlüssel der Heilsgeschichte wie umgekehrt die Heilsgeschichte die geschichtliche Tiefe und kosmische Weite des Rechtfertigungsgeschichte. Die Rechtfertigung bleibt jedoch Mitte, Anfang und Ende der Heilsgeschichte. Anders müßte auch das Kreuz Jesu seinen zentralen Platz verlieren, und dann würde alles schief: die Anthropologie und Ekklesiologie genauso wie die Christologie und Soteriologie.⁵⁶

In actual fact, Bell's doctoral thesis, *Provoked to Jealousy*, defends the idea of *Heilsgeschichte* and, with reference to Cullmann, he argues, '*Heilsgeschichte* is important for the way Paul understood his mission'⁵⁷ (cf. Rom. 1.16; 3.23; 5.1; 8.1-2). Thus for Cullmann, 'Die ganze heilgeschichtliche Verkündigung von Rom 9-11 über Israel und die Heiden ist mit des Paulus eigener Berufung zum Heidenapostel aufs

⁵⁵ Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, p. 61.

⁵⁶ Ernest Käsemann, *Rechtfertigung und Heilsgeschichte im Römerbrief*, in *Paulinistische Perspektiven* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), pp. 108-139. For Käsemann, 'Justification is seen as the key of Heilsgeschichte, as well as Heilsgeschichte is intrinsically connected with the cosmic dimension of justification. Justification is and always will be the beginning, the middle and the end of Heilsgeschichte. Without it Jesus' cross would lose its centrality, and in essence God's salvific process, which involves Christology, Ecclesiology as well as Soteriology would go all wrong.'

⁵⁶ Bell, *Provoked*, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁷ Bell, *Provoked*, pp. 62-63.

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engste verknüpft.⁵⁸ For this reason the doctrine of justification by faith, quite clearly held—and still holds today—substantial implications for the claims of modern Christianity.

Having briefly discussed the issue of justification by faith in Pauline thought, we shall now consider its formulation with regard to the doctrine itself but also as to when, why and how this came to light. For this we have to understand how the contextual issues of Pauline and Lutheran thought are interpreted within the theological world.

2.5. Paul's conversion and the doctrine of justification

According to Michael Bird and Preston Sprinkle, 'NPP plays a great deal on the demise of the Hellenistic/Gnostic Paul, over and against the 'Lutheran Paul' creating thus, an atmosphere more congenial to locating Paul in a matrix of Jewish beliefs.'⁵⁹

Similarly for Dunn:

Paul's autobiographical statement that he was a Pharisee with "zeal" for the Law in "Judaism" (cf. Phil. 3.5; Gal. 1.13-14) indicates that the pre-conversion Paul was a "zealot" who, after the model of the Maccabees (cf. 1 Macc. 2) and Phinehas (cf. Num. 25.6-13), ...devoted himself to maintaining the integrity of the Jewish religion over against the

⁵⁸ Oscar Cullmann, *Heils als Geschichte: Heilsgeschichtlich Existenz im Neum Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), p. 226. 'The proclamation of the history of salvation in Romans 9-11 to Israel and the Gentiles is intrinsically connected to Paul's vocation as apostle to the Gentiles.'

⁵⁹ Michael F. Bird and Preston Sprinkle, 'Jewish Interpretation of Paul in the Last Thirty Years', *Currents in Biblical Research* 6 (2008), pp. 355-376 (355).

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syncretistic corruption of Hellenism and to the safeguarding Israel's distinctive national identity from the pressures of the Gentiles.⁶⁰

So in Dunn's view, 'Paul persecuted the Hellenist Jewish Christians⁶¹ not for their preaching of the crucified Jesus as the Messiah nor for their breaking the law but for their preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles and accepting gentile converts without requiring their circumcision. He perceived the latter as a threat to the "Israel's integrity and purity".⁶² However these are quite debatable statements and as we shall see, the real issue is not quite as clear as these assertions would have us suppose.

⁶⁰ James Dunn, *Partings*, 119-22; *Paul and Justification by Faith*, 93; *Paul's Conversion*, 87-89; *The Theology of Paul*, 347-354.

⁶¹ The Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, mentioned by Luke in Acts 6.1. Many scholars regard Stephen as the spokesman for their theology and believe that the Hellenists were critical of the Torah and the Temple (Acts 6.11-14) and welcomed Gentiles into the church without requiring them to get circumcised. For a defense of this view of the Hellenists, see Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1991), pp. 54-86.

⁶² James Dunn, 'Paul's Conversion: A Light to Twentieth Century Disputes', in *Evangelium Schriftauslegung Kirche*, (Festschrift P. Stuhlmacher; eds. J. Adna, S.J. Hafemann and Otto Hofius; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), p. 90. Nonetheless, Seyoon Kim diverges from Dunn's opinion. For Him, Paul persecuted the Hellenist Christian Jews for proclaiming Jesus—crucified under the curse of the Law—as the Messiah, for criticizing the temple and the Law related to the temple cult in the name of Jesus Christ, and for associating with the gentiles and thereby damaging the purity and integrity of Israel. Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), p. 42.

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To begin with, Dunn accuses the Old Perspective on Paul (OPP) of understanding Luther's pain within the same context as that of Paul, and this is taken with an oblique reference to Romans 7. In his opinion, 'this Protestant reading of Paul is a reading back of Luther's own experience into Paul.'⁶³ For Dunn it is a retrojection back into Paul's first-century self-testimony of what Krister Stendahl calls 'the introspective conscience of the West.'⁶⁴ However, Dunn says that things are not as linear as they first appear, 'the trouble with it is that when Paul speaks explicitly of his own experience before he became a Christian there is nothing of all this. On the contrary, Paul speaks with the echo of his earlier pride of his success as a practicing Pharisee (cf. Gal. 1.13-14; Phil. 3.6).'⁶⁵

At this point he adds, 'classical Protestant exposition of justification by faith has begun to miss the way as an exposition of Paul's teaching on the subject.'⁶⁶ Indeed for Dunn, 'the Christian doctrine of justification by faith begins as Paul's protest not as an individual sinner against a Jewish legalism, but as Paul's protest on behalf of Gentiles

⁶³ Dunn, *Justice*, p. 14.

⁶⁴ Krister Stendahl prepares the ground for Sanders when he firmly asserts that New Testament scholars should interpret Paul in terms of his [Paul's] own religious environment, and firmly discourages Pauline exegetes from reading the experience and teaching of Paul through 'the lens of Martin Luther's 'introspective' struggle'. See Krister Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West', *HTR* 56 (1993) pp. 199-215.

⁶⁵ Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁶ Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 13-14.

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against Jewish exclusivism',⁶⁷ i.e. 'Paul developed his doctrine of justification through faith in Christ without works of the Law only in the wake of the Antiochian and Galatian controversies, and that the "*works of the Law*" in this case refer mainly to the observance of Israelite identity – markers such as circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath.'⁶⁸ Conversely for Kim, 'Paul's association of the law with death and sin juxtaposes this view that the law outstanding between Paul and the Judaizers focused only on circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath'; rather, for Kim, Paul's concerns 'implied a general and a fundamental treatment of the issues of the Law.'⁶⁹

Before proceeding, it is worth noting that there is an intrinsic link between Paul's formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith, and his call, so a timescale is taken into consideration not only with regard to the doctrine itself but also as to when, why and how this came to light. Correspondingly, for Dunn the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ for Paul became a reality for him as a result of a long process of reflection.

⁶⁷ Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 25.

⁶⁸ James G. Dunn (ed.), "'A Light to the Gentiles", or "The End of the Law"? The Significance of the Damascus Road Christophany for Paul', in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), pp. 93, 99.

⁶⁹ Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective, Second Thoughts and the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 41.

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Dunn says that ‘the formulation of the doctrine occurred between fifteen to seventeen years after Paul’s call, i.e. in the wake of the Antiochian and Galatian controversies,⁷⁰ and thus, reminds Kim, Dunn and others, ‘suggest it only out of a tactical necessity for his gentile mission, excluding therefore the Jews Christians from embracing it as saving provision from God in Christ.’⁷¹

In view of this, Kim is convinced he has a much more coherent explanation to account for the rise of the doctrine of justification through faith in Christ than does Dunn and his fellows. Consequently, Kim argues from a different point of view, believing that some Jewish Christians had difficulty in accepting Paul’s interpretation of the law on account of the fact that they had not experienced such a dynamic Christological encounter as had Paul, and had not received the same level of revelation on these issues as he had during this time. Consequently, it was very difficult for them to grasp hold of this new way of thinking because it flowed directly against their traditional and cultural worldview as Jews. In effect, ‘this law oriented mindset prevented them from ‘embracing Jesus’ Law – critical teaching and ministry, in spite of

⁷⁰ The Antiochian controversy refers to the events narrated in Gal. 2.11ff, where certain men came from James and put pressure on Jewish believers like Peter and Barnabas to avoid sharing the common meal with Gentile Christians because of their failure to observe the food laws. This occurred approximately one or two years before the controversy over circumcision, which is treated as the main issue in Galatians.

⁷¹ Kim, *Paul and the New*, p. 44.

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their recognition of Christ's death as the eschatological atonement'⁷² (cf. 1 Cor. 15.3; Gal. 3.13; Rom. 3.24-26; 4.25).

For Kim, 'reluctantly Jewish Christians and country fellows, bound to a strong commitment to Judaism or law abiding, thought of the New Covenant not as saving provision from Yahweh but as a complement and reinforcement to their former religious practices.'⁷³ Likewise, 'the Qumran sect understood the New Covenant and the presence of the Spirit in their community meant precisely that (cf., e.g. CD 6; 1 QH 7.6 ff.; 14.13 ff.).'⁷⁴ Without a shadow of doubt this was the result of a misinterpretation of Ezekiel 36.27-38, (Ezek. 11.19-20) and Jeremiah 31.31-34—key Scriptures used by Paul to underpin his antitheses "the law – the Spirit" and "the flesh –

⁷² Kim, *Paul and the New*, p. 44. Kim thinks Paul did reevaluate the Law, and that this reevaluation was bound up with and central to the 'Gospel' that he received in the Damascus event. Before his conversion to faith in Christ, Paul had viewed the Law as the means of salvation. But seeing the same Jesus who had been crucified under the curse of the Law now exalted and vindicated by God caused him to rethink the role of the Law. He now saw that salvation was not through his efforts at keeping the Law but only through faith in Christ. Seeing Jesus crucified under the curse of the Law appearing as the Messiah and Lord vindicated by God on the Damascus road, Paul realized that Christ's death was indeed the eschatological atonement for us and therefore that Christ was 'the end of the Law' for salvation (cf. Rom. 10.4) (p. 22).

⁷³ Kim, *Paul and the New*, p. 44.

⁷⁴ Kim, *Paul and the New*, p. 44.

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the Spirit.⁷⁵ Thus Kim understands that the justification of the ungodly essentially developed out of Paul's Damascus Road experience.⁷⁶

Bell underpins Kim and juxtaposes Dunn in this regard because for him, 'the justification of the ungodly by faith alone was developed at an early period in Paul's Christian life,⁷⁷ and from this he inferred divine impartiality in the sense that the Gospel was for the Gentiles as well for the Jews' (cf. Acts 13.38-39). Additionally, for Bell, 'It is easy to underestimate the trauma of this life-changing experience before Damascus.'⁷⁸ Likewise for Hengel, 'Paul was overwhelmed by Jesus Christ in His Glory. But this was the same Jesus who suffered the ignoble death of crucifixion; right from the start Christ's person and work were therefore of fundamental importance and they became inextricably intertwined with his theology of justification, and from that moment on Paul had to rethink all his assumptions about the law.'⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Kim outlines his understanding of the origin and development of Paul's theology in several stages, see *Paul and the New Perspective*, pp. 42-43.

⁷⁶ Seyoon Kim, *The Origins of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen: TUP, 1981), pp. 269-311.

⁷⁷ Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*, p. 286.

⁷⁸ Bell, *No One Seeks*, p. 6. Contrast Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (London: SCM Press, 1976), p. 40. 'For Stendahl justification is simply a means of bringing Jew and Gentile together. However, Paul's idea of justification cannot be reduced to a doctrine of the Church.'

⁷⁹ Martin Hengel and Anna M. Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (London: SCM Press, 1997), p. 97.

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In addition to this, Crossley opines, 'Paul may have developed his ideas of justification by faith without the works of the Law immediately after his conversion; however, for the moment at least, it simply cannot be said exactly when Paul was widely preaching justification by faith and when Christian, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, started practising this.'⁸⁰ To an extent, I would agree with Crossley on the basis that it is not possible to determine a precise date for the formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith, as this would tend to imply the sudden arrival of a conclusion on this issue, on the part of Paul, and as such, tends to marginalize the effect that a process of reflection would undoubtedly have had upon his understanding, which is moreover, in some sense, reflected in the development of his writings and ministry. Consequently, for me this formulation did not appear overnight but was rather probably the product of Paul's reflection upon these deep issues over a long period of time (cf. Acts 21.15-20; Gal. 1.1-24).

However, questions have been raised on this issue and focus upon whether or not such revelation was a direct result of Paul's conversion, or was something that came as part and parcel of his call and commissioning as an Apostle. For Bell, the word "conversion" is rejected because it implies that Paul in some sense changed his religion, thus creating a parallelism between Paul and the Jews from the time of John the Baptist, who were arguably called to demonstrate their repentance through the act of

⁸⁰ James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004), p. 134.

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baptism, as opposed to changing their religion which would go way beyond the remit of John's ministry (cf. Jn 1.19-34).

Having said that, it appears to me that both the Jews and Paul were called not just to repent, but were additionally to convert as both actions are mutually interlinked in that one cannot happen without the other. Both Paul and the Jewish people generally were called to a new experience of life in Christ in a similar way to how the Jewish people were called out of Egypt during the Exodus. The ramifications of this spiritual translocation were life changing, as is evident in Paul's life, and as a result, 'Paul's life changed so radically when he became a Christian that it seems right with J.G. Gager to speak in terms of Paul's conversion....'⁸¹ It is additionally worth noting that Bell himself considers this issue as one worthy of debate.⁸²

By way of conclusion, it is clear that Dunn and his fellow New Perspectivists assume that the doctrine of justification by faith was developed fifteen to seventeen years after Paul's conversion, and whilst I understand this position, I would rather understand things quite differently. As with Kim, it appears quite clear to me that Paul's conversion, his call and his sense of justification are elements or aspects of his dynamic encounter with the Lord on the Damascus road, and so it was out of these

⁸¹ John G. Gager, 'Some Notes on Paul's Conversion', *NTS* 27 (1981), pp. 697-704.

⁸² Bell, *Provoked*, p. 286.

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very real experiences and the impact that they undoubtedly had upon him that the doctrine progressively over time ultimately flowed.⁸³

It is on this basis, therefore, that the theory presented by the NPP can no longer stand,⁸⁴ because the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith was aimed at both Jews and Gentiles alike. As such, it has a universal character and for Kim, 'Paul's doctrine of

⁸³ Kim, *Paul and the New*, p. 44.

⁸⁴ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 123. Sanders argues that in Romans and Galatians Paul distinguishes between two righteousnesses: a Jewish righteousness that is attained through the Law, and God's righteousness, which is attained by faith. For Sanders, 'that is also the formulation of Philippians 3.6 and 3.9; 'righteousness by the Law', which Paul himself once had, is contrasted to 'righteousness on faith in Christ'. The truth comes out: there is such a thing as righteousness by the Law.' Furthermore, "... it is not wicked. In and of itself it is gain (Phil. 3.9). It becomes wrong because God has revealed another one.' However, the Law was not given as a measure of righteousness but was rather intended to highlight it and, in doing so, emphasizes humanity's need of a savior. The Law served the pedagogical purpose of pointing us toward Jesus. The Law could not, and was never intended to impart righteousness to humanity but rather, as Paul has said, 'no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the Law; rather, through the Law we become conscious of sin' (cf. Rom. 3.20). Furthermore, in Philippians Paul was not referring to obtaining righteousness through the observance of the Law, but as a Pharisee who struggled in keeping it. Clearly, then, both contexts of Philippians 3 go against Sanders' assertion. In verses 1-8 Paul underlines Christ's righteousness, and in verses 10-21 he restates to the Philippians the need to be aware of those who pervert the message of the cross (cf. vs. 18-19). For a Jew or any other person to be declared as righteous via their observance of the Law was, and still is, an impossible task simply on account of humanity's inherited sinful nature. Consequently, it is only achievable through the cross of Christ (cf. John 19.30; Rom. 8.1-4). This is an issue to which we shall return in due course.

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justification apart from the works of the Law was developed early, out of his encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus road', and thus, 'the doctrine belongs to the centre of Paul's gospel, and it is not a mere tactical manoeuvre which he developed fifteen to seventeen years after his conversion and call in order to fight the Judaizers in defence of his gentile mission.'⁸⁵

2.6. Paul and Luther in contest

In light of what has been said above, it appears that in their efforts to prove their point against the proponents of the OPP, the NPP has approached the similarities between Paul and Luther in purely academic terms and in doing so have missed the intrinsic relationship that exists between Paul and Luther. Dunn's assertion that Luther's dilemma essentially found its origins within the context of an internal struggle with the various pagan and extra-biblical practices of the Western Church of Luther's time is a debatable point indeed.⁸⁶ As Lloyd-Jones states, Luther was looked upon by his fellows as an antinomian,⁸⁷ and a heretic. In other words, for him in the eyes of his opposers, Luther was using the "discovery" of the doctrine of justification by faith as an excuse to live in a way that was ungodly; he was using the doctrine as a means of

⁸⁵ Kim, *Paul and the New*, p. 82.

⁸⁶ Dunn, *Justice*, pp. 12-14.

⁸⁷ Antinomian (a term coined by Martin Luther, from the Greek *ἀντί*, 'against' + *νόμος*, 'Law') is defined as holding that, under the Gospel dispensation of Grace, moral Law is of no use or obligation because *faith alone* is necessary to salvation.

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justifying a sinful lifestyle and had adopted the slogan, 'not by works but faith alone' as his motto.⁸⁸

This response would therefore tend to suggest that Luther's opposition is to be more correctly viewed from the standpoint of the radicality of his message as opposed to any conflict that he may have felt with regard to the practice of pagan rituals, within the Church and it was this message of a God who justifies the ungodly on the basis of faith alone, to which his contemporaries took exception (cf. Rom. 5.1). Similarly, 'Paul was misunderstood, when he taught on justification by faith, and the union with Christ, in his view, seemed to be doing away altogether with the law, and the whole notion of law, in God's dealing with the human race'⁸⁹ (cf. Rom. 3.20, 28; 4.14; 7.6; 8.2: 10.4: 1 Cor. 15.56; Gal. 2.16, 21; 3.10-11; 5.4).

Thus, in being accused of antinomianism, of preaching a sugar-coated gospel and by stating that justification could be obtained on the basis of faith in Jesus alone which in turn could provide the means of salvation, both Paul and Luther were misunderstood. However, it needs to be said that neither Paul nor Luther were proposing an antinomianist agenda but more precisely that their proposals as connected to the doctrine of justification by faith did not generically carry with them

⁸⁸ Martins L. Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 6* (Edinburgh: The Banner of the Truth Trust, 1973), p. 9.

⁸⁹ Jones, *Romans*, p. 3.

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the idea of 'justification by a faith that is alone', but rather the nuanced idea of 'by faith alone' (cf. Rom. 3.8, 6.1-2, 7.12; 2 Cor. 5.18-19; Jam. 2.20-26).

By way of conclusion, in the introduction to his book on Romans, Luther states that saving faith is:

... a living, creative, active and powerful thing. Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It does not stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing. Anyone who does not do good works in this manner is an unbeliever. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire.⁹⁰

Similarly, Crossley states: 'One of the logical conclusions that could, and has been drawn from Paul's theology is that without the law anything is ethically permissible. Paul himself recognized this possibility and ruled it out'⁹¹ (cf. Rom. 6.15). Indeed, 'Paul has a notorious reputation for being morally conservative and 1 Corinthians 6 shows his concerns for correct behaviour. Paul's solution to the potential problem of boundless immorality is to bring in the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8.9-11; Gal. 5.13-26).'⁹² Thus, having discussed the issues regarding justification (i.e. its formulation, implications and application in Paul's and Luther's thought), I shall present a synopsis of the law in order to define its role and implication within the NPP framework.

⁹⁰ Martin Luther, *An Introduction to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans* (ed. Johann K. Irmischer; trans. Robert Smith; Vol. 63; Enlangen: Heyder and Zimmer, 1854), pp. 124-125. [EA 63: 124-125], August 1994.

⁹¹ Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 90.

⁹² Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 90.

2.7. Paul and Jesus, an analogous approach on the Law

The content of the New Testament can be understood within the context of accounting the continuation of Jesus' ministry through the early Church by the power of the Holy Spirit acting through them, as illustrated by Luke's double volume work. As such, Paul's Letter to the Romans is not an exception; Paul intended to impress in the mind of his hearers a single message, already exposed by Jesus himself in the Gospels.

On this basis, Wright comments, 'Paul argues in Romans 5–8 that all who believe this gospel are the true, sin-forgiven, People of God, who are thus assured of their future salvation, thus enabling them to attain what scholars call 'inaugurated eschatology', the anticipation of in the present of what is to come in the future.'⁹³ One could say that for Paul, in a holistic sense, Romans expresses the essence of this view, and so for him it could possibly be described as *the* Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 1.16).

Elsewhere in this thesis it will be argued that there is a tensional relationship in existence between Paul's arguments, and the claims of Jesus in the Gospels. However, whilst Paul's arguments base their claim upon prophetic antecedents, Jesus interpreted His rejection within the framework of the ancient enmity that exists between good and evil (cf. Is. 10.22-23; Jn. 8.31-47; 12.39-40; Rom. 9.27).

⁹³ Wright, *What Saint Paul*, pp. 131-132.

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For Paul, this rejection was inseparably linked into their religious heritage and worldview, which was an inevitable product of their historic traditions. This therefore, raised an immense barrier to their acceptance of God's message of Grace through Paul (cf. Rom. 3). In Paul's mind, the Jewish conception of God was based upon the law and its observance, and in view of the sinful nature, this could only be an imperfect one (cf. Rom. 8.5) because both the Jews and humanity in general stood together in their need of a saviour.

However despite this, in Paul's mind, obedience to the law was still an essential requirement to a *relationship with God*, and this paradoxical situation therefore necessitated a solution that was simply beyond humanity's capacity to provide. Consequently, this set the scene for the divine intervention in the form of Jesus Christ, and the subsequent availability to the believers, of the Holy Spirit through the New Birth (cf. Rom. 2.17-29; 3.21-31).

In turn, Jesus' rejection as the promised Messiah was closely connected to the idea that he did not lead the Jews back to universal Torah observance as intended by the different sects of the first century CE. Instead, he presented a prophetic interpretation of it for the Jews of his time and place. However, here a word of caution is needed; it was not something opposed to the Torah.⁹⁴ Clearly, Jesus made use of the Torah to underpin his teaching. However, he did not appeal to Torah in the traditional way as

⁹⁴ Maurice Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth, An Independent Historian's Account of his Life and Teaching* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), p. 286.

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one might expect, but rather, he offered a summary of the people's duties to God under the Torah⁹⁵ (cf. Mt. 12.5, 15.2; Mk 7.5, 8, 13; Lk. 6.4; 10.30-37). Therefore, Jesus' opponents saw him as one who was interfering in their established religious affairs; as dogmatic and controversial Rabbi, who proposed different laws and customs. Consequently, they understood him from a subjective viewpoint (cf. Mk 7.5-9, 13; Mt. 5.17-32). However, there were exceptions to the rule.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 285, 288-289, 296. It appears to me that Jesus corroborates the Torah. At first glance Jesus' ethical teaching is aimed at his Jewish audience but he implicitly also gives to it a more universal character. His approach to the Torah is coherent and easy to fit into his teaching as a whole. Having said this, Jesus' understanding of the Torah not only set the foundation for the later Jesus Movement, which was his intention from the very beginning (cf. Matt. 28.18-20; Mark 16.15-16; Luke 24.47-48; Acts. 1.8; 9.15), but he also gave to it the sense originally intended by God. A closer insight on Jesus' teaching will perceive that it focused on the two main commandments of the 'Shema', the core of the Torah, i.e. love for God and for the neighbor (cf. Deut. 6.4-5; Lev. 19.18). This opposed orthodox Jews at Qumran, whose teachings were to 'love all sons of light' and 'hate all sons of darkness' (1 QS I, 9-10). To an extent I accept Casey's theory concerning Jesus' own interpretation of the Torah. However, on the basis of the New Testament teachings as a whole, I assume the idea of reformulation. From the beginning, the fulfillment of the Torah was in Jesus' mind. Indeed, he could not bring it to completion unless a reformulation was made (cf. Mt. 5.18; Lk. 16.17; Gal. 3.13; 4.4-5).

⁹⁶ Luke sketched the outline of Acts around the striking success of the apostolic mission to Israel which represented the restoration of Israel as promised (cf. Acts 15.13-18), and appealed constantly to the multitudes of believing Jews to highlight this point (cf. Acts 2.42, 47; 4.4; 5.14; 6.1, 7; 9.31, 42; 12.24; 13.43; 14.1; 17.10-12; 19.20; 21.20). One may also find evidences in support of this in other writings of the New Testament (cf. Jn 3.1, 4; 7.50; 19.39; Rom. 10.12).

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The religious leaders clearly believed in the biblical revelation, but they justified their position by stating that this same revelation should be subject to their own particular brand of interpretation and traditions (cf. Mt. 15.3).⁹⁷ Consequently, due to these and several other factors, they sought to avoid debate and confrontation and, instead, were judgmental on Jesus' ministry (cf. Mt. 9.6; 21.23-24). Unfortunately, this also prevented them from being participants in God's salvific purpose for humanity, which was plainly presented to them in Jesus (cf. Jn 1.1-14; 3.1ff; 8.32; 14.1-6).

For Westerholm however, there appears to be a tension between how Jesus and Paul respectively, understood and applied the Torah. Indeed for Westerholm:

Jesus and Paul almost detach themselves one from the other; Paul's view of the law bears no relation to Jesus' own. Paul never appeals to the practice of Jesus in his polemic against the law. He could not; for his own view of redemption required that Jesus was born under the law and strictly fulfilled its demands. Paul's motives, too, are different. Jesus attacks the institutions of the law when and because they slay the moral sense, rob the soul of piety, substitute appearance for reality.⁹⁸

For Westerholm, 'Paul conversely has a different agenda which has no connection with ethical criticism or legalism; he fights against the law as a missionary, and as advocate of redemption in Christ.'⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Already by c. 165 BCE, the orthodox author of the Book of Jubilees compiled a considerable list of things you must not do on the Sabbath, and attributed them all to the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. The list of prohibitions includes: lighting a fire, carrying a burden out of the house, going on a journey, having sex with your wife, and making war (Jub. 50.7-13).

⁹⁸ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, p. 22.

⁹⁹ Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, p. 22.

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The statement by Westerholm that Paul did not have in mind Jesus' fulfilment of the law is somewhat paradoxical, as it probably formed the initial kernel of thought which was later expressed in Galatians and Romans (cf. Rom. 8.1-3, 15.8-9; Gal. 2.15-21, 3.13; 4.4-5; 5.1-6). Again, it is unreasonable to suggest that Paul fought against the law considering his background (cf. Phil. 3.3b-6). It would be reasonable to say, however, that Paul is at pains to use the law in order to illustrate and corroborate his thesis. As such, it serves as a key element to pinpoint Jesus' centrality as the one to whom the law ultimately referred.

Westerholm fails to see that Paul advances no criticism of pursuing the law from faith. He seems to suggest two different ways of salvation, one by law and one by grace, implying that the age of the law required deeds of those who would be counted righteous in God's sight, and obviously righteousness could never be attained by means of the law.

In view of this, Kierkegaard was of the opinion that it is possible, in certain circumstances, for a religious individual to obtain contentment within the context of a religious framework, and therefore, that issues concerning a legal and ritualistic obligation for such individuals provide that which is needed to satisfy their spiritual *raison d'être*. In other words, the various religious systems can actually be instrumental in preventing people from relying on faith and upon God's compassion. In this way, such people effectively prevent God from revealing Himself to them because the

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adoption of these systems has filled the spiritual void within their souls.¹⁰⁰ With this view Kierkegaard implies that a religious spirit is essentially satisfied with the religious act, but that they are also denied the fulfilment that a personal and inner relationship with God provides. For Paul, then, a fundamental tenet within his theology is the idea that things are believed and received by faith, and not by sight (cf. 2 Cor. 5.7).¹⁰¹

Furthermore Paul's argument generally, focuses upon the impossibility of human nature to live up to God's standard, and so for example, Judaism as a belief system was likewise ineffective in this regard. For Kierkegaard:

Sin is: before God, or with the conception of God, in despair not to will to be oneself, or in despair to will to be oneself. Thus sin is intensified weakness or intensified defiance: sin is the intensification of despair. The emphasis is *before God*, or with the conception of God; it is the conception of God that makes sin dialectically, ethically, and religiously what lawyers call "aggravated" despair.¹⁰²

Valérie Nicolet Anderson explains this Kirkegaardian approach to sin:

With Kierkegaard's definition of sin, we are confronted by aspects of an explanation for sin that resonates with several Pauline concepts. Specifically, these aspects are the "before God" dimension, and the importance of the definition of the self. The "before God" dimension insists on the fact that sin is always committed with the conception of being

¹⁰⁰ Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith: A Historical Sketch from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 187.

¹⁰¹ Colin, *Philosophy*, p. 187.

¹⁰² Søren Kierkegaard (ed.), *Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition by Anti Climacus* (trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 77. Italics author's own.

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before God. And the definition of the self allows one to see how important a correct understanding of anthropology is when one has to explain what sin is.¹⁰³

Again if this is a correct understanding of Romans 7, on this basis, Paul's metaphorical use of the man in Romans 7.9-25, can consequently be used to describe the universal human need of a saviour before a Holy God. Thus, Jesus, the second Adam, was of necessity perfect and blameless and in this way He replaces generic humanity, putting Himself before God as an atoning sacrifice for sins (cf. Rom. 3.23-24; Rom. 5.14; 1 Cor. 15.22, 45). Indeed, this is the message of the cross as depicted in 1 Corinthians 1.18, Ephesians 2.16, and Colossians 1.20 and 2.14. Paul's conclusion, therefore, is that the *saving righteousness of God* is the antithesis and answer to all human efforts which strive to obtain God's favour, and it is this undeserved grace which finds its final expression in Christ (cf. Rom. 3.24; 4.16; 5.2, 15-18, 20-21; 6.1, 14; 11.6; Eph. 2.5, 8; Tit. 2.11; 3.7).

In fact, it can be seen from the above analysis that Westerholm's view, as well as that presented by the NPP, demonstrates a paradoxical view of Paul, that is, one which sees Paul as an orthodox Pharisee whilst at the same time he is also a Christian. Nevertheless, for Kim, 'there must be some continuity between the Judaism that Paul practised as a Pharisee and the Judaism that he now criticizes as a Christian.'¹⁰⁴ These

¹⁰³ Valérie Nicolet Anderson, 'A Kierkegaardian Reading of Romans 7.7-12', in *Reading Romans with Contemporary Philosophers and Theologians* (ed. David W. Odell-Scott; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007), p. 250.

¹⁰⁴ Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, p. 144.

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cannot be detached—the new Paul moved on toward a more mature stage of faith. Consequently, we do not have two Pauls, two messages, and two faiths, but a single Paul, a single faith and a single message. As a result of this, we need not see a discrepancy between Jesus and Paul, though they clearly had different approaches. There was rather, in actual fact, an intrinsic connection between them.

Taking this into account, and although certain issues concerning Pauline theology have already been touched upon, the essence of what has been considered has as its focus, ideas connected to how the law or Torah is understood. Thus, from this point forward I shall explore Paul's central aim: to express to both Jews and Gentiles alike, that the rite of circumcision as an identity marker for the people of God, and the associated requirement to keep the Law of Moses, had now, in Christ, been rendered both unnecessary and redundant in light of the New Covenant that Jesus had brought into effect (cf. Jer. 31.31-34; Rom. 2.28-29; 3.1; 4.11; 15.8; 1 Cor. 7.19; Gal. 5.6; 6.15; Phil. 3.3; Col. 2.11).

Clearly the subject of circumcision was something of a controversial issue within early Christianity,¹⁰⁵ and especially for the Jews when interpreted by Paul, for example. However, Paul had no intention of courting this controversy in a contrived way but, as I will argue below, for Paul, the circumcision that was and is required by God has more to do with that which takes place in the heart and consequently, it is more correctly understood as an internal and spiritual experience, as opposed to something that is

¹⁰⁵ Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 94.

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merely a physical act (cf. Eph. 2.11). This leads us toward another issue, perhaps the most controversial of all in terms of the differences that exist between the OPP and the NPP, the law and its various nuances.

2.8. The Law, its meaning and an insight into legalism

By way of introduction, Bell reminds us: ‘since the publication of two books of Sanders, much has been written to argue that Judaism in Paul’s time was not a religion of works-righteousness, but is interesting that even Sanders makes the following concession: “This passage (cf. Rom. 9.30-10-3), or part of it, at first blush offers the best proof that Paul’s argument against the law is really against a legalistic way of observing it”.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Sanders argues strenuously that, ‘the Judaism in Paul’s day was not "legalistic",¹⁰⁷ as traditional Protestant readings maintain, but that it was characterized by "covenantal nomism".¹⁰⁸ The concept of “covenantal nomism” by

¹⁰⁶ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 187. In fact, Sanders argues that Romans 9.32b-33 makes it clear why Israel fell: they did not believe in Christ. Sanders then asserts that ‘not by faith but by works’ in 9.32a simply means ‘they did not believe in Christ’ and not ‘they incorrectly tried for righteousness and by trying achieve self-righteousness, likewise, ‘their own righteousness’ (cf. Rom. 10.3) means ‘that righteousness which the Jews alone are privileged to obtain’ rather than ‘self-righteousness which consists in individual presenting their merits as a claim upon God’.

¹⁰⁷ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 57-74.

¹⁰⁸ Michael S. Horton, ‘The Heart of the Gospel: Paul’s Message of Grace in Galatians’, *Modern Reformation* 12.5 (2003), pp. 32-33. Covenantal nomism holds that the average Jewish person may sin and yet remain in the covenant through repentance, renewed obedience to the Law, and (according to some major rabbinical sources) the ‘merit of the fathers’, i.e. the faithful deeds of the

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Sanders argues that, 'righteousness is a matter of being part of God's covenant people, which is initially a matter of grace – "getting in" to God's covenant is a matter of God's "electing" or choosing – but then becomes a matter of obedience – "staying in" God's covenant requires obeying the stipulations that come with it, which make Torah, God's law; Sanders, therefore concludes that if Paul was in fact reacting against legalistic works-righteousness, then he was wrong to take Judaism as his target.'¹⁰⁹

Wright argues differently:

Judaism from Paul's time was not as many suppose, a legalist religion based on works, supposing this would cause violence to both Paul and Judaism itself. The Jews kept the law as a sign of gratitude, in another words, in response to God's grace, i.e. not to affirm themselves as the people of the covenant but to "stay in it", i.e. this inclusion functioned as God's gift and in an accurate way Sanders adopted the term "covenantal nomism".¹¹⁰

Correspondingly, Thompson is of the view that most Jews who seek to observe Torah do not actually recognize their religion as one based fundamentally upon merit

patriarchs. The condition for remaining in the covenant is not, then, successfully fulfilling all of God's commandments—it is not legalistic perfectionism—but freely intending to obey them. The fact that covenantal nomism provides for transgressions and does not require perfect obedience means, for Sanders and others, that it was a religion of grace after all.

¹⁰⁹ Ed P. Sanders, *Paul the Law and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 46. Sanders argues that the thrust of Paul's summary of Jew's failure was not a matter of works, abstractly conceived, but on the Law, that is, the Mosaic Law. Paul's argument is that one need not to be a Jewish to be righteous. This is against the standard Jewish view that accepting and living by the Law is a sign of favoured status. This is both the position which, independently of Paul, we can know to have characterized Judaism and the position which Paul attacks.

¹¹⁰ Wright, *What Saint Paul*, pp. 18-19.

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because for him, 'they too start with the grace and loving kindness of God.' For them, says Bird, 'as for the Psalmist, the law is a gift from God and a path of life, and therefore God has chosen the Jews freely, apart from anything they have done (cf. Ps. 19.7ff; 119; Deut. 7.7).'¹¹¹ He further states, 'Jews seek not to obtain God's approval, rather, those who view the law as divinely given appear to be basically satisfied with the way of life revealed for them in Torah.'¹¹² Thus the NPP and its proponents think that Sanders is right about first-century Judaism's stance on Torah-centric legalism. They also attempt, in various ways, to reconcile Paul with the concepts of covenantal nomism, over against a more traditional, Reformation reading of Paul.

Indeed, Sanders's notion of Judaism as covenantal nomism has received broad consent in New Testament scholarship, but there have also been attempts to modify or correct it. Martin Hengel 'gives a fundamental criticism of Sanders's covenantal nomism that, 'it ignores the "positive will" of the Jewish religion or its representatives, as it operates only within the concepts of "getting into" the covenant through divine election and "staying in" it through law observance. Merely "staying in" the covenant is "the absolute minimum goal", and it is impossible to think that all the various groups within Judaism wanted simply the minimum goal.'¹¹³ In fact, no religion, let alone its active, self-conscious and especially successful representatives (e.g. the Pharisees),

¹¹¹ Bird, *The New Perspective*, p. 5.

¹¹² Bird, *The New Perspective*, p. 5.

¹¹³ Martin Hengel (ed.), 'E.P. Sanders, Common Judaism, Jesus und die Pharisäer', in *Judaica et Hellenistica* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), p. 394.

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could be content with such a minimum goal. For Hengel, then, a more adequate description of the structure of a religion must involve such questions as, '*what* it wants, *why* it wants it, and *with which* means it seeks to arrive at it.'¹¹⁴

Consequently, *legalism* is at the heart of our understanding of the term *relationship*. This concept has recently been challenged by studies demonstrating that, in spite of the NPP's pragmatism regarding Jewish ethnicity, the sentiments behind the NPP advocates' intention do not solve the inherent legal hurdles which have blocked Jews—in the past and in the present—from expressing the same faith as Abraham, with God's acceptance being nationally represented through the Old Testament's rite of circumcision. Unquestionably, and as stated in the previous section, this could not be detached from a legalistic bias in the area of faith and Jewish self-understanding which was inevitably, in a historic sense, linked into the Temple and cultic system, and as we shall see in this section, that included the prevailing thoughts of Second Temple Judaism.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Hengel, *E.P. Sanders*, p. 394. Italics author's own.

¹¹⁵ This period refers to the religion of Judaism during the Second Temple period, between the construction of the second Jewish temple in Jerusalem in 515 BCE, and its destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. This period witnessed major historical upheavals and significant religious changes that would affect not only Judaism but Christianity (the latter calls this the Intertestamental period). The origins of the authority of Scripture, of the centrality of Law and morality in religion, of the synagogue and of apocalyptic expectations for the future all developed in the Judaism of this period.

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In my view, the main criticism to be levelled at the NPP interpretation is one that focuses mainly upon their hermeneutical inconsistency, and it appears that the only conclusion one can come to regarding these issues is that this school of thought interprets the New Testament out of context, and thereby raises unsolvable pretexts; in another words, as Crossley points out, 'the New Perspective on Paul downplays the idea that Judaism was a religion whereby the individual earned their salvation.'¹¹⁶ As a result of this, the NPP's basic working principles of interpreting the Bible are problematic. Therefore, our concerns here will largely centre on the way in which Judaism in general, and specifically Paul, related to those constructions, especially on Sanders's thesis that Judaism is a religion of grace which he contends throughout his research on the rabbinic writings.

Sanders argues, 'there is no hint in Rabbinic literature of a view such as that of Paul in Gal. 3.10 or of 4 Ezra, that one must achieve legal perfection.'¹¹⁷ However, a major problem with this kind of assertion is that, to the detriment of his thesis, he dismissed several Midrashic statements. In actual fact, significant rabbinic writings tend to support the OPP position regarding the law and its observance within a Judaic context and, furthermore, scholarship in general claims that Sanders has only viewed *one side of the coin*, which relates to the concept of Jewish soteriology. However, despite suffering severe criticisms, the popularity of covenantal nomism remains largely undiminished. In summary, I have selected only a few examples to underpin my point

¹¹⁶ Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 97.

¹¹⁷ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 137.

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of view on this issue. "The Soteriology of Rabbi Akiba and E. P. Sanders' Paul and Palestinian Judaism." *New Testament Studies* 42 (1996): 185-95.

Charles Quarles has specifically repudiated Sanders's assertion. Quarles persuasively argues that, 'm. 'Abot 3. 16-17 and b. Sanh. 81a show older rabbis like R. Gamaliel II holding to rigorous views similar to those of Paul in Gal. 3.10 (i.e. the requirements to keep all the commandments of the law and pessimism about human ability to do it) and R. Akiba countering such views with his more human view of God's judgment according to the majority of works.'¹¹⁸ Further, G.N. Stanton suggests that Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (8.4) is, 'an important piece of evidence against Sanders's notion of covenantal nomism. Justin, who did not know Paul's letter to the Galatians, represents Trypho the Jew as pleading with Justin to 'do all things that are written in the law *in order to find* mercy from God.'¹¹⁹

Seifrid observes in IQS and *Pss. Sol.* how the Qumran covenanters and those (Pharisees?) who are represented as the "righteous" or "pious" in *Pss. Sol.* are distinguished from the rest of the Jews, and how the saving blessings of the covenant are restricted to the former. A measure of individualism is developed and salvation is

¹¹⁸ Charles Quarles, 'The Soteriology of R. Akiba and E.P. Sanders Paul and Palestinian Judaism', *New Testament Studies* 42 (1996), pp. 185-195.

¹¹⁹ Graham N. Stanton, 'The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses: Reflections on Recent Trend, Interpretation', *Currents in Biblical Research* 5.1 (2006), pp. 123.144.

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conceived of as contingent upon personal righteousness.¹²⁰ In support of this, Stuhlmacher refers to a large list of rabbinic texts that expose the legalistic side of Judaism. He says, 'in view of the openness of all these pre- and post-Christian Jewish texts, it is not enough simply to call Judaism a religion of grace and to point to

¹²⁰ Mark Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (NovTsup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 78-135; summary in his 'Blind Alleys', p. 76. Also, T. Laato (*Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* (Atlanta, GA: Scholar Press, 1995), esp. pp. 147-68) arrives at a similar conclusion through his analysis of the Jewish optimistic anthropology in contrast to Paul's pessimistic anthropology. Pointing out the fact that in the Jewish literature which is concerned with eschatological salvation, 'obedience [to the Law] is the criterion and condition for eschatological salvation' (p. 55); Timo Eskola (*Theodicy and Predestination in Pauline Soteriology* (WUNew Testament 2/100; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1998), pp. 54-60) observes that with regard to such literature as Sanders, 'covenantal nomism' is really a 'synergetic nomism' insofar as it requires obedience to the Law for 'staying in' the covenant and eventually obtaining eschatological salvation. Eskola appeals to Charles Moule's observation: 'in observing that a Jew was in the Covenant-area by no merit but by the grace of God, it must not be overlooked that Sanders does, nevertheless, agree that obedience to the Torah was necessary for staying within the Mosaic Covenant, within which one is initially placed by the sheer grace of God. If the Jew was 'in' (i.e. within the covenant) unless he deliberately put himself 'out' by flagrant transgression, this does not alter the fact that 'staying in' does therefore depend on observance: a code of Laws does splay an essential part, though not in the initiation of 'salvation', which is by pure grace, yet in its maintenance ... I am asking whether 'covenantal nomism' itself is so far from legalism', see Charles Moule, *Jesus, Judaism, and Paul, in Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis* (ed. G. F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), p.48. Cf. also Donald A. Hagner, 'Paul and Judaism, The Jewish Matrix of Early Christianity: Issues in the Current Debate', *BBR* 3 (1993), p. 122.

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covenantal nomism.¹²¹ In this way, it appears to Kim that, 'the more conscientious and zealous for law observance one was, the more one emphasized the saving value of law observance',¹²² hence he also appeals to Paul's testimony (e.g. Phil. 3.5-6 and Gal. 1.13-14), and additionally to writings on this particular subject from the pre-Christian literature, in order to make his point.¹²³

In other words, Schreiner argues that Paul opposed legalism; however, for him, it does not follow that there was no emphasis on God's grace in Judaism. For Schreiner:

Sanders rightly disputes the caricature that Judaism had no theology of grace and was consumed with earning merit. Schreiner's thesis attests that Paul detected legalism in Judaism because its theology was synergistic. Salvation was by God's grace and human works. Judaism believed human beings were endowed with free will so that they could

¹²¹ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification*, see p. 42. A large list of rabbinic texts that, in Stuhlmacher's view, contradict Sanders's premise that Judaism is a religion of grace and stresses the concept of covenantal nomism [e.g. 4Q398 (4QMMT); 1QpHab 8:1-2; 2 Baruch 14:12-13; 51:7-14; 4 Ezra (2 Esdras)].

¹²² Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, p. 147.

¹²³ Mark A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2000). This fresh and thorough study of pre-Christian Jewish literature effectively repudiates the notion of 'nationalistic election theology' in Judaism (i.e. 'covenantal nomism' in Sanders's terms), and convincingly demonstrates 'a highly individualistic and conditional view of covenant' (p. 639). Thus the work deprives the New Perspective School of its basis in Judaism and consequently aborts its proposed revolution in Pauline studies. See also Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, 'The Concept of 'Works of the Law' in Jewish and Christian Literature', in *Christian Jewish Relation through the Centuries* (ed. S.E. Porter and B.W.R. Pearson; JSNTS 192; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

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cooperate with God. Paul believed human beings lacked the ability to choose what is good. Even faith is a gift of God.¹²⁴

Additionally, for Bird, ‘Sanders might not have the right answers, but he asks the right questions and gets us back into the Jewish texts themselves.’¹²⁵ However, he argues differently from Schreiner as he believes ‘there were forms of grace – works synergism in second temple Judaism.’¹²⁶ Bird thus classifies it as *Variegated Nomism* because, for him, ‘it is a better description of Second Temple Judaism since it permits a far greater diversity of beliefs concerning the role of the law, covenant, grace and eschatology than “covenantal nomism” does.’¹²⁷

I agree in part with the concept of synergism as proposed by Schreiner and Bird. However, I do not agree that Pauline thought implies that human beings lack the ability to do what is good; Romans 7 is just an inference by Paul, which denotes human inability to do good when they know they should do it. However, it must be said that Paul’s concept of obedience must not be understood as a down-payment for salvation, but rather as a reciprocal and spontaneous response; Christians obey—or at least strive to obey—*because* they love God, as a result of the salvation and hope that they have received from Him. If understood in this sense, it is not a justification by a faith that is

¹²⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 1998), p. 94.

¹²⁵ Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, p. 114.

¹²⁶ Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, p. 114.

¹²⁷ Bird, *Saving Righteousness*, p. 114.

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alone, but is rather the nuanced idea of, 'by faith alone' (cf. Rom. 3.8; 6.1-2; 7.22-23; 2 Cor. 5.18-19; 2 Cor. 9.8; Gal. 5.16-25; Col. 1.10; 1 Tim. 1.3; 2 Titus 3.17).

Whether we accept that a form of synergism is present in the OT as well as in the Pauline literature or not, I will argue that Paul's teaching contains essentially a tension of both synergism and monergism. For example, Philippians 2.12-13 states, 'Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, cultivate your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure' (MKJV). Furthermore, 'And so, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only when I was with you but even more now that I am absent, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For, it is God who is producing in you both the desire and the ability to do what pleases him' [ISV]. These two verses clearly illustrate the point, and so opposing views would run contrary to the general teaching of the New Testament and with the understanding of James 2.20-26, for example. They would also point towards a form of antinomianism and a confining of Paul's thought within the bounds and limitations of extreme Calvinism.

Admittedly, Jewett offers a reasonable exegesis to this:

In Rom. 9.30–10.4 Paul discusses the implications of the Gentiles gaining the righteousness while Israel continued to prefer works over faith. They struck the "stumbling stone" of Christ because he opposed the religion of works. Paul explains that non-believing Israel demonstrates "zeal for God but without knowledge" (cf. Rom. 10.2), which alludes to the idealization of Phinehas and Elijah as paragons of Jewish zealotism in the kind of Judaism that Paul had favoured prior to his conversion. Zeal refers to the intensity with which believers maintain their allegiance to God and, especially in the

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period of the Jewish resistance movement, to the Torah',¹²⁸ [that is, during *Second Temple Judaism*].

Jewett goes on:

The lack of 'knowledge' refers to a failure to acknowledge the way God's righteousness is embodied in Christ. Paul's fellow Jews were 'seeking to validate their own righteousness' (cf. Rom. 10.3), implying a competitive stance in which one's 'own' accomplishment is being compared with others. Although this is usually taken in a strictly individualistic manner, it also refers to the sense of ethnic or sectarian righteousness boasted by various groups in the Mediterranean world.¹²⁹

In essence, for Kim, 'it seems that "covenantal nomism" as Sanders has defined it needs to be modified to accommodate the strands of thought in Second Temple Judaism that, accorded saving value to deeds of the law beyond Sanders's sense of merely "staying in" the covenant.'¹³⁰

In view of this, as I partially agree with it, I have no intention to discard the theory of "covenantal nomism" entirely. I am also aware that the biblical approach of the NPP such as it is, has left much to be desired. I am of the view that the law was given as an act of divine grace,¹³¹ and so the access to the covenant was possible for anyone who

¹²⁸ Robert Jewett, 'Romans' in *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 100.

¹²⁹ Jewett, 'Romans', p. 100.

¹³⁰ Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, p. 147.

¹³¹ I am in agreement with Thomas Schreiner in this regard (*The Law and its Fulfillment*, p. 93). Like Schreiner, I also do not argue that legalism is present in the teaching of the Old Testament, for the covenant with Moses was not legalistic since it was given after God had graciously liberated His people from Egypt (cf. Exod. 19.3-6; 20.2-17). My thesis differs from some scholars as I think that this

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adopted its codes and prescriptions as a way of life. Certainly God's acceptance of such individuals could not be based on the perfect obedience to it as we have already considered in some measure, and therefore, in Pauline thought, this situation is the result of inherited human sinfulness which renders us all unable to fulfil it perfectly (cf. Rom. 1.18–3.20; 4.5, 7).

The statement of Romans 7, for example, proves this point and so, for Paul, the law was good, holy, and played a fundamental role in the divine economy of human salvation. However, it proved to be ineffective in this regard and so he continues on in this train of thought by saying, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the Law of sin' (cf. Rom. 7.25).

Consequently, a dualistic criterion would seem to apply here: firstly, the concept of 'getting-in' was not, in actual fact, an impossibility, as the cases of Rahab, Namman and Ruth for example demonstrate.¹³² Firstly, the concept of *Divine Election* as in the case of

legalistic bias precedes the Exile period, and that Jews in general distorted—*especially in the period of the Jewish resistance movement* (i.e. from Paul's day)—the Law and used it for legalist purposes. This zeal refers to the intensity with which believers maintained their allegiance to God and, especially in the period of the Jewish resistance movement, to the Torah, i.e., during Second Temple Judaism.

¹³² This goes against the conjecture that, the righteousness provided by the Law applies only to the Jews, whereas the true righteousness that comes from God applies to all who have faith (cf. Rom. 10.4). Proselytes were welcome to benefit from the righteousness provided by the Law; it was not an

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national Israel was, to some extent, dependent upon the grace of God as an act of His sovereign will, but despite this, acceptance was also granted on the basis of faith which was subsequently reflected in an individual's attempt to observe the law (cf. Luke 1.6; Rom. 3.21–4.25). The issue at hand, then, is more rightly focused upon the concept of 'staying-in' which carries with it two main thoughts.

Secondly, the concept which seeks to imply the possibility of achieving a legalistic righteousness from God is an essentially flawed concept, as Paul makes abundantly clear.¹³³ However, attempting to observe the law as an expression of one's faith, in order to benefit ultimately, from Christ's vicarious sacrifice upon the cross, even though this concept in the Jewish mind at that time was still in its infancy, was not

exclusive Jewish right but an inclusive divine solution for all peoples. Abraham illustrates this principle. Righteousness comes by faith for the very reason that God's promise was always intended to be universal, to all descendants who have faith, not just those of the Law, i.e. Jews. In fact, there is a link between Abraham and the law—both covenants were given as means of faith, and one complements the other or the former is the completion of the first.

¹³³ I disagree with Sanders's proposition on this issue. Sanders implies that the problem with the Law was not the Jew's zeal in pursuing it, nor that it could not be fulfilled: it was simply that God never intended the Law to be a means of salvation in the first place. From the beginning, God's plan was to make all men righteous, both Jews and Gentiles, on the same ground—faith in Christ, cf. Sanders, *Paul the Law and the Jewish People*, p. 46.

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totally wrong, and fundamentally from God's perspective, it was an implicit element within the law itself, from the very beginning (cf. Rom. 1.1-3; 10.1-3).¹³⁴

Without doubt, therefore, if the Jews pursued the law from a position of faith, they would have obtained right-standing with God. Schreiner concedes, 'The Jews did not go astray by pursuing the law with ardour and vigour [...] It was the subjective attitude with which they pursued the law that led them astray.'¹³⁵ If the law had been pursued in faith, the Jews would have seen that they could not keep it and that the law pointed to Jesus the Messiah as the only way of Salvation (cf. Rom. 9.32b-33).

Ultimately, it appears that the NPP interprets and applies the law's principles subjectively; by virtue of their reception of the Law at Sinai, the Jews seriously misunderstood the law's purpose and intentions and consequently, they lost sight of

¹³⁴ Israel failed because it sought to 'establish its own righteousness'. It did not submit to 'the righteousness of God' found in Christ, who is the goal of the Law which Israel pursued. That Law, holy though it is, offers a merely human righteousness based on deeds of obedience (cf. Rom. 10.5). It has been transcended by a higher righteousness of God, revealed and given to the one who believes. This 'righteousness of faith' dismisses our attempt to attain a righteousness of our own, by which we deny God's judgment upon us and right over us. It demands that we listen to its witness to the righteousness found in Christ incarnate, crucified and risen for us (cf. Rom. 10.6). The human questioning of the Creator's freedom receives its 'answer', not in mere words, but in God's deeds in Christ, where it is exposed as rebellion and silenced with mercy. God's sovereign word does not pass us by on its way to fulfillment, but meets us and calls us to account in Jesus Christ.

¹³⁵ Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment*, p. 104.

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God's unmerited favour toward them (cf. Deut. 9.4-6). Implicitly, the concepts of "getting-in" and "staying-in" had a soteriological implication in the Old Testament, as both these concepts were essential requirements for Jews, Proselytes, and Gentiles to ultimately enjoy the benefits of the cross (e.g. Josh. 6.22-25; Ruth 1.16; Acts 8.26-40; Heb. 11.31). This is something that, additionally, the writer to the Hebrews also confirms: 'And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise, for God had provided some better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us' (cf. Heb. 11.39-40). Paul also offers similar confirmation (cf. Rom. 3.27; 4.13-14, 16; 9.32; Gal. 3.11-12, 23; Phil. 3.9).

In conclusion therefore, it would appear that the keeping of the law was essentially a shadow of a reality yet to come and indeed, for Paul, it was a 'mystery hidden for long ages past' (cf. Rom. 16.25-26). Having fulfilled its role, it was subsequently overshadowed by a greater revelation and so the idea of staying-in, in a legalistic sense, was retrospective in terms of a relationship with God. The Jews from Paul's time did not understand that: 'the law and the Prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for the heaven and earth to pass away than for one title of the law to fail' (cf. Lk. 16.16). Accordingly for Jesus, John the Baptist was the last in the line of faithful Old Testament prophets and the vision that he proclaimed was one that held that the Kingdom of God was at hand, in and through the Person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (cf. Jn 1.19-34).

2.9. Attempts by the NPP, a concise argument

As I have mentioned above, Sanders's notion of Judaism as covenantal nomism has received broad consent in New Testament scholarship, but there have also been attempts to modify, improve or correct it. Thus, NPP scholars strive to nullify the effect of legalism in Judaism during the Second Temple period, and in the face of such criticism have responded in a number of ways. For instance, N.T. Wright argues that though legalism is seen as a characteristic of Jewish self-thought behaviour of Paul's day, for Wright, there are no hints of pharisaic legalism and self-thought in 4QMMT.¹³⁶

Jewish misunderstanding of who Jesus was and the nature of his Messiahship inevitably led to his rejection and on this basis, 'τὴν ἰδίαν δικαιοσύνην Israel failed completely in understanding that Christ all along was the secret goal of Torah, the τέλος νόμου, that is, the goal of the law.'¹³⁷ For Wright, 'When the task is done and the time is up, the Torah reaches its goal, which is also the conclusion of its intended reign, not because it was a bad thing to be abolished but because it was a good thing whose job is done.'¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Nicholas T. Wright, '4QMMT and Paul: Justification, Works, and Eschatology', in *History and Exegesis: New Testament Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis for His 80th Birthday*, (ed. Aang-Won Son; New York and London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), p. 106.

¹³⁷ Wright, *The Climax of The Covenant*, p. 241.

¹³⁸ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 241.

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Apparently, Wright seems to be in line with OPP scholars. However, a major problem with this is that this legal concept of relationship is only partially defended by him.¹³⁹ Certainly, he believes that Jewish legalism in Pauline thought must not be perceived of, as a nationalistic taboo, but as he asserts, there is an intrinsic misunderstanding by many, of the role played by the Torah within the national consciousness. For this reason, adds Wright:

Gentiles are said to be attaining membership in the people of God, while Israel is missing out, through pursuing the Torah in the wrong manner. In Paul's concept the Torah actually is the νόμος δικαιοσύνης, the boundary marker of covenant membership; but it is so in a paradoxical fashion, given that it can only be fulfilled by faith, not by the 'works of the law', the badges of Jewish membership (Sabbath, dietary, laws, circumcision) which kept Jews separate from Gentiles.¹⁴⁰

Similarly for Dunn, 'the Christian doctrine of justification by faith begins as Paul's protest not as an individual sinner against a Jewish legalism, but as Paul's protest on behalf of Gentiles against Jewish exclusivism.'¹⁴¹ Therefore, 'Paul developed his doctrine of justification through faith in Christ without works of the Law only, and that the "works of the Law" in this case refer mainly to the observance of Israelite identity – markers such as circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath.'¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment*, p. 100. N.T. Wright suggests that the references in Rom. 4.3-8 to earning merit is 'secondary' in 'Romans and the Theology of Paul', in *Pauline Theology* (ed. by E.H. Lovering Jr.; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), p. 192. This is a tacit admission that the theme of merit is in the text. Even if it is secondary, which Schreiner thinks is doubtful, some explanation must be given to account for why Paul inserted it in this passage.

¹⁴⁰ Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 240.

¹⁴¹ Dunn, *Justice*, p. 25.

¹⁴² James G. Dunn, 'A Light to the Gentiles', pp. 93, 90.

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Thus for Dunn, 'Paul's polemic is not against legalism; he criticizes privileged status as attested and maintained by obedience to the law, and condemns the attempt to enter the covenant community by human effort or to remain in the covenant via the flesh (cf. Gal. 3.3).'¹⁴³ In other words, Paul's focus on the inclusion of Gentiles in Romans 3.29-30 and 4.9-12, 14 shows that the real target of his argument is not those who believe in works-righteousness, but those who hold a perception of special privilege for the Jews. Paul rejects the 'attitude of the Jew' that relies on a uniquely privileged position, and so, as can be seen in these remarks, the concept of "getting in" and "staying in" the covenant is thereby implicit, but in the opinion of Wright and Dunn, the Jews did so in the wrong manner.

However, Das disagrees with this proposition by Wright and Dunn. He says:

In Romans 10.5 Paul cites Leviticus 18.5. He cites this same Old Testament passage in Gal. 3.10-12. There he applies Leviticus 18.5 in terms of the necessity to do the law. Paul's understanding of Lev. 18.5 in terms of human activity and performance of the law in Galatians lends credence to a similar understanding in Rom. 10.5, and consequently 9.30-32. Romans 9.30-10.8 nowhere mentions circumcision, Sabbath, or other national identity markers. Nothing in these verses indicates that Paul has in mind only those aspects that distinguish Jews from Gentiles. Even if Paul had in mind the boundary-marking aspects of

¹⁴³ James G. Dunn, 'Yet Once More, The Works of the Law: A Response', *JSNT* 46 (1992), p. 111, 113.

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the law, national identity is never divorced from the individual's own doing of the law (as was clear in Phil. 3, where national identity stands alongside performance of the law).¹⁴⁴

Like Das, Schreiner argues: 'the term work of Law refers to the law as a whole, and the evidence that only part of the law is in focus is lacking. Moreover, the close connection between works of Law in Rom. 3.28 and works in general in 4.2, 6 (see also vs. 4-5) shows that Paul thinks of works in a principal way and does not limit them to "badges" that separate Jews and Gentiles.'¹⁴⁵ Kim corroborates Das and Schreiner. For him, 'Paul's association of the law with death and sin juxtaposes this view that the law outstanding between Paul and the Judaizers were focused only on circumcision, food laws, and the Sabbath, but his concerns implied a general and a fundamental treatment of the issues of the law.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law and the Covenant* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), pp. 241ff.

'The burden of proof is on those who want to assign a more specific meaning to the word ἔργα in this context, since semantically the broader meaning of the term is preferred unless there are decisive reasons in the context for limiting it' (T.R. Schreiner, *Israel's Failure*, p. 217). God's own activity and election takes precedence over any human activity, including those works that demonstrate ethnic particularity; Stephen Westerholm, *Paul and the Law in Romans 9–11*, p. 229. Additionally, see ch. 6 on the problem Paul identifies with the Law in Gal 3.10: the Law requires perfect obedience. Note also the emphatic placement of Lev. 18.5's ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ. The Law is based on a principle of doing what it requires (which dovetails with Gal. 3.10).

¹⁴⁵ Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁶ Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, p. 41.

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Furthermore Bell writes, ‘There is a contrast between the way of the Gentiles, as a way of faith, and the way of Israel, a way of works-righteousness. Paul is not just making the point that Israel failed to fulfil the law; he is criticizing Israel for trying to fulfil it legalistically.’¹⁴⁷ Ziesler questions this too, and commenting on Romans 9.31 he considers that ‘Paul does not suggest that Israel failed to fulfil it in the right way’, adding, ‘in Romans 9.32 Paul makes precisely this point, *διὰτί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.*’¹⁴⁸

Doubtless Paul was concerned about the exclusion of the Gentiles from blessing, but this does not disprove a polemic against legalism. The theory by the NPP isolates the term legalism and demands that the term “works of Law” focuses upon what might be called *boundary markers* that separate Jews from Gentiles. However, we must not forget that for the biblical contributors, there was invariably a spiritual connotation behind the reality, for example. As we look at some New Testament texts (Acts 15.24-29 and Colossians 2.16-17 for example), it is possible to see the legalistic spirit as being intertwined within and around it, even if grace is theoretically proclaimed.¹⁴⁹ The same can be said of the NPP.

¹⁴⁷ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 187.

¹⁴⁸ John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (London: Philadelphia, 1989), p. 253.

¹⁴⁹ Donald Hagner, *Paul and Judaism: The Jewish Matrix of Early Christianity: Issues in the Current Debate* (Paper presented at a symposium, Institute for Biblical Research, San Francisco, November, 1992).

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It is important, however, not to assume the applicability of legalism in all cases. Schreiner reminds us that not all Jews were legalists but, 'legalism threatens even those who hold to a theology of grace since pride and self-boasting are deeply rooted in human nature'.¹⁵⁰ Schreiner cites Robert H. Stein's remarks: 'if Judaism were not legalist at all, it would be the only religion in history that escaped the human propensity for works-righteousness.'¹⁵¹ In the final analysis we have arrived at the conclusion that the Mishnah, the teaching of Jesus, and the Pauline corpus all contain specific textual evidence that legalism existed in the Judaism of Paul's time.

2.10. The quantitative and qualitative critique of the Law

In fact, God brought into completion what the law could not do, to which Moo observes: 'Often the distinction is made between the quantitative critique of the law and the qualitative critique. In the quantitative critique Paul says that the Jews tried to fulfil the Law but in fact were unable to do so. In the qualitative critique, it is said that human beings are not even intended to fulfil the law.'¹⁵²

As for the quantitative argument, 'the impossibility of its fulfilment is exactly what Paul meant when [he] affirms that there is no such thing as justification by works of

¹⁵⁰ Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment*, p. 100ff.

¹⁵¹ Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment*, p. 100.

¹⁵² Douglas Moo, 'Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years', *JSNT* 40 (1987), pp. 297-298 (287-307).

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Law.¹⁵³ And yet, Bell adds, 'not only are human beings unable to fulfil the law but they try to fulfil it in a legalist manner.'¹⁵⁴ Bell argues that both points of view carry roughly equal weight. In fact, it was 'an approach adopted by the reformers and has a long history down to the present day'.¹⁵⁵ As for the qualitative critique, Bultmann was of the opinion that according to Paul, men and women are incapable of fulfilling the law but more than that, crucially, 'Paul goes much further still; he says not only that man

¹⁵³ Ulrich Wilckens, 'Works of Law in Paul', *NovT* 33 (1991), pp. 217-44, as cited in Bell, *No One Seeks*, p. 262. See also Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, pp. 120-121. Cf. also Schreiner, 'Works of Law in Paul', *NovT* 33 (1991), pp. 217-44, cited in Bell, *No One Seeks*, p. 262.

¹⁵⁴ Bell, *No One Seeks*, p. 263. Bell uses the term 'legalism' to refer not only to keeping the Law (or trying to keep it), but also to a constellation of negative aspects: externalism, casuistry, and, above all, the attitude that one is earning salvation and thus giving rise to an attitude of boasting and self-righteousness. This, Bell believes, is how the word is usually used by theologians. So, adds Bell, 'legalism' corresponds to what Heiki Räisänen calls 'hard' or 'anthropocentric' legalism, as opposed to 'soft' or 'Torah-centric' legalism (Heiki Räisänen, 'Legalism and Salvation by the Law', in *Die Paulinische Literatur und Theologie* (ed. S. Pedersen; Aarhus: Forlaget Aros, 1980), pp. 63-83), referred to in Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law*, pp. 132-33. Cf. Richard Longenecker (*Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: reprint, 1980), pp. 78-84) makes a distinction between 'acting legalism' and 'reacting nomism'. My experience is that very few theologians use the word as defined in the Oxford Dictionary: 'Adherence to the law as opposed to the gospel; the doctrine of justification by works, or teaching which savours of it.' This indicates the dictionary editors took a standard view of a few decades ago.

¹⁵⁵ Bell, *No One Seeks*, p. 263.

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cannot achieve salvation by works of the Law, but also he is not even intended to do so.¹⁵⁶

2.11. The positive and negative aspects of the Law

Having said this, of course, Romans 8.3 reveals both the positive and negative aspects of the Old Testament law. First, given its divine purpose and origin, the Law for Paul was a good thing (e.g. Rom. 7.12) and therefore, I would argue that the Old Testament law has a double-edged application. First, it was bad in the sense that no one could ever fully obey it and as a result, it effectively condemned humanity before God on account of this inability (cf. Rom. 3.19-24; 1 Cor. 15.56; 2 Cor. 3.6; Gal. 3.13). But it was also good in the sense that it carried forward the divine intention: to reveal to humanity its need of a saviour. In that sense, the law served a pedagogical (i.e. παιδαγωγός) role as it pointed toward the life and ministry of Jesus (cf. Rom. 3.19-24; 7.12; 13.8; Gal. 3.24-25; 5.13-14; 6.13-15).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Rudolf K. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament ET*, I (2 volumes; London: SCM, 1952), p. 263.

¹⁵⁷ Horrell, *An Introduction*, p. 91. Some scholars, notably Heiki Räisänen, have argued that Paul's various statements about the Law cannot be harmonized into a coherent or systematic scheme: Paul is simply inconsistent. See Heiki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), p. 7, pp. 14-15 and 'Paul's Theological Difficulties with the Law', *StBib* 3 (1978), pp. 301-315. Others suggest that Paul's thought developed between his different letters, notably Galatians and Romans, but since both positive and negative statements occur within the same letters, such an answer seems less than complete. As for Paul's consistency, few would want to argue that Paul was rigorously consistent or systematic in all that he wrote, but many scholars believe that it is at least worth the attempt to understand what underlying convictions motivate Paul's varied statements about the Jewish Law.

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It is this aspect of the law, as a pedagogical overseer or custodian,¹⁵⁸ which Paul tends to hold in tension with the concepts of Torah observance expressed through what might be called ‘works of the Law’, and that some, notably Räisänen for example, appear to have misunderstood on the basis of Paul’s apparent inconsistency regarding these issues.¹⁵⁹ In this, Paul was neither a confused or deluded individual. Instead,

The basic problem or dilemma surely results from theological convictions which Paul seeks to hold together. He is convinced on the one hand that God gave the Law, so unless God made a mistake, or was unable to bring the plans to fruition, or has simply had a change of mind, then the Law must be a part of the divine purpose. Yet on the other hand, Paul is convinced that God has now acted in Christ for the salvation of all who believe, and that salvation comes through Christ and not through the Law. As such, I reject a certain form of *theodicy*, which posits a God of strict justice who seems rather unjustly to hold all people accountable to a standard they are intrinsically unable to attain—a God who by nature is both just and unjust. Instead, I hold on to the opinion that God acted in love and provided the Law as means of bringing sin into effect in order to reveal His mercy in Christ, who accomplished it on the behalf of mankind. I therefore appeal to the Augustinian form of theodicy, which argues that humans have an evil nature because it is inherited from the original sin of Adam and Eve and maintains that God remains blameless and good, cf. R. Douglas Geiviett, *Evil and the Evidence for God: The Challenge of John Hick's Theodicy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p. 19.

¹⁵⁸ Ronald Y.K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 168-170.

¹⁵⁹ Heiki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983) as cited in Horrell, *An Introduction*, p. 91. N.T. Wright correctly points out weaknesses in Räisänen’s claim that Paul was inconsistent. See Nicholas T. Wright, ‘Putting Paul Together Again’, in *Pauline Theology, Volume I: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, (ed. J. Bassler; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 186-190; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, reprint, 1988), pp. 171-172; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 209. Moo understands that ‘obedience to the

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Romans can be viewed as a further outworking of the issues raised in Galatians, in which they are given an almost cursory treatment.

Accordingly, the full implications of Paul's thesis concerning the purpose of the law and our response to it are to be found in Romans which was intended for a slightly different audience demographic to that which existed in Galatia. The idea that Paul developed substantially in his theological understanding in the relatively short period of time between the writing of Galatians and Romans, for example, in my view, tends to lose some of its initial foundation. Consequently, it is no wonder that Paul's fellow countryman stumbled dramatically at this point (cf. Mt. 21.42; Acts 4.11-12; Rom. 9.33; 1 Pet. 2.4-7) and thus, Wright is able to conclude, 'in the Messiah are fulfilled the Creator's paradoxical purposes for Israel and hence for the world. He is the climax of the covenant.'¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

I began this section by exploring the question of what kind of effect the NPP thinking has had upon the Portuguese-speaking theological debate, and we found out that the subject has been approached slightly in Brazil but in a very incipient way. Some

Law for Paul was nothing short of, 'good works' defined in Jewish terms, the principle enunciated here has universal application; nothing a person does, whatever the object of obedience or the motivation of that obedience, can bring him or her into favor with God.'

¹⁶⁰ Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 241. I shall examine this assertion by Wright more closely in due course. This will provide us with an appropriate decisive point with regard to this thesis.

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reasons were provided for this lack of interest on the part of Brazilian scholarship. Hence I exposed some reasons as to why these, and other subjects, are not yet matters of deep discussion in the Portuguese field.

Firstly and most importantly is that the investigation of the New Testament in Brazil and Portugal is restricted mostly to a denominational/confessional locus within a theological institutional context. As a matter of fact, and as seen above, very few institutions in Brazil have made an effort to achieve a paradigm shift in this regard.

Then we saw that in spite of some development, Brazilian theology is still in its infancy compared to other parts of the world. However, this will soon change. With regard to Portugal, it is less developed in theologically academic terms than Brazil. This will also begin to change. I have made no mention of the former Portuguese colonies such as Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe in Africa, and of East Timor in Asia. The reason for this is that these nations are still very underdeveloped and extremely dependent on theological resources provided by other nations such as the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, and Portugal, among others. It is preferable, therefore, to focus more on Brazil and Portugal.

Evidently the discussion in the preceding paragraphs assumed the view that the Jews understood righteousness from a legal, moral and behavioural point of view. In the first chapter we found out that NPP's scholarly find it much more satisfactory to view righteousness by law and by faith as complementary, rather than contradictory. However, I did not argue that legalism is present in the teaching of the Old Testament,

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for the covenant with Moses was not legalistic since it was given after God graciously liberated His people from Egypt (cf. Exod. 19.3-6; 20.2-17). My thesis is that, from the perspective of Paul, Judaism had distorted the law and used it for legalistic purposes.¹⁶¹

However we saw that with regard to Pauline thought, it appears that righteousness is understood more in terms of a right relationship to God, rather than upon one's adherence to a religious code of moral behaviour or a historic code of religious ethics. In this, Paul's understanding appears to be more in tune with the various concepts linked with the ideas of *Hesed* in its purest form and, for him, is fundamentally linked into his understanding of the reception of the Holy Spirit at conversion.¹⁶² Hence, *Hesed* is to be understood more in terms of relationship as opposed to religious conformation.

Lastly, I offered an overall synopsis of the law. It has been seen that in Pauline theology, external Jewish rites essentially have no extant spiritual value but are better understood within the context of an internal application, and specifically, to those issues who are connected to the things that go on in the heart. Again, the concept of heart circumcision is reflective of an individual whose life has been changed as the result of a real encounter with God—through the new birth—and this does not depend

¹⁶¹ See Brice L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), pp. 93-96 and Robert H. Gundry, 'Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul', *Bib* 66 (1985), pp. 1-38, for two analyses which support the thesis that Paul is opposing legalism.

¹⁶² Robin L. Routledge, 'Hesed as Obligation: A Re-Examination', *Tyndale Bulletin* 46.1 (1995), pp. 179-196.

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upon one's observance of the law or ethnic background but, more precisely, upon the new life made available in Christ (cf. Rom. 2.29; 3.21-31; 2 Cor. 3.6; 5.17).

Chapter Three: An insight into the Deliverance of God

3.1. Background

In the above discussion, I have attempted to distil the main points of contention between the NPP and those of the OPP. Inevitably during the course of this discussion, something of Paul's thoughts on justification/righteousness has been touched upon but to end the debate at this point would be quite inconclusive and inappropriate, as there remains a further very important theoretical issue which needs to be considered before we can proceed toward the objective of this thesis.

The debate continues as the concept of *justification by faith* has recently been challenged again by modern scholarship, namely, by Douglas Campbell, who considers himself a Post-New Perspective scholar.¹⁶³ Indeed, one of the most significant current

¹⁶³ Douglas Campbell Interviewed on *The Deliverance of God: Eerdmans Author Interview Series* at www.eerdmans.author.com [Accessed March 15th 2015]. On this interview Campbell states that, the problem with *justification theory* is that it revolves around Jews and Judaism. In sum, righteousness in Paul's thought is, according to traditional scholarship, against Judaism, so he proposes to deconstruct this paradigm. I totally disagree with this proposition by Campbell. Traditional scholarly opinion is not against Judaism itself; on the contrary, it argues that Christianity in Pauline thought is nothing less than the eschatological faith of his forefathers in its final apogee. The Christian Church is thus the true or the new Israel of God which, for the moment, replaces the nation of Israel in God's agenda. Paul, however, envisages a future hope for Israel in Romans 11. This future implies faith in Christ on the part of Israel, without which salvation cannot be attained. Traditional scholarship argues that the Church, alongside the remnant of Israel of faith, comprises a single entity—the

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discussions in the academic field nowadays has focused its attention on Campbell's 2009 masterpiece, *The Deliverance of God* (abbreviated to *TDoG*),¹⁶⁴ particularly because of his theoretical viewpoint on *justification theory* as understood by conventional readers. Therefore, like that on the NPP, Campbell's work is also pertinent to a central understanding of the concept of relationship in Pauline thoughts.

Despite much criticism, the popularity of Campbell's work remains high and *justification theory* as understood by Campbell will be at the heart of our debate. In order to understand Campbell's thoughts, I have divided this section into several parts which will begin with an introductory section followed by a discussion on faith and its variants, the ecumenical implications, the teacher's issue, and my conclusion and personal understanding in light of the present discussion. Thereafter, in consideration of the NPP and in response to Douglas Campbell, I shall outline my view on the issue of *justification by faith alone*.

people of God—which together foretaste God's eschatological salvation foretold to Abraham. In summary, Paul summons his counterparts to accept a most high form of Judaism—the faith initiated by Abraham—which finds its pure form and completion in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. Please see Scott Hafemann, 'The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11.25-32: A Response to Krister Stendahl', *Ex Auditu* 4 (1988), pp. 38-58. This thesis includes an eschatological section below, where this matter will be discussed in more detail.

¹⁶⁴ Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). Hereafter this will be abbreviated to *TDoG*.

3.2. Introduction

To better understand the content of Campbell's view I quote from Kyle Fever, a Lutheran proponent.¹⁶⁵ He says, 'Douglas Campbell argues that "justification by faith" in its traditional reformed view has taken on a particular yet very intricate form. It has developed over time and influences the very foundation of the ordinary Christian thought and practise.'¹⁶⁶ For Campbell it associated to a particular reading of Romans 1–4, yet is fundamentally not Pauline. For Campbell, 'This view of salvation which shapes Christian existence has several difficulties as it has come to be understood and needs to go.'¹⁶⁷ This is the burden of Campbell's *TDoG*, which contains 936 pages of text and 242 pages of endnotes—*both full of complex argumentation*—toward this end.

It is noteworthy to remember that a question which has caused so much dispute among Pauline scholars since William Wrede in 1904, is used by Campbell as a

¹⁶⁵ Kyle Fever is Adjunct Professor of the New Testament at Warburg College and the Institute of Lutheran Theology.

¹⁶⁶ Kyle Fever, *A Book Review of The Deliverance of God* at www.lutheranforum.org/book-reviews/review-of-the-deliverance-of-god-by-douglas-acampbell/ [Accessed May 17th 2013].

¹⁶⁷ R. Barry Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul but Not According to Knowledge', *JSNT* 34.2 (2011), pp. 115-149. Campbell aims to eliminate justification theory from Paul, both criticizing it in its own right and displacing it via a 'rhetorical' and 'apocalyptic' rereading of Romans 1–4 and related texts. In this way, he hopes to lead Pauline scholarship not only 'beyond the 'Lutheran' of Paul' but 'beyond the protests of 'the new perspective' as well, declaring his book to be 'an important moment in the advance of ecclesial and scholarly triumph of the participatory and apocalyptic Gospel', please see p. 115.

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preliminary point: is Paul's theological centre 'justification by faith' and the establishment of a 'forensic' righteousness imputed to those who profess faith, or is it 'participation in Christ' and the 'transformation' of the life of the believer? The centre of this debate is the tension between Romans 1–4 and 5–8. Kyle says that, 'while many have been content to explain the tension in terms of the theological categories of "justification" and "sanctification",¹⁶⁸ Campbell is not; so Campbell names the traditional view as justification theory.'¹⁶⁹

Indeed, justification theory, which forms the Christian foundational doctrine, is that which causes the tension alongside other exegetical problems that plague scholars and threaten to render Paul an incoherent thinker (see footnote 157). For Campbell, Romans 1–4 and 5–8 each present quite distinct theories of salvation, and the latter does not fit the justification theory interpretation that encapsulates the Christian thought.¹⁷⁰ He exposes its systematic difficulties by juxtaposing it with a sketch of an alternative Pauline theory of Salvation drawn from Romans 5–8.¹⁷¹

What is justification theory for Douglas Campbell? According to his depiction, it is a 'soteriological theory' that essentially follows along the line of the 'Four Spiritual Laws'

¹⁶⁸ It is noteworthy to emphasize that this is the view assumed by myself during the course of this section below.

¹⁶⁹ Kyle, *Review*.

¹⁷⁰ Kyle, *Review*.

¹⁷¹ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 120; see also Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 62-95.

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and their plan of salvation. He develops his description of justification theory in summary form as follows:

[1] God has created and an order according to which there is a way to live by which to attain salvation; [2] individual are accountable to this; [3] this is called 'the Law'. It is known through the Old Testament law, but also through nature and human conscience; [4] However, individuals are incapable of attaining this standard (think bondage of the Will); [5] and are thus under God's judgement; [6] God has sent Jesus Christ to pay the price for the individual's sins; [7] and thus made a way for the individual to be reconciled with God; [8] one needs only to possess faith, and thus receive Christ's righteousness.¹⁷²

The correct demonstration of faith in Jesus places the individual in the right standing with God and the individual is thus a recipient of salvation. For Campbell, this is the problem solved.¹⁷³

Campbell assumes that this is not to put justification down necessarily because, for him, justification means a hundred different things.¹⁷⁴ In fact, I have no problems whatsoever to agree with Campbell on this sentence. By definition, Paul's theology permits a range of definitions that relate simultaneously to the term *justification* and these, in turn, relate to the change of God's attitude toward the person who is in Christ. For Paul, a person experiences this justification as a divine act through which an individual enters into a new relationship with God on the basis of *faith alone*¹⁷⁵ (i.e. in a

¹⁷² Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 11-35.

¹⁷³ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 11-35.

¹⁷⁴ Campbell, Eerdmans Author interview Series.

¹⁷⁵ Mark Seifrid, 'Blind Alleys in the Controversy over the Paul of History', *TynBul* 45 (1994), pp. 77-81.

Seifrid argues that circumcision was understood in ethical terms denoting faith and piety. It is thus the social and soteriological function of the Law (which circumcision supremely represents) that Paul

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way that is not dependent upon such an individual's observance of Torah, or the Law of Moses, e.g. Rom. 2.17-29; 3.28; Gal 2.15-16; 6.15).¹⁷⁶

Thus for Campbell the main problem with justification theory concerns its construal of how God effects salvation. According to Campbell, justification theory articulates a theory of salvation that is individualist, conditional and contractual.¹⁷⁷ In other words, it centres on a modern 'individualistic' understanding of the human person and her relationship to God; salvation is the domain of the individual and the individual's position before God. God is a God of retributive justice, and justification theory demands a 'conditional' understanding of salvation that is granted in relation to the individual's actions.

confronts as demonstrative of his thesis: justification by faith alone. The question that permeates Romans 4 is: 'who are the people of God and on what condition shall they be justified?' Paul's argument aims to disclose that righteousness and Law are to be now understood in light of Jesus' death and resurrection.

¹⁷⁶ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 525. On this issue, throughout the Epistle Paul is at pains to emphasise the supremacy of God's salvific purposes for humanity as it is expressed in the person of Jesus Christ when contrasted with the requirements of the Law of Moses. In this way, God's righteousness is displayed, as it is simultaneously imputed to the unrighteous person on the basis of faith. This was a key proposal of Luther, for example; a radical understanding which was not wholly shared by his contemporaries.

¹⁷⁷ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 3, pp. 11-35.

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In short, for Campbell, the theory requires the prior perception of a forensically retributive God. On the one hand, salvation is not granted because the individual cannot rightly perform certain actions in accordance with God's Law, and on the other hand, it is granted on the basis of another human action that replaces the obedience desired—*faith*. Therefore, the theory is 'contractual' in that the understanding of salvation depends upon, and is the result of, an exchange between two parties: God and the individual. However, God is not a God of retributive justice, but a benevolent God who wants not to judge, but to *transform* and *deliver* humans out of their oppressive condition: 'they need to be rescued first and then taught to think about God and to behave correctly.'¹⁷⁸

For Campbell, therefore, God is a God of restorative justice. Consequently, Campbell says that justification theory has a serious ethical crisis. It has no convincing way of generating significant ethical behaviour from its converts. Campbell then assumes 'Paul's argument in Romans 5–8 allows little room for *a simul iustus et peccator*¹⁷⁹ sort of perspective that often goes along with justification theory, because it is thoroughly transformative rather than contractual (cf. Romans 6 and 8).'¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 62-65, 75.

¹⁷⁹ *Simul iustus et peccator* means that a Christian is at the same time both righteous and a sinner. Human beings are justified by grace alone, but at the same time they will always remain sinners, even after baptism. The doctrine can be interpreted in two different ways. From the perspective of God, human beings are at the same time totally sinners and totally righteous in Christ (*totus/totus*). However, it would also be possible to argue that human beings are partly sinful and partly righteous (*partim/partim*). The doctrine of *simul iustus* is not an excuse for Lawlessness, or a license for

3.3. Faith in/of Christ

Having introduced a short insight into Campbell's views, I will now discuss the basis upon which he builds up his thesis. Before going any further, it is worthwhile saying that issues have been raised about Campbell's methodology. R. Barry Matlock, Campbell's opponent, says: 'Questions about the sources used for Campbell's portrait of justification theory begin with his very methodology. Rather work from primary literature (that of theologians or exegetes, I mean), he chooses to offer what he calls a *theoretical description* of justification theory: his account is an amalgam of a particular reading of various Pauline texts.'¹⁸¹

On the basis of this descriptive overview, Campbell proceeds, through several chapters, to enumerate justification theory's many difficulties.¹⁸² These are of three types: "intrinsic" (matters of internal logical coherence or consistency); "systematic" (consistency with Paul's thought as a whole); and "empirical" (consistency with what we know of the realities over which JT particularly ranges). All these difficulties relate,

continued sinful conduct; rather, properly understood it comforts the person who truly wishes to be free from sin and is aware of the inner struggle within him. Romans chap. 7 is the key biblical passage for understanding this doctrine. Luther also does not deny that the Christian may ever 'improve' in his conduct. Instead, he wishes to keep Christians from either relying upon or despairing because of their own conduct or attitude.

¹⁸⁰ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 82.

¹⁸¹ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 124. Italics are my own.

¹⁸² Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 36-166.

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one way or another, to the “prospective” and “contractual” nature of justification theory.¹⁸³ Thus, I will consider Campbell’s arguments in a twofold way: firstly, I will consider his thoughts through the prism of other scholarly thought and thereafter, I will introduce my personal thoughts to the argument before reaching a conclusion.

For me, these issues essentially turn upon the concepts of *faith and its variants*. As we shall see, Campbell is not 100% wrong but is not 100% right either. He argues: ‘For Paul, faith is never about you; it is about you but about Christ himself, who through his suffering, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension, accomplishes all that is necessary for providing the righteousness demanded by God.’¹⁸⁴ In sum, Campbell argues that faith is a sign or evidence that Christ does a work in the life of the person, and in turn, the person becomes part of the process, is set free and trusts in God, believes in God, has fidelity and loyalty to God, and is long suffering or better put, reaps the fruits of the Spirit.

In view of that, Campbell outlines that, ‘justification by faith is not in terms of appropriation but assurance, i.e. comfort from accusation that they are not doing the things they need to do; therefore in Campbell’s viewpoint, justification theory instils Christians towards a *conditional mentality*, such as, you have to follow the rules and so forth, or you are not saved, as a result of this you are held in a very insecure place.’¹⁸⁵ In

¹⁸³ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 119.

¹⁸⁴ Campbell, Eerdmans Author Interview Series.

¹⁸⁵ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 30-35.

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other words, for Campbell, confessing Jesus as the Risen Lord is the solution for being justified by faith, because as far as Romans 1–3 is concerned, humankind is far from God and can never respond to Him. So far so good. At first glance, Campbell's line of thought shares some similarity with justification theory. However, it is important not to overemphasise the strengths of Campbell's arguments as there are some issues which need to be dealt with before we reach a conclusion.

3.4. The meaning of πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

What we know for sure is that πίστεως means 'faith' in Greek and that Χριστοῦ means 'Christ'. So far so good. But in the Greek there is some genitive ambiguity concerning how the two nouns of *faith* and *Christ* are to relate to each other. Based on this, Martin Luther, and those who followed him, translated *Pistis Christou* as 'faith *in* Christ'. It is, as we shall see, a matter of translation but also a matter of hermeneutic. Clearly Paul speaks of the 'faith of Jesus Christ' in varying terms eight times in his letters, primarily in Galatians and Romans (e.g. Gal. 2.16 twice; 3.22; Rom. 3.22, 26; Phil. 3.9; Eph. 3.12).

Although interpreters have traditionally understood the genitive as signifying the object of faith in such instances (that is, 'faith in Christ'), a considerable number of scholars now advocate reading the genitive as expressing the subject of faith, 'Christ's faith'.¹⁸⁶ In fact, a growing number of scholars (e.g. Richard Hays, N.T. Wright, Douglas

¹⁸⁶ Mark Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000), p. 139.

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Campbell, etc.) have argued that the proper translation of *Pistis Christou* should be 'faith of Christ'.

As we shall see during the course of this section, Campbell supports a subjective genitive and has written extensively on the issue at hand. However, two worthy opponents of Hays and Campbell have arisen in the wake of the debate, namely, James D. G. Dunn and R. Barry Matlock. Both scholars argue that the traditional, objective genitive is the proper translation of πίστις Χριστοῦ.¹⁸⁷

As matter of fact, Dunn opposes the subjective genitive translation on grounds of the absence of the definite article in the debated πίστις Χριστοῦ sections. Dunn believes that, 'if Paul wished for the phrase to be read as "the faithfulness of Christ", then he would have included the definite article, which would then read, "ἡ πίστις Χριστοῦ."' ¹⁸⁸ Dunn agrees with the suggestion of E. D. Burton, who suggests that when πίστις is used in a subjective genitive construction, 'the article is ... almost invariably present.'¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Perhaps it could be said that these four men are the four leading scholars of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate in the field, the former two arguing for a subjective genitive while the latter two argue for an objective genitive.

¹⁸⁸ James G. Dunn, 'Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ', in *Pauline Theology, Volume IV: Looking Back, Pressing On* (ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson; Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1997), pp. 61-81.

¹⁸⁹ Dunn, 'Once More', p. 64 n17.

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Matlock argues against Campbell's reading on the basis of his linguistic and exegetical side, pointing out that Campbell rests his case on his distinctive argument from Romans 1.17 and 3.21-22. In fact, Campbell posits a parallel between these two texts according to which πίστις is bound instrumentally (ἐκ, διὰ) to a verb of revelation (ἀποκαλύπτω, φανερώω) whereby it is said to reveal δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ.¹⁹⁰ On this basis, Campbell argues that for justification theory to treat *faith* as though it could *reveal* anything (as opposed to responding to what is already revealed), would be to make a semantic error—to assert something unmeaningful or ungrammatical. The text cannot be read in this way, thus supporting his claim that *Christ's fidelity* must be in view.¹⁹¹ Certainly, there is a parallel between these two texts, which have been observed by other scholars.

Nonetheless, Matlock disagrees with this proposition by Campbell. In his view, 'doubtfully it never quite rises to the level of a case – despite the enormous *interpretative leverage* that he seeks to exert against the conventional reading on the basis of this instrumentality within divine disclosure of πίστις'.¹⁹² He juxtaposes Campbell: 'in Romans 1.17, ἀποκαλύπτεται does not await some indication of instrumentality in what follows – this has already been given: the righteousness of God is revealed ἐν αὐτῷ, "in/by it", i.e. τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, the gospel (v. 16). In that case, ἐκ

¹⁹⁰ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 377-380.

¹⁹¹ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 379.

¹⁹² Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 144.

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πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is to be taken with δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, just as Habakkuk 2.4 would suggest (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως).¹⁹³

Matlock presents his case by arguing the presence of a parallel between Romans 1.16-17 and 3.21-22, that is, the righteousness of God is revealed χωρὶς νόμου, apart from the law (which is to say, in/by the gospel). Hence, for Matlock, ‘there is no verb of revelation in 3.22, and here διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is found in direct association with δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, confirming the same in 1.17.’¹⁹⁴ In conclusion, this fails the precise ‘instrumentality’ of πίστις on which Campbell sustains his case. As such, one of the main argumentative props for his rereading of Romans 1–4 collapses.¹⁹⁵

The core of the question, then, is: ‘since the Greek term *pistis* can bear the meaning “faithfulness”, it is argued that Paul has in view “Christ’s faithfulness” or at least includes this idea in his reference, i.e. Paul speaks of “Christ’s faith (fullness)” as Christ’s obedience to God on behalf of humanity in his death on the cross, in which humanity is included and represented: it is the faithfulness of Jesus which saves us’.¹⁹⁶ Richard Hays argues: ‘this reading establishes a connection between the saving death of Christ and the obedience demanded of the Christian, conversely, for him, the traditional reading of the expression as “faith in Christ” betrays an individualistic stance

¹⁹³ Matlock, ‘Zeal for Paul’, p. 144.

¹⁹⁴ Matlock, ‘Zeal for Paul’, p. 144.

¹⁹⁵ This matter will be discussed further below.

¹⁹⁶ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, p. 139.

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which is unrepresentative of Paul and of the biblical message as a whole.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, Hays suggests that, 'the [Christocentric] reading highlights the salvific efficacy of Jesus Christ's faith (fullness) for God's people; the [anthropocentric] reading stresses the salvific efficacy of the human act of faith directed toward Christ.'¹⁹⁸

The debate essentially revolves around Jesus' faithfulness and his saving action. For Campbell and associates, Jesus is the prophetic figure portrayed by Habakkuk 2.4. In fact, Campbell argues, 'Paul reads Habakkuk 2.4 as referring to Christ as the Righteous One whose faithfulness in going to the cross meant the life he received in the Resurrection – a faithfulness that now gives life to those who trust in and are faithful to Christ. Hab. 2.4 is not in the first instance about any and all persons who believe in Jesus Christ. It is not really even about belief as a mental state; it is about faithfulness in relationship.'¹⁹⁹

As such, this school of thought advocates the following: it is first of all about *Jesus Christ himself*, the Righteous One, and then only derivatively about those who follow

¹⁹⁷ Richard Hays, *The faith of Jesus Christ* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation, Series 56; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983), pp. 247-266. See also Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (Studioron Novi Testamenti Societas Monograph Series 84; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 175-221.

¹⁹⁸ Richard Hays, 'ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake in Pauline Theology?', in *Pauline Theology, Volume IV: Looking Back, Pressing On* (ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson; Atlanta GA: Scholars, 1997), pp. 35-60.

¹⁹⁹ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, especially pp. 377-380 and 613-616.

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him in faithfulness and trust. Thus, Campbell says that Paul is much more radical in emphasizing the grace of God's acting through the faithfulness of Christ than the Reformation has tended to be, where the emphasis shifted to faith in Jesus, as a mental state of belief. In this way, 'Campbell is another of the modern interpreters who translates *pisteos Iesou Christou* (e.g. Rom. 3:22) as "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" rather than the typical "faith in Jesus Christ"; therefore, Paul is emphasizing Jesus' faithfulness, not our works of belief.'²⁰⁰ Indeed, Campbell's logic is not entirely flawed as similar sentiments are expressed in the New Testament. 'The just shall live by faith' (cf. Rom. 1.17; Gal. 3.11; Heb. 10.38), but in what sense or in what way is the real meaning of Habakkuk's prophetic oracle?

To begin with, Seifrid juxtaposes this view by Campbell and says, 'we must note at the outset and understanding of "faith" in early Christianity stands at some distance from this proposal, in Seifrid's viewpoint the authors of the New Testament in their majority speak of believing *in* Jesus Christ as the means by which God grants salvation.'²⁰¹ He adds, 'only five texts (cf. Gal. 2.16 twice; 3.22; Rom. 3.22, 26; Phil. 3.9; Eph. 3.12) in the New Testament speak of the *faithfulness of Christ* using the adjective *pistos*, a paucity which stands in stark contrast to the approximately 400 (both implicit and direct) to the faith in Christ in the New Testament.'²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, pp. 377-380.

²⁰¹ Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, p. 140.

²⁰² Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, p. 140.

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Moreover, and despite recent attempts to demonstrate otherwise, the topic of Christ's faith (i.e. his believing) is essentially missing from the New Testament.²⁰³ In conclusion Seifrid observes:

Some passages outside Paul's letters which use the expression "the faith (*pistis*) of Jesus Christ" are debatable; in the end they do not signify Jesus' believing. At least one fundamental reason for this silence is apparent: in the New Testament 'faith' is based upon the work of God in Christ, in sum, despite the assertions made by the New Testament authors on Jesus' humanity, they clearly did not speak of Jesus' believing in God, since he himself was the object of faith.²⁰⁴

As much as I agree with Seifrid and his approach, and although there is a suggestion which points to Jesus' trustworthiness on the people's behalf, I understand that the intrinsic problem is not focused so much upon the concept of Jesus' believing. Leon Morris explains: 'this message has been understood traditionally as "the just shall live by faith" (KJV), but many now hold that it should be taken as "He that is just by faith shall live". Grammatically it is easier to take the words as KJV, but the point is not decisive, all the more so since Paul is quoting and may have felt obliged to reproduce the words of the prophet in the text known to him.'²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Please note that Mark Seifrid quotes Ian G. Wallis (*The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (Studioron Novi Testamenti Societas Monograph Series 84; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 175-221) to make his point, and says that the examples used by Wallis brought forward from the Synoptics, James, and Revelation are hardly convincing. James 2.1 is a good example of that.

²⁰⁴ Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, p. 140. Italics author's own.

²⁰⁵ Morris, *Romans*, p. 71. It is not certain exactly what text Paul had. The Hebrews means 'the righteous will live because of his faith (or faithfulness)' and appears to signify that the servant of God must await God's time for deliverance. Until then, the servant's trust in God must sustain him. In the LXX μου is attached to πίστewς, which might mean (with God as the speaker) 'because of my

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Morris presents some ideas about how the words “he that is just by faith shall live”

should be taken. They are as follows:

First, there is the context. Paul is talking about that righteousness which ‘is from faith to faith’, and cites the prophet in support. He is not talking about the way God’s people should live. Second, there is the point made by Nygren that in chapters 1-4 the faith words (“faith”, “to believe”) occur “at least 25 times” and the life words (“life”, “to live”; “to preserve alive”) twice, whereas in chapters 5–8 the figures are exactly reversed. The inference is that at this stage of the epistle Paul is concerned with the fact that it is by faith that God saves people rather than with how they live. Third, the whole teaching of Romans is such as to lead to connect “righteous” with “faith”. Paul keeps insisting that a person is righteous only by faith (e.g. 3.20, 22, 24, 28; 4.2-3, 13, etc.; 5.1) is especially important, for in summing up the argument to that point Paul speaks explicitly of being justified by faith. There is no corresponding emphasis on “the righteous as living by faith”.²⁰⁶

As matter of fact, an intrinsic link is traceable between Habakkuk’s oracle quoted by Paul in Romans 1.17 “the righteous shall live by faith”, and the “faith of Christ” as depicted in the KJV (See Gal. 2.16 twice; 3.22; Rom. 3.22; Phil. 3.9; Eph. 3.12). Remarkably, all these verses with the exception of Ephesians 3.12, are related; justification by faith is their theme. Having said this, Romans 1.17 and 3.21-22 will be the key verses used by me to bring forth my thoughts. Noticeably, Romans 3.21-22 amplifies and represents an expansion of the original thesis of Romans 1.17a, further developing the interpretation of the Habakkuk text.

faithfulness’ or ‘because of his faith in me’. Paul lacks the $\mu\omicron\upsilon$ both here and in Galatians 3.11. It is not clear whether he had a different text or whether he understood the passage in a different way.

²⁰⁶ Morris, *Romans*, pp. 71-72. I hope and think Leon Morris is implying a kind of righteousness that is by Law (i.e. impossible to be attained) and the one produced by faith in Christ (i.e. attained by grace), otherwise it diverges from Paul’s overall teaching, whose faith must be characterized and underpinned by a life of holiness or as one wish a byproduct of this same justification.

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The phrase 'but apart/without the law' restates Paul's introductory thesis in Romans 3.21-22. It is followed by four references to the law with which the previous section concludes (cf. Rom. 3.19-20), confirming that the question of the law's meaning and significance is pivotal to Paul's concern here. Francis Watson believes:

The assertion that the righteousness of God "is apart from the law" (v. 21) corresponds to the assertion that this righteousness is "through faith of Jesus Christ" (v.22), and this makes it clear that the initial "by faith" of the Habakkuk citation carries for Paul the connotation "apart from the law". *By faith* means "apart from the law", and the necessity of this "apart from the law" arises from the fact that "by works of the Law shall no flesh be justified before him".²⁰⁷

Watson, then, understands that 'in these brief, cryptic Pauline formulations, a radical new reading of Jewish scripture is coming to birth, over against a reading in which scripture consists most fundamentally in the commandments that point the way to righteousness and life'.²⁰⁸ In sum, for him, Paul here practices a specifically hermeneutical theology.

²⁰⁷ Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), p. 72.

²⁰⁸ Watson, *Paul*, p. 72. Paul's original thesis—about the *righteousness of God which is by faith*—took the form of an interpretative gloss on the Habakkuk citation. Although the gloss sought to clarify and amplify the quotation at several points, there was no indication that the prophetic 'by faith' was understood as referring to the faith of Jesus Christ Himself. 'The one who is righteous by faith' is not Christ but the believer (compare the reference in 1.16 to 'everyone who believes, the Jew first and also the Greek'). If in 3.22 the phrase 'through faith of Jesus Christ' derives from 'by faith' of the original thesis and the citation (v. 1.17), then it must be understood in a way that harmonizes with that earlier usage. 'Through faith of Jesus Christ' indicates that the earlier 'by faith' is to be understood in some unspecified relation to Jesus Christ, but it can hardly indicate that Jesus Himself is the subject of that faith or faithfulness. If Paul did not understand the Habakkuk citation Christologically, then he cannot be referring to the faithfulness of Christ in Romans 3.22. If he did

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Following on from the previous reasoning, Paul himself provides the necessary contextual clarification of the *faith* to *Jesus Christ* in the assertion that follows the expanded restatement of the original thesis in Romans 3.21-22. The introduction of *Jesus Christ* into the restatement prepares for the claim that those who have sinned are nevertheless 'justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness through the passing by of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God; for the display of His righteousness at this time, for Him to be just and, forgiving the one being of the faith of Jesus' (cf. Rom. 3.24-26).

As with Watson, I understand that this passage interprets Jesus' death not as the outcome of his own faithfulness but as God's saving action. Thus faith, and consequently righteousness, is what is intended in God's action in the death of Jesus. God set forth Christ as an atoning sacrifice by his blood, and by having *faith*, God would allow its benefits—righteousness, the remission of former sins—to be received. God justifies the one who is of the faith of Jesus, and indeed, the name *Jesus* denotes nothing other than the saving action that God accomplished in his death.²⁰⁹ Thus, 'faith,

understand the citation Christologically, he should already have made this clear in Romans 1.17. See Watson, *Paul*, pp. 74-75. Moreover, the translation 'through faith of Jesus Christ' is hardly less misleading and paraphrased than 'through the faithfulness of Christ'. Where a preposition is inserted in the one case or the definite article in the other, an interpretative decision is made that the Greek phrase leaves open, see Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation* (Anchor Bible Commentaries; Yale: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 345.

²⁰⁹ Watson, *Paul*, p. 75. Cf. Mt 1:21

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then, is faith of Jesus in the dual sense that Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's saving action, is as such both the origin and the object of faith. In this way, the ambiguous genitive formulations – “through faith of Jesus Christ”, “the one who is of the faith of Jesus”, (vv. 22, 26) – may be clarified, not by grammar but by context.²¹⁰

In sum, it is quite clear that Paul is stressing the primacy of faith. The genitive usage conveys the idea that Jesus is the source of faith, and that faith is found exclusively in him as opposed to the faith in/of the law which, for Paul, became obsolete as Jesus brought it to completion on the cross, or better put, the faith which may be relied on, rather than the faith which relies.

On this issue, there is also a further point which needs to be considered. Accordingly, having reviewed the subject of faith, I shall now discuss the implications that this reading may hold with regard to future interpretation.

²¹⁰ Paul's doctrine of righteousness by faith is an exercise in scriptural interpretation and hermeneutics. Paul seeks to persuade his readers that this language and conceptuality is generated by Scripture, which thereby bears witness to its fundamental duality. In its prophetic voice, Scripture speaks of the (positive) outcome to God's apocalyptic saving action and in the voice of the Law; it speaks of the (negative) outcome of the human action that the Law itself had previously promoted. This dual scriptural testimony is fundamental to the Pauline hermeneutics of faith. Although Paul has directed us to the testimony of the Law and of the prophets, it is he who interprets that testimony. We cannot take on trust his claim that, while speaking in his own voice, he faithfully reproduces the (twofold) voice of Scripture. Please see Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, pp. 76-77.

3.5. Ecumenical implications

Again, a very strong ecumenical element is perceptible in Campbell's thesis. Keven Carey, writing a review of *TDoG*, suggests that 'in Campbell's thesis the traditional Catholic elements of trinitarianism and sacramentality are congruent with and not contradictory to Protestantism. Overall, the exposition and demolition of "pure" Justification Theory is masterful and fascinating but ultimately not so important as the complete demolition of the doctrine of atonement.'²¹¹

This tends to carry with it the implicit thought which confirms Campbell's stance, holding to the view that, 'Justification theory has a deeply impoverished conception of the sacraments, and its ethics and polity are "scandalous": Justification theory seems unable to ask its converts to do more than trust and believe; meanwhile, its ecclesiology is consensual, confessional, and correspondingly tepid. It poses a barrier to "ecumenism": it represents a "false problem" that, if "eliminated from Paul", would remove a "major impediment" to Catholic-Protestant dialogue.'²¹²

Accordingly, Campbell tends to argue against justification theory which he considers a contractual and individualistic framework whereby rules and decrees held people in a very insecure place with the implication that perfect righteousness was required in order to attain salvation. Of course, no-one could ever attain perfection. His

²¹¹ Keven Carey, 'Review of *The Deliverance of God: an Apocalyptic re-reading of Justification and Paul*', at: www.jesus4u.co.uk/study-sheets/deliverance-god-apocalyptic [accessed March 17th 2015].

²¹² Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 213-214.

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focus is upon Reformed Evangelicalism in general which is reflected in his use of certain terminologies (i.e. *consensual*, *confessional* and *tepid* ecclesiology) when applied to theological understandings which these Christian groups hold dear.

Noting the compelling nature of this evidence, Campbell's thesis suggests a form of ecumenical approach, or, in other words, Campbell himself implies that confessing Jesus as the Risen Lord is the solution for "being justified by faith". In sum, it is an ecumenical solution whereby acceptance of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour becomes the root experience that gives the divided Churches a present unity, despite their disunity as Churches. Consequently, justification theory is a barrier to achieve this intending unity. However, Campbell also knows that justification theory's foundational and doctrinal basis relies on Christ's atoning work, and I reason that without this definite agreement on this central premise, any attempt at fellowship is merely papering over the sundering cracks. It is not just whether justification theory's ecclesiology is consensual or confessional, then, but rather, the concept interplays with a range of other doctrines within the Pauline corpus without which a relational interaction between God and humanity cannot be attained—factors which it would seem Campbell's thesis has not fully taken into account.

Furthermore, I think that insofar as Campbell's perspective understands salvation as something corporative, that is, grounded upon Christ's faith (i.e. fullness), the individualistic side of it is demoted to something redundant. The problem with Campbell's reading is that it is essentially, and solely, participatory. Campbell himself asserts: 'The notion of 'faith' emerging from my rereading of Romans 1–4 is essentially

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participatory. That is, “Christ’s faith”, which seems to embrace several aspects ranging from right beliefs about God, through trust, to steadfast fidelity over time, is isomorphic with *Christ’s own “faith”*.²¹³

At first glance, Campbell’s proposition gives the impression that an amalgam exists between both points of view, that is, they exist within the context of concurrent thought (i.e. tension). One may ask, however, to what extent this is recognized by him. Campbell’s proposal begins to weaken at this point as he maintains a strong but subjective reading of the issues at hand and consequently, whether one agrees with his view or not, an imposed subjectivist reading of *faith of Christ* implicitly carries with it the idea that salvation is able to be attained without the full participation of the believer within the salvific process, and further tends to negate the needful requirement of one’s faith and personal obedience.

Evidence in support of the above position can be found in Grant Macaskill, but not without caution:

This understanding of the relationship between the faith of Christ and the faith of the Christian is an interesting and sophisticated resolution of the πίστις Χριστοῦ debate, one that contextualises it in the surrounding text of Romans and allows us to escape the dichotomy of subjective and objective dimensions (though, it is worth stressing that Campbell himself maintains the subjective reading as core). The arguments here may or may not convince, but they at least constitute a serious attempt to grapple with the difficulties in the text of Romans and are developed in close engagement with that text.²¹⁴

²¹³ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 756. Italics author’s own.

²¹⁴ Grant Macaskill, ‘Review Article: The Deliverance of God’, *JSNT* 34.2 (2011), p. 157.

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Admittedly the sentiment expressed in this view embodies the idea that Macaskill is not entirely in favour of the dualistic understanding of this issue among traditional scholarly thought.

Nonetheless, contrasting Campbell and Macaskill, I assume both variants on my reading. Like Matlock, I think that Campbell plays off against the different concepts that Paul holds together: the justice and mercy of God; justification and participation; the guilt and enslavement of sin. The result is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the attempt to construe justification and participation as separate doctrines of redemption, and then to have the latter alone represent the real Paul.²¹⁵

Matlock adds:

There have been indeed Protestant readings that are one-sidedly oriented around “justification by faith” narrowly conceived, but that does not justify one in committing the equal and opposite error; however, Campbell’s book, against its intentions, will create renewed interest in a third alternative, the effort to offer a satisfactory account of the interdependence of ‘justification’ and ‘participation’ – the very thing he believes to be most needed – but that Campbell rules out literally by definition, that is, Campbell’s very definition of each ensures their mutual antagonism.²¹⁶

For this reason Dunn cautiously states:

To play off justification by faith and participation in Christ, or the gift of the Spirit, against each other, or to attempt to subsume one within the other, is to fail to recognise the richness of each and the limitation of each. Small minds may fret about how Christ can be both advocate and judge, how Christ can be ‘in us’ and ‘we in Christ’, how he can be both elder brother in the Spirit and Lord and agent in creation, but Paul evidently felt no such inhibitions. He had experienced the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, the image of God, as a gospel for all, giving assurance of acceptance now, sure hope of transformation

²¹⁵ Matlock, ‘Zeal for Paul’, p. 147.

²¹⁶ Matlock, ‘Zeal for Paul’, p. 147.

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even of sinful human beings into that image, and promise of final vindication – and that was sufficient for him.²¹⁷

Accordingly, both Dunn and Matlock understand these issues within the context of dichotomy, where ‘justification’ and ‘participation’ are held together as a unity.

Justification is therefore defined as the forensic declaration that the believer is righteous, rather than the process by which he is made righteous, involving a change in his status rather than in his nature. Again, a deliberative and systematic distinction is made between justification (the act by which God declares the sinner to be righteous) and sanctification or regeneration (the internal process of renewal within man). Thus, justifying righteousness is defined as the alien righteousness of Christ, external to man and imputed to him, rather than a righteousness which is inherent to him, located within him, or which in any sense may be said to belong to him.

I would suggest that this understanding thus rules out the idea of *perfect sanctification*, which clearly cannot be understood as a gateway to salvation, but instead as a way of pleasing God through subsequent obedience. No bargain or contractual agreement is made between the two parties in the strict sense (i.e. between either God or humanity), but rather, the whole concept turns on the notions connected to *hesed*. That is a relationship established on the basis of love.

²¹⁷ Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, p. 97.

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Indeed, Campbell's approach fails in addressing issues of primary texts in his engagement with historical theology, as well as in his engagement with Judaism, including the question of how the Hebrew Bible, and the concept of covenant developed therein. To me, he fails to highlight the inconsistency with which the concept of unconditional grace is applied therein, or even to highlight the internal contradictions of its deployment.²¹⁸

This is clearer still in his understanding of *faith* in Romans. Macaskill says: 'it is clear that he is resistant to any attempt to see this as something required of the believer in Paul's theology: however, such a notion is foreign to the Apostle, and should not be read into the Judaism that he challenges.'²¹⁹ It seems to me that his proposal implies that Christian conduct and obedience never amount to anything before God as far as final justification by faith is concerned.

As result of this, Campbell's subjective reading²²⁰ denies the twofold meaning of imputation, i.e. for Campbell, justification is not seen as a divine declaration whereby sinners attain God's favour graciously and faith is seen as deeds. It is possible that a Johannine concept may enhance this: 'Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God; that you believe on Him whom He has sent' (John 6.29). In essence and in

²¹⁸ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 27.

²¹⁹ Macaskill, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', pp. 152-154.

²²⁰ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 527.

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biblical terms, deeds and faith walk together, hand in hand²²¹ as well as πίστις and σωτηρία in Romans which are inextricably intertwined.

By way of conclusion, and though I am in support of the objective genitive reading, I assume the faithfulness of Christ implies that people can have faith in him and because an injunction to have faith in him assumes that he is faithful, both the faithfulness of Christ and faith in Christ are ideas that fit the context of each biblical passage that uses πίστις Χριστοῦ. This is the primary reason that it is difficult to make a strong case for one view against the other. That said, there is a further issue in Campbell's thesis which must be dealt with before we are able to bring this section to a close and it is to that discussion which I shall now turn.

3.6. The teacher

By far the most controversial aspect of Campbell's book, and the basis upon which he builds up his arguments, is the teacher. This paradoxical debate goes on from Romans 1.17—4 and consequently, I will attempt to distil this debate in a very straightforward and succinct way, by offering an overview of the salient points rather than an exhaustive review. Macaskill comments: 'Campbell suggests that between Romans 1.18 and 3.20 Paul is largely representing the views of a legalistic Jewish-Christian opponent, whom he labels "the Teacher".'²²²

²²¹ Faith, it should be noted, is not the condition for salvation but the mode of salvation, i.e. salvation is not *propter fidem* but *per fidem*.

²²² Macaskill, 'Review Article: "The Deliverance"', p. 158.

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Campbell argues that 'Paul is here using the rhetorical technique of προσωποποιία, or "speech-in-character", a device whereby the writer adopts the voice and opinions of another character in Romans 1.18-32.'²²³ To sum up, 'Campbell draws parallels between Paul's concerns in Romans and those in Galatians, where he also opposed Teachers who were presenting "*an alternative soteriological programme*". Just as Galatians is written in a context in which there were two gospels in play, two gospels were also in play in Romans occasioned by "the spectre of the teacher's arrival."²²⁴

As already mentioned in the introduction to this section, Campbell does this by breaking Romans into two, conjecturing that Romans 1–4 and 5–8 each present quite distinct theories of salvation. Campbell believes that Romans 5–8 does not fit the justification theory interpretation that summarizes the Christian thought, so he juxtaposes it with a sketch of an alternative Pauline theory of salvation which he has drawn from Romans 5–8.²²⁵ Thus, the driving force behind Campbell's arguments rests on presuppositions that Romans follows different patterns. Campbell construes Romans 1.16-17 and 1.18 as in irreconcilable opposition; the former speaks of a benevolent God who has 'revealed' his (benevolent) righteousness, the latter of an angry God who is 'revealing' his wrath. Paul is, then, contrasting two gospels.²²⁶

²²³ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 522

²²⁴ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 522. Italics are my own.

²²⁵ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 120; Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 62-95.

²²⁶ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 543.

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In his re-reading, Campbell questions other scholars (e.g. Francis Watson, E. P. Sanders, James Dunn and Stanley Stowers), claiming that their re-readings do not go far enough, leaving too much of the old reading still in place. Needless to say, Campbell considers his reading on Romans 1.18–3.20 as the answer to an appropriate reading of the Pauline gospel. However, Campbell's interpretation has not been without its detractors. Matlock says:

What he is getting at is this: the '*turn and burn*' preaching that, according to Campbell, the conventional reading finds in Romans 1.18-3.20 really is there – *and thus Campbell resists any effort to read otherwise* – but it is not Paul talking; rather it is Paul's opponent, "The Teacher", whose voice appears to be more consistent than that of Paul in these texts, and to whom Campbell's man-made theory attributes the conception of justification theory.²²⁷

Bruce Clark defines: 'for Campbell Paul's gospel is fundamentally opposed to the Teacher's (which, Campbell maintains, is almost identical with justification theory), and that this opposition reflects a widespread debate within Judaism regarding the very character of God.'²²⁸

In fact, says Matlock, 'Campbell needs this hypothesis to build up his arguments and to reinforce his case, i.e. that finally someone has been able to read Paul in the way Campbell claims that justification theory does; it turns out to be Douglas Campbell'.²²⁹

²²⁷ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 139.

²²⁸ Bruce Clark, 'Review Article: *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul*', *Tyndale Bulletin* 64.1 (2013), p. 62.

²²⁹ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 139. This goes another part of the way toward explaining how Campbell can seem unaware that his description of justification theory is even contestable: at a certain level,

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Again, there is no shortage of disagreement regarding this pseudo character in the field. The immediate difficulty here in Romans is that Paul makes no explicit mention of such opponents, in stark contrast to Galatians. For instance, Clark depicts a list of difficulties:

(1) It is unclear how Campbell labels 1.18 a 'Gospel' or how from 1.18 it is 'immediately apparent' that the Teacher's Gospel has no significant input from Christology. (2) What of the similarities between Romans 1.18-32 and 1 Thessalonians 4.3-8? (3) Did the author of Ephesians 4.17 (with its very similar description of non-Christian humanity) also wrongly presume that Romans 1.18-32 was Paul's? (2) Why would Paul include a doxology (vs. 25) in the teacher's diatribe?²³⁰

Macaskill corroborates Clark saying: 'I find myself, then, unconvinced by Campbell's argument regarding Romans 1.18-3.20, as have most reviewers.'²³¹ The reason Macaskill says this has to do with the suggestion by Campbell that much of Romans 1.18-3.20 represents the thought of Paul's opponent.²³² He adds: 'What is

he himself affirms justification theory. His rereading actually depends on justification theory being false *as a theory* but importantly true in terms of his perception of 'the turn and burn' of preaching and related matters in Rom. 1-4. Campbell is himself committed to the prospective reading of Romans 1-4 that he mistakenly attributes to supposed 'conventional readers'.

²³⁰ Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', pp. 62-63.

²³¹ Macaskill, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 159.

²³² Macaskill, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 158. I assume Francis Watson's view on this. Though I find it difficult to recognize that in Romans 1.18-32 Paul opposes a real character speaking in the teacher's voice, i.e. in mode of diatribe, I believe that Paul applies the method somehow. Please see Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, pp. 76-77. Diatribe is an ancient form of speech which, from a Second Temple Jewish perspective, claims that God will judge humanity on the basis of their failure to recognize God and their subsequent idolatry and immorality.

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particularly sad is that this problematic section of the book overshadows the more robust (if still controversial) analyses of Romans 3.21–4.25 and Campbell’s provocative discussion of faith and righteousness.²³³

Clark concurs with Macaskill and says: ‘Actually, Campbell’s attack against justification theory – *labelled by him of rationalistic, contractual and individualistic reading* – is only sustained by the modernistic theological superstructure forced upon it, in which he engages in a highly complex, subtle polemic, creative employing speech-in-character. However, his own exegesis is not only ingenious – *it demands too much of Paul and the letter’s auditor* – but altogether untenable at key points’.²³⁴ Furthermore, it remains a growing problem in that Campbell fails in his *engagement* with conventional readers and this is most likely the strongest weakness of his work. Thus, in the face of such criticism, proponents of justification theory and others, have responded in a number of ways. With few exceptions,²³⁵ to date there has been little agreement on Campbell’s *theoretical description* of justification theory.

²³³ Macaskill, ‘Review Article: “*The Deliverance*”’, p. 159.

²³⁴ Clark, ‘Review Article: “*The Deliverance*”’, pp. 55-56. Italics are my own.

²³⁵ Alan Torrance, ‘Article Review: Douglas Campbell, “*The Deliverance of God*”’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65.1 (2012), pp. 82-89 (89). Alan Torrance considers Campbell’s book ‘a profoundly cogent and refreshing rethink of Pauline interpretation – on which stands to generate a tectonic shift in Pauline scholarship’. He adds: ‘viewing things purely theologically, that is, without judging the exegetical case, the Paul who emerges is emphatically more coherent than the approach he critiques’.

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Matlock reminds the reader that this chapter of the book is the only sustained engagement with the works of any of his peers, and even so it is predictably vitiated by his preoccupation with justification theory. In fact, 'nowhere is this more evident in his account of Watson (2004), which simply does not fit on Campbell's conceptual map; as usual, rather than suspect the map he forces the fit, with results that tell us little about Watson but much about Campbell.'²³⁶ For Matlock, Campbell not only fails to sustain his case, but also fails to establish the need for it. Matlock goes on to say that every contemporary conventional reader, like Matlock, would concede that what Campbell describes as *justification theory* is not to be found in Paul.

Quoting a long list of scholars from *TDoG*, Matlock refutes Campbell's adamant fallacy, that is, that these putative 'conventional readers' (mainly Romans commentators), agree with justification theory as described by Campbell. Matlock argues that it is not easy to find someone who departs significantly from the conventional reading, but finding the opposite should be easy.²³⁷

For this reason, Clark classifies *TDoG* as a 'thought experiment', conjecturing that the book is particularly pervaded by Campbell's own arguments. These are as follows:

[1] Must Christ's death be either satisfactory or liberating and transformative, and must be the dominance of the former in Romans 1-4 and of the later in Romans 5-8 necessarily create 'framing tensions'? [2] Must be God be either retributive in his justice or benevolent, i.e. must be God be either one who is 'compassionate, gracious, slow to

²³⁶ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 139. Please see also Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 417-31.

²³⁷ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 135. To check the list, please see Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 333-37 and 1013-20 nn. 33-100.

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anger, abounding in love' or one who 'will by no means leave the guilty unpunished' (Exod. 34.7)? [3] Must God deal with humanity in either strictly individualistic or strictly corporate terms? [4] Must a soteriology of unconditional grace negate an initial response of faith or even a covenantal or contractual arrangement? [5] Must 'belief in the Lord Jesus Christ' be either 'evidence of salvation' or its appropriation'?²³⁸

Clark reasons that Campbell should have selected and engaged with five or six diverse proponents of traditional readings to underpin his case. In other words, 'this misappropriation of a good idea constitutes, for the present reader, one of the most disapproving aspects of the book: at the end of the day, Campbell's experiment advances his arguments but at the expense of preventing his provocative thesis from engaging in more exciting, real dialogue (actual engagement with J-theory is surprisingly rare)'.²³⁹ Clark's conclusion is that the work rightly denounces some sort of rationalist epistemology while, unfortunately, leaning upon it to secure its argumentative strategy, or put simply, Campbell fails to make his point.

In the final analysis, and I far as I am concerned, Campbell makes the same mistake as those who hold to the NPP view which proposes an alternative way of salvation for Jews that is independent of the cross of Christ, thus missing the intrinsic link between OT law and the Gospel of Grace. In the same way, by supposing Romans 1–4 and 5–8 each present quite distinct theories of salvation, Campbell distorts the whole picture and misses the intrinsic relationship between the Old Testament Covenant and the

²³⁸ Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', pp. 60-61. Please, see also Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 712; 664, 706; 101; 896; pp. 817-20.

²³⁹ Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 61.

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Gospel of Jesus. These two, like the Old Testament corroborates the New Testament, cannot be separated from one another and, in turn, fulfil or complete one another.

There is no doubt that Campbell displaces Romans from its central focus and impetus, but Watson reminds us that, ‘the theology of Romans is supremely normative, from Paul’s standpoint and also from our own. Justification in both the centre of Paul’s theology and the only sure foundation for the church; the theological task of historical-critical scholarship is constantly to rediscover this’.²⁴⁰ As I said before, there is a hint that in Romans 1.18–3.20 Paul often proposes his argument by using the questioning voice of a Jewish interlocutor to evoke his thesis (i.e. the presence of some sort of diatribe is there), but going as far as to say that there are two gospels in the course of the letter to the Romans is going too far.²⁴¹ Indeed, Campbell has not taken into consideration the structure behind Romans, which obeys a certain pattern.

²⁴⁰ Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles, Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 166.

²⁴¹ A significant point which originates from the modern study of rhetoric form in Romans is the renewed appreciation of the diatribe style used by Paul (i.e. dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor) – essential part in important stages of Paul’s argument throughout the letter (cf. Rom 2.1-5; 17-29; 3.27 to 4.2, from 9.19 to 21; 11.17-24). The attempt to criticize the arrogance and correct claims is characteristic of diatribe. In general, the typical function of the diatribe was not to create controversy against an opponent, but to critically present questions to a fellow student in a philosophical school context, viewing to lead him to the truth. Thus, the contemporary rhetoric perception call into attention the modern reader for the danger of understanding passages such as Romans 2, as if it implies a controversial expression against an ‘adversary’ or as an indication of a complete break between two monolithic entities (i.e. ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’). Rather, in

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For me Campbell resorts to ingenious eisegesis upon which he then seeks to build his thesis. There is a saying in evangelical circles which holds to the idea that the use of a text without exploring its proper context is but a pretext. This is exactly what Campbell appears to do as he appears to force the text of Romans 1.18–3.20 to support his argument. Certainly, ‘Paul’s statements about the law are not entirely consistent, and (but) one should not emphasise the negative ones at the expense of the positive. Christianity was for Paul the fulfilment and not the annulment of Judaism.’²⁴² Clearly Campbell ignores this by supposing that the Teacher’s Gospel, whilst relying on the law, stood in opposition to Paul’s Gospel of Grace, thus illustrating the idea that Campbell’s reasoning works the other way around. Conversely, Paul’s statements on the law in Romans 1.18–3.20 function as a sort of utterance by the apostle to make his point. Thus I assume that Romans is formed by a single gospel.

3.7. Personal understanding

Having outlined a theoretical summary of the above views, I will now consider some practical implications which these views appear to have thrown up. Indeed, some of his observations and comments are quite helpful, and as said on a personal note above, he is neither 100% right nor 100% wrong. I agree partially with some of the

Romans’ case, the diatribe indicates Paul’s engagement in a critical dialogue with fellow Jews and Jewish-Christian about the importance of the new ‘philosophical sect’ within Judaism (i.e. Christianity) and its relationship with Judaism, its source, and others Judaism (s) of the time’.

²⁴² William D. Davies, ‘Paul and the Law, Reflections on Pitfall in Interpretation’, in *Paul and Paulinism* (ed. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 4-16.

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concepts implied by him. James Crossley rightly notes that a committed evangelical might hold nuances on Paul's theology of justification that a non-believer might miss through lack of interest.²⁴³ That is not Campbell's case since, as far as I am concerned, he is a believer, and though he does not argue in a systematic theological sense, he is not down on justification, but there are things on which I disagree with him.

To begin with, by labelling justification theory as archaic and vague, Campbell allegedly considers his thesis the ultimate answer to an accurate evaluation of justification. However, no theory or scholar has a 'God's-eye-view' of things. In fact, all attempts to explain salvation in its fullness have their problems. This is good to bear in mind, as even the best of our exegesis may be defective. Moreover, Campbell may not be aware of the problems brought about by him which illegitimate many of his hermeneutical arguments.

Instances of this can be seen in the following verses which may underpin my view: 'For also we have had the Gospel preached, as well as them. But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with *faith* in those who heard it' (cf. Heb. 4.2); 'in whom also you, hearing the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation, in whom also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance, to the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory' (Eph. 1.13-14); and 'Then faith is of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (cf. Rom. 10.1).

²⁴³ Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 9.

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The terms *mixed with faith, believing* and *hearing* are mere New Testament examples of how faith is a living, creative, active and powerful thing; it is a supernatural event that occurs by means of God's action, but which involves human participation (cf. Heb. 11.1-40). Nonetheless, Campbell also opines that faith can become a limiting factor when looked upon as means whereby salvation is granted.²⁴⁴ To an extent, I would agree with Campbell's position in this regard in the sense that faith can unwittingly be turned into a deed or works based salvation theory, but this stands against the essential principles of *justification by faith alone*. For Paul, saving faith comes as the result of a gift from God: 'For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast' (cf. Eph. 2.8-9).

Furthermore, faith is something that can be personally resisted or refused (cf. Heb. 3.12, 15, 18-19), and can further be exercised in a positive way according to a person's attitude toward God and the claims that He makes (cf. Heb. 3.14; 11.1). On this basis, therefore, it appears to be the case that salvation and faith go hand in hand, that is, they are inseparably attached to one another—an understanding which is expressed throughout both the Old and New Testament (cf. Heb. 11.1-40). Therefore, one must bear in mind that nothing a person does—whatever the object of obedience or the motivation of that obedience—can bring him or her into a place of favour with God,²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Campbell, Eerdmans Interview Series.

²⁴⁵ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 209.

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a principle which underpins the basic Christian belief that salvation is granted by grace through faith alone.

Having said that, faith in Paul's thought is always seen as the instrumental and never as something based on one's personal achievement, so justification by faith is not understood in terms of merit or demerit but rather in terms of Jesus' faithfulness. Jesus met all that is required by God for *right living, right thinking* and a *right relationship*. In broad terms, these things imply a righteousness (vindication) which could only be received and *not* achieved, things which the God who delivers from sin gives to those who seek him by faith (cf. Heb. 11.1). On this issue, it would seem that Campbell has rightly noted Paul's thoughts in the sense that Jesus' faithfulness is seen as fundamental in bringing this soteriological process to completion (cf. Phil. 1.6).

Additionally, Campbell's theory implies that the God of justification theory is a God of retributive justice, and justification theory demands a 'conditional' understanding of salvation that is granted in relation to the individual's action. As said elsewhere, for Campbell, the theory requires the prior perception of a forensically retributive God. However, in the words of Augustine, it works the other way around: 'Credo ut intelligam', that is, 'I believe so I can understand' and not 'I understand so I can believe.'

Accordingly, it would seem that faith comes before comprehension and understanding, and so Luke shows how faith is inculcated through explanation (preaching): 'He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. And He said to them,

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“So it is written, and so it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be proclaimed in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (cf. Lk. 24.45-47). Additionally, he showed it through the story of Lydia, ‘whose heart the Lord opened, so that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul’ (cf. Acts 16.14). Both texts make it clear that although faith was already in place, the disciples did not yet adequately understand the full implications of their own scriptures with regard to Jesus.

Thus Luke (cf. 24.45-47), and other examples from the New Testament follow the same pattern: repentance and remission of sins should be proclaimed first, followed then by an overall set of doctrines which must be taught thereafter. Campbell, however, reasons the other way around; for him one must conceive of God’s salvation on the basis of “Christ alone” and work from there. He says, ‘in the light of the revelation of salvation, people perceive that their initial condition was dire indeed, that is, one does not reason one’s way to salvation by first recognizing sin, failure, and depravity.’²⁴⁶ For Campbell, ‘the true Pauline proclamation begins with the word of transformation and hope in Christ, and from that basis identifies where such transformation and hope needs to be effected in particular contexts.’²⁴⁷

It appears that Campbell’s reasoning on this point is not so divergent from Paul’s and undoubtedly, although a Christ-centred theology is of crucial importance with

²⁴⁶ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 74.

²⁴⁷ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, p. 74.

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regard to salvation (and as such, rightly forms the very centre of the Christian message), it is nonetheless irrelevant how this message is conveyed to people. We may start with Christ or the preaching of repentance; whichever form one opts for will not alter the content of the message.

I am completely in line with Campbell's assertion on God being a benevolent God of restorative justice, who wants not to judge, but to *transform* and *deliver* humans out of their oppressive condition. However, as said above, I simply cannot grasp hold of how Campbell's theological construal arrives at this conclusion. Clearly he proposes a paradigm shift but he is very ambiguous and inconclusive in his approach. Moreover, he dismisses faith to such a degree and seemingly ignores that it functions as the very foundational basis upon which all other Christian doctrines depend on. Campbell simply displaces faith from its main role in God's divine economy and by so doing disregards the basis or pillars upon which the Christian faith makes its claim, without which faith becomes redundant. Below I leave a short summary of them.

3.8. Doctrinal basis

What must be clear here is that justification discourse does not emerge in a spontaneous and unmediated way from Pauline texts. It is a theological doctrine, formulated on the basis of a series of theological premises, which addresses a particular problem and is driven by a whole apologetic and other concerns. In other words, the generic confusion and Campbell's misreading can be traced to presumed doctrinal exposition rather than biblical scholarship per se.

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Thus, if we were to align the basis of the Christian life in Pauline terms, we would have faith, repentance, justification, adoption, regeneration, sanctification and glorification (cf. Rom. 8:29). Each doctrine focuses upon a different aspect of the work of salvation. We must not separate these aspects nor give prominence to any one of them above others because, in Pauline thought, each step or stage in the experience of salvation is equally essential and inseparably connected. Having said this, chronologically, there appears to be a certain amount of overlap which can make it difficult to distinguish one from another at times. The best way to explain them is to say that, together, they form a set of doctrines which outline the divine process of what might be called *Progressive Sanctification*.

Personally, I think that on a scale of one to seven, there are three that are sequential—faith, repentance and justification—and as far as the others are concerned, these are highly interconnected and together form a complete unit. For example, adoption is so intertwined with justification that some think these two doctrines are simply two steps in the same aspect or two metaphors for the work of salvation. Furthermore, repentance accompanies the work of faith because simple belief in God is not enough, and as such, there must also be an accompanying change of feeling which is nothing to do with remorse but which is all to do with a change of life (cf. 2 Cor. 5.17). Also, repentance by itself is not enough; it would be a waste of time, since repentance without faith in Jesus (i.e. the object of this same faith), does not save, and vice-versa.

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Likewise, no one is able to nurture biblical faith without repentance. In a sense, repentance is part of it—it is the causal effect of faith. To say that it is possible to have faith without repentance, and that faith is something that leads to it, obviously goes against the general teaching of the Scriptures.²⁴⁸ For this reason, faith without repentance is not genuine. Both are intrinsically part of a whole and depend on the attitude of each person before the presentation of God's Kingdom. Repentance, then, is a biblical doctrine (cf. Mt. 4.17).

True repentance involves confession of sins (cf. Rom. 10.8-9). Though these verses are aimed at a religious generation (i.e. the Jewish people) they have a universal application. Implicitly speaking, the Jewish community professed a faith based on tradition rather than a faith based on a relationship with God. An accurate examination of the Old Testament scriptures which were regarded by them as God's word would, in the words of Jesus, be enough to prove that the prophecies found their complete fulfilment in his life and ministry and this is paradigmatic (see Jn 5.37-40).

As said elsewhere about the Jews, their elect status was so misunderstood that it did not allow them to put into practise a faith based upon God's mercy, but simply divorced them psychologically from the responsibilities that came as part and parcel of that election. In spiritual terms, Jesus stood in antithesis to their Messianic expectations but fortunately for Christians their rejection meant acceptance.

²⁴⁸ Martin L. Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (ed. Banner of Truth Trust, at the Puritan Studies and Westminster Conferences between 1959 and 1978), p. 193.

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In actual fact, justification follows faith and repentance, and both things are intrinsically linked to each other. Justification is the change of God's attitude toward the person who is in Christ. It is also the change of our position before God, so that the man may be 'justified by His faith' (cf. Rom. 5.1). Accordingly, justification is by faith, and if one's faith is static and fruitless, everything else is ineffective because without works, faith is dead and is invalidated and cancelled by the scriptures (cf. Jas 2.20).

That said, Campbell's thesis ignores this principle. He argues on God's benevolence and he is right but elusive at the same time. Scripturally speaking, justification by itself cannot perform its role on its own; it depends on other aspects which form a doctrinal unit, without which deliverance cannot be attained. Since before God all are under the same condition, all must repent. In other words, *all* includes *all*, without exception. Consequently, in Pauline thought, repentance implies a change of feelings in order to serve God in the newness of life (cf. Rom. 3.23).

Another example would also be between justification and regeneration. In biblical terms, justification follows a three-fold pattern; firstly, the positional justification which occurs instantly through an act of faith and repentance and then progressive, apocalyptic or futuristic justification (cf. Rom.5.1; 8.38-39). That said, regeneration is progressive and begins at the new birth. So, the proposed process above must not be understood as a straightforward thing, as indispensable or an essential pre-requisite for attaining salvation, but rather, the dissection is done by having in mind a presentation of the whole redemptive process. In all cases there is always an exception to the rule:

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for example, the thief hung on the cross and his redemption took place during his last agonizing moment (cf. Lk. 23.42-43).

Salvation in Pauline thought is, then, a process in development as well as a past fact. It is God's operation, through which man is made to be 'conformed to the image of his Son' (cf. Rom. 8.29; 13.11). None of these elements of salvation can be defective. When one is born of God and puts faith into action, irrespective to her background, position, or status, such a person overcomes the world in respect of its opposition to God and its anti-Christian spirit (cf. 1 Jn 5.4). This person sins (cf. 1 Jn 2.1)—*will sin*—but the process of sanctification will never be obstructed. God's redemptive process is operating in us (cf. Phil. 2.13), and He will keep on perfecting us up to the day of Christ (cf. Phil. 1.6; 1 Thess. 5.23-24).

That said, and though human participation is part of the process, the redemptive plan, its fulfilment, and application finds its origins in God and is of His whole responsibility (cf. Jn 16.7-11). Though faith is something that is not controlled, manipulated, or understood by the human reason, on this basis it functions as a crucial pre-requisite to the understanding and acceptance of the central truths of the Christian faith. Biblical faith point to the Godhead as the sole focus, and has as its basis the divine revelation upon which Christians build up their faith. Faith is not man's property, but God's revelation. In sum, mankind is just a mere recipient of it. In other words, Jesus empowers people to exercise faith in His name; it proceeds from Him and not us. Having received it, man has to practise the sort of faith that operates his salvation (cf. Phil. 2.12-13; Heb. 12.1-2).

Conclusion

Matlock, perhaps the fiercest opponent of Campbell in the current field nowadays, thinks that Campbell has used a very unusual language to address the issue of justification theory and therefore attacked its proponents with disdain. He argues:

It is of course a fundamental academic value that one should describe one's opponent's position in a fair and even-handed way. Campbell does not just fall short, he flouts this value in the extreme, going so far as to associate his opponents with anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, fascism and imperialism, not on the basis of anything they say but of his own logical extrapolation from his *theoretical description of "justification theory"*.²⁴⁹

Matlock counterattacks, saying that Campbell's definition of justification theory is of no value other than reasons of academic ethics, and that this part of Campbell's analysis is the most outrageous stretch he has encountered in the field. Besides, for Matlock, justification theory as depicted by Campbell is 'the most elaborately constructed straw-man [Matlock] has ever witnessed, and to watch Campbell parry and thrust with it across hundreds of sprawling pages is a singular and uncanny spectacle.'²⁵⁰

Though Grant Macaskill seems less scathing, he focuses on the innermost of Campbell's work, '*The Deliverance of God* fails to realize its author's ambition, yet it raises valuable points along the way. As an attempt to bring Scripture and theology

²⁴⁹ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 137. Throughout, and despite the appearance created by voluminous endnotes, Campbell's argument tends to be a monologue. Here he has talked himself into a most invidious position.

²⁵⁰ Matlock, 'Zeal for Paul', p. 137.

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together, it is unsuccessful, failing to meet the canons of criticism of the latter and demonstrating an inadequate grasp of theological literature and method. Therefore, as a reading of Paul, it is both more and less successful.²⁵¹ For Macaskill, *TDoG* has left much to be desired in biblical terms and theology. Campbell's lack of interaction with scholars in general is to blame, but also, for Macaskill, Campbell has failed exegetically and hermeneutically, imparting too much of himself into the task.

As far as Bruce Clark is concerned, he assumes that *TDoG* posits a most provocative thesis, 'which invites us to new vistas of interpretative possibility, with keen argumentative skill, even if that skill occasionally gets in the way of his thesis.'²⁵² Even though Clark accepts the contribution brought by Campbell into the academic field, the use of the term *skill* is a subtle critique by him, which implies the reason of Campbell's failure in sustaining his case. Clark is peremptory in tone, saying that Campbell would not disagree with him that 'in some sense the great strength of *The Deliverance of God* is that it reveals how disastrous a particular (i.e. a very syncretistic) kind of J-theory can be. But this becomes its great weakness as well. Campbell does not present a J-theory at its best but at its worst, and who wouldn't abandon that for a participationist soteriology?'²⁵³

²⁵¹ Macaskill, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 160.

²⁵² Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 87.

²⁵³ Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 88.

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Consequently, and given the current high profile debate that *TDoG* has stirred in the field, it is quite surprising that Alan Torrance considers Campbell's book 'a profoundly cogent and refreshing rethink of Pauline interpretation,' on which stands to generate a tectonic shift in Pauline scholarship. He adds, 'viewing things purely theologically, that is, without judging the exegetical case, the Paul who emerges is emphatically more coherent than the approach he critiques.'²⁵⁴ There are two things in Torrance's review of *TDoG* which have caught my attention: first, his review of it presents quite a theological, rhetorical and academic approach, one that demands little interaction with scholarly and biblical precedents, showing similarities with the one presented by Campbell; second, in spite of being favourable to *TDoG* he does not deny the presence of some issues in it, namely, he points to the exegetical hurdles in its contents, which for most reviewers stand as one of Campbell's biggest predicaments.

As for me, Campbell's re-reading of Romans, while possessing several very insightful points, has its problems. It is an intriguing view, but not a convincing alternative. I can see Paul working with language and ideas that his audience held, and then transforming their understanding, but I find it difficult to recognize that all of 1.18-32 is Paul writing in "the teacher's" voice, i.e. in mode of diatribe,²⁵⁵ if there even was one specific problematic teacher in Rome.

²⁵⁴ Torrance, 'Article Review: Douglas Campbell *The Deliverance*', pp. 82-89.

²⁵⁵ Campbell, *The Deliverance*, pp. 520-547.

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I find myself, then, unconvinced by Campbell's argument regarding Romans 1.18–3.20, amongst his other ideas. Needless to say, as seen during the course of this section, Romans 1.18–3.20 is not the only stumbling block on Campbell's thesis, and although he assumed it as the backbone of his arguments, all his construal resulting from it is jeopardized by it. Finally, I still cannot grasp hold of how Campbell conceives the *problem*. Clearly humanity needs saving, but why? I think Clark's arguments may be useful here. He asks, in the wake of *TDoG*, who are the winners and losers? Perhaps the real winner is Heikki Räisänen, if one concedes with Clark that Campbell has:

[1] Accurately portrayed traditional readings, [2] overthrown these and yet, [3] unsuccessfully offered an alternative (as our exegetical critique might suggest), then, as he himself states, the result is Räisänen's contradictory Paul. Regardless, the losers are at least four in number: [1] fortunately, a modernistic/rationalist epistemology, [2] sadly, individual human action, for *The Deliverance of God* is distinctly modernistic in its antithesis of the community and the individual; and the possibility and nature of individual responsibility are ambiguous; [3] again, sadly, the perspicuity of Scripture, as just mentioned; and [4] theology proper, as divine autonomy is dealt a serious blow.²⁵⁶

Clark concludes, 'Campbell presents the reader with a God whose righteousness requires that he save an enslaved humanity, but, alas, he is apparently unable to do so, at least not in *toto*; some, inexplicably, remain enslaved.'²⁵⁷ No doubt, Campbell is remarkably elusive when it comes to defining the standard according to which there is a problem. In Pauline thoughts, humanity is in need of a rescue, enslaved to the flesh, under the power of sin. This much Campbell admits. Have they not violated God's law? Or is humanity just enslaved to sin and the flesh by accident? Cannot Paul have reasoned from God's unconditional saving act in Christ and identified a violation of

²⁵⁶ Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 87.

²⁵⁷ Clark, 'Review Article: "*The Deliverance*"', p. 88. Italics author's own.

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God's law as the plight? This is a key question! *God's sovereignty is the theme of Romans* and Campbell has not taken it into account.

It appears to me that the works of Krister Stendahl, E.P. Sanders, and Heikki Räisänen are symptomatic of a widespread dissatisfaction with the Lutheran approach to Paul. This is also apparent in the work of scholars such as M. Barth, G. Howard, James Dunn, N.T. Wright, and (perhaps most significantly) in the important three-volume commentary on Romans by U. Wilckens. The process of purging Paul from Lutheran contamination (H.J. Schoeps)²⁵⁸ is already well under way.

In view of that, and as far as I know, Campbell's presentation of justification theory is unparalleled among his peers in contemporary Pauline studies. However, he has not succeeded. Obviously *TDoG* is not a clear defeat for justification theory. In summation, there is as yet no consensus as to the new image of the apostle that is to replace the Lutheran one. Having said that, the ironic problem is that Campbell's intention to challenge and overturn a widespread view of salvation will reach only a few, and though he admits an alternative re-reading of his book, the damage is unfortunately self-inflicted.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Hans J. Schoeps, *The Theology of the Apostle in the light of Jewish Religious History* (London: Lutterworth, 1961), p. 197.

²⁵⁹ Campbell, Eerdmans Author Interview.

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Definitely, a theoretical description, (terminology used by Barry Matlock to define *TDoG*) is well applicable to Campbell's attempt to demolish justification theory. In this way, given its several meanings, the term "theoretical" may indicate hypothetical, academic, notional, imaginary, conjectural, speculative and abstract and so, to me, Campbell's account of justification theory is a bit of all but *above all* is imaginary, conjectural, speculative and abstract.

Chapter Four: Justification, Its Implications and Meaning

4.1. Introduction

Having dealt with the backbones of the New Perspective on Paul and *The Deliverance of God* on justification by faith, and though the matter has been discussed in detail along the course of the previous chapters, it would be inconclusive to end the debate on justification by faith at this stage. It is worth reminding the reader that we are building our argument to an interpretation of Romans 12.1-8, and the NPP school of thought and Douglas Campbell were discussed in detail because of their intrinsic relation with the main subject of this thesis, that is, *relationship with God* in Pauline thought.

Despite the conjecture presented by the NPP school of thought—that the doctrine of justification by faith functions only as a Pauline pragmatic tactic to facilitate his mission to the Gentiles, and of Campbell’s attempt to split Romans into two distinct gospels—it will be shown on the proceeding sections that Romans is one single gospel and one single message: justification by faith forms the very centre of the Christian message preached by Paul in Romans, functioning as a bridge between humanity and Yahweh, and how we shall see, it performs what the law could not do, i.e. it enables people to deliver the right λατρείαν to God in Christ.

In order to continue this thesis, I shall consider God’s provision for the inability of both the Jews and Gentiles to fulfil the divine requirement of a righteous life, as part

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and parcel of what it meant to be a member of the community of God's people. Therefore an overview of Paul's thought will be given with the intention of shedding some more light on the matter of justification. Again, I shall merge my own view with some traditional and contemporary scholarship. We will now turn to a discussion of this issue.

4.2. Foundation

In sum, justification is a divine act by which man enters into a new relationship with God and it is God's way of making His people acceptable to Him through Jesus (cf. Rom. 5.1). Justification is a free gift and does not depend on perfection. It is instantaneous and essentially acts to help us as we work through our human limitations. Richard Bell states, 'ultimately, salvation is not dependent on good works. Many have believed that Romans 2 creates problems for a view that stresses that salvation is independent of works,'²⁶⁰ but Romans 2, correctly understood in the context 1.18–3.20, does not contradict this sentiment. Justification is *sola gratia, sola fide, propter Christum*.²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Bell, *No One Seeks*, pp. 274-75. It is worth adding that Romans 2 was not just a problem for Reformation theologians, but also for the Church Fathers. Please see Karl H. Shelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter, Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer* (Düsseldorf: Methodist Press, 2nd edn, 1959), p. 80. A number of Church Fathers saw problems in reconciling Romans 2.13 with Romans 3.20. See for example, Origen's treatment of this in his discussion of Rom. 2.11. See also Caroline Hammond Bammel, *Der Römerbrief Kommentar des Origenes: Kritische Übersetzung Rufins* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1990), pp. 129-309.

²⁶¹ Bell, *No One Seeks*, p. 275.

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Consequently, Romans 1.16-17 function as a key through which we are able to open up the epistle as a whole, with the first three chapters outlining the basic premise—that all men are sinners (cf. Rom. 1.18-32; 3.9-18; 5.12-21)—and this, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.²⁶² In fact, the phrase δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ must be characterised as the key term for the letter as a whole (cf. Rom. 1.17; 3.5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 10.3).²⁶³ Accordingly, Paul introduces the idea (which he further develops as the epistle progresses) that an individual is justified by faith and that this will happen in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Thus, it is only through an accurate reading of Romans that we are able to acquire greater insight into what it was that Paul actually meant; indeed, it reveals God's grace as the vehicle through which His favour came, and faith as the means whereby all men are able to appropriate this favour.

In this way Romans further demonstrates the connection between the later New Testament writings and the Gospels, as it provides an overview of the extension of Jesus' ministry into the Post-Resurrection era by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, to reinforce his thesis, Paul declares Romans as, 'εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ' (cf. Rom. 1.1). The term εὐαγγέλιον (gospel) in Romans 1.17 is definitely a Pauline word (60 times in Paul

²⁶² The issue regarding one's ethnic origin as a pre-requisite to membership of the community of God's people will be discussed in detail, later in this thesis.

²⁶³ Johan C. Beker, 'The Faithfulness of God and the Priority of Israel in Paul's Letter to the Romans', in *The Romans Debate* (ed. Karl P. Donfried; St Paul, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1977), p. 330.

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out of 76 New Testament occurrences), appearing nine times in Romans and Philippians which is the most of any of the books.²⁶⁴ It is fair to say, then, that the content of the various New Testament books are in harmony over the importance of this word.

Having said that, Romans 1.16-17 is also the foundation of the epistle upon which Paul builds his thesis, and so it is clear that from his perspective, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way to God. In view of this, Morris indicates that ‘for Paul to confirm his doctrine of Justification and Sanctification, he refers to the Old Testament as sacred Scriptures and to a Gospel promised in the Holy Scriptures...implying that Jews are seen as God’s chosen people (cf. Rom. 1.1-2).’²⁶⁵

Morris, however, cautions with regard to Paul: ‘How can he establish a system of salvation for Gentiles on the basis of the Scripture that gives a special place to Jews? If the place of the Jews as set forth in the Old Testament does not agree with the justification Paul sees in the Old Testament, then his position can scarcely stand.’²⁶⁶ For this reason, for Nanos, ‘an approach to Romans must take into account the context of Paul’s apostolic ministry in the light of his two-step missionary pattern: “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (cf. Rom. 1.16; 2.10).’²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Morris, *Romans*, p. 40.

²⁶⁵ Morris, *Romans*, p. 343.

²⁶⁶ Morris, *Romans*, p. 343.

²⁶⁷ Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 239.

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Paul's "custom" of going to the synagogue upon his arrival in a city he has not preached in previously, before he would turn to preach to the Gentiles in that location, is captured in this phrase, which operates throughout Paul's argument in Romans, and along the same line traced by Luke in Acts 17.1-2.²⁶⁸ Consequently, Nanos has painted Paul's intentions toward Rome on the same canvas as Luke, and somewhat at odds with the patterns as it is usually traced in Romans. He says, 'I have found Paul to be a champion of the restoration of Israel first (not its rejection) before the Gentile mission commenced, even as did Luke. He pinpoints his arguments saying that, Israel continued to be Paul's unmistakable priority in spite of his apostleship to the Gentiles.'²⁶⁹

But be this as it may, both the Old and New Testament affirm a place for the Gentiles within the context of God's wider eschatological intentions. Consequently, for Paul it would seem that salvation was intended, first for the Jew, and then for the Gentile (cf. Rom. 1.16). The Gospels underpin this viewpoint (cf. Mk 7.24-30). For example, Romans 1.16-17 stands in parallel with John 1.11-13 in the sense that when Jesus came to his own people they did not receive him.

However, those who did receive him—whether Jew or Gentile—were nevertheless the ones who actually experienced a spiritual rebirth, that is, they were born not merely physically, or from a fleshly impulse, but were rather born spiritually by the power of God on account of their faith (cf. Jn 1.11-13; 3.5-8). Membership of the

²⁶⁸ Nanos, *Mystery*, p. 239.

²⁶⁹ Nanos, *Mystery*, p. 240.

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community of God's people is not, and never has been, reckoned on account of an individual's ethnic origin, with both the Old and New Testament accounts tending to support this understanding (cf. Josh. 2.1; Ruth 1.16; 2 Kgs. 5.17; Mk 5.24-29; Jn 4.6-41; Rom. 5.1; 11.11-24; Eph. 2.8-9).

4.3. The unrighteousness of all mankind

Accordingly, Jewish elect status was fundamentally misunderstood in that it prevented the Jews from putting into practice a faith based upon God's mercy, and effectively psychologically divorced them from the responsibilities that came as part and parcel of that election. In this way, and under the terms of Israel's election with specific reference to successful entry and longevity in the land of Canaan, for example, the Hebrews were required not only to obey the Law of Yahweh, but were additionally required to love Him with all their heart. It was also out of this sincere love for God that their obedience was understood to flow (e.g. Deut. 10.12-13; 11.1, 13-15, 22-25; 30.15-16).²⁷⁰ For Routledge, this concept is implicit within the meaning of the Hebrew word *hesed*, which is best defined by him as 'faithful and loyal conduct within the context of a relationship.'²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ David H. Rigby, 'Comfort My People: A Typological Study of the Deutero-Isaian Themes of The Servant, Second Exodus and Universalism' (Unpublished M.Th. Dissertation, Bangor University, 2006), p. 10.

²⁷¹ Routledge, *Hesed as Obligation*, pp. 179-196. See also D.A. Baer and R.P. Gordon, 'The use of the root word $\tau\omicron\eta\kappa$ and its Cognates', in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis II* (ed. W.A. Van Gemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), pp. 211-218.

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However, as far as Israel was concerned, the reciprocal devotion and faithfulness that one would expect within the context of a loving and committed relationship (cf. Deut. 6.4-9; 10.12-13; 11.1, 13, 22-23; Josh. 22.5; Isa. 54.5; Jer. 2.2, 3.14), had become very one-sided (cf. 1 Sam. 8.6-7; Jer. 3.20; 31.32; Ezek. 16.30-32), and as a result, the forfeiture of the land in this context is to be understood as a natural outworking of the effects of this rejection. Indeed, under the terms of their election, it would be true to say that the land was not theirs by right, but by grace, and this entitlement effectively remained only on the basis of their obedience to the terms of that election (cf. Gen. 12.7; 13.14-17; Lev. 18.24-28; 20.22-26; Deut. 9.1-6; 28.15ff.).²⁷²

Indeed, for Paul, the corollary is that this new faith is one which is now able to be experienced by the Gentiles; it is a continuation and completion of the Hebrew faith, and it connects both Jew and Gentile in the widest sense, with God's faithfulness and compassion in Christ (cf. Rom. 1.16-17; 3.21-31; 4.12, 16; 9.1-29; 10.5-21; 11.20-32; 15.4-12; Col. 3.11).²⁷³

According to Paul, the object of faith is Christ whom the Gentiles received and whom Israel partly refused to accept. Wright reminds, 'The phrase "*the righteousness of God*" occurs eight times in Paul's letters, seven of which are in the letter to the

²⁷² Ronald E. Clements, *Old Testament Theology* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1978), p. 94.

²⁷³ Rigby, *Comfort*, pp. 10-12.

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Romans.²⁷⁴ Wright feels that the meaning of this phrase has been confused within the various translations. For him:

It is obvious to readers of the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures that *the righteousness of God* would have one meaning: God's own faithfulness to His promises, to the covenant (Isa. 40-55; Dan. 9). God has made promises; Israel can trust those promises. God's righteousness is thus cognate to his trustworthiness on the one hand and Israel's salvation on the other. And at the heart of that picture in Isaiah there stands, of course, the strange figure of the suffering servant through whom God's righteous purpose is finally accomplished.²⁷⁵

In view of this, for Moo, Paul shows in simple terms how and why the Gospel is God's saving power to everyone who believes. For Moo, it is effected purely and simply on the basis of faith (cf. Rom. 1.17).²⁷⁶ No matter which way you consider it, 'verse 17 is the grace of God being revealed...the verb translated "is being revealed" is an important biblical term, meaning originally, "uncover".²⁷⁷ In other words, it discloses the various aspects and elements of God's redemptive plan. Thus The phrase, 'ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν' in Romans 1.17 is best interpreted as a reference to the growing faith among Gentile Christians, as evidence of God's righteousness is being revealed is a Greek idiom that, with abstract nouns, express 'increase, progression, or movement from a lower to a high state.'²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Wright, *What Saint Paul*, p. 96.

²⁷⁵ Wright, *What Saint Paul*, p. 96.

²⁷⁶ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 69

²⁷⁷ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 69.

²⁷⁸ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 69.

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Biblical antecedents for the phrase *δικαιοσύνη γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται*, (cf. Ps. 98.2; Isa. 51.4-8) include the nations in God's actions on behalf of Israel.²⁷⁹ The phrase therefore refers to the growing number of Gentile believers. Indeed, the Gentile focus dominates Romans 1.8-17. Gentile faith proves that God's eschatological salvation has indeed arrived, hence, 'the Gospel is then efficacious to everyone, without distinction between Jew and Gentile, Greek or non-Greek, wise or foolish.'²⁸⁰ Therefore, in Paul's viewpoint, the Gospel is not a truth among other truths but, 'Rather, it sets a question – mark against all "truths".'²⁸¹

Having introduced the reasons by which he writes the letter, Paul declares why he has done so. For him, humanity has consequently gone astray, and have thus fallen short of God's grace (cf. Rom. 3.23). As Wright says:

Paul has made it plain that not only is the Gentile world out of touch with its creator and therefore under God's judgment, but also the Jews, and despite having been given the covenant through which God had intended to redeem the world, they remained in exile, living in sin. So Israel had joined the Gentile world in the defendant's chair in the Law-court of God. Through the faithfulness of Jesus, God is Himself righteous, for He has

²⁷⁹ Please see, for example, Isaiah 52.10, 53.1 and 56.1, which also links the concepts of righteousness and salvation together within the context of a spiritual relocation, from estrangement to acceptance and favour.

²⁸⁰ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (The Crossway Classical Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: A Division of Good News Publisher, 1993), p. 28.

²⁸¹ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 35.

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fulfilled His covenant; He has dealt with sin and vindicated the helpless: 'He is the justifier of the one who has faith.'²⁸²

This points to a kind of spiritual illness (cf. Rom. 1.18; 3.20-21), and Romans 5 provides the remedy in order to cure it, along with Romans 6–8, implying the resulting condition of the successful treatment. So, according to Paul, this illness symbolises the universality of sin which needs to be dealt with, and the treatment results in righteousness as a product of the spiritual healing provided by the justification.

Having said that, the wrath of God:

... stands in obvious antithesis to the "righteousness of God" (cf. Rom.1.18) since in verse 17 ... this fact of antithesis shows unmistakably, if any confirmation were needed, that the "δικαιοσύνη γὰρ Θεοῦ" (v.17) is not the attribute of justice but the righteousness provided in the Gospel to meet the need of which the wrath of God is the manifestation, but it is the holy revulsion of God's being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness.²⁸³

Clearly, Romans 1.18-32 was addressed to the Gentiles in a plural sense, because Paul outlines the general condition of all humanity—and especially that of the Gentiles—as one of failure toward God. As a result, this passage is more appropriately applied to those outside Israel. However, when Paul refers to his own people, he does so in the second person of the singular "you", which Paul uses to make his accusation (cf. Rom. 2.1-5, 17-29).

²⁸² Venema, Cornelius P., 'N.T. Wright on Romans 5:12-21 and Justification: A Case Study in Exegesis, Theological Method and the "New Perspective on Paul"', *Mid America Journal of Theology* 16 (2005), p. 31.

²⁸³ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), p. 35.

4.4. The fruits of righteousness

‘Justification is the theme of the epistle, and in these two verses the apostle is giving us an introductory summary of his leading thesis.’²⁸⁴ Using Abraham’s example of being justified by faith, Paul understands, if, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God ... Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (cf. Rom. 4.2-3). As such, Paul understands this side of justification as something that might be called positive accreditation in that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (cf. Gal. 3.6-7).

In conclusion, righteousness is that which is required from men to be in the right standing before God (cf. Deut. 6.25). This is exactly the type of righteousness that Abraham had when it was credited to him by God. In Paul’s theology, Jesus is the culmination of the law—one might also say he *is* the Law—and if one is in Christ then he has fulfilled the law because Christ is the end of the law as a way of attaining righteousness (cf. Rom. 3.24; Tit. 3.7). That is why for Paul, both Jews and Gentiles must repent and believe in Christ (cf. Rom. 10.1-13). Because Abraham was counted as righteous before the law came into force, his righteousness did not come through obedience to that law but was rather an act of grace, without any form of reference to legal obedience. The negative side of justification is exemplified in the person of King David, who sinned against God, but whose sin was not taken into account (cf. Rom. 4.3, 6-8).

²⁸⁴ Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 35.

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In view of this, for Hodge, 'righteousness cannot be understood here to refer to a divine attribute such as uprightness, justice, goodness or truthfulness is obvious, because it is a righteousness that is by faith'.²⁸⁵ There is clearly a correspondence within Paul's thinking on this issue, and elements of this are evidenced within the interaction that exists between Romans and Galatians for example. In Paul's theology, Jews and Gentiles suffer from the same condition: no one is righteous (cf. Rom. 4.9). Above all, Romans underpins the idea that salvation is offered through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In it, Paul argues that all persons are guilty of sin and are therefore accountable to God. It is only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that sinners can attain salvation.

Therefore, God is both just and the one who justifies. In response to God's free, sovereign and graceful action of salvation, humanity can be justified by faith. Paul uses the example of Abraham, David, and others to demonstrate that it is by faith that humanity can be seen as righteous before God. It is in this sense that Thompson's comments, as referred to above, are to be understood; the faithful Old Testament characters were accepted only by virtue of God's grace and nothing more, that is, they were the recipients of God's unmerited favour. 'They did not know anything about Jesus, yet they were accepted by grace. Relating to God by faith has always been crucial; what changed with the coming of Christ is the content or precise object of that faith'²⁸⁶ (cf. Gal. 3.6-9; Rom.4).

²⁸⁵ Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle*, p. 27.

²⁸⁶ Bird, *The New Perspective*, p. 6.

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In turn, the Epistle to the Galatians, for example, represents a practical response to the incompatibility of legalistic conformity²⁸⁷ when considered against the backdrop of a righteousness that comes by faith (cf. also Rom. 3.21-31). For Dodd, '[Paul] does not think of right conduct either as conformity with a code or as the adding of virtue to virtue in a discipline of self-culture. It is *the harvest of the Spirit*.'²⁸⁸ In this way, 'a sundered fellowship' existed between those who demanded circumcision and Sabbath, and those who did not. Judaizers argued that Paul was not a "real" apostle, claiming that in order to sugar-coat the gospel, he had removed legal requirements. Paul replies by reassuring his apostolic authority, and explains how legal requirements pervert the gospel. This is where *sola fide*, the fundamental of Christianity, is introduced.

It would seem that Paul is stunned by the Galatians' present situation, and is at a loss to understand why after hearing the gospel they should want to return to Judaic

²⁸⁷ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 441. However, it is noted that that for Paul, a certain amount of linguistic overlapping is evident with regard to his reference to the Law and the Spirit. For Sanders, for example, this means that, 'there is no neat division in Paul's thought between 'mystical' and 'juridical''. This for him does not necessarily imply an interchangeably, but merely a difference in emphasis, whereas for Wright this difference in emphasis is essentially viewed as Paul's reinterpretation of his Judaic heritage from a different perspective. The issue connected with the idea of Law, legalism, and Jewish nationalism has been dealt with in greater detail in the previous section. Please see N.T. Wright, *Climax*, p. 88.

²⁸⁸ Charles H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Fontana Books, 1959), p. 197. Italics author's own.

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legalism as though this was in some way a pre-requisite to Christian faith, and especially where this involved the Gentile believers (cf. Gal. 4.10; 5.2-6). Based on this, I propose that Romans can be considered an immediate response to the problems experienced by the Galatians. Indeed, it further unpacks these very real issues and in this way deals with the issue of how a person might be justified through faith alone²⁸⁹ (cf. Rom. 5.1-8), thus representing a radical departure from traditional and historic norms—a fact that Martin Luther, for example, came to experience during the Reformation and which is expressed in the maxim: ‘Peace if possible, but truth at any cost.’²⁹⁰

In other words, Romans functions as Paul’s counter-argument against the Jewish tendency to consider themselves as Abraham’s sons based upon their genealogical background and historic elect status under Moses. This particular Jewish argument based itself upon the claims of Genesis 17, where God promised blessings to Abraham and his descendants. In their view, all proselytes to Judaism were thus bound by the Mosaic law to become circumcised, or, as Paul states, a member of the circumcision group (cf. Gen. 17.11; Gal. 2.12). But in actual fact, for Paul, this New Testament

²⁸⁹ Mark Seifrid, ‘Blind Alleys in the Controversy’, pp. 77-81.

²⁹⁰ Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), p. 162. In the Church of Rome, where the dominant Gentiles moved further and further away from what they might perceive to be foolish remnants of Judaism, such as rules about food and holy days, while the returning Jewish Christians, keenly sensitive of their minority status, insist even more strongly on adherence to their ancestral customs.

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circumcision was not something that took place in a person's body at the hands of someone else, but was rather to be understood within the context of Christian belief. The circumcision that he refers to and understands, then, is one that takes place in an individual's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 2.28).

Thus the Jewish believers in Galatia had clearly lost sight of this and were embarking upon a course of a partial return to the law, and particularly with regard to the rite of circumcision. In addition, Paul advocates that Abraham corresponded to God's appeal to believe, and acceptance is thus granted on this basis (cf. Rom. 5.1).²⁹¹ In concluding his remarks, Paul makes appeal to the idea that humanity fundamentally divides itself into two camps and therefore, solidarities or races are found, in this section of the letter. All those who are in Adam are in solidarity with him in his fall and sin, but those who are in Jesus are in solidarity with him in his death and resurrection. Having outlined the way God in Christ justifies sinners, Paul goes on to the way the justified should live²⁹² (cf. 2 Cor. 13.4; Gal. 5.13).

4.5. Righteousness imparted: Sanctification

From Romans 6 to 8.39 onwards, Paul deals with the question of holiness. This section gives us an answer to the common idea that abstinence from sin was no longer something that was relevant, which stemmed from the mistaken understanding that God's grace far outweighed the effects of a sinful life. Paul, however, cautions against

²⁹¹ Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 192.

²⁹² Morris, *Romans*, p. 243.

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this and reminds us that we should not forget the fact that there are two inevitable outcomes which result from our union with Christ: in the first instance ‘the guilty has been removed by Jesus’ sacrificial death and the efficacious power of resurrection in a life of holiness; secondly, the death of Christ was the means by which sin was destroyed, and His burial the proof of the reality of his death.’²⁹³

However, Romans 6.1-14 represents the other side of the coin, dealing as it does with the human inclination toward sin and the folly of such tendencies. It reminds the believer not to abuse the grace which God offers, and with this, pragmatically, ‘Paul repudiates all such approaches with decision. He points out that grace liberates us from sin; it does not bring us firmly under its bondage.’²⁹⁴

Undoubtedly, the phrase ‘by no means’ is Paul’s ‘way of understanding that what he has just said is controversial and requires further elucidation to avoid possible misinterpretation.’²⁹⁵ From Paul’s perspective, God’s paternal love is shown through the lavishing of His undeserved grace upon humanity. In another words, even during the era of the law, God did not abandon His people or His purpose, but rather, on

²⁹³ Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. 245.

²⁹⁴ Morris, *Romans*, p. 244.

²⁹⁵ James G. Dunn, *Romans* (World Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), pp. 529-530.

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account of human failure, instigated the sacrificial system in order to typologically point the way forward to its completion in Jesus as the Messiah.²⁹⁶

To illustrate his argument, Paul uses the analogy of death and resurrection to symbolise the idea that once a person has undergone a true conversion, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that individual's sinful nature has been put to death (i.e. *crucified with Christ* cf. Gal 6.14) and has simultaneously, been raised up to newness of life by the power of the same Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 6.4). Indeed, if this has not happened, then a huge question mark remains over that individual's spiritual status (cf. Rom. 8.9). Consequently, 'Christians are represented as buried with Christ by baptism into his death, if they really died with Him; and if buried with him, it is not that they shall remain in the grave, as Christ arose from the dead, they should also rise.'²⁹⁷

4.6. Freedom from the Law's condemnation

Romans 7.1-6 opens up to us the possibility that the relationship which exists between a husband and wife can also be used as an illustrative picture to portray the link that exists between the Christian believer and the Old Testament law. Morris supports the view that Paul is referring to a literal relationship, and hence, the death of the husband thus leaves the woman free, if she so chooses, to marry again. In this way, on account of Jesus' death and the fulfilment of the law which His life represented, the believer's symbolic death with Christ through the new birth by the power of the Holy

²⁹⁶ Moo, *Romans*, p. 355.

²⁹⁷ Moo, *Romans*, p. 245.

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Spirit, thus sets him free from the requirements of the law (cf. Rom. 3.31; 7.1-3; Gal. 2.15-16).²⁹⁸

However, some on this issue (e.g. Barrett and Leenhardt), think that Paul is referring to the Torah but Wright points out that the husband in the illustration is not the Torah. He states, 'The key is to be found in the whole line of thought of the preceding chapters, particularly in 5.20 and 6.6. The former husband is the *παλαιος ανθρωπος*, the old 'you' which died in baptism, the self over which, because of the Torah condemnation of Adamic humanity, the Torah exercised a hold.'²⁹⁹

Thus Wright defines Romans 7.1-6 as having an allegorical interpretation. In this way, the old person dies (i.e. the sinful nature, or husband) leaving the real person (i.e. the spiritual, or wife) behind, and this for Wright clearly symbolises both the husband and wife figures in Paul's illustration. Consequently, in this case the wife is free to enter into another contract with another man, which for our purposes and Paul's is Jesus Christ, and this, through participation in his death and resurrection (cf. Rom. 7.4). In a spiritual sense, she has been enabled to die and rise again to newness of life.³⁰⁰

Dunn, at first glance, would appear to support Wright's view. For Dunn the imagery as portrayed by verses 6.18-22 is still part of Paul's thought which implies a connection

²⁹⁸ Morris, *Romans*, p. 271.

²⁹⁹ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 196.

³⁰⁰ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 196.

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between the law and sin, which was and still is the prevailing situation during the Adamic age within which all humanity lives, until such time as they are set free through Christ's death by way of the new birth experience which, for Paul, is a crucial step to make.³⁰¹

To an extent I agree with both Wright's and Dunn's proposition. However, I tend to favour that of Morris, because for him, 'it seems better to see the word as referring to an obvious axiom of political justice – that death clears all scores, and that a dead man can no longer be prosecuted or punished.'³⁰² In conclusion therefore, there are no longer any boundaries as both the symbolic bereaved husband and wife are free to start a new life, in another words, 'it is not only the dead man over whom the law has no authority; this is true of the living woman as well'.³⁰³ In Paul's view, everybody, regardless of the regulations imposed by the Old Testament law, is free to enter into a new relationship, that is, they are free to serve God under another law, for example, a law based on God's righteousness as opposed to that of carrying the burden of the Old Testament law (cf. Rom. 7.6).

³⁰¹ Dunn, *Romans*, p. 361. Clearly, Dunn now recognizes that in Romans 7.7-13 Paul integrates the story of Israel within the story of Adam and that Paul is thus indicating 'that Israel was bound up in the solidarity of human frailty and failure and was firmly caught in the nexus of sin and death as any Gentile.' See also Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, p. 99-100.

³⁰² Morris, *Romans*, p. 271

³⁰³ Morris, *Romans*, p. 271.

4.7. Οὐδὲν ἀρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

In Rom. 8.1-17, Paul takes the argument further: ‘what Paul is saying is that for those who not only forensically are in Christ Jesus the guilt of their sins has been removed by his death. However, and spiritually speaking, due to the sanctifying influence of his Spirit dominating their lives, there is now (=consequently) no condemnation’.³⁰⁴ The assertion of Paul—‘Οὐδὲν ἀρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ’—is closely connected to the main thrust of Paul’s previous reasoning, when taken as a unit (cf. Rom. 1.16, 17; 3.21, 24; 5.1,2, 6-8, 15-21; 7.6). The second half of the book and the verses following 7.6, for example, speak of the hope produced by the new life in Christ (cf. Rom 8.1b-17) representing Paul’s concluding thoughts upon Jesus’ sacrificial offering whereby everyone who believes will be justified.

Romans 8.18-27 refers to a future glory yet to come. It carries with it an eschatological emphasis which points forward to the completion of God’s purposes for humanity, and is fulfilled in Christ. In this sense, ‘the completion of eternal salvation, underpinned by God’s righteousness, may be rightly said to be in the atonement made by Jesus.’³⁰⁵ In Paul’s view, though the idea of a universal kingdom of God is depicted throughout the Old Testament, it is in the New Testament that it becomes evident, and

³⁰⁴ William Hendriksen, *Romans* (New Testamentary Commentary; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1980), p. 244.

³⁰⁵ David Petts, *Body Builders: Gifts to Make God’s People Grow* (Doncaster: Mattersey Hall, 2002), p. 168.

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reaches its climax in the life and ministry of Jesus (cf. Mt. 3.2; 4.17; Mk 1.15; Rom. 8.18-25, 37-39).

In Paul's view the proclamation of God's word is confirmed by way of signs and wonders (i.e. *χαρισμαθα*), and thus authenticates the invasion of the Kingdom of Satan (cf. Jn 16.11; Col. 1.13; 2.15). It depicts the final victory over Satan and evil, forming the basis for an inevitable eschatological consummation (cf. Rev. 2.10).³⁰⁶ Paul (cf. Rom. 8.18-27) also clearly carries on with this line of thought, depicting as it does the eschatological conclusion to God's ultimate plan and the correlation of a believer's life within that overall framework.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, Pauline theology understands that if one has experienced the new birth, then one can also enjoy the certainty of salvation in the age to come. It is a biblical principle which is often referred to as *Eternal Security* within the context of evangelical Christian circles. At this stage Romans 8.38-39 is at its peak and reaches its final fulfilment. Pauline theology bases its claim on God's righteousness, which stands at the other end of the spectrum to that of Old Testament law. The Pauline expression, 'ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται' therefore implies reliance on God's provision to achieve divine salvation and it is therefore divided as follows:

Past (σώσαντος; past tense: Greek form that indicates a past), (cf. 2 Tim. 1.9).

³⁰⁶ George Wood, *Doctrinal Position of the AOG in the USA* (Lisbon: Bible Institute Translation Department, 1989), p. 2.

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Present (σωζομένοις: present tense), (cf. I Cor. 1.18).

Future (σωθησόμεθα: future tense), (cf. Rom. 5.9-10).

Accomplished (σεσωσμένοι: perfect tense), (cf. Eph. 2.8).³⁰⁷

In sum, throughout the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul has set out the revelation of God's righteousness which has been made in and through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and, more specifically, through his death, his resurrection, and the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁰⁸ As with anything else in all creation, Paul abandons specifics and settles for a sweeping generalization wide enough to cover everything else that exists. He does not say "will separate but shall be able to separate"; he is talking about power, and no created being is powerful alongside the creator. The love of God is, of course, God's love for us and not ours for Him. For Paul this love is explained in Christ Jesus; God's love cannot be experienced apart from Christ. The cross, and only the cross, shows what real, divine love is (cf. Rom. 5.8).

³⁰⁷ Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, *Romans to Revelation V* (Moody Commentary; Chicago: Baptist Press, 1988), pp. 167-168.

³⁰⁸ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 235.

Chapter Five: Paul's Intended Agenda

5.1. Introduction

At this stage we should consider Paul's statement at Romans 9.2-3 alongside those views of scholarship which believe that Paul intended it as a type of postscript to what he said in the preceding chapters. Thus, in order to clarify these issues, they will be considered in direct relation to what Paul has to say. But what exactly is Paul lamenting? He does not tell us what Israel's problem is in the opening of this section. It is simply assumed that the readers understand why Paul would have unceasing grief for his 'brothers and sisters, [his] kin according to the flesh, who are Israelites, whose is the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises, whose are the fathers and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh' (cf. Rom. 9.3-5).

Firstly, there are several reasons behind Paul's passionate exhortation. The problems which surround this section of Romans find their origins within the apparent change of direction from Romans 8 and the overall theme of Romans 9 through to 11.36. As we have already stated, the basic thesis of Romans is the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles together forming the wider community of God's people. Secondly, I shall consider its overall position and the role that it plays within the wider context of the Epistle to the Romans as a whole and finally, I shall consider the questions which surround Paul's statements within this section.

5.2. The continuity of chapters 9–11 with chapters 1–8

Morris proposes, 'the first eleven chapters of Romans are a unity, and it is important. Paul is not here proceeding to a new and unrelated subject. These three chapters are part of the way he makes plain how God in fact saves people.'³⁰⁹ When commenting on these chapters, Morris states, 'it is not easy to see them as no more than an appendix to what has gone before,' and, 'some scholars hold the basic aim of the letter is to deal with the problem of relationship of Jews and Gentiles in the Church of Rome.'³¹⁰

Consequently, some scholars understand Rom. 9–11 as the epitome of Paul's thesis in Romans. For Morris, however, 'it is better not to see these difficult chapters as the heart and the essence of what Paul is saying to the Romans.'³¹¹ Lloyd Jones on the other hand, regards 1–8 as 'the completion of Paul's statement of the doctrine of salvation,' and 9–11 as 'a kind of postscript'.³¹² By this, Lloyd Jones states that he does not believe in the theory that 9–11 represents a continuity of the subject matter contained within 1–8. Leenhardt takes the same position stating that with 9–11, 'the landscape of thought abruptly changes ... the question which is now going to be discussed seems to have no connection with the preceding themes.'³¹³

³⁰⁹ Morris, *Romans*, p. 344.

³¹⁰ Morris, *Romans*, p. 343.

³¹¹ Morris, *Romans*, p. 343.

³¹² Lloyd Jones as cited in Morris, *Romans*, p. 343, n

³¹³ Frans J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 241.

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Dodd presents yet another viewpoint. For him this section is, 'an old sermon, carried around by Paul, in case of need, and inserted here without relevance to the rest of the letter, which runs on from 8.39 to 12.1.'³¹⁴ Regarding Dodd's assumption, Wright concludes, 'if we are to avoid this – and many exegetes would now, rightly in my view, regard such a conclusion as a *reductio ad absurdum* – there are other opinions available.'³¹⁵ Wright believes that Romans 9–11 functions as the climax of the theological argument, and the bringing into focus of the practical aim. In his view, the whole of Romans 1–11 is an exposition of how God has been faithful, in Jesus Christ, to the promises he made to Abraham. This exposition must of necessity reach its climax in the historical survey of how these promises have worked out. We note the way in which Romans 9.6ff. begins in typically Jewish style with Abraham and works through to the prophets, before moving forward to Christ (cf. Rom. 10.4 and the mission of the Church—10.9ff.).³¹⁶

Wright concludes: 'it is only on the basis of whole of Romans 1–11 that the warning of 11.13ff. to Gentile Christians who are tempted to the arrogance of saying that Jews are cut out of the covenant family permanently – can be understood.'³¹⁷ Murray additionally corroborates Morris and Wright suggesting, 'it might seem that there is discontinuity in this portion of the epistle and its length appears to aggravate

³¹⁴ Charles Dodd, cited in Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, p. 232.

³¹⁵ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 232.

³¹⁶ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 234.

³¹⁷ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 235.

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the question raised.³¹⁸ However, he continues saying, 'it would only occur in the case of a failure to discern or realise the correlation that these sections have upon the thesis of the epistle.'³¹⁹

Dunn argues, 'it would not be possible to read the apparent change of direction from Chapter 8 to Chapter 9 as though 8.31-39 was the completion of the exposition, as though Paul, in an attitude of praise claimed victory, stopped dictating, and turned, after a pause, to a new, an afterthought to the main argument.'³²⁰ To complete his arguments, Dunn states, 'to hear the transition from Chapter 8 to Chapter 9 in this way would be to miss the underlying movement of thought which has determined the major thrust of the argument so far.'³²¹

Dunn wants us to understand that it is paramount to consider the context of the letter with regard to the idea 'that it is precisely the righteousness of God testified to by the law and prophets (cf. Rom. 3.21), the promise of God to and through Abraham (i.e. Chapter 4) into which the nations have entered.'³²² This underlines the idea of

³¹⁸ Murray, *The Epistle*, p. xii.

³¹⁹ Murray, *The Epistle*, p. xii. On this issue, Murray seems to support the continuity of the subject, which tends to go against the arguments of Lloyd Jones and Leenhardt. Please see Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 241 and Lloyd Jones in Morris, *Romans*, p. 343.

³²⁰ Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), pp. 529-530.

³²¹ Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), p. 530.

³²² Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), p. 530.

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Paul's mission into the Gentile world, in that throughout chapters 1–8, Paul outlines his understanding of what it means to be a member of the New Covenant community through the new birth, by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in a believer's life. In chapters 9–11, he then goes on to link this understanding into the idea of national Israel, as a representative group for wider humanity in terms of her historic experiences with God which, upon reflection for Paul, are interpreted in a typological way. The thesis of this is made quite clear throughout Romans 9, for example, as it serves as both the link and key to what follows in chapters 10–11.³²³

5.3. Why are chapters 9–11 a continuity of Romans chapters 1–8?

In my view, chapters 9–11 continue on from where chapter 8 leaves off in terms of God's sovereignty. Indeed, the two sections complement one another regarding God's original intention to reach the whole of humanity as opposed to a specific ethnic group. Because of this, I understand that the epistle as a whole, and this section in particular, has to be seen as a complete unit and not as two separate entities. For Haldane, 'Israel, more than any other nation, could have participated by birthright in the blessings

³²³ David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship between the Old and New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, rev. edn, 1991), pp. 194-195. See also Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutic Typos in Scripture* (Barrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1981), p. 268; Rigby, *Comfort*, pp. 10-12.

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contained in the Gospel, because they were direct descendants according to the flesh of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.³²⁴

He goes on, 'the rejection of the Messiah was the cause by which their rights and privileges promised to their forefathers by Covenant were forfeited; he directs us to Romans 10.16-17 in this regard.'³²⁵ Additionally, 'the Jews stumbled in consequence of their ignorance of the righteousness which God had provided in the fulfilment of His violated law, and of their vain attempt to establish righteousness on their own' (cf. Gal. 4.4-5; Heb. 4.2).³²⁶

Accordingly, with the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 15.16-18) in addition to the Jewish converts, Paul is able to show that the inclusion of both groups of people had been expressly foretold by the prophets (cf. Rom. 9.25-29; 10.19-21). Consequently, as we have considered above, certain scholars (e.g. Lloyd Jones and Leenhardt) regard Romans 9.2ff as a postscript to the letter as a whole which has found itself within the main body of the epistle.

Also, according to Donfried, 'other scholars of a former generation (notably C.H. Dodd) regarded this section of Romans as something of a digression, i.e. less than

³²⁴ Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), p. 438.

³²⁵ Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle*, p. 439.

³²⁶ Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle*, p. 438.

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central to the overall argument, however, more recent commentators have generally come to the view that it is in fact integral and important to the whole letter.³²⁷ Having said that, the overall thrust of this section is consistent with the overall thrust of the preceding chapter and this would tend to suggest that it was actually meant to be regarded as forming part of the original argument and, as such, provides an essential link between chapters 1–8 and 9–11.

On one hand, I agree with those who suggest that a hiatus would exist if Romans 9.2ff. were not situated where it is but on the other hand, its inclusion does not adversely affect Romans' purpose in dealing with both the Jewish and Gentile convert question. In view of this, I propose that there is no need to make Romans 9–11 an exclusive section which stands on its own merit in isolation from chapters 1–8.

³²⁷ Karl P. Donfried, *The Romans Debate*, p. 328.

Chapter Six: The Nation of Israel and the Christian Church

6.1. Introduction

Continuing on from the previous reasoning, we saw that many have been uneasy about the teaching of chapters 9–11 and some have felt that they are an appendage to chapters 1–8. I concluded that they are not an appendage but that they complement one another. It shows how the eschatological thrust which becomes so clear in Romans 8 is developed in the chapters preceding it, especially chapter 11. Paul is saying that the role of Israel is not to be ignored. Yes, Israel has spurned their Messiah but all this was part of God's plan to make room for the non-Jew. There will also be an eventual or eschatological manifestation of the sonship of those who appear to have been cast aside during the present epoch. However, God's plan regarding sonship is not accomplished fully in the present and is not limited to those who are presently members of the Christian Church.

Israel as the collective 'sons' or people of God will also participate in the manifestation of the 'sons of God' at the *eschaton*. It must be remembered that in Exodus 4.22b and 23, Israel is called God's son. So it is not just the redeemed from the New Testament epoch but the covenant people of the Old Testament who qualify for the full adoption mentioned in chapter 8 of Romans, and the revelation of the sons of God (cf. Rom. 8:19) should not be limited to the members of the Church alone.

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In the same way that there is a change in the way we understand sonship now for the Christian, so too the status of sons will change for the Jew due to the *parousia*. If these same Jews believe in the Messiah at his coming, they too will enter into the full inheritance of the sons of God. The manifestation of the sons of God in Romans 8 is, then, complementary to this mystery being revealed in Israel. As mentioned earlier, this underlines that there are stages in the unfolding of the *eschaton*. This will be the subject of our next discussion.

6.2. Paul's statement

To begin with, Paul hypothetically expresses a desire to be cut off from Christ for the sake of his brothers. Biblically speaking, I see three reasons why he would make such a remark (cf. Rom. 9.2ff.). The reasons for this find their origins within Acts 22, for example, and relate to his *personal* background, conversion and ministry. Paul was a Jew and a Roman citizen who under the tutelage of Gamaliel was thoroughly trained in and acquainted with Old Testament law (cf. Acts 22.1). In his generation there would be very few people who would be more capable than him of writing a doctrinal thesis such as Romans.

Secondly, his conversion to Christianity occurred because of a dynamic personal experience (cf. Acts 22.6-16) and so, beside his solid knowledge of the Old Testament, Paul's arguments are based upon experience rather than merely ideas, or simply as a result of his theoretical knowledge. With regard to his ministry, God's call upon his life had a very specific agenda—to become an Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 22.21).

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Despite this, Paul remained loyal to and passionate about his Jewish heritage, and this was reflected in his custom of always going to the Jewish place of prayer as soon as he arrived at a new place (cf. Acts 16.13). For him, this was regarded as an opportunity to explain to the Jews how Jesus was the Messianic deliverer for whom they had all been waiting. However his experiences among his Jewish brothers were not all that he would have expected—an experience which became the deciding factor in his ministry among the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 1.16-17).

Having said this, most of his early and initial converts came from his Jewish audience. Paul's reference to his being 'cut off' for the sake of the Jewish people (cf. Rom. 11.1-2) demonstrates the fact that he remained passionate about his ancestral origins and that he was not merely an uncommitted bystander but was rather a man for whom the eternal destiny of the Jewish people was something very close to his heart. Noticeably, each of chapters 9, 10 and 11 begins with a personal statement by Paul, in which he identifies himself with the people of Israel and expresses his profound concern for them. To him Israel's unbelief is far more than an intellectual problem. He writes of the sorrow and anguish he feels over them (cf. Rom. 9.1ff.), of his prayerful longing for their salvation (cf. Rom. 10.1), and of his conviction that God has not rejected them (cf. Rom. 11.1ff.).

Wright notes that Romans 7.7-25, for example, appears to offer evidence in support of this claim, 'Paul looks at "his flesh" in rebellion against the Gospel, and in

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himself (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ) he identifies with them'.³²⁸ This was so even though apparently, he does not explicitly state what caused this. He does, however, state that he has great *sorrow* (λύπη) and unceasing *anguish* (ὀδύνη), terminology which warrants a certain amount of explanation for Morris: '[it] is important to distinguish between λύπη and ὀδύνη in this context, but unceasing may indicate the endless duration of the pain, in fact, the term ὀδύνη denotes physical pain and 'never quite loses its physical association.'³²⁹

However, it seems clear that with regard to this issue, one cannot simply confine Paul's anguish and sorrow as if these terms just involve a physical pain; Paul's connection to the Jewish race went far deeper than a superficial association, forming the basis upon which much of his ministry and understanding was clearly founded. The use of both terms in tandem clearly emphasises Paul's deep discomfort at the plight of his nation. I would suggest that this discomfort finds its basis in the spiritual connection that Paul had with the Jewish people, which reflected itself in various physical emotions.

The Greek term ἀνάθεμα means 'bearing the curse of God,'³³⁰ and in this way, it would appear that Paul's choice of words is significant. The use of such a phrase and the implied exaggeration which it carries shows that Paul is using a certain amount of

³²⁸ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 237.

³²⁹ Morris, *Romans*, p. 346.

³³⁰ Morris, *Romans*, p. 347.

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hyperbole in order to make his point. In Paul's view, paradoxically, a true believer could never be cut off from Christ and even though Paul was sincere, he knew the impossibility of such a request being fulfilled (cf. Rom. 8.37-39; cf. Rom. 9.1). Moreover, according to Morris, nothing in the Greek language corresponds to the idea of being cut off.³³¹ This sheds a little more light onto the assertion made by Paul and his apparent contradictory statement. As Morris writes, '[Paul] simply says "accursed from Christ". He uses the preposition ἀπό, which here clearly denotes separation, an un-classical use which denotes alienation.'³³²

Similarly, Ogilvie continues Morris' argument. He understands Paul's comments within the same context as those uttered by Moses to the Jewish people (cf. Ex. 32.32).³³³ Bruce, however, though expressing similar sentiments, is slightly less dogmatic: 'but whereas Moses refuses to survive if his people perish, Paul could almost welcome perdition for himself if it meant salvation for Israel.'³³⁴ Clearly, this school of thought reads quite a lot into Paul's remarks. Whether the comments of Ogilvie and Bruce are a true reflection of what was actually in Paul's mind at the time, given their implication, is quite another matter, and it would appear that on this issue, they may

³³¹ Morris, *Romans*, p. 347.

³³² Morris, *Romans*, p. 347

³³³ Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Communicator's Commentary: Romans*, Communicator's Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), p. 185.

³³⁴ Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and a Commentary* (Leicester: Inter Varsity, 1977), p. 185.

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have gone a little too far. As such, I am forced to disagree with them in this regard because these sentiments stand over against Paul's other remarks at Romans 8.37-39, for example.

Consequently, I must assume a position that lies somewhere between both points of view. In other words, although I understand Paul's feelings for his brethren, and think he is being sincere, I would not draw from them the same conclusions as do Ogilvie and Bruce.³³⁵ Certainly, Paul was not putting his personal salvation at risk, but was rather over-expressing a desire in order to make his theological point. This now leads us onto the questions that focus upon Romans 9.4 to 11.36.

6.3. Romans 9.4–11.36

Admittedly, this section (i.e. Romans 9.4–11.36) can by no means do justice to Paul's three chapters, written with so much anguish, hope, and faith. Thus we arrive at Paul's fundamental theological problem: how to hold together the two dispensations—one being God's election of Israel and his gift to them of the law, the other his offer of salvation to those who have faith in Christ. The election of Israel poses an even harder problem than did the law. In the introductory section above, we saw how Paul itemizes the signs of God's favour (cf. Rom. 9.1-3), hence the link between 9.1-3 and 9.4 to 11.36.

³³⁵ Haldane, *The Exposition of the Epistle*, p. 439.

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Generally speaking, Romans 9.4 to 11.36 is the most controversial section of the epistle, and as such, has been a matter of debate and discussion among scholars. A balanced approach to this section therefore depends on many issues, differing schools of thought, eschatological viewpoints and so on. The main thrust of this section focuses upon God's Sovereign ability to choose, and within this context, 'the exposition is developed step by step with claim regarding God's saving purpose as revealed in His word having a two-sided character which builds up to the solution of the problem.'³³⁶ Throughout this section it is noticeable that, 'the outworking of this in the first instance is a fulfilment of the promise in Gentiles as well as Jews, in a Jewish remnant as well Gentiles (cf. Rom. 9.24-29).'³³⁷

This consequently represents a kind of 'twofold response to God's word – an Israel which has missed the way (cf. Rom. 9.30-10.5, 18-21), and Gentiles who have responded in faith (cf. Rom. 9.30, 10.6-17).'³³⁸ In this way, it appears that only a remnant remains (cf. Rom. 11.1-6), and the rest who rejected the offer of salvation as a gift become, as a result, hardened to the message of grace, from which it is very difficult to repent (cf. Rom. 11.7-10). It is clear that the fall of the Hebrew nation, though lamentable, was for Paul, an essential factor in assuring that the gospel message was taken to the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11.11-16), but it also serves as a stark warning to Gentiles lest they make a similar mistake (cf. Rom. 11.17-24).

³³⁶ Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), p. 518.

³³⁷ Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), p. 51

³³⁸ Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), p. 518.

6.4. Grace not race

In Romans 9.6b, Paul States, 'not all of those of Israel are Israel'. By this remark, he appears to infer that there is a distinction to be made within the group of people commonly referred to as 'Israel' and this distinction hinges upon the difference between those who are Jews by way of natural descent, and those who have received the Spirit of Christ (cf. Rom. 8.9b; 9.6-33).

In Paul's mind, contrary to Jewish tradition, God has not specially favoured any particular ethnic group of people and this is because all humanity is important to Him: 'there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave or freeman, but Christ is all things in all' (cf. Col. 3.11). He goes on, 'but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart; in spirit and not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.' (cf. Rom. 2.28-29 [NKJV]). In fact, 'the depiction of Gentiles who 'do what the law requires', because it is written on their hearts shows that, no superiority claim of Jews against Gentiles can be correct' (cf. Rom. 2.14-15).³³⁹ One can say that if Abraham's faith is not in their hearts, it will be no advantage that Abraham's blood runs in their veins.

Indeed, an overview of Romans 9.6-16 shows us that genealogical descent from Abraham is simply not enough. Morris declares: 'Paul develops his arguments with reference to the immediate descendants of Abraham. Not all who are Abraham's seed are true descendants, the recipients of the promises. Unmistakably, Paul is showing

³³⁹ Jewett, 'Romans', p. 91.

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that more than physical descent from Abraham is required if one would inherit the promises.³⁴⁰ For Morris, 'πάντες τέκνα will refer to children of Abraham, not, as some suggest, to children of God.'³⁴¹

6.5. The right relationship

According to Pauline theology, God is the judge, and as such, it is He who determines who is or who is not a member of the people of God, and this is irrespective of whether or not such an individual is a Jew or Gentile (cf. Rom. 9.22-26; 10.20). There is, therefore, a sense in which all the people of the world are the objects of God's love (cf. Jn 3.16). The expression 'whoever' in John 3.16 expresses choice on the individual's part and at the same time indicates that various benefits and privileges accompany the invitation, if it is accepted. The text indicates the consequences of either believing or rejecting, of enjoying eternal life or perishing eternally and it deals with arguments connected to predestination which holds that some are born for salvation, while others are born and destined to face eternal condemnation.³⁴²

In short, all were in the same lost condition, and for all of them Christ died and rose again. Jews had to discover that they were as much in Adam as everyone else and equally in need of salvation by grace. God has not predestined some to be saved and

³⁴⁰ Morris, *Romans*, p. 353.

³⁴¹ Morris, *Romans*, p. 353.

³⁴² Eddie J. Fernandes, *From Chaos to Christ-Likeness* (Lisbon: Self-published, copyright Eddie F. Fernandes, 2009), p. 135.

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others to be lost; instead he has proclaimed the gospel to all, so that whoever believes may come to Christ and be saved. All men have freedom to choose or refuse to be grafted into Christ, but only those who manifest the obedience of faith will be saved (cf. Rom. 16:26). This is the crucial point made in Romans 11:23: Jews can be grafted in “if they do not persist in unbelief.” All who believe are the elect who are chosen not in themselves, but in him (cf. Eph. 1:11). They are predestined to be conformed to the image of God's dear son (cf. Rom. 8:29) because they are made partakers of the same nature—holy because he is holy. Only such a family of Jews and Gentiles made new in Christ would fulfill all the aspects of the promises God made to Abraham (cf. Rom. 4:18).

In biblical terms, God loves because it is His nature to love. However, there is a sense in which those who are His people are especially beloved, and this is the theme of Romans 9:25. The perfect tense ἠγαπημένην indicates a continuing state; the love of God is not a transitory phenomenon.³⁴³ It is a fundamental understanding within Romans that God acts in mercy. Again, this mercy does not depend upon ethnic or racial status, but rather upon His divine nature (cf. Rom. 10:13). Lineage cannot guarantee election; nor does election presuppose righteousness; but God's election is, rather, a free act of mercy. If either lineal descent or ethical performance could guarantee election, then God's choice would not be free and would not be an act of mercy.

³⁴³ Morris, *Romans*, p. 370 n.119.

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In view of this, the Letter to the Romans is peremptory in tone and apostate Israel is not linked to the promises. Morris asserts, 'from the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God Paul turns to passages which speak of the exclusion of all but a remnant of Israel.'³⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, most of the Jews of the day did not believe in Christ, and this led Paul's countryman to raise fundamental questions concerning Jesus' claims to Messiahship: 'If Jesus were the Christ, would not the people of God accept Him?'³⁴⁵

As seen, the biblical precedent offers us a basis from which we become aware that there is a tensional relationship existing between Paul's arguments, and the claims of Jesus in the Gospels. However, whilst Paul's arguments base their claims on prophetic antecedents, Jesus interprets His rejection within the framework of the ancient enmity that exists between good and evil (cf. Isa. 10.22-23; Jn 8.31-47; 12.39-40; Rom. 9.27). Nevertheless, both interpretations work together because in both cases stubbornness and spiritual ignorance is seen as the cause of this rejection (cf. Rom. 10.2-3). On the one hand, the consulting of the Scriptures could resolve the Jew's spiritual hurdles (cf. Jn 5.39) whilst on the other, a denying of a self-righteousness based on ownership of the law and election, could be replaced by a righteousness that is based on faith (cf. Rom. 10.3).

The Jews refused to accept the gospel as God's provision for their spiritual welfare. Truly, in Paul's view, people cannot invoke one they have not believed or heard of. But

³⁴⁴ Morris, *Romans*, p. 370.

³⁴⁵ Morris, *Romans*, p. 371.

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this is not the case with Israel. Everywhere where there was a Jewish community the gospel had been announced (cf. Rom. 10:18). This rejection of the gospel by the religious leaders and people is, according to Paul, a confirmation of their rebellion. God accordingly offers the good-news of salvation to the Gentiles who did not seek Him (cf. Rom. 10:20). In doing so, God has made the Jews jealous³⁴⁶ (cf. Rom. 10:19-21). For Bell, 'this jealousy takes on a negative meaning in 10:18: Israel is provoked to jealous anger. Israel knew that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well for the Jews (cf. Rom. 10:19). They knew this because Moses prophesied that Israel would be provoked to jealousy through a non-nation (cf. Deut. 32:21).'³⁴⁷

Consequently, we can see that the divine intention is not to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy in a purely negative sense, but is rather a reflection of God's mercy toward them. The provoking to jealousy served a pedagogical purpose in a similar way to how Jesus' parables were intended. The Jews were encouraged to consider these issues in light of their historical traditions and experiences, and thereby come to conclusions in line with God's salvific purposes for all humanity, and on this basis, to faith in Christ.

³⁴⁶ In Romans 10:19-21 Paul uses the collection of Old Testament texts to emphasize his point, so he is of the view that on the basis of Hebrew rejection, God chose to turn to the Gentiles with His offer of salvation and they would, in turn, accept it. This would effectively demonstrate to the Jewish nation the folly of their decision to reject the Lord, and upon observing Gentile acceptance, would be filled with envy.

³⁴⁷ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 154.

6.6. The climax of Paul's statement and intention

Up to this point the issue of Judaism, and by implication Israel, has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the areas of legalism, behaviour and moral conduct. However, it is increasingly difficult to ignore Paul's change of direction. As an observer, I have drawn attention to the apparent paradox existing in Paul's soteriology which implies that in spite of all their rejection, legalism, and stubbornness, and though it does not include or imply an overall redemption among this people,³⁴⁸ it seems to me that God is still at work to bring Israel back to Himself.

Thus we reach the climax of Paul's statement and intention as expressed in Romans 9.1-3. At this point one might ask: "who, or what, is the true Israel as depicted in Pauline thought?"; "where do these people find their origins?"; and "how are they to be recognised as such?" Since these questions are very important for the purposes of this thesis, we must consider all possible permutations that may arise during our investigations as we search for the answer to this complex, yet axiomatic question. It is to this multi-faceted problem that I shall now turn.

³⁴⁸ Morris, *Romans*, pp. 412-420. There is considerable agreement that *all Israel* does not mean 'each and every Israelite without exception'. The term refers to the nation as a whole. It is used in this way in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Sam. 12.1; 2 Chron. 12.1; Dan. 9.11). Particularly instructive is a passage in the Mishnah which assures the reader that 'all Israelites have a share in the world to come' (cf. Sanh. 10.1) and then goes on to give a considerable list of Israelites who 'have no share in the world to come', sometimes mentioning classes such as those who deny the resurrection of the dead and sometimes individuals such as Jeroboam and Balaam. Clearly 'all Israel' indicates the people as a whole, but it leaves open the possibility that there may be exceptions. So much is clear.

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Based on Paul's assertion in Romans 11.1-2a and 11.25-26, a vast majority of scholars hold the view that the Hebrew people were and still are, part of God's plan. However, some scholars do not hold the same viewpoint on this concept. Paul's assertion has brought about a very compelling case, and according to Nanos, 'the difficulty of this task becomes apparent when one look closely at the usual interpretations of what Paul means in asserting that "*all Israel will be saved*".'³⁴⁹ Sanders adds, 'the kernel of all this is the introduction of "all", which has created a range of interpretations; whom does Paul mean for his audience to understand by "*all Israel*"?'³⁵⁰ For the sake of clarity the term *mystery* will also be dealt with in this section.

6.7. Israel's restoration

First of all, it is noteworthy to say that the discussion here does not revolve around Israel's restoration; it generates little debate among scholars, being a common theme of Jewish eschatology (e.g. Deut. 30.1-5; Neh. 1.9; Jer. 23.3; 29.14; Ezek. 11.17; 36.24; Amos 9.11-15; Mic. 2.12; 4.6-7; Zeph. 3.19-20; Zech. 10.8-10; Sir. 36.11; Bar. 4.37; Macc. 2.18; *Jub.* 1.15, 22-25; 50.5; *Pss. Sol.* 17.26-28; IQSa 1.1-6; 4Q174 1.10-13).³⁵¹ The

³⁴⁹ Nanos, *The Mystery*, p. 256. Italics are my own.

³⁵⁰ See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 147-182, for a thorough discussion of R. Joshua's statement that 'All Israel – there is for them a share in the world to come' (literal translation from Sanders [p. 182] for *m. Sanh.* 10.1) and related statements in rabbinic literature (also pp. 367-383 for this theme in *Jubilees*).

³⁵¹ Please see Dale Allison, 'The Background of Romans 11.11-15 in Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature', *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 10 (1980) pp. 229-234; Dahl N. Alstrup, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early*

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crux of the problem lies in the nature and scope of this restoration and it was a contemporary Pauline issue. Was Paul proposing that some particular event or experience (i.e. a spiritual rebirth) would occur during his life time? Or was he simply implying that an eschatological event would occur in the far off and distant future? This is the place at which the controversy reaches its high point.

6.8. Interpretative background

At first the argument centres around the way in which much prophetic literature in both the Old and New Testament is interpreted. In the epilogue to his study of Israel, John Bright poses the question, 'Whither Israel's History?' He comments, 'It is on this question, fundamentally, that the Christian and his Jewish friend divide.'³⁵² In Bright's opinion it concerns the identity and destiny of God's people Israel related to eschatological viewpoints. There is a spectrum of opinion with all views, and strengths and weaknesses to each proposal which are outside the scope of this study. This section aims to examine whether the Scriptures teach a separate identity and destiny for Israel and the Christian Church, and whether or not there is ground for a Jewish hope for "chief nation" status in a Millennial Kingdom attested by the Scriptures.

Christian Mission (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1977), pp. 152-53; James Dunn, *Romans* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a), p. 681; Elizabeth Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9–11* (Atlanta GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1989), pp. 124-31, 162-63; David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 252-253.

³⁵² John Bright, *A History of Israel* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), p. 452.

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Millard J. Erickson summarizes the four ways to interpret biblical eschatology: 'the idealist, the futurist, the historicist and the preterist, and its various proponents fall into one of four schools of thought concerning the Millenium (cf. Rev. 20.1-8).'³⁵³ Sproul categorizes them generally as follows: 'historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism, amillennialism and postmillennialism.'³⁵⁴ I will now present a brief introduction to the main streams of thought regarding the *eschaton* and its variations.

6.9. Premillennialism

To begin with, many evangelical exegetes see in Romans 11.25-27 a Pauline prediction of the restoration of the kingdom to the Jewish nation in fulfilment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant promises, following the salvation of all the Gentiles. So Ladd argues: 'Israel as a nation is to be saved and is to become an instrument in the hands of God for the fulfilment of the divine purposes.'³⁵⁵ There are numerous variations on the theme. Sometimes the nation's salvation is seen as happening at or

³⁵³ Millard J. Erickson, *Contemporary Options in Eschatology: A Study of the Millenium* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), p. 30.

³⁵⁴ Robert C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus: When Did Jesus Say He Would Return?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), p. 193.

³⁵⁵ George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 95.

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around the Second Coming, and will involve either a real conversion of Jews to Christ,³⁵⁶ or a separate way of salvation apart from Christ.

In fact, some scholars suggest that “all Israel’s” salvation is independent of Christ and the gospel, but according to Nanos, ‘this does not make sense of Paul’s sorrow or his intention to provoke Jews to jealousy in this same text, and while this view is attractive and allows for excellent dialogue, it fails to account for many of Paul’s statements in Romans and elsewhere. Most importantly, it does not deliver the motivational impact this context demands.’³⁵⁷ Richard Bell adds: ‘The understanding of the relation of Israel to the Church must be able to account for Paul’s jealousy motif, and the models that are often put forward in Jewish Christian dialogue fail in precisely this respect: the impression is given that Israel lacks nothing and therefore has no need of the Gospel.’³⁵⁸ Käsemann is also against such views, stating: ‘Wie es Kirche nicht ohne Israel gibt, so bleibt Israel allein Gottesvolk wenn es Kirche wird.’³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Nanos, *Mystery*, p. 257. The idea that ‘all Israel’ will be saved by an eschatological miracle such as the return of Christ is foreign to Mark Nanos. He refutes this saying; ‘it is particularly difficult to see the motivational message in this solution. In other words, if God will by any means save all Israel at the end of some period of time (i.e. *parousia*), what effect does this have on Gentile presumption toward the ‘stumbling’?’ Due to the fact that Jews are provoked by a kind of Jealousy by Gentiles, Nanos understands this as a form of triumphalism such as, ‘We will win in the end’. For him it simply juxtaposes the revelation given to Paul, suggesting that the Gospel is ineffective.

³⁵⁷ Nanos, *Mystery*, pp. 257-258

³⁵⁸ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 198

³⁵⁹ Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HzNew Testament 8a; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980), p. 300.

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That said, I corroborate both writers on this proposition as it goes against all biblical perspective on divine redemption. Moreover, according to further biblical evidences, and as I have already stated during the course of this thesis, revelation is something progressive and not static, which, according to Pauline Theology, finds its apogee in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and as such God's salvation plan intends to reach humanity as a whole (cf. Rom. 1.16).

Thus the sequence of Pauline thought in Romans 10.1-21 is as follows: (1) messengers are sent; (2) they declare the Word; (3) sinners hear the Word (cf. Luke 1.74, 77); (4) sinners believe the Word; (5) they call upon Christ; (6) they are saved! The argument here is simply that no one can be saved without the Word of God, for "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (cf. Rom. 10.17, [NKJV]). The New Testament relegates all other suggestions apart of the Gospels, as mere speculation, and this includes the Jews, to whom Romans 10 was specifically addressed.

Others see it involving all Jews, while some believe the salvation will happen to a majority but not all. By rule, Premillennialist schools of thought claim that the interpretation of Scriptures has to be based upon the way in which the New Testament interprets the events of the Old Testament. According to this school, then, there is no single system as the New Testament views prophecy from both a literal and a spiritual perspective.

Erickson states, 'Premillennial groups hold that Christ will return to personally administer his Kingdom for one thousand years; Historic Premillennialists (i.e. Post-

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Tribulationists) view the Church as the prophesied initial phase of Christ's Kingdom, which, passing through the Great Tribulation, will be raptured/resurrected and judged at his *parousia*, when Christ establishes his Millennial kingdom.³⁶⁰ Dispensationalists hold that there are three divisions of humanity: the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God (cf. 1 Cor. 10.32).³⁶¹

In the words of Dwight D. Pentecost:

God's covenant with Abraham constitutes their basis for belief in a Jerusalem-centred, millennial reign of Christ. During this reign, Old Testament prophecies conferring blessing on Israel, fully re-gathered and restored to all the land pledged to the patriarch, will be literally fulfilled. Jesus, whose offer of the kingdom to the Jews was rejected, is now building his worldwide Church, which, for all its wonderful manifestation of grace, only interrupts temporarily God's program for Israel.³⁶²

Pentecost presents the dispensationalist scheme as follows:

The Church, identified as a totally separate "heavenly" entity from Israel the "earthly" people of God, will fail to fulfil the Great Commission, becoming corrupt and apostate toward the end of the church age. Christ will come secretly to rapture and resurrect its members to heaven, and God's prophetic clock will restart with the Jewish nation being prepared for conversion through terrible Tribulation. The Tribulation will end when Christ returns to establish his millennial reign over the world, constituting Israel as head of the nations. The temple will be rebuilt and the Mosaic sacrificial system re-instituted, albeit as a memorial of Christ's atonement not as another way of salvation.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ George E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 7.

³⁶¹ Samuel H. Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises and Their Fulfillment* (London: John Bale, Sons and Danielson, 1936), p. 108.

³⁶² Dwight D. Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1958), p. 136.

³⁶³ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 525.

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In fact, many dispensationalists see in the rebirth of the secular State of Israel the prophesied return, though in unbelief, of God's people to the Promised Land (cf. Ezek. 36.12). Rob Richards writes, 'I am persuaded that were the present state of Israel to be defeated and driven from the land, yet God is bound by his covenant faithfulness to restore his people. I am actually persuaded that this is the return promised in Scripture, with all the inherent difficulties and questions it raises.'³⁶⁴

6.10. Amillennialism

In contrast, Millar, a confessed amillennialist, criticizes the above view stating, 'whatever the variation, the proponents of this school, sit at odds with the main thrust of both Galatians and Romans that there is no membership in the covenant family of God, and thus no salvation, based on racial, ethnic or ancestral grounds.'³⁶⁵ Millar states further, 'even F.F. Bruce notes this difficulty, and attempts to resolve it by arguing that the mystery to which Paul refers is a new revelation freshly received.'³⁶⁶ However, says Muller, this begs the question: 'was Paul writing to inform the church at Rome concerning God's future end-time purposes with respect to ethnic Israel or to God's purposes being outworked at that – *and this* – present time with the Jews?'³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ Rob Richards, *Has God Finished With Israel?* (Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2000), p. 160.

³⁶⁵ Bruce Millar, 'The Identity and Destiny of Israel and the Church' (Unpublished MTh Thesis; University of Wales, Bangor, 2003), pp. 74-75.

³⁶⁶ Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: IVP, 1974), p. 221.

³⁶⁷ Millar, 'The Identity and Destiny of Israel', p. 75.

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Ironically for Millar:

Had the prophetic schemes of the end-time exegetes not clouded this pericope, we argue that a natural reading of it would conclude that Paul was outlining a present scenario: At this present time there is an election according to grace (cf. Romans 11.5); the threefold “now” of Romans 11.30-31 highlights Paul’s focus on Israel’s present response — Gentiles *now* have obtained mercy, Jews have *now* been disobedient, that they too may *now* receive mercy.³⁶⁸

Thus for Millar, the omission of this third *now* by some translations changes the whole picture. Motyer corroborates this remarking, ‘some of the earliest and best manuscripts do include that the argument is definitely on the side of including it.’³⁶⁹ Thus Amillennialists schools (i.e. Amillennialism and Postmillennialism) in general claim that a major reason for Paul’s letter is to demonstrate that God is still saving Jews, and reminding a largely Gentile Church not to forget that fact—a point that would have little strength if he was referring to some far-off future event.

Motyer adds, ‘It should be noted that the phrase “*Blindness in part has happened to Israel*” (cf. Romans 11.25), frequently cited as ground for the hope of a national conversion of Israel’ is often used to imply temporal meaning, i.e. blindness has happened for a while.’³⁷⁰ However, O.P. Robertson opposes this, stating:

This interpretation has little to support it. It is doubtful that the phrase has a temporal meaning anywhere in the New Testament. The phrase declares either that ‘partial hardening’ has happened to Israel or that ‘part of Israel’ has been hardened ... in either case, ‘in part’ does not have temporal meaning. This phrase does not provide an exegetical

³⁶⁸ Millar, ‘The Identity and Destiny of Israel’, p. 75.

³⁶⁹ Steve Motyer, *Israel in the Plan of God: Light on Today’s Debate* (Leicester: IVP, 1989), pp. 155-56.

³⁷⁰ Motyer, *Israel in the Plan*, pp. 155-156.

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basis for the idea that God intends to initiate special saving activity in Israel at some time in the future.³⁷¹

Instead, the point made by Motyer and Palmer Robertson implies that Paul admonishes Gentile Christians not to vaunt themselves over unsaved Jews, vainly imagining that God has no further interest in saving them. Rather, as the remainder of the verse indicates, those who have hardened their hearts solidly against the gospel are but a part of Israel, and the remainder of the Jewish people may yet turn to Christ as they hear the gospel and are made envious by seeing the Gentiles enjoying the blessings of God's salvation.

For this reason, Amillennialist schools regard the nation of Israel to have failed in its missionary purpose, culminating in its rejection of Christ. Some scholars see the Church replacing or displacing Israel, accomplishing its missionary task, as God always intended.³⁷² The Church is thus the "new Israel",³⁷³ and therefore they, 'generalise and

³⁷¹ Robertson O. Palmer, *The Israel of God: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2000), pp. 176-177.

³⁷² Herman Bavinck, *The Last Things: Hope for this World and the Next* (Ed. J. Bolt; Trans. L. Vriend; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), p. 99.

³⁷³ Edmund P. Clowney, *Israel and the Church (Two views): A Guide to Biblical Prophecy* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), p. 215.

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state the Church is automatically to be viewed as having fulfilled all prophetic promises made to the Nation of Israel in the Old Testament.³⁷⁴

Others however, are less extreme, simply referring to the Church as, 'the "spiritual Israel of God,"'³⁷⁵ and although this term does not appear in the Scriptures, it needs to be recognised that in a number of passages the Church in Pauline thought is equated with Spiritual Israel (cf. Rom. 9.6; Gal. 6.16). But be this as it may, and though Amillennialists generally accept the literal second coming of Christ to establish his eternal kingdom, it has been shown that a future Jewish-centred millennial kingdom does not feature in either view. Consequently, there is 'no place for a last-minute-large-scale salvation for the Jews.'³⁷⁶

In any case, the debate goes on. Premillennialists appeal to the phrase *until the full number of the Gentiles has come in* to advocate a special saving activity in Israel at some time in the future (cf. Romans 11.25b). For example, Wilkinson says: 'The duration of Israel's blind condition and the making up of the Gentile portion of the

³⁷⁴ David J. Garrard, 'The Importance of Keeping the Premillennial Rider in any Statement of Faith Regarding the Second Coming of Christ' (A conference paper; Doncaster: Mattersey Hall Bible College UK, 2010), p. 6.

³⁷⁵ William E. Cox, *Biblical Studies in Final Things* (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1966), p. 70.

³⁷⁶ Personal communication with Nicholas T. Wright (interview on phone), 10th of March 2011. See also Wright, *The Climax*, p. 251. This is supported by Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 472.

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body of Christ, are however, coterminous. When one ceases, so does the other.³⁷⁷

Therefore, as the Church has been completed, God can now re-start Israel's prophetic purpose. Wilkinson goes on and argues that, 'the word "until" sets a time limit to any group of conditions, making the said conditions temporary not everlasting; preliminary not final. Therefore, common sense demands that if a certain condition of things is temporary and if its time limit has been passed, there must be a replacing of those conditions by their opposite.'³⁷⁸

Conversely, Robertson understands there to be no reliable theological evidence to affirm this; the logic, then, is flawed. In fact, he does not deny that "until" may have the meaning Wilkinson applies, but according to him, it is by no means always true. In this case, the word brings a matter to a point. For Robertson, "'until" indicates the fact that a goal is to be reached, but it does not, of itself, determine the state of affairs after the termination. In this way, the subsequent affairs must be determined from the following context:

[1] Paul persecuted Christians up to (until) death (ἄχρι θανάτου) (cf. Acts 22.4), but his murderous activity did not cease when they died; he persecuted them to the point of death.

[2] The people of Noah's time ate and drank until the day (ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας) he entered the Ark (cf. Matthew 24.38), but they did not stop doing so thereafter; his action signalled the point they became beyond salvation.

³⁷⁷ Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises*, p. 77.

³⁷⁸ Wilkinson, *The Israel Promises*, p. 77.

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[3] Christ must reign until (ἄχρις οὗ) he has put all his enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15.25). His reign will not cease when all his foes are vanquished; rather, the conquest of every enemy is inevitable throughout his reign.³⁷⁹

Robertson continues, 'verse 25 does not say that hardening will cease in Israel; it says that hardening has happened to part of Israel and will continue until the full number of Gentiles has come in. Up to that point, God is still saving those Jews who do believe. What happens afterwards is not indicated by the context. The phrase is more naturally interpreted as implying a *terminus ad quem*.'³⁸⁰

In support of Robertson, Motyer advances an idea that Paul was painting in broad brush-strokes. He comments, 'every time a Gentile gets saved, his testimony constitutes an appeal from God to Jews who notice it. Every time a Jew turns to Christ, it lessens Israel's hardening by one. Both processes continue side-by-side with the lines gradually converging, so that when the point is reached when the fullness of the Gentiles is complete, so too will Israel's hardening cease because their fullness is also complete.'³⁸¹ Obviously, proponents of Pre-millennialism find some difficulty with Motyer's cessation of hardening view, and for them, the salvation of both Jew and Gentile during the same period up to an eschatological end-moment seems consistent with Paul's statement.

³⁷⁹ Robertson, *The Israel of God*, p. 179.

³⁸⁰ Robertson, *The Israel of God*, p. 180.

³⁸¹ Motyer, *Israel in the Plan*, p. 159.

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In essence, each of the above theoretical positions make an important contribution to our understanding of the subject of Israel and its destiny and as we have seen, there is little agreement on what the phrase, “all Israel” actually means among scholars from different eschatological traditions. Thus within this context we will move toward a definition of the collective noun “Church”, and due to its intrinsic relationship with Israel, it is *conditio sine qua non* for us to define the identity and destiny of both people. In other words, a definitive proposal to this pertinent question will be the aim of the next chapter.

Chapter Seven: Who then is 'All Israel'?

7.1. Introduction

Basically, the discussion in the preceding paragraphs focused on defining the eschatological *schools of thought* and their variants. There is also, however, a further point to be considered. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to review recent scholarship concerning the role of Israel in God's economy. This will help us to arrive at a final position and consequently, to be better placed to decide which approach would be best for us to adopt as our own.³⁸²

This chapter will consist of two sections: a first one, containing two points of view arguing against each other, and a second one, which puts forward a different point of view but, at the same time, brings the puzzle together and synthesises all views into a single one. For me, this latter viewpoint is more accurate biblically speaking, which is why I will discuss it apart. That said, there are perspectives within both views with which I am still very much in agreement.

³⁸² Though defining Israel and the Christian Church is relevant to this thesis, it must be recognized that eschatology is a vast and very controversial subject within the field of theology. However, because *relationship with God* is the main thematic emphasis of this thesis, I consider it relatively important to posit myself favorable to one single view. Basically, this eschatological section will argue on the Church being a replacement of Israel in terms of extended privileges and for a determinate purpose in God's divine economy, and not for a replacement theology whereby Israel's privileges are transferred unto it indeterminately and unconditionally.

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When it comes to the subject of Israel, Paul can seem to be a man in conflict, both with himself and the wider Jewish community. On the one hand, he maintained his Jewish identity throughout his life (cf. Acts 22.2-3) and could affirm, 'what advantage has the Jew? Much, in every way' (cf. Rom 3.1-2, NRSV). On the other hand, he later described Israel as 'enemies of God' (cf. Rom 11.28) and elsewhere, declared his Jewish identity to be σκύβαλα (literally 'excrement').

Such language, added to his insistence that Gentiles are not to adopt aspects of Torah such as circumcision and food laws (cf. Rom 14.14; Gal. 5.2-6; Col. 2.16-22), led to hostility and opposition from the Jewish community,³⁸³ with his own reference to receiving 'the forty lashes minus one' (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24) indicating a belief among his contemporaries that he had strayed outside of God's covenant.³⁸⁴ Ever since, Paul's relationship with Israel has been a source of theological and scholarly tension. He has been heralded as both a champion and an enemy of Judaism; he has been accused of

³⁸³ E.g. persecution (Acts 17.13; 19.17); physical abuse (Acts 14.19; 2 Cor. 11.24-25); expulsion from Jewish regions (Acts 14.19).

³⁸⁴ John M. G. Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Jewish People', in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul* (ed. Stephen Westerholm; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 188-201.

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apostasy,³⁸⁵ misrepresentation,³⁸⁶ and anti-Semitism³⁸⁷ but also of being consistent with Jewish thought at the time,³⁸⁸ and a herald of the renewed Israel.³⁸⁹

At the heart of this tension is Paul's theology concerning the identity, commission, and salvation of Israel. It is therefore essential, if we are to understand Paul's strained relationship with Judaism, that we examine his understanding of God's elect people. As such, I hope to show that the Pauline Corpus implies an assurance that God remains faithful to his promises and will still invite Israel to step back into their original call to be the image of God (cf. Gen. 1.26-28).

7.2. Israel's elect identity

As seen in the NPP chapter above, first-century Judaism is not easy to define, since all the evidence points to a broad spectrum of beliefs and practice, both in Judea and

³⁸⁵ John M. G. Barclay, 'Paul Among the Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?' *JSNT* 60 (1995): pp. 89-120, p. 118.

³⁸⁶ Mark Nanos, 'A Jewish View', in *Four Views on the Apostle Paul* (ed. Michael F. Bird; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), p. 161.

³⁸⁷ Douglas Harink, *Paul Among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology Beyond Christendom and Modernity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), p. 151.

³⁸⁸ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 543.

³⁸⁹ Nicholas T. Wright, 'Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire, in Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation', in *Essays in Honour of Krister Stendahl* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburgh, PA: Trinity, 2000), pp. 160-83, p. 178.

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the Diaspora.³⁹⁰ What united them, however, was their faith in One God (cf. Deut. 6.4-6) and their association with Israel, God's elect people (cf. Deut. 7:6).³⁹¹ This was a statement of their inheritance, founded in their ethnicity. Of all the peoples of the world, God had chosen Israel and has confirmed this choice by making a covenant with Moses, and establishing Israel as a nation (cf. Exod. 19.6), with the national hallmarks of a Law (cf. Exod. 24.7-12) and a land (cf. Exod. 33.1-3a).

Nowhere did Paul reflect on Israel more than in his Letter to the Romans, particularly in Rom 9–11. He begins the letter by establishing his messianic theme, and introducing the terminology that would later illustrate his view of Israel: for Paul, Jesus' identity was both *κατὰ σάρκα* ('according to the flesh') and *κατὰ πνεῦμα* ('according to the spirit') (cf. Rom. 1:3-4). It is language that Paul later placed at the centre of his discussion of life under the law (cf. Rom. 7), which indicates that *σάρκινός* (cf. Rom. 7.14)³⁹² contrasted with life in Christ (cf. Rom. 8), which is *κατὰ πνεῦμα* (cf. Rom. 8.4-5, 12, 13). In drawing this comparison, Paul had raised a dangerous question: had the nation of Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* been replaced?³⁹³ In view of that, what is essential to note is the distinction Paul draws between Judaism (ethnicity) and the chosen people of God (inheritance), culminating in the Pauline assertion: 'But it is not as though the word of

³⁹⁰ Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 18-27.

³⁹¹ Nicholas T. Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (London: SPCK, 2005), pp. 108-109.

³⁹² Also referred to in Romans 7.5, 18, 25.

³⁹³ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 549.

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God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel', (cf. Rom. 9.6, ESV).

Dunn helpfully notes that this is Paul's first use of the word Ἰσραήλ in the letter thus far.³⁹⁴ As such, it represents a third group of people that Paul is identifying. Up to this point Paul had been speaking ethnocentrically as a Jew, typical of his time,³⁹⁵ dividing humanity into Ἰουδαίω (a special, specific nation) and ἔθνῶν (i.e. all other nations), but now he introduces Ἰσραήλ as something else: a people whose identity is defined by who *God* is, not who *they* are, and who trace their roots to the covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen. 12.1-3; 17.4-8), not the covenant with Moses (cf. Exod. 19.5-6; 24.1-12).

Initially, then, 9.6 does read as a replacement of one Israel for another, especially considering what Paul has just said in Roman 8. Paul's description of life κατὰ πνεῦμα included a law (8:2), righteousness (8.10), adoption (8.16), and glory (8.21). If we take righteousness to be a covenantal blessing,³⁹⁶ then we can see that this includes the very same blessings that belong to Israel in 9.4, with the notable exception of priestly service.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p. 505.

³⁹⁵ Charles H. Cosgrove, 'Did Paul Value Ethnicity?' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68 (2006): pp. 268-290, p. 273.

³⁹⁶ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 234.

³⁹⁷ We will return to this subject during the exegesis of Chapter 12.1-8.

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This has sometimes been contested as supporting a dual-covenant theology, covering two nations of Israel, Jewish and Christian, which carry the same blessings. This then bridges between the opposing views that either Jewish Israel is rejected in favour of Christian Israel or that both Israels will be saved independently of one another.³⁹⁸ The latter view raises obvious questions as to how we reconcile this with Jesus' insistence that, 'No one comes to the Father except through me' (John 14:6).

7.3. Two eschatological views in contest

The key discussion from now on will centre around the controversial Pauline assertion, 'And so all Israel shall be saved' (cf. Romans 11.26). As Morris states, 'this expression has caused unending disputation among expositors.'³⁹⁹ The futurist interpretation of Paul's *so* is taken to mean "and then" or "at this time", subsequent to the lifting of Israel's blindness.⁴⁰⁰ F.F. Bruce concurred with this meaning,⁴⁰¹ but offered no evidence. Robertson disagrees:

The phrase καὶ οὕτω simply does not mean "and then." Instead, it means "and in this manner" or "and in this way." Of the approximately 205 times in which the word οὕτω occurs in the New Testament, not once does it have temporal significance. Paul easily enough

³⁹⁸ Horrell, *An Introduction*, p. 102.

³⁹⁹ Morris, *Romans*, p. 420.

⁴⁰⁰ John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom: A Basic Text in Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959), p. 190.

⁴⁰¹ Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, p. 222.

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could have said *καὶ τότε*, "and then." But instead he says quite specifically *καὶ οὕτω*, "and in this manner"⁴⁰².

Thus Amillennialists understand that, what Paul is driving at is not that Gentiles should first be saved and after that, the Jewish nation, but rather that God, working to his eternal plan centred on Christ, has permitted the hardened part of the ethnic nation of Israel to continue to exist, having transferred the status and privilege of being "Israel" to the Messiah and his people. Thus, through the initial preaching of the gospel by the believing remnant of Jews (the apostles), the Gentiles have believed in Christ and become incorporated into God's family, and this activity will continue until the full number of Gentiles is complete.⁴⁰³ During this time, God's will is that other Jews who

⁴⁰² Robertson, *The Israel of God*, pp. 181-182.

⁴⁰³ Nanos, *Mystery*, pp. 256-258. Indeed, a significant aspect of Nanos' view is that the word 'fullness' (*πλήρωμα*) has to do with 'that which is brought to fullness or completion.' He concludes: 'If Paul meant to communicate 'the full number' of Gentiles in a numeric sense his point would have been better made by using the same adjective he uses for Israel's destiny: 'all' as in 'all gentiles saved first and then all Israel,' certainly the sense the text is most often given.' This and some of the eschatological concepts discussed in this section have been challenged by Mark Nanos, see Nanos, *Mystery*, pp. 256-258. By which I understood Nanos' reading of this section of Romans regards other views to be an antithesis of Paul's mission among Jews. For him it had a contemporary and a continuing fulfilment, i.e. a mission which should be achieved during Paul's apostleship and which would follow its course in human history. Basically, Nanos' approach is, with little variation, similar to the position held by the Amillennialists; though Nanos distinguishes between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, the people as a whole are the most likely meaning of 'all Israel', and so there is no room for two entities in Pauline thought, but just one. Nanos' refusal to accept the redemption of Israel at the event of *parousia* proves my point. See Nanos, *Mystery*, p. 278 n. 110.

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come to faith, hopefully motivated by envy, should augment the present remnant of Jews. Through this process, in this way, God is saving "all Israel".

As seen above, a basic premise for the Amillennialists is that since God does not guarantee salvation to Jews on the basis of external qualification, being a descendant of Abraham does not guarantee salvation. Thus two other possibilities arise: either it refers to *the elect Jews within the ethnic nation of Israel* or it refers to *all those elect in the true Israel, the Christ, i.e. the whole Church*, consisting of Jewish and Gentile believers. Wright argues:

Paul actually began the whole section (cf. Rom. 9.6) with just such a programmatic distinction of two "Israels". Thus for him, the Olive Tree figure shows that Gentiles are grafted into Israel; equally, since natural Abrahamic lineage does not make one a member of Israel but only faith in Christ, Jews have to be grafted into Israel also. In this way, Gentiles become "heirs together with Israel, members of one body and sharers together in the promise in Jesus Christ"⁴⁰⁴ (cf. Eph. 3.6).

⁴⁰⁴ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 250. Others however approach this in a distinctive manner. As instance of this I cite Johan C. Beker. He says, 'it is important to recognize that although Paul uses the terminology of *anthrōpos* (cf. Rom. 3.28), and *pas/pantes* (cf. Rom. 11.32), he never loses sight of the fact that Jews and Gentiles are two distinct people who even in Christ cannot be fused into one general category of *homo universalis*. Just as Paul's notion of the body of Christ is characterized by 'many members in one body' (cf. Rom. 12.3), this same concept of unity amidst diversity applies to his discussion of Jew and Gentile. In other words, Paul's emphasis on equality of Jew and Greek in the body of Christ does not nullify the distinctiveness of both peoples. Therefore, there is no contradiction for Paul when he juxtaposes the universal equality of the believer and the particular priority of the Jew in Romans 1.16.' Beker goes on, 'Just as Karl Barth and Ernst Käsemann are wrong in characterizing the Jew in Romans as the *homo religiosus* in general, so it is wrong to suppose that the emphasis on *pas* or *anthrōpos* blots out the ethnic specificity of two different peoples, Jews and Gentiles. Paul intends to stress not uniformity, but unity in diversity. The pluralistic diversity of people in their ethnic and

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In view of this, Amillennialists take the second of the two possibilities to be correct. In fact, Amillennialists argue that the quotation Paul bases his statement on confirms this, i.e. a conflation of Isaiah 59.20, Isaiah 27.9 and Jeremiah 31.33-34, whose passages speak of judgement past, covenant renewed, exile ended and blessing flowing to the nations from Israel. However, Paul has made a subtle change to Isaiah 59.20: instead of 'The Redeemer will come to Zion' ('for the sake of Zion', LXX) he writes: 'The Redeemer will come from Zion.'

According to Wright it is 'a deliberate echo of Isaiah 2.3, "The law will go forth from Zion", for in Paul's mind, the blessing which was to flow out to the nations was not the Torah, but Christ. For what the law could not do is now done by Christ and the Spirit.'⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, the quotation is not referring to the *parousia*, as some think, but to the present missionary operation through which the New Covenant blessing is to be realized, and the Abrahamic Covenant promises fulfilled by a faithful, magnificent God of grace!

Wright gives us the following analogy: 'If we were to specify the contents of Paul's beliefs, it would be natural, since Paul by his own admission continued to understand

cultural variety is maintained, although in Christ this pluralism becomes nevertheless a unity.' Please, see Johan C. Beker, cited in Donfried, *The Romans Debate*, p. 329. It is worth pointing out that such views do not diverge much from the one presented by Dwight Pentecost, see footnote 363.

⁴⁰⁵ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 250.

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his work from the standpoint of one who had been a zealous Pharisaic Jew, to group them under the twin heads of Jewish theology, namely, monotheism and election, God and Israel.⁴⁰⁶ He adds, 'it cannot be isolated from, for instance, his treatment of justification, his discussions of Israel, his Christology and theology of the cross, his pneumatology, even his views of baptism. Paul's account in Romans makes it clear in a whole variety of ways that Paul is transferring to the people of Christ attributes and characteristics of Israel.'⁴⁰⁷

Therefore Wright argues that the basis of Israel's jealousy is that her covenant privileges have been transferred to the Church.⁴⁰⁸ The kernel of the question is Wright's reading of Romans 11.26. Wright argued for the Church as Israel on the basis of Romans 9.6:

In particular, 9.6 gives the lie to the constantly repeated assertion that one cannot make "Israel" in 11.26 mean something different from what it means in 11.25. 'Not all who are

⁴⁰⁶ N. T. Wright, 'Putting Paul Together Again', in *Pauline Theology*, pp. 183-211, (p. 184).

⁴⁰⁷ Wright, 'Putting Paul Together Again', p. 190.

⁴⁰⁸ Nicholas T. Wright, *The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans* (PhD Thesis: University of Oxford, 1981), p. 193. Again, Nanos' reading diverges from this and from the customary reading of Romans 11; Nanos does not find Paul 'expecting the non-Christian Jews to be provoked to jealousy by gentile salvation' (Nanos, *Mystery*, pp. 255-287). Rather, Romans shows the same two-step pattern—'to the Jew first, and also to the Greek'—that Acts attributes to Paul's mission. Rome is an exceptional case, however, in that Paul has not yet had an opportunity to preach to the synagogues. It is that opportunity that Paul wants to safeguard by urging the Gentile Christians of Rome to conform halakhically with their synagogue environment.

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of Israel are in fact Israel'. Paul opened his great argument with a clear signal that he was redefining "Israel", and here (in Rom. 11.26) that argument comes full circle.⁴⁰⁹

In his view, Paul does not articulate a future conversion of ethnic Israel earlier in Romans, nor, for the matter, elsewhere in his letter. For him, 'the explanatory of scriptural citations in Romans 11.26b-27 say nothing more than Romans 9.24-26 and 10.6-13: God has incorporated the Gentiles into "all Israel."' ⁴¹⁰ If Wright is correct, 'Romans 11.26 would express the very point Wright had been making for the entirety of Paul's letter, and indeed for the New Testament as a whole, i.e. God's historic people in the Christ would include the Gentiles. A church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles is "the new people of God"'. ⁴¹¹

Klappert concurs with Wright and says, 'Die Kirche als das neue Gottesvolk ersetzt das Israel der Erwählung Gottes', ⁴¹² accurately called "Substitutionsmodell", ⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ Nicholas T. Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary and Reflection', in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (ed. Leander E. Keck; X; 12 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), pp. 393-770 (p. 689).

⁴¹⁰ Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans', p. 691.

⁴¹¹ Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans', p. 691.

⁴¹² Bertold Klappert, *Israel und die Kirche: Erwägungen zur Israellehre Karl Barths* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1980), pp. 14-17.

⁴¹³ Bertold, *Israel und die Kirche*, pp. 14-17. For more discussion of the historical development of this substitution model see Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 131-132, 146-147, 200-206. Richardson (pp. 205-206) points out that Justin Martyr was the first to call the Church 'true Israel' (ca. 160). Wright, *The Climax*, pp. 249-251,

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whereby Israel's privilege is passed to the Christian Church. Likewise, Lucien Cerfaux says, 'Le Christ venu, Israël s'efface',⁴¹⁴ and, 'Le privilèges du judaïsme trouvent leur épanouissement dans l'Église chrétienne.'⁴¹⁵ Cerfaux concludes:

Nous remarquons donc la tendance de Saint Paul à séparer les appellations les plus caractéristiques et les plus religieuses (Israël, semence d'Abraham, élus, appelés, aimés), du peuple concret et, plus explicitement, de la génération juive qui rejeté le Messie, pour en faire des appellations à contenu théologique et qui vont désormais se reposer sur l'Église. C'est une indication pour l'interprétation du privilège d'Israël'.⁴¹⁶

Nevertheless for Bell, 'such a view [i.e. by Wright et al] accounts well for the jealousy of Israel for the Gentile Christians, but the question is whether Paul thought in terms of a transfer of covenant privileges.'⁴¹⁷ For Bell, there is no reliable evidence to affirm that Paul meant this. Although Bell follows the same line of argument as

discusses problems with usual substitution and suggests a 'Pauline Polemical Redefinition' wherein Gentiles join with the remnant of Christian Jews to make a 'whole people.' Notwithstanding Wright's keen awareness of the process Paul is describing, his view seems to be another way of saying that Israel is the church. Paul, however, continues to maintain distinction between Israelite and Gentile believers in Christ; between Israel and the community of believers in Christ inclusive of Gentiles; between natural and wild branches, and so on. See also the comments of William S. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context: Jew and Gentile in the Letter to the Romans* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 132-160.

⁴¹⁴ Lucien Cerfaux, *Le Privilège d'Israël selon Saint Paul, Études d'Exégèse et d'Histoire Religieuse de Monseigneur Cerfaux réunies à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anniversaire* (II; 2 vols ; New York: Gembloux, 1954), pp. 339-364 (p. 363).

⁴¹⁵ Cerfaux, *Le Privilège*, 341.

⁴¹⁶ Cerfaux, *Le Privilège*, 347.

⁴¹⁷ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 168.

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defended by the Amillennialists—that is, he agrees that God does not promise salvation to Jews on the basis of external qualification— he puts it differently: 'there is no difference because all, Jews and Gentile alike, have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God. There is no distinction in respect of the δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ. Both Jews and Gentile can only be justified by faith.'⁴¹⁸ Hence, adds Bell, 'it should be clear that in Romans the covenant privileges have not been transferred from Israel to the Church, rather they have been extended.'⁴¹⁹

Luz corroborates Bell: 'Die Privilegien Israels sind zugleich auch die Privilegien der christlichen Gemeinde, derer sich Gott erbarmt hat.'⁴²⁰ The point made by Paul supports this assertion by Bell and Luz—after all, the patriarch Abraham is not only the father of Jews but the father of Gentiles (cf. Rom. 4.6). Moreover, circumcision is at the core of the dilemma, and in the light of what has been argued during the course of this thesis, circumcision as an external sign has been superseded by the Spirit-filled life (cf. Gen. 17.9-14; Phil. 3.3). Circumcision was only an external sign between God and Abraham, and not its condition—God's promise was not based on external rites, but on His Word given previously in Genesis 12.1-3.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 181.

⁴¹⁹ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 181. Paul enumerates this as follows: 'ὧν ἡ υἰοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθήκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι' (cf. Rom. 9.4). Note that Peter 2.10 applies Hosea 1.10 and 2.23 to the Gentiles. It shows that an extension is in course and not a transference of privileges.

⁴²⁰ Ulrich Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus* (München: C. Kaiser, 1968), p. 273.

⁴²¹ Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), p. 97.

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All things considered, Das points out: 'Wright's position therefore represented a change of mind; he formerly held that Paul envisioned a future conversion of the bulk of the ethnic Israel. The whole family of Abraham in the present age whether Jews or Gentiles, will come to Christian faith through a "steady process".'⁴²² Ironically, Das says that, 'Wright sarcastically (and rather humorously) scoffed at "the last-minute version of the favoured nation clause", a reference to the majority position that envisions a future for ethnic Israel.'⁴²³

Andrew Das pinpoints 'an overall overview on Romans 9.1-5 and throughout Paul's entire discussion in Romans 9-11 is precisely that the vast majority of Israel does not currently believe in Christ.'⁴²⁴ Thus, for Das, as attractive as Wright's position is, he has not resolved the difficult exegetical hurdles. As already seen, Wright insists that in Rom 9.6-11.25b Paul has consistently distinguished between two categories of Israel: the believing remnant and the unbelieving majority.⁴²⁵ Also, for Das, 'Wright therefore translates the hardening ἀπὸ μέρου in 11.25a as a hardening, *in part*.'⁴²⁶

⁴²² Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), pp. 236-237.

⁴²³ Wright, 'The Letter to the Romans', p. 693.

⁴²⁴ Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, p. 254.

⁴²⁵ Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, p. 237.

⁴²⁶ See Rom 15.15, rather than 'for a while' as in Rom 15.24.

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Based on this Das understands there are two categories of Israel: 'While one part of "Israel" constitutes the "remnant", the other part of Israel according to the flesh – the great majority – has been "hardened".'⁴²⁷ He further commented on 11.25a and the distinction between the part and remainder: 'Following 11.7, it (ἀπὸ μέρους) implies a division between the Israel that is hardened and the Israel that has become the 'remnant': the remnant obtained it, but the rest were hardened.'⁴²⁸ This, certifies Das, reminds us that 'from the very beginning of the discussion Paul made it clear that there were two categories of Abraham's children (cf. Rom. 9.7-8) and indeed two categories of "Israel" itself.'⁴²⁹

7.4. Issues in exegesis

Evidence in support of Das' position, above, can be found in the following exegesis. Paul goes on to show how the salvation of the Gentiles depended upon the hardening of Israel and he says that the former should not be too proud of themselves as they can easily be cut off from the original stock into which they have been grafted so that the original branches may bear their proper fruit in their rightful place.⁴³⁰ In fact, he states that if the demise of the Jews resulted in the Gentiles' salvation (cf. Rom. 11.11), then the restoration of the Jews would be equivalent to "life from the dead" (cf. Rom. 11.11, 15b). After discussing the role of the Gentiles in their relationship to faith and God Paul

⁴²⁷ Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, p. 237.

⁴²⁸ Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, p. 237.

⁴²⁹ Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*, p. 237.

⁴³⁰ Garrard, 'The Importance of Keeping the Premillennial Rider', p. 7.

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makes a startling declaration: 'I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery ... Israel [i.e. the nation just discussed during these three chapters of Romans] has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel [the same nation just referred to above] will be saved.' (cf. Rom. 11.24-25).

Based on this, Garrard states that, 'any interpretation which tries to make one of the above *Israels* mean something different from the other cannot understand the use of words and their meaning, whatever the first Israel may mean so does the second.'⁴³¹ F.F. Bruce corroborates Das and Garrard concluding, 'the term "Israel" cannot change its referent from verse 25 to verse 26, and cannot mean the Church.'⁴³²

Therefore, if a logical exegetical approach is applied to the passage, one will notice that Romans contains the secret to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel. In chapters 9–11, Paul explains that God has not rejected his People the Jews and that He always keeps his promises. Pauline theology expresses that the Jews—God's chosen people in the Old Testament period—played, and still play, a crucial role in God's agenda in this New Testament era, and are intrinsically connected with His plan of salvation and purpose for the entire world. In chapters 9–11, we see God's overall intent: 'use Israel's failure as an opening of the Gospel to the Gentiles with the view of bringing Israel into still greater blessing in the end.'⁴³³ There is also, however, a further point to be considered to conclude this section.

⁴³¹ Personal communication with David Garrard (personal interview), 07th of May 2011.

⁴³² Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, pp. 221-222.

⁴³³ Dunn, *Romans*, p. 518.

7.5. τὸ μυστήριον

Obviously, yet implicitly, the question regarding the term mystery has been dealt with in the preceding paragraph, however, the subject has not been discussed in detail. I have deliberately left this until the later part of the discussion because I consider that though the term precedes the statement 'all Israel will be saved', the debate order does not alter the importance and implication of it in Pauline soteriology (cf. Rom. 11.25-26).

Consequently, its prior use is neither programmatic or a deliberate Pauline structure; it could well be introduced after the referred statement. The term 'mystery' plays a great deal on the destiny of the nation of Israel and so scholars are generally in agreement regarding the intrinsic link between the olive tree and the term. Indeed, they tend to operate in symbiotic union which warrants the further specific discussion below.

To begin with, many and varied are the scholars' interpretations of the identity of the olive tree. Some see it as the ethnic nation of Israel, others as the "spiritual" remnant of ethnic Israel.⁴³⁴ Arguments are advanced for it being a reference to Abraham, the Abrahamic faith and covenant, or the "commonwealth of Israel" (cf. Eph.

⁴³⁴ Nanos and Beker see it as the ethnic nation of Israel or the spiritual remnant of Israel. Please see Nanos, *Mystery*, p. 254; Beker, *The Romans Debate*, p. 332.

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2.12) in which Gentiles and Jews are reconciled to God in one body.⁴³⁵ Others understand Christ to be the olive tree figure or its equivalent, that is, the whole Church, consisting of Jewish and Gentile believers and grafted into Christ, the true Israel (e.g. N.T. Wright).

Millar concurs with this last premise defended by N.T. Wright. He says, 'Inasmuch as both Jews and Gentiles are viewed as branches, and Paul mentions nothing of the trunk of the tree but only the root or rootstock, he disagrees with the above positions.'⁴³⁶ Millar points out that, 'Paul makes it clear that receiving the fatness of the root of the olive tree is all-important. It is the same root of the one tree that supports both Jew and Gentile believers. Scripture plainly identifies Christ as the root of Jesse (cf. Isa. 11.10), and the root out of dry ground (cf. Isa. 53.2). He is the root and the offspring of David (cf. Rev. 5.5; 22.16)'.⁴³⁷

Consequently, for Millar the source of spiritual life is not Abraham, nor the covenant promise, far less the nation of Israel because life is sealed with Christ in God (cf. Col. 3.3). It is so, 'because natural Abrahamic lineage does not make one a member of Israel but only faith in Christ, then Jews have to be grafted into Israel (i.e. Christ) also. In this way, Gentiles become heirs together with Israel, members of one body and

⁴³⁵ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 243. For further discussion, see W. C. Kaiser, 'The Old Promise and the New Covenant', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 15 (1972), pp. 11-23.

⁴³⁶ Millar, 'The Identity and Destiny', p. 71.

⁴³⁷ Millar, 'The Identity and Destiny', p.71.

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sharers together in the promise in Jesus Christ.⁴³⁸ Admittedly, this argument by Millar is supported by evidence from some early Church Fathers, such as Cyril of Jerusalem who believed Christ to be the olive tree: 'Ye were anointed with exorcised oil, from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. For ye were cut off from the wild olive-tree, and grafted into the good one; and were made to share the fatness of the true olive-tree.'⁴³⁹

Actually, this interpretation has some consistency with Paul's other statements concerning *mystery*:

(a) In 1 Corinthians 2, the "mystery of God", or "God's wisdom in mystery", designates Christ or God's plan of salvation embodied in Christ; (b) in Colossians 1.23c-29, the mystery is "Christ among you" who is preached among the Gentiles, i.e. God's plan of Salvation that includes the Gentiles in salvation; and (c) in Ephesians 3.6, "the mystery of Christ" is that the gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and fellow partakers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

In essence this helps us to understand the mystery in Romans 11.25-26 and 16.25-26, by which Paul obviously meant the inclusion of believing Jews. It was for his preaching of this same mystery of Jew and Gentile made one in Christ, hidden in ages past but now revealed to the saints, that he was held in chains (cf. Col. 4.3).

⁴³⁸ Wright, *The Messiah*, p. 250.

⁴³⁹ Cyril, S., Lecture 3 – *On Baptism*, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Volume 7, Master Christian Library, vol. 8, Rio, AGES Software, (2000), p. 339.

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From this, it is natural to ask whether the mystery of Romans 11.25-26 is to be understood in the same context. Kim conjectures, 'the common language of μυστήριον and the common concern for the divine *Heilsplan* for the Gentiles and the Jews, the web of interrelationship among the verses supra cited plus his testimony in Galatian 1.1-16 increase the probability that Romans 11.25-26 was also related to the Damascus revelation,⁴⁴⁰ when Paul got his call to become ambassador of Jesus among both people. In this manner, the line of thought expressed in the quotation embodies the view that the κήρυγμα as received and announced by Paul reveals the hidden μυστήριον.

On balance, Kim backs up Millar's approach to this. Likewise, I assume that the New Covenant in Christ, of which the Pauline gospel is a part (cf. Rom. 2.16), encapsulates the olive tree where Jews and Gentiles are grafted in, together. I simply do not follow the same line of argument presented by Millar. It is probable that he borrows his view from N.T. Wright, who thinks that Jesus' Jewishness and spiritual lifestyle fulfils the Torah integrally and thus replaces Israel as the ideal of God. For Wright, in Paul's mind, 'the blessing which was to flow out to the nations was not the Torah, but Christ, for what the law could not do is now done by Christ and the Spirit.'⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴⁰ Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, p. 240.

⁴⁴¹ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 250.

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At first glance there does not seem to be much wrong with Wright's view—Jesus and the Age of the Spirit were the ultimate goal of the giving of the Torah by God (cf. Jer. 31.33-34). However, a major problem with this kind of interpretation by Wright is that it overturns Jesus' role regarding the law itself. Of course, Jesus' Jewishness and spiritual faithfulness to Yahweh plays its part in all of this. However, I think that Wright has not quite comprehended it fully. His proposal clouds the spiritual pericope and reads into it quite superficially.

Indeed, Jesus is deprived of his vital role in God's economy. In contrast, I argue that Jesus' Jewishness would be of no value had he not lived a sinless life, or better put, in Pauline thought Jewishness could not ascertain freedom of sin to any mortal men, to which Jesus was an exception to the rule (cf. Rom. 7; Rom. 8.2-3, 10; 2 Cor. 5.21; Gal. 2.17). In Pauline thought only Jesus can meet the law's requirements on behalf of everyone who believes yet are incapable to obey it fully, and it is in this sense that Jesus is the personification of Israel in himself.

Evidently, this reading by Wright still takes the Scriptures from a literal approach, disengages the nation of Israel from any future role in God's agenda, and displaces the Christian Church, replacing it by what he redefines as the True Israel of God. This construction by Wright denies that Paul is referring to the *parousia* in Romans 11.25-26, but to the present missionary operation.⁴⁴² So then it has been shown that

⁴⁴² Wright, *The Messiah*, pp. 205-208. Wright argues that Paul does not refer to the *parousia* but to the first coming of Jesus and thinks it is better 'to see the passage as *inaugurated* eschatology' (p. 207,

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Amillennialists sustain that Christ is the olive tree but at the same time, offer ambiguous solutions to the detriment of Israel in God's agenda. In the interim, scholars in general question the validity of their claim⁴⁴³ and this will be the focus of the next topic.

7.6. Unveiling the mystery

Whilst a variety of definitions of the term mystery have been suggested, in conclusion, I will propose a short exegesis which will draw this discussion to a close. Paul develops the argument further, explaining how it is that God has not given up on the nation of Israel through his introduction of what he calls *τὸ μυστήριον*. This same nation which appears to be rejected by God will eventually be saved. For all who state that Paul is talking about the Church, there is a failure to grasp what Paul has been saying during the previous chapters. Also there is a failure to grasp the significance of

italics are author's own). In other words, this present missionary operation took off with the first advent and will follow its course throughout the ages until the manifestation of God's kingdom in its fullness.

⁴⁴³ Even Nanos, whose contemporary Pauline view on Israel's redemption differs from most scholars argues favourably towards Israel's restoration and rejects its complete abandonment by God. He suggests; 'the 'mystery' is not so much that 'all Israel' will be saved, but the mystery reveals *how* 'all Israel is being saved'.' Further, 'the Gentile mission, which commences with a warning to the 'stumbling,' is in the service of the restoration of Israel, that they might be provoked to jealousy as they see the fulfilment of the promises in Paul's *apostolic ministry to the gentiles* taking place before their very eyes without their participation as expected ([un] realized eschatology!).' See Nanos, *Mystery*, p. 287. Italics are my own.

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the meaning of the way in which Pauline writing uses the word "mystery". It speaks of what was unclear and unknown but which from that point on is a clear and established part of *revealed truth*. It is no longer a mystery.

Paul seems to be saying that although it all seems vague and perhaps even impossible, the nation as a whole is going to turn to God in the future. He does not say when this will happen other than that he links it to the point at which the "full number of the gentiles has come in" (cf. Rom. 11.25b), in other words, at the end of the dispensation of the Church and at the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ. It cannot be before. In fact, the Pauline teaching alone is sufficient grounds upon which to establish the veracity and hope of a millennial reign (*contra* amillennialism and postmillennialism).

This means that it is not possible to generalise how prophecy has to be fulfilled. By the same token, eschatology and prophecy can by no means be an exact science. Rather, it is necessary to examine each prophetic statement and decide whether the fulfilment is literal or spiritual. This is the case with the nation of Israel and the Christian Church. In factual terms, the nature of our outcomes in eschatology is by and large determined by our system of interpretation. David Garrard explains: 'literal schools of interpretation result in premillennial outcomes while spiritualising schools produce amillennial or postmillennial outcomes.'⁴⁴⁴ He adds: 'spiritualising schools equate all promises to Israel in the Old Testament as fulfilled, if indeed they are

⁴⁴⁴ Garrard, 'The Importance of Keeping the Premillennial Rider', p. 7.

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fulfilled, in the Church – spiritual Israel. Literal schools state that it is necessary to understand the context of the promise and decide whether it refers to the physical nation or otherwise.⁴⁴⁵

The result of this general stance is that, Premillennialists—although they are not all united in their views—would maintain that many of the promises made to national Israel need to be viewed as unfulfilled and as not applicable to the Church. Therefore Garrard takes the view that, 'God has not finished with the nation of Israel.'⁴⁴⁶ Nevertheless, it is not as linear as it appears; it remains a growing problem in theological circles as proponents of universalism have also suggested that this same salvation may be taken literally.

7.7. Universalism and faith in contest

So far I have dealt with the various schools of eschatology and its variants, with Israel's redemption, and with the term *mystery* and its significance. However, it would be inconclusive to end the section here, so it is also reasonable to look at Paul's use of πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ to see how scholars interpret him in this regard. At first sight, it is not plainly discernible what Paul means when he uses the phrase "all Israel". Is he implying a general, unconditional and universal salvation among Jews? Or is he referring only to law-obedient Jewish Christians within the church? Universalism is at the heart of our understanding of Paul's thought and is now discussed.

⁴⁴⁵ Garrard, 'The Importance of Keeping the Premillennial Rider', p. 7.

⁴⁴⁶ Personal communication with Garrard (personal interview), 07th of May 2011.

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There is no shortage of disagreement in the academic world as to whether a universal salvation is aimed at Israel. No doubt we face a twofold dilemma: on one hand, most commentators recognize that Paul is speaking about groups at 11.32, while on the other hand, some assume that he may well have universal salvation in mind in this passage and at 11.25 and 11.26a. Apparently, this argument is sustained by Nanos, whose view on Israel seems to imply a sort of universalism. Indeed, there is noticeable compatibility between Nanos' work⁴⁴⁷ and Sanders's view, namely that a universal salvation of both Jews and Gentiles is quite visible and espoused.⁴⁴⁸ This point is also sustained by the work of Barrett and Dodd,⁴⁴⁹ who appear to assume the same position.

⁴⁴⁷ Nanos, *Mystery*, pp. 239-288.

⁴⁴⁸ Sanders, *Paul*, pp. 117-128.

⁴⁴⁹ Barrett concedes: 'If God has predestined all men to wrath and he has predestined all men to mercy. If they were not predestined to the former they could not be predestined to the latter' (emphasis his). Dodd points to Paul's premise that 'all Israel will be saved' (cf. Rom. 11.26) and that 'no distinctions are draw' (cf. Rom. 3.22) and concludes: 'Whether or not, therefore, Paul himself drew the 'universalist' conclusion, it seems that we must draw it from his premises.' See Charles K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1967), p. 227. Dodd's argument has some force if *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ* includes every single Jew. See Dodd, *The Epistle*, pp. 183-187, especially p. 184. For Bell *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ* means the whole nation—every single member. This solution, says Bell, has the strength of understanding *Ἰσραήλ* as the nation. However, it is often pointed out that in the OT and Rabbinic literature, the expression *πᾶς Ἰσραήλ* was not used to refer to every single Israelite. A striking example is Mishnah Sanh. 10.1, which opens with the words: 'All Israelites have a share in the world to come.' This is then followed by a long list of exceptions that have no share in the world to come: 'he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead

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Undeniably there are texts that suggest or at least contain hints of a universal salvation (cf. Rom. 5.18-19), but a crucial issue in understanding Romans 11.32 and 11.25-26a is whether Paul espouses universalism in the sense that *every* individual will be saved. Bell says that, 'two points should make us cautious in drawing a universalist conclusion from Romans 11.32; first, Paul's use of the article *τοὺς πάντας* suggests that Paul is referring to groups, Jews and Gentiles, and not referring to every single individual.'⁴⁵⁰ Bell draws a parallel with Galatians 3.22 to support his thought. He adds, 'second, although on theological grounds (but not necessarily on linguistic grounds) *παῖς Ἰσραὴλ* most likely refers to every single Jew from every age, *τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν* cannot refer to every single Gentile who ever lived.'⁴⁵¹

Consequently for Bell:

... the Gentiles of the "*fullness of the nations*" are those who have believed the Gospel. This would exclude large numbers of Gentiles who had never heard the Gospel such as

prescribed in the Law, and (he that says) that the Law is not from heaven, and an Epicurean.... Three kings and four commoners have no share in the world to come. The three kings are Jeroboam and Ahab and Manasseh...The four commoners are Balaam and Doeg and Ahithophel and Gehazi. The generation of the flood have no share in the world to come....The men of Sodom have no share in the world to come.... Please see Herbert Danby, *'Mishnah': Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 397. For Bell, there are strong theological reasons for believing *every* Jew will be saved, and he takes the statement in Romans 11.26a to mean that '*παῖς Ἰσραὴλ*' (as opposed to a remnant) will be saved. See Bell, *Provoked*, p. 139-140.

⁴⁵⁰ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 152.

⁴⁵¹ Bell, *Provoked*, p. 152.

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Pharaoh who lived before the event of the cross and the reconciling word of the Gospel (cf. Rom. 9.17). Paul's point is therefore that God has predestined Jews and Gentiles to damnation in order that he may have mercy on both Jews and Gentiles.⁴⁵²

In this situation, and even though some suggest that “παῖς Ἰσραὴλ” means that ‘each and every Israelite without exception’ will be saved, I disagree. This does not make sense of Paul's sorrow and pain in this same context, and while this view is attractive and debatable, it fails to account for many of Paul's statements in Romans (cf. Rom. 3.23; 5.1; 8.1; 9.6-7) Furthermore, it does not fit many other Pauline texts in the New Testament which make no distinction between races (e.g. 1 Cor. 6.9-10; Gal. 5.21; Eph. 5.5). Instead I assume Morris's solution, which I think be more moderate. He says, ‘There is considerable agreement that *all Israel* does not mean “each and every Israelite without exception”; the term refers to the nation as a whole. It is used in this way in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Sam. 12.1; 2 Chron. 12.1; Dan. 9.11).’⁴⁵³

Particularly instructive is a passage in the Mishnah which assures the reader that ‘all Israelites have a share in the world to come’ (cf. Sanh. 10.1) and then goes on to give a considerable list of Israelites who ‘have no share in the world to come’,⁴⁵⁴ sometimes mentioning classes such as those who deny the resurrection of the dead and sometimes individuals such as Jeroboam and Balaam. Clearly, “all Israel” indicates

⁴⁵² Bell, *Provoked*, p. 152.

⁴⁵³ Morris, *Romans*, p. 420. Italics author's own.

⁴⁵⁴ Danby, *Mishnah*, p. 397.

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the people as a whole, but it leaves open the possibility that there may be exceptions.

So much is clear.⁴⁵⁵

In sum, it is left for the reader to answer how Paul envisages the salvation of Israel, through conversion or through some other way independent of Christ. Paul certainly does not speak of a conversion of Israel in the sense that after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, the gospel is preached to Israel, and Israel comes to believe. But as Hofius rightly points out, 'that does not mean a "Sonderweg" of salvation for Israel. The nation will not be saved independent of the Gospel and independent of faith, salvation for Israel, as for the Gentiles, is through faith.'⁴⁵⁶

Particularly, universalism voids the significance of the cross of Christ. Similarly, salvation by any other means than Christ gives the impression that Israel lacks nothing and therefore has no need of the gospel, but the main point in Paul's argument is not about universal salvation but God's justification of both Jews and Gentiles *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *propter Christum*. Finally, the depth of God's plan to save the world is expressed in the final hymn of praise (cf. Rom. 11.33-36).

⁴⁵⁵ Morris, *Romans*, pp. 412-420.

⁴⁵⁶ Otfried Hofius (ed.), 'Wort Gottes und Glaube bei Paulus', in *Paulusstudien* (Wunt 51, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2002), p. 318.

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7.8. A distinctive view on Israel

Having considered several eschatological perspectives, I will now present a distinctive view which will bring me to an appropriate starting point for the remainder of this study. In this section, I will express a view which understands the role of Israel in a slightly different way to those already considered. Here, I will propose an intermediate approach, which embraces both viewpoints discussed above but which also incorporates elements which neither view appears to have considered.

To begin with, 'Rom. 7–8 refutes any notion of a two nation reading. What Paul had in view was not Christ's covenant nation replacing Moses' covenant nation; nor was it both nations living concurrently.'⁴⁵⁷ For Paul rather, it was one nation, which had taken part in the fulfilment of the Mosaic covenant by Christ's birth (cf. Rom. 9.5), which had died with Christ (cf. Rom. 7.4; 9.22) and which had been resurrected through Christ (cf. Rom. 6.5; 8.10; 11:15). Therefore, Israel, with its blessings and election had remained the same but had shed the constraints of the Old Covenant (κατὰ σάρκα) and found new life in the New Covenant (κατὰ πνεῦμα),⁴⁵⁸ becoming 'the Israel of God' (cf. Gal. 6.16).

For John Barclay, Romans 9.6 describes only one Israel. In this case, the question remains, *who belongs* to this one Israel? A straight-forward reading would suggest that the first Israel refers to the Jews, not all of whom will acknowledge Jesus as their

⁴⁵⁷ Wright, *What St Paul*, pp. 140-42.

⁴⁵⁸ Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Jewish People', p. 195.

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Messiah (cf. Rom. 10.16), and thereby dying to the Mosaic covenant and being resurrected into the Christ covenant (i.e. the second Israel of Romans 9.6). This is broadly Wright's view,⁴⁵⁹ but as seen in the previous section, this reading becomes problematic when we take into consideration Paul's subsequent assertion that 'all Israel will be saved' (cf. Rom. 11.25).

Dunn thus suggests that a better reading is that it reveals the 'now-and not-yet' of God's apocalyptic activity.⁴⁶⁰ However, in the opinion of Hedley, this also feels inadequate, since the sense of there being two distinct nations, either side of a covenantal veil, prevails.⁴⁶¹ For him what fits closer within the context of the whole letter, is to understand it the other way around: the first Israel is the resurrected, Christ-centred Israel, which consists of *more* than only ethnic Israel. Indeed, the resurrected Israel has the capacity to contain *all humanity*.⁴⁶²

In fact, Theodore Pulcini contends for a reversal of the Jewish doctrine of election by Paul, arguing that God's word has not failed (cf. Rom. 9.6a) because Israel's identity has always been established by entering into the covenant made with Abraham (cf.

⁴⁵⁹ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 238.

⁴⁶⁰ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, p. 509.

⁴⁶¹ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*. This is not, however, Dunn's final conclusion, please see pp. 519, 531.

⁴⁶² Manfred Hedley, *Romans 9–11 and Israel in the New Covenant* (Westminster: Westminster Theological Centre, 2013), p. 4.

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Rom. 9.7-13), defined by righteousness,⁴⁶³ inherited through God's promise (cf. Rom. 9.8), and preserved by God's mercy (cf. Rom. 9.16).⁴⁶⁴

Based on this, for Hedley:

The "children of the promise" are therefore the true "descendants of Israel" (cf. Rom. 9.6b), and will receive God's mercy (cf. Rom. 9.14-29) as they live righteously by faith (cf. Rom. 9.30-33). In so doing, they have died to the Mosaic covenant (κατὰ σάρκα) and been raised into Israel's resurrected body (κατὰ πνεῦμα), to live by the Christ covenant. Finally, Paul uses his own experiences as evidence of his argument, referring to himself as 'a saved Israelite who, though a Benjaminite κατὰ σάρκα, is first and foremost a descendent of Abraham' (cf. Rom. 11.1-2a).⁴⁶⁵

7.9. Israel's covenant commission

It has been shown throughout the course of this thesis that the concept of covenant was deeply rooted within election in Jewish thought,⁴⁶⁶ but I argued that Paul was a critic of Judaism's association with the Mosaic covenant, especially their legalistic observation of the law. My own view opposes the New Perspective on Paul,⁴⁶⁷ which

⁴⁶³ Theodore Pulcini, 'In Right Relationship with God: Present Experience and Future Fulfilment: An Exegesis of Romans 5:1-11', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 36 (1992), pp. 61-85, particularly p. 66.

⁴⁶⁴ John M. Barclay makes a very similar observation, but he insists even more on God's mercy, and that humans will not being involved at all: see Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Jewish People', p. 197.

⁴⁶⁵ Hedley, *Romans 9-11 and Israel*, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁶ Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), pp. 102-109.

⁴⁶⁷ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 422-23. The NPP understand first-century Judaism in terms of 'covenantal nomism': Torah observance was not soteriological bureaucracy, but a response

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implied that Paul's disapproval of 'works of the Law' (cf. Rom. 3.20, 28; Gal. 2.16; 3.2, etc.) is not against general Torah observance, but against using the Torah as a dividing line between God's people and 'the rest'.⁴⁶⁸

Also, James Dunn's view is by no means a consensual one,⁴⁶⁹ and though I implied I am inclined towards a covenant-centred faith consistent with Torah observance, it should not imply a sort of soteriological bureaucracy by the Jews of Paul's time; it should be viewed as a pointer toward the New Covenant understanding. Paul's treatment of Israel in Romans 9–11, for example, reinforces this view.

Far from criticising a covenant response, then, Paul uses it as the cornerstone of his assessment of Israel, reframing it within the story of God, which has led to the victory of Christ.⁴⁷⁰ Paul's revelation of a resurrected Israel is not to say the Mosaic covenant is bad, or obsolete, but rather it is simply the imperfect covenant. From the very beginning of his Letter to the Romans and throughout Galatians, Paul identifies the Abrahamic faith covenant as the primary promise of God. I must therefore take a moment to consider this covenant carefully:

to God's covenant with them. God loved Israel, so He chose this nation to walk in His ways, in accordance with the Torah.

⁴⁶⁸ Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, pp. 105-7.

⁴⁶⁹ Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, p. 42.

⁴⁷⁰ Harink makes a similar point, though with some different conclusions. See Douglas Harink, *Paul Among the Postliberals*, pp. 161-68.

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As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your offspring after you. And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God (cf. Gen. 17.4-8).

On this issue, we need to be aware of some considerations. God calls this an 'everlasting covenant' (cf. Gen. 17.7). This brings to mind Galatians 3, where Paul contrasts the two covenants of Moses (law) and Abraham (promise), similar in many ways to Romans 9-11. Here again, Paul identifies with Abraham, but on the basis that the Mosaic covenant was temporary 'until Christ came' (cf. Gal. 3.23-29). Paul, therefore, connects a straight line between the Abrahamic covenant and the Christ covenant, with the Mosaic covenant given to hold God's people to his side in the meantime.

There is a noticeable similarity between the Abrahamic covenant and the first covenant between God and humanity (cf. Gen. 1.26-28). Both promises to Abraham imply a commission that flows from a covenant relationship. The first is to be fruitful, the second to possess the land. Genesis 1.26-28 is the same. Based on an intimate relationship in which humans are the image (i.e. εἰκόνα, LXX) of God (depicting God living within humanity by his Spirit),⁴⁷¹ humanity is to be fruitful and subdue the land. In

⁴⁷¹For two sources on this interpretation, see Crispin Fletcher-Louis, 'God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation', in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (ed. S. Gathercole and T. D. Alexander; Carlisle: Paternoster,

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each case, the covenant is not about what God's people *receive*, but what they *do*. By joining the puzzle together, we have a vision of the resurrected Israel, called back to its Abrahamic roots in order to return to its original relationship with God, bearing His image in the world and expressing an intimate and powerful relationship with God by His Spirit.

This type of framework is often portrayed in Pauline letters: Jesus is the εἰκόνα of God (cf. 2 Cor. 4.4; Col. 1.15), Christians are εἰκόνα of Christ (cf. Col. 3.10) and therefore, the εἰκόνα of God (cf. 1 Cor. 11.7; 2 Cor. 3.18). Paul appeals to this directly in his discussion of the life in the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8) where Christians are called to be confirmed as the εἰκόνα of his Son (cf. Rom. 8.29). This is firmly rooted in Rom. 9–11 in the form of the Abrahamic promise.⁴⁷² Looking back to the NPP's view that first-century Jews lived a life of *covenantal nomism*, we can now clearly see Paul's criticism. In fact, this attitude embodied a faithful response to the wrong covenant.

Indeed, a faithful response to the right covenant—that of Abraham and Christ—might better be understood in terms of *covenantal eikonism*, in which Israel, having

2004), pp. 81-100, especially pp. 83-88, and Freddy Hedley, *The God of Page One: Rediscovering God's Identity and Ours* (Westminster: Emblem, 2012), pp. 161-188.

⁴⁷² John Barclay argues a similar case, but from the perspective of new creation (looking back to Genesis) instead of resurrection (looking forward to Revelation). Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism and the Jewish People', pp. 196-98.

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died to the old covenant which is now fulfilled (cf. Rom. 10.1-4; Gal. 3.23-29),⁴⁷³ is resurrected to live as the εικόνα of God: carrying the Spirit, creating life, and taking kingdom authority over the land. Horrell comments on covenantal nomism: 'The appropriate response for those who are members of this covenant people is to live in obedience to God's Law.'⁴⁷⁴ We might speak of covenantal eikonism in this same manner, so Pauline thought demands an appropriate response for those who are members of resurrected Israel to live in obedience to God's commission to bear His image.

7.10. Israel's assured salvation

How, then, does Paul succeed in dealing with Israel in terms of God's promise to Abraham, and the corresponding commission to live a life of covenantal eikonism, despite his acclamation that at some point 'all Israel will be saved' (cf. Rom. 11.26)?

Both Dunn and Wright express opposing views in relation to Romans 11.26, but in spite of these differences, Dunn tends to assume the viewpoints of Das and Bell. For example: 'There can be little doubt that by "Israel" ... Paul means the historic people of that name'.⁴⁷⁵ Wright, however, insists: 'There is ... no justification for taking Rom. 11,

⁴⁷³ Horrell, *An Introduction*, p. 98.

⁴⁷⁴ Horrel, *An introduction*, p. 93.

⁴⁷⁵ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, 527. This is supported by Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Jewish People', p. 198 and Bruce C. Corley, 'Jews, the Future, and God (Romans 9-11)', *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (1976): pp. 42-56, particularly pp. 53-56.

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as a whole or in its parts, as a prediction of a large-scale, last-minute, salvation of Jews'.⁴⁷⁶ Wright's use of Romans 11.26 argues that πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ refers to New Covenant Israel, precluding Jews who deny the risen Jesus. However, Paul makes sure to clarify that the Israel throughout Rom. 11 is indeed Jewish Israel.⁴⁷⁷

However, Paul's differentiation between Israel kata sarka and Israel kata pneuma points in the direction that he understands them within the context of the two covenants he has presented us with thus far. Indeed, Paul's approach in Romans 10.5-6 defines his soteriology by contrasting Moses' covenant of righteousness with that of faith (i.e. the Abraham/Christ covenant). In doing so, he paves the way for the arguments of chapter 11, where each covenant is contrasted in antithesis.

As seen before, Paul presents the Christ covenant, covering resurrected Israel (κατὰ πνεῦμα), which he likens to an olive tree in which natural (i.e. Jewish) and grafted (i.e. Gentile) branches come together to share the holiness of the root, which is Christ.⁴⁷⁸ This portrayal of unity is characteristic of Paul's salvific discourse (e.g. Eph. 2.11-22) and it condenses his view of resurrected Israel without a glitch, both in terms of election (cf. Rom. 11.17, 21, 23), and because their commission to covenantal

⁴⁷⁶ Wright, *The Climax*, 251. This is supported by Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 472.

⁴⁷⁷ Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Jewish People', p. 198.

⁴⁷⁸ Barclay, 'Paul, Judaism, and the Jewish People', p. 198. It is also tempting to connect this to Jesus' vine identification in John 15.1-11.

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eikonism ensures their place is sustained by God's faithfulness, sovereignty, fidelity, and unchangeable character (cf. Rom. 11.20).⁴⁷⁹

Thereafter Paul introduces the Mosaic covenant, which is more complex. Hedley says that, 'despite Paul's agonising (cf. Rom. 9.1-3; 10:1), the first sign of imminent good news for Israel κατὰ σάρκα is Rom. 9.19-24, in which Paul challenges ethnic Israel by echoing the tone of God's words to Job' (cf. Job 38.1; 40.2).⁴⁸⁰ For Horrell, 'the purpose of God's interrogation of Job was to draw him from unbelief and apparent rejection back to belief and acceptance, in order to restore him and bless him with a new life (cf. Job 42.7-17). Paul's criticism of the potter's clay (cf. Rom. 9.20-21) performs the same function: in the midst of unbelief and apparent rejection, Israel will recognise God's faithfulness',⁴⁸¹ and will find their faith and be restored with resurrected life.

This promise of restoration finds its highest expression in Rom 11.26, 'all Israel will be saved'. But how can this be, if they deny Christ? Paul's answer is immediate: they will not deny Christ! For Jesus will return (cf. Rom. 11.27) in the form Judaism is expecting of their Messiah: as exalted king (cf. Jer. 23.5); military leader (cf. Isa. 11.2-5);

⁴⁷⁹ Richard B. Hays, 'The Letter to the Galatians: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections', in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* (ed. L. E. Keck; XI; 12 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), pp. 181-348; 239-40. Also consider James 2.14-18.

⁴⁸⁰ Hedley, *Romans 9–11 and Israel*, p. 9.

⁴⁸¹ Horrell, *An Introduction*, p. 100.

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and judge (Mic. 4.3). In the meantime, because God's covenant is for all humanity, Israel's heart has been temporarily hardened (cf. Rom. 11.7).

This achieves two goals in God's salvation story. Firstly, Gentiles can now resurrect into Israel given the expression of the Abrahamic covenant and because the Mosaic covenant has been set aside. Secondly, this will stimulate Israel's jealousy in preparation for the coming of Christ (cf. Rom. 11.11). Consequently, when the Israelites see the Messiah, they will not hold back, they will cross the bridge from the Mosaic to the Christ covenant.

In this way, the apparent contradiction between Romans 9.6 and 11.26 is resolved. The Israel of 11.26 is actually the resurrected Israel of Romans 9.6b, as Wright asserts, but it includes the fullness of Jewish Israel, as others assert. This view, then, is a combination of both views exposed in the previous chapter: a single Israel is presented, but at the same time it allows room for the 'now-and not-yet' of God's apocalyptic activity, defended by James Dunn et al.

7.11. Biblical precedents

There are some biblical precedents upon which my preferred approach may rest. For example, Matthew proposes a universal mission which ought to be developed by Israel in relation to the life and ministry of Jesus. Accordingly, Matthew's depiction of Jesus as Israel's Messiah who has come to reverse the nations' predicament of sinfulness (cf. Mt. 1.21) and 'lostness' (cf. Mt. 10.6), is reflected in his calling of the twelve tribes of Israel (cf. Mt. 2.6; 4.25; 10.6; 15.24). Thus, if the people of Israel

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received Jesus as their Messiah, the long-standing hope for restoration would have come to fruition.

Nevertheless, as seen in the analogy between Jesus and Paul's ministry, Jesus was confronted by outright opposition from the time of his birth. Not only does he meet with hostility from the leadership groups, but also by people from his hometown and eventually the whole people of Israel (cf. Mt. 13.54-58; 23.36; 27.25). Owing to Israel's failure, she has to suffer divine punishment at a national level. In particular, the evangelist connects Israel's rejection of Jesus and the withdrawal of the divine presence from the temple (cf. Mt. 23.29-38; 27.3-10), as well as the destruction of this sanctum itself (cf. Mt. 26.61).

As a result, Israel's predicament has become even worse after rejecting Jesus than it was before he came, as declared in Matthew 12.43-45. Jesus clearly applied the parable to Israel's rejection of his presence among them, fulfilling John 1.11-13: 'He came to His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave to them authority to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God.'

Without a shadow of doubt, Matthew bears the ironic message that Israel's rejection of Jesus by putting Him to death broadens the opportunity of forgiveness, offered initially to Israel alone (cf. Jn 1.12), and then to all humanity (cf. Mt. 26.28). As the opportunity to hear the gospel is expanded from Israel (cf. Mt. 10.5-6) to all nations

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(cf. Mt. 28.19-20), the opportunity *to be forgiven* is also broadened from Israel to all humanity. Given this parallelism, the role played by Israel's failure in the latter strongly suggests that there is also a close connection between Israel's rejection of Jesus and the missionary expansion to all nations in this gospel.

Likewise, a similar view is also applied in the parable of the wicked tenants (cf. Mt. 21.33-46). In it, the vineyard is taken away from the rebellious tenants and given to an ἔθνος bearing fruits for the kingdom of God, which from this time forward is transferred to the ἔθνος, namely, the faithful Christians of the Church. Since such a trans-ethnic body of faithful Christians emerge as a result of the universal mission, the idea underlines that Israel's rejection of Jesus gives rise to the universal proclamation of the gospel, through which faithful believers of all nations will be gathered into the Kingdom of God.

Notwithstanding Israel's failure, and though for Matthew the salvation of all Israel is unattainable, the nation is expected to be established anew at the end of the age (cf. Mt. 23.39). Though it seems paradoxical, and since Israel is expected to be re-established not within history but in the eschatological age Matthew recalls, it would not be possible unless the universal mission is accomplished, otherwise, there would be no end, no return of the Son of Man and no establishment of the nation in the eschatological Kingdom of God. Thus reciprocity is in view; Israel's failure brings about the missionary expansion to all nations, but in the same manner the universal mission itself hastens the *eschaton* for the revealing of Israel.

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The quotation as reproduced in Matthew 21.33-46 derives from Psalm 118.22-23, as quoted from the LXX, for this passage faithfully renders the Hebrew original⁴⁸² and explains the reasons of Israel's failure. Hendriksen recalls, 'they had utterly rejected not only the servants but even the son! They had done it in order to enrich themselves. The soon had gone now, so they thought, so his inheritance would be theirs. Jesus surprises them by reminding them about this passage from the Psalms. Here a very similar transaction had been described: builders had rejected a stone meaning that leaders, prominent men, had rejected, despised, and scoffed at Israel.'⁴⁸³

This same Israel had become in a very true sense the head of the nations (cf. Psalm 147.20), but it had not happened because of its power—on the contrary, by God's sovereign will this wonderful thing had been accomplished. However, adds Hendriksen, 'Jesus now shows that the words of Psalm 118 reach their ultimate fulfilment in the owner's son, that is, in himself, the true Israel.'⁴⁸⁴ What then about the nation, namely, the old unconverted Israel that rejected the Messiah? The Messianic sentence was peremptory, all the privileges and special standing in the eyes of God which this people had enjoyed in the old dispensation, to which Jesus' words and ministry had been added, 'will be taken away'. In reaction to this rejection, 'a nation producing its fruit, a

⁴⁸² William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), p. 785.

⁴⁸³ Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 785.

⁴⁸⁴ Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 786.

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church international and multi-ethnic, gathered from both Jews and Gentiles would come into scene.⁴⁸⁵

In this sense I am in agreement with Wright; Jesus is the personification of Israel in himself, and in whom Jews and Gentiles are grafted in. That said, I am reminded that my disagreement with Wright relates to his view of Jesus being portrayed as Israel within a replacement theological framework, thus precluding Israel κατὰ σάρκα from playing a role within God's eschatological agenda. For him, as no one could ever fulfil the Old Testament law integrally, Jesus took this role upon himself, and as true Jew brought into completion what should have been Israel's role. Arguably, Jesus posits himself as the Israel of God, assumes spiritual aspects pertaining to Israel, and dethrones the nation from its status as God chosen people. As already discussed Wright claims that, the rights of Israel were transferred to the Messiah and His people.

In my understanding, however, Jesus personifies Israel as the perfect man, the role-model and second Adam, the only one capable of meeting the requirements of the law on behalf of Jews and Gentiles. In other words, in Him the humanity God aimed for in the Garden of Eden reaches its apogee. In Him the Christian Church, formed of Jews and Gentiles, becomes the universal family intended by God in the Book of Genesis. Paul's grafting-in terminology thus adopts a spiritual connotation in relation to the Church as the Body of Christ in which both Jews and Gentiles are brought together to

⁴⁸⁵ Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 786.

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form a unity (cf. Eph. 2.10-22). It is in this way that Paul conceives the true Israel of God, as far as Galatians 6.16 is concerned, for example.

In addition to this, 1 Peter 2.4-10 reinforces the point and his citations of Psalm 118 and Exodus 19.6, for example, similarly underline these ideas. In this passage, Peter tends to build his thought through the use of a sequence of prophetic references which he then applies to the conception of God's people in a new way. That is, in a way consistent to this new and recently inaugurated era. However, instead of utilising an Olive tree motif, in keeping with this new understanding of God's people as a dwelling of the divine, the imagery changes toward a construction oriented reference with his use of the *chief corner stone*.

The principle applied by Him is the same as that applied by Paul. The cornerstone of a building, in addition to being part of the foundation and therefore supporting the superstructure, determines the lay of the wall and crosswalls throughout. Such is the relation of Christ to His church (cf. Isa. 28.16; Mt. 21.22; Acts 4.11; Rom. 9.33; Eph. 2.20). As the chief corner stone He sustains the building.

In conclusion, the respective motifs (e.g. building, bride, body, olive tree, vineyard) used by the New Testament writers describe the relationship or interaction between Christ and the Church. Nonetheless, while Matthew attributes Jesus' rejection to pride and religiosity on the part of the builders, Paul and Peter attribute this to God's sovereign will (cf. Rom. 9.20-33; 1 Peter 2.8).

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By way of conclusion, this view solves several inherent eschatological hurdles:

[1] Replacement theology whereby Israel's rights are transferred to the Church unconditionally; [2] the dual-covenant theology whereby two nations of Israel are seen as separated entities carrying the same blessings, i.e. the question of continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the Christian Church; [3] lastly, whether there is one covenant in place, or two, thus nullifying any universalism along with its view that salvation can be attained through both covenants.

In the above view the Church assumes the role of Israel of God and uses the prerogatives of Israel for a divine purpose in time (cf. Rom. 9.4-6), nullifies the dual-covenant theology (thus solving the continuity versus discontinuity dilemma), and removes the clash between the covenants since they meet together to become a single unity (please compare the similarity between Jer. 31.31-33 and Heb. 8.8-13). Even J.C. Beker's view is not contradicted.⁴⁸⁶ In this way, this view does not blot out the ethnic specificity of Jews and Gentiles because the 'grafting' in Pauline thought is understood as embracing both people in a spiritual sense, however, their ethnic status still intActs

Conclusion

Behind all the critical questions, I adopt the following conclusion: as with Richard Bell, I assume that the theological basis for the jealousy of Israel is not that the covenant privileges have been transferred from Israel to the Christian Church, but rather that they have been extended. Definitely, Israel will not be saved independent of

⁴⁸⁶ Please, see footnote n404.

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the gospel and independent of faith. Salvation for Israel, as it is for the Gentiles, is through faith.⁴⁸⁷

This is shown clearly in 11.23, ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιμείνωσι τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ, ἐγκεντρισθήσονται, because πίστις and σωτηρία in Romans are inextricably intertwined. Consequently, Israel must come to faith to be saved. How then does Israel come to faith? Israel comes to salvation through the gospel, which she receives from the coming Christ at the *parousia*. "All Israel" as a whole will therefore come to faith, as Paul himself came to faith—through a direct meeting with the risen Christ.

Ultimately, God does not guarantee salvation to Jews on the basis of external qualification or ethnic background. Ultimately, the nation as a whole will—by faith—be grafted back into the olive tree: Jesus. This is the summation of the term *mystery* announced by Paul, or as one wish of Paul's gospel. In sum, Paul says that the restoration of Israel will bring resurrection to the world (cf. Rom. 11.15). In other words, Paul was certain that there was a future for Israel as a nation, and he looked forward to the day when Israel would be received into fullness of blessing as a whole.

I followed the same reasoning beginning with the observation that Paul's relationship with Israel was marked with conflict, but in spite of all opposition he faced, he kept his conviction that Jewish Israel still lay at the heart of God's plan. This was not

⁴⁸⁷ Faith, it should be noted, is not the condition for salvation but the mode of salvation, i.e. salvation is not *propter fidem* but *per fidem*. See Hofius, *Wort Gottes und Glaube bei Paulus*, pp. 172-173.

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unqualified good news, however, because God's hope for His people was not that they rest on the assurance of future salvation, but that they step into a life of present Christ-centred righteousness. Paul's message sparked controversy at the time and it continues to be an essential challenge to all God's people today.

The true blessing of Israel's election is not in the things to come, but in the calling to be in the image of God—carrying God's presence in the world, and taking part in his mission for human and cosmic restoration. This is God's highest calling, and the peak of human existence. In this respect, resurrected Israel cannot afford to rest on its laurels. Jewish Israel remains a cause for distress—in need of discipleship—because even though they will stand with God eventually, it is what they are missing now that really matters.

Chapter Eight: Priestly Service

8.1. Introduction

As previously mentioned, defining who exactly Israel and the Christian Church are relevant to this thesis. Given that *relationship with God* is the main theme of this thesis, it is important to be clear about the various controversies in Pauline studies outlined above, particularly as they relate to ecclesiology. The previous section discussed the Church being a replacement of Israel in terms of extended privileges, and for a determinate purpose in God's divine economy rather than a replacement theology in which Israel's privileges are transferred unto it indeterminately and unconditionally.⁴⁸⁸

Having taken into account the previous discussion and the biblical precedents presented, I assume that the Christian Church—figuratively portrayed in the image of olive tree—is the Israel of God, i.e. the continuation of Old Testament Israel, with all its privileges and rights (cf. Gal. 6.16). This depiction is reinforced by other portrayals, where Jesus plays the vital role together with the people: he is also the head of the body, the chief corner stone, the bridegroom and the true vine (cf. Jn 15.1-8; Rom. 11.16-32; 1 Cor. 3.9; Eph. 2.21; 4.12; 5.22-33; Col. 1.24; Gal. 6.16). Interestingly,

⁴⁸⁸ In my view the three previous chapters fall into the following three sections: (1) Paul begins with the creation of Israel (cf. Rom. 9.1-3); (2) as a counterpart, in the central section he deals with the divine rejection of Israel and its failure to submit to the Word of God which has come to fulfilment in Christ (cf. Rom. 9.14-10.21); and (3) he then returns to where he left off, describing the salvation of Israel by the promise of God alone (cf. Rom. 11.1-36).

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together, these portrayals speak of the symbiosis between Jesus and His people for the spiritual welfare of the whole but also for the benefit of those outside their circle of action, i.e. for the world. This will be our next discussion.

8.2. Romans 12.1-8

Having reached this triumphant crescendo—*restoration* by God’s mercy—Paul turns his attention to the practicalities of living in resurrected Israel, and immediately he adds to them that which was missing before: the priestly service *λατρείαν* (cf. Rom. 12.1). We saw in the previous section how Paul drew an almost exact correlation between the blessings of Israel *κατὰ σάρκα* (cf. Rom. 9.4) and *κατὰ πνεῦμα* (cf. Rom. 8), but it is only after the fullness of God’s goodness—the renewed Abrahamic covenant—has been unveiled that he commissions them to *λατρείαν*. This *λατρείαν*, I understand, is characterised by kingdom authority (cf. Rom. 12.4-8; 12.21; 13.12; 15.19), life-giving relationships (cf. Rom. 12.9-20; 13.8-10; 14.1-21), and connection to God (cf. Rom. 14.17; 15.5-6, 13): the hallmarks of the image of God, which Paul himself displays (cf. Rom. 15.14-19).

Certainly the Epistle to the Romans speaks about a unity in the diversity which is ‘programmed’ by God to achieve His goals; Jews and Gentiles are made into one people to accomplish His divine will. At this point, *λατρείαν* is at the heart of our understanding of relationship in Pauline thought. To begin with, the term is listed in the seven Old Testament privileges extended to the new community, which are *υιοθεσία*, *δόξα*, *διαθήκαι*, *νομοθεσία*, *λατρεία*, *ἐπαγγελία*, *πατέρες* (cf. Rom. 9.4). But before discussing the term in detail, I give a brief background of the facts, which for Paul

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prevented Israel κατὰ σάρκα from coming to terms with her reluctance to accept the offer of the gospel. In my opinion, Romans 12.1 implies a Pauline admonition alerting the new community to grasp his teachings fully to avoid falling into the same trap. Paul lists three central motifs in Romans which led his people astray.

First of all, Israel's rejection of Jesus is the 'stumbling against the stone of offense' which led the nation to experience a spiritual exile (cf. Rom. 9. 33). Secondly, the believing community of Jews and Gentiles—referred to by Paul as 'a provocation to jealousy by a nation which is not'—should not be understood as a reference to Gentiles alone, but to a multi-ethnic community of remnant Jews and Gentiles (cf. Rom. 9.24-26, 27, 29; 10.19). Lastly, the servitude to which Israel κατὰ σάρκα was subjected was due its failure to believe the gospel (cf. Rom. 11.7-9).

In short, Israel's attempt to establish its own righteousness in its pursuit of the law and its exclusive table-fellowship depicts a confident nation, proud of its religious heritage. For this reason, Paul is perfectly aware that the exile continues, as his allusion to Israel's disobedience in the diaspora in Romans 2.24 shows (cf. Isa. 52.5; Ezek. 36.20). Therefore, this, added to a guilty conscience caused by the law's enforcement of sin, led the nation to misinterpret Paul's intention in Romans, i.e. that the idea of a cultic service and the observance of the law had been superseded and fulfilled by the New Covenant inaugurated in Christ.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁹ Seifrid, *Christ, our Righteousness*, p. 153.

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Seifrid depicts the process as follows:

In the first portion of his argument in Romans, Paul recounts the formation of Israel as *creature verbi* (cf. Rom. 9.1-13). Despite his grief over Israel's rejection of the Gospel, Paul knows that the Word of God has not failed. His sorrow therefore has its limit (cf. Rom. 9.6). As his subsequent argument shows, the benefits of election he names belong to Israel in the form of promises (cf. Rom. 9.4-5). The *sonship* granted to Israel in its redemption from Egypt foreshadows the adoption to sonship (*υιοθεσία*) at the redemption of the body (cf. Rom. 8.23). The glory of God which followed Israel in the wilderness had as its goal the glory (*δόξα*) of God which manifested in the resurrection of the dead (cf. Rom. 5.2; 6.4; 8.18, 21; 9.23). The giving of the law (*διαθήκαι*) anticipated the sending of Christ (cf. Rom. 6-8). Israel's worship in the wilderness pointed forward to the gathering of the Gentiles and remnant Jews and their priestly (*λατρεία*) service to God (cf. Rom. 12.1-2; 15.16). Over against the fathers (*πατέρες*) to whom the promises (*ἐπαγγελίαι*) were given stands the Christ in whom they are fulfilled. In other words, Israel's history itself is promissory. Consequently, the gifts granted to Israel do not come to fulfillment in accord to fallen humanity (i.e. according to the flesh: *κατὰ σάρκα*), but in opposition to it (cf. Rom. 9.3, 5, 8; 11.14; cf. Gal. 4.21-31). The nation exists only as it is determined by the Word of God which created it. Not all of Israel is 'Israel' (cf. Rom. 9.6). Not all of Abraham's 'seed' are children of God. The calling of 'seed' takes place according to the pattern found in Isaac, who was born of the word of promise (cf. Gal. 4.7-9). The 'children of the flesh' are excluded.⁴⁹⁰

With the exception of the covenants (*διαθήκαι*) which can fused with the promises (*ἐπαγγελίαι*) — this list by Seifrid contains six of the seven privileges pertaining to Israel *κατὰ σάρκα*, which are extended to Israel *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, i.e. the Israel of God (cf. Gal. 6.16). As the saying goes, there is no cause without effect and no effect without cause. Having presented the reasons of Israel's failure, Paul and the author of Hebrews reveal the reason by which they refused to accept the good news of Christ. However, there is an obvious and inherent tension in their thinking.

On the one hand, Paul says, 'What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had before prepared to glory' (cf. Rom. 9.22-24). On the other hand,

⁴⁹⁰ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, p. 153.

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he retorts, 'Why? Because it was not of faith, but as it were by the works of the Law' (cf. Rom. 9.32). The author to the Hebrews presents a different argument but follows the same line of thought: 'For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it' (cf. Heb. 4.2 [KJV]). Admittedly, Paul's own statement is reinforced by the writer to the Hebrews and with little variation they agree between them: on one side, Paul sees this rejection as part of God's plan, and on the other side, both statements attribute it to a lax attitude concerning faith on the part of the Hebrew people.

That said, one may ask, what in fact caused this? Again, John 6.29 may help here: 'Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent', and, 'You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And they are the ones witnessing of Me, and you will not come to Me that you might have life' (cf. Jn 5.39). As mentioned above, the duality which exists between faith and works inseparably links the two conceptions together,⁴⁹¹ and in Jesus' thought, πίστις and ἔργον are equivalent to σωτηρία, and the presence of this threefold element is inextricably entwined within Pauline thought.

Thus, for both Jesus and Paul the scriptural evidence for faith was impressively conclusive for any sincere and faithful Jew who sought it objectively and honestly. In virtue of this, the reason is not that they were unable to believe, but that they refused

⁴⁹¹ Faith, it should be noted, is not the condition for salvation but the mode of salvation, i.e. salvation is not *propter fidem* but *per fidem*.

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to believe. In simple terms, the good news message had been announced and an opportunity had been given, but it was not welcomed (cf. Acts 2.9; Rom. 10.14-18). With this in mind, one may ask: on which basis did Jesus and Paul build their doctrine? Should we not reason that Jesus' thought and Paul's systematic construal relied on the Hebrew Scriptures to convey their message, or did they also rely on the historical, cultural, religious and environmental factors of their time to strengthen their argument? The answer for this is yes, but not without caution.

Paraphrasing Walter Kaiser; 'objectively, Jesus' teaching is even more straightforward in this regard, he quoted nothing else but exclusively the scripture collections of his days to substantiate his ministry. As such, for Kaiser, Jesus' ministry and deeds must be judged on the basis of these same Scriptures for those who believe, and cautiously for scholars in order to restrict the scope of Jesus' theology to that canon.⁴⁹² Kaiser adds, 'surely an approach to primary sources such as the Quran texts, the Apocryphal collection, the Rabbinic writings, the Nag Hammadi et al, can function as extra sources to pinpoint *historical-critical-religious* and even environmental arguments, but not as definite sources upon which doctrinal basis can be construed.'⁴⁹³

As for me, I share the same viewpoint assumed by Kaiser; treating primary sources as definite sources would definitely seriously and integrally distort the theological purpose and full meaning by which the various contributors of the divine revelation

⁴⁹² Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 16.

⁴⁹³ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 16.

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had consciously and under divine favour argued towards.⁴⁹⁴ Actually, 'Kaiser argues that this would indeed jeopardise the centrality and correlation between the Old Testament and New Testament, in other words, it would imply a sort of ambiguity.'⁴⁹⁵ Basically what Kaiser is driving at is that the thematic line of thought used by Jesus could be impaired by the intromission of that which belonged exclusively to Israel's historical heritage. Hence, the same principle is applicable to Paul et al; as far as the New Testament is concerned, none of its authors used primary sources to construe theology or to establish Christian doctrine.

After all, for Paul, this refusal on the part of his fellow citizens meant a clear denial of the Hebrew Scriptures held so dear by them. Correspondingly, it meant the exile (cf. Rom. 10.19-20), i.e. the image of the exile that stands behind the figure of the olive-tree branches, 'who' were broken off because of their unbelief (cf. Rom. 11.20). It is on account of the gospel, not of some past failure, that God treats the Jewish people as enemies (cf. Rom. 11.28). In spite of Israel's obduracy, Paul finds the 'mystery' of Israel's final salvation in biblical texts which speak of the end of the exile and inauguration of the New Covenant (cf. Isa. 59.20; Ps. 14.7; Jer. 31.33-34).

In the same manner, Paul was capable of viewing Christ's cross as the prophetic moment of freedom from 'exile' for the world (1 Cor. 1.19-21). Romans 8.1-4 lays out this scenario in detail:

⁴⁹⁴ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 16.

⁴⁹⁵ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 16.

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There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. But the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

On this basis, I would argue that in Paul's mind, the New Christian Church, particularly Rome, should attain a good understanding of the term λατρείαν, as well as be able to discern what could prevent the new community (i.e. Israel κατὰ πνεῦμα) from committing the same mistake perpetrated by Israel κατὰ σάρκα., In other words, they should be able to offer the right λατρείαν as δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Taking into consideration the term's meaning, λατρείαν may suggest service paid by a slave or alternatively payment made to someone⁴⁹⁶—in this case to God in Christ. That said, the term λατρείαν may be subject to different interpretations, but two approaches bear a resemblance to each other, albeit whilst remaining distinct.

As instance of this I may cite Robert Jewett, who understands the term as 'an ethic based on righteousness through faith, including a new basis of tolerance within a diverse community, an appropriate response to the "mercies of God", which requires a living sacrifice of bodily service that is not "conformed to this world"'⁴⁹⁷ (cf. Rom. 12.1-2). He goes on, 'The "renewal of the mind" evokes the recovery of righteous rationality, implying a complex of assumptions and mental abilities characteristic of a group rather

⁴⁹⁶ Edward Robinson, *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, 1850), p. 534.

⁴⁹⁷ Jewett, 'Romans', p. 102.

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than an individual. The focus on group decision-making in this introductory paragraph is sharpened by the unequivocal phrasing, “that you (plural) may ascertain what is the will of God”⁴⁹⁸ (cf. Rom. 12.2). In this way, Jewett understands Paul’s use of the term λατρείαν in Romans 12.1-2 within a distinctly ethical framework.

I am not against Jewett’s line of thought as the following context offers a basis to do so (cf. Rom. 12.3-8), but I should also consider two other terms which are an integral part of the preceding text: μεταμορφῶ and νοός, which stand for *transformed* and *mind*. Unquestionably, what Paul is driving at in this session of the epistle revolves around Christian ethic, and certainly there is an ethical issue going on here, but one must not forget what is implicit behind the text itself and in the letter as a whole. Thus I observe a synthesis between an ethical and a spiritual cultic system,⁴⁹⁹ so λατρείαν

⁴⁹⁸ Jewett, ‘Romans’, p. 102.

⁴⁹⁹ Peter Stulhmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), p. 187. At the time of Paul, the catchword ‘reasonable worship of God’ had a special nuance of significance. In the Hellenistic period, the educated pious turned away from the coarse and bloody sacrifices in the temples, considering it more appropriate to honour in the spirit the invisible, spiritual deity. Their prayers were thus the ‘spiritual’ or ‘reasonable’ sacrifice which truly corresponded to the nature of God (e.g. Corp. Herm. 13.18, 21). Philo, and Hellenistic Judaism in general also incorporated this way of thinking. Since with their heavenly praise the angels present to God a bloodless ‘reasonable’ sacrifice (T. Lev. 3.6), in the same way, the Spirit-filled hymns and thanksgivings of the pious on the earth are also the most perfect offering that can be presented to God (Philo, Spec. Leg. 1.272,277). The writings of Paul and 1 Peter (cf. Pet. 2.5) make it clear that this Hellenistic-Jewish way of thinking and expression was then carried over into the New Testament as well.

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could not be paid unless μεταμορφῶ and νοός, or, in other words, unless transformation of the mind was in place. Thus the understanding of the community should be swapped from a law mindset with its rules, ceremonials and ablutions, into a new cultic service paid to God in Christ. In this way, human mediators prefigured in the OT priesthood and the precepts of the Old Testament law had become obsolete for the given purpose.⁵⁰⁰

Obviously, the text uses metaphors to clarify Paul's point in terms of meaning and substance: not be conformed (συσχηματίζεσθε) with this world, or taking the mould, or this world way of thinking, but *transformed* (μεταμορφῶ) from inside out, or to transfigure. Thus, metamorphosis is a term used to explain the transformation of the silkworm into a butterfly, and in Paul's thought, this renewing of mind could only happen through God's Word in the life of the Christian community so they could experience that which is good and pleasing, and the perfect will of God (cf. Rom. 12.2).

⁵⁰⁰ Morris, *Romans*, p. 433. The appeal is that the readers *offer* their bodies as sacrifices, a suggestion whose force would be more obvious to Paul's first readers than to most modern students; first-century people were familiar with offering of sacrifices, unlike twenty-first-century readers. They had stood by their altar and watched as an animal was identified as their own, as it was slain in the ritual manner, its blood manipulated, and the whole or part of the victim burned on the altar and ascended in the frames to the deity they worshipped. To suggest that *they* should be sacrifices was a striking piece of imagery. Paul's verb *offer* could be used of offerings of various kinds (e.g. it is used in Rom. 6.13, 16, 19), but it was also a technical term for the offering of a sacrifice.

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Thus, in contrast to Israel κατὰ σάρκα, the new multi-ethnic Israel κατὰ πνεῦμα should embrace a new life style, which would abolish the former model of relationship—where servanthood was understood as based on the Old Testament law requirements—to be replaced with a new concept of relationship with God, based on fatherhood by faith in Christ (cf. Mt. 6.9-13). This was their worst paradigm. Phillips says that, ‘the foundations of Judaism of Paul’s time were laid—the God-given religious system of the Hebrew people, all centring on the Tabernacle, the sacrifices, and the priesthood.’⁵⁰¹ Consequently, this new Pauline concept of relationship in Jesus was seen as a travesty for them. Paul’s counterparts, then, misunderstood Jesus’ life and ministry, depicting it as a spiritual insurrection going on in Israel.

Furthermore, the Jewish view of God certainly also contributed to this rejection. Hans Küng depicts the Word of God in Judaism as ‘a kind of mediator between God and human Jews understand God as “pure spirit” who is totally other than human, as a consequence of this they could not accept that God could take on a human body in the incarnation as explained in John 1.1’.⁵⁰² It infers that, ‘all the proclamation of Christ as the Word incarnate has repressed this notion in Jewish theology.’⁵⁰³ Küng summarizes, ‘the Jewish tradition has always held unshakeably to a basic truth of Jewish faith, than

⁵⁰¹ John Phillips, *Exploring the World of the Jew* (John Phillips Commentary Series; Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1992), p. 16

⁵⁰² Hans Küng, *Judaism: Between Yesterday and Tomorrow* (London: SCM Press, 1992), p. 377.

⁵⁰³ Küng, *Judaism*, p. 378.

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it is the 'Shema Israel', "Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone".⁵⁰⁴ As such, Küng sees in the meaning of this confession 'a shut door to the acceptance and consequent repudiation of any dualism or trinitarianism, because it infers the unity and uniqueness of God.'⁵⁰⁵

Indeed, the idea of worshipping Jesus as the incarnated God-man and as the mediator between Yahweh and mankind was something abhorrent for the orthodox Jewish community (cf. 1 Cor. 1.18-22; 1 Tim. 2.5). In the final analysis, for Paul, Christianity was not primarily an ethical, ritualistic, social or even an ecclesiastical system, but could be defined in one single person—Jesus Christ. In my opinion, in Romans 12.1-2, Paul was impressing upon their mind the priesthood of all believers in Christ, which for reasons of a sinful conscience brought about by the law, could never be attained before, but that was now possible in Christ. The author to the Hebrews offers a good explanation of the question, so to a discussion of this I now turn.

8.3. The ashes of the heifer

This section will examine the theological implications contained in the writer's reference to the ashes of a heifer (cf. Heb. 9.13). However, though the Hebrew's author introduced this theological statement in his list regarding the sacrificial system of atonement pertained to the Old Covenant, the *ashes of the heifer* themselves cannot be exclusive and apart from the other sacrifices mentioned in the text. Having said that,

⁵⁰⁴ Küng, *Judaism*, p. 378.

⁵⁰⁵ Küng, *Judaism*, p. 379.

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I shall focus on the expression itself while scrutinizing the context of the passage where the statement is found.

Lane states: 'By grouping the *blood of goats and bulls* and *the sprinkled ashes of a heifer*, the writer implies that all sacrifices of the Old Covenant were able to provide merely an external and symbolic removal of defilement.'⁵⁰⁶ In other words, they sanctified to the extent of the purging of the flesh. Given this, as a requirement for atonement of sins, the shedding blood functioned as external regulations which applied until the time of the *new order* (cf. Heb. 9.1-10). Bruce underpins this and says, 'the blood of slaughtered animals under the old order did possess a certain efficacy, but it was an outwardly efficacy for the ceremonial pollution.'⁵⁰⁷

Clearly, Hebrews 9.13 exerts a deep symbolic element and its implications are related to the new order quoted in Hebrews 9.10. The text in discussion implies that anyone who contracted ceremonial defilement through approaching a dead body was to be cleansed by being sprinkled with water containing *ashes of the heifer* (cf. Num. 19.11) which would ceremonially cleanse and sanctify them from impurity. There is also another, more central reason for the ceremony, and this is implicitly seen in Hebrews 9.1: 'Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.'

⁵⁰⁶ William Lane, *Hebrews* (Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 40; Dallas, TX: Word Publisher, 1991), p. 239.

Italics author's own.

⁵⁰⁷ Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, rev. edn, 1990), p. 215

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Lane explains: 'the ceremonial involving the red heifer aptly illustrates the outwardly nature of the cultic provision of the Old Testament. It also demonstrates that the unclean state was a hindrance to worship,' (cf. Numbers 19.13; 20).⁵⁰⁸

In fact, the author to the Hebrews does not offer any suggestion of how the Levitical procedures could cleanse from sin, even if only in a temporary manner. Bruce corroborates this: 'Just how the blood of sacrificed animals or the ashes of a heifer effected a ceremonial cleansing our author does not explain; it was sufficient for him, and no doubt for his readers, that the Old Testament ascribed this efficacy to them.'⁵⁰⁹

8.4. The question regarding the conscience

Having introduced the implications of the sacrificial system, I will now discuss their application. Lane introduces: 'Conscience is the human organ of the religious life embracing the whole person in relationship to God. It is the point which a person confront God's holiness.'⁵¹⁰ Brown comments that the imperfect nature of those sacrifices is further illustrated in the words of the author which seem to contain a reason why sacrifices could not make the worshipper perfect, relating to his *conscience* (cf. Hebrews 9.9).⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 239.

⁵⁰⁹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 216.

⁵¹⁰ Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 240.

⁵¹¹ John Brown, *Hebrews* (London: The Banner of the Truth Trust, 1961), p. 376.

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In fact, outwardly, the sacrifices dedicated, sanctified, and consecrated, as the author confirms in chapter 9.13—but only in to a certain extent. They could not cleanse the conscience of the sinner before God. In other words, those sacrifices restored the penitent to a mere formal communion with God, but if it was an inward sense of guilt that kept him in his heart far from God, sacrifices were undoubtedly ineffective as they could not deal with this condition. Even so, and in spite of the inefficacy of the sacrifices, they were ordained by God to sanctify the ceremonially unclean. Nevertheless, Kistemaker recalls that ‘the observation of those regulations affected the penitent only externally, not internally. Their consciences, however, remained unaffected.’⁵¹²

In view of what has been said—that a guilty conscience prevented the worshipper from approaching God— we assume that there is a further element to what the author to the Hebrews is trying to convey. Stedman observes: ‘the author makes his point to imply that, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer offered in the tabernacle, were suffice to make the penitent acceptable to God. Yet temporally, they functioned as a shadow or figure of some reality yet to come’.⁵¹³ Thus the following topics will clarify the implicit theology contained in the two previous points.

⁵¹² Simon J. Kistemaker, *Hebrews* (Welwyn Garden City: Evangelical Press, 1984), p. 98.

⁵¹³ Ray C. Stedman, *Hebrews* (IVPNTCS; Leicester: IVP, 1992), p. 98.

8.4. The eternal Spirit

Referring himself to the efficacy of both systems, the key phrase used by the author is “how much more”—a straight allusion to the superiority of the New Order of Hebrews 9.10. Hagner argues that many scholars (Hughes and Delitzsch, for example) preferably teach that the eternal Spirit does not refer to the Holy Spirit (as some manuscripts do), but refers to the Spirit of Christ, who is eternal in nature.⁵¹⁴ Its use, then, is a reference to Christ’s personal nature which enabled him to make the perfect sacrifice.

However, Hagner disagrees with this proposition saying, ‘the reference to the Spirit [i.e. though the definite article is absent, it is a reference to the Holy Spirit because of the adjective ‘eternal’] was to be understood for his intended readers to be the Holy Spirit.’⁵¹⁵ Hagner adds: ‘if the author’s conjectures pointed out to the personal Spirit of Christ, he would have unmistakably indicated, i.e. by means of adding ‘of Christ’; however, it is worthy to note that there is no mention whatsoever to the eternal Spirit, personal, of Jesus’.⁵¹⁶

Nonetheless, Montefiore disagrees with Hagner and says, ‘It does not mean the Holy Spirit, or Christ’s disposition, or his soul. It refers to “the power of a life that nothing can destroy”. The author always assumes the complete humanity of Jesus, and

⁵¹⁴ Donald Hagner, *Hebrews* (UBCS; Grand Rapids, MI: Goodspeed, 1989), p.163.

⁵¹⁵ Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 163.

⁵¹⁶ Hagner, *Hebrews*, p. 163.

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this is not here in question.⁵¹⁷ Based on this, I understand Hebrews 9.8-10 to be a reference to the Holy Spirit, who participated in all Christ's event. Through the Holy Spirit He was begotten, trained, tested, worked, and offered himself as a sacrifice, and was resurrected and justified (cf. Lk. 1.35; 2.40; 4.1, 14, 21; Heb. 9.14; Rom. 8.11; 1 Tim. 3.16).

In spite of the incongruity between scholars regarding the origins of the eternal Spirit, what really matters is the truth contained in the statement. Lane explains: 'The main clause of v 14 summarises the benefits experienced by Christians as a result of Christ's high priestly offering. In this context, where the discussion focuses upon purgation, the phrase reflects a concept of sin as defilement that is inimical to the approach to the living God.'⁵¹⁸ F.F. Bruce reinforces this, saying, 'those earlier sacrifices might affect external purification, but the blood of Christ – *His offering up to God* – cleanses the conscience; it does the very thing they could not do, since we have been told that they could not.'⁵¹⁹ What is it that they could not do? Hebrews 9.9 has the answer: 'They could not, as regard the conscience, make the worshipper perfect' (cf. Gal. 3.10-11; Rom. 3.20).

⁵¹⁷ Hugh H. Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Adam & Clark Black, 1964), p. 154.

⁵¹⁸ Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 240.

⁵¹⁹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 216. Italics author's own.

8.6. God's provision through Jesus' sacrifice

Having taken into account the inefficacy of the sacrifices, a New Covenant in Jesus—the perfect man—could inaugurate a new cycle in God's agenda. Hebrews 9.26b claims: 'But now he [Jesus] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.' In agreement with Paul, Hebrews' explanation of the central purpose of Jesus' sacrifice is that the community may be renewed in the worship of God and its cultic service (cf. Rom. 12.1-3). Indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the Christian interpretation of the sacrificial system, and demonstrates that the tabernacle and the offerings were just 'a shadow of the realities' which were fulfilled in Jesus' perfect sacrifice, the implicit reality of the Old Covenant (cf. Heb. 10.1).

Lane proposes: 'the aptitude of the corrupted conscience to ban someone from serving God has been superseded by the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse the conscience from defilement (cf. Heb. 9.22).'⁵²⁰ The Hebrew's author had a new way in mind which undoubtedly could enable the people to serve the living God, not only by purging away that guilt which separates a Holy God from sinners, but by sanctifying and renewing the soul through the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, purchased by Jesus for this purpose, thus enabling the people to serve the living God in a lively manner (cf. Rom. 5.5; 8.1-2, 4-6, 9, 13-14, 16; Heb. 10.19).

⁵²⁰ Lane, *Hebrews*, p. 241.

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Brown states, ‘the main purpose of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to show that Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, has a more excellent ministry than Aaron and his Sons, who were mediators of the Old Covenant (cf. Hebrews 9.15).’⁵²¹ The New Covenant foretold by the prophet Jeremiah 31.34 is what underpins the certainty of total forgiveness. The first covenant covered the sins committed under it, but was unable to provide ‘eternal redemption’; this is embodied by the New Covenant, which God has established within the New Order (cf. 2 Cor. 3.1-9). Realistically, the New Covenant is a spiritual covenant, as opposed to the Old Covenant which was merely a legalistic physical covenant and could not strengthen the sinner; this is indeed Paul’s message in Galatians and Romans (cf. Gal. 2.16; Rom. 7.6, 16, 23; 8.2-4; 12.1-2).

That said, Hebrews 9.1-15 focuses on several points. Clearly, the writer speaks about the first pact (i.e. the Old Covenant/Testament) as being something earthly and provisional. These practices had their own purpose and duration even to the day of the reform, in other words, until the New Testament of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was revealed by his incarnation.

The author asserts that if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer are sprinkled on the unclean sanctifies to purify the flesh, the blood of Christ, who for the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, could go much further; the blood of Jesus could purify the sinful and guilty conscience blamed on the fall in the Garden of Eden, whilst at the same time could also remove the wall of separation between the Creator and His

⁵²¹ Brown, *Hebrews*, p. 388.

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creation. This is where the expression of grace reaches its highest point (cf. Gal. 2.21; Rom 3.21; 6.14-15; 11.16).

In sum, a New Covenant, order, or will would be inaugurated between God and men (cf. Hebrews 9.15). I believe that this text may have two applications. First, it is possible to argue that the believers of the Old Testament died in the faith of the Lamb promised to Abraham, and by that same faith sacrifices were made as a sign of hope (i.e. forgiveness of sins). Upon these, Jesus' death had a retroactive application, thus their final redemption reaches its completion by the crucifixion of Jesus (cf. Rom. 4.1-3).

Therefore Abraham's sacrifice is legitimately applicable to this. In fact, it is as important as the act from God in the Garden of Eden, in which God provided saving provision for His creation (cf. Gen. 3.15; 22.1-13). This episode symbolizes or prefigures a spiritual reality of rare dimension. This event explains Paul's assertion regarding the good news being announced to Abraham (cf. Gal. 3.6-9). Pauline theology implies that that the Gospel of Jesus, which had now been revealed, would be the complete fulfilment of the divine plan. For Paul, the Gospel of Jesus Christ was God's ultimate goal.

Abraham is called the father in faith or the father of many nations (cf. Gen 12.3, 15.5; Rom. 4.13-25); the revelation which God addressed to him predicted the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. By trusting in God, Abraham was justified by faith through grace alone, and from this perspective, those who are of the faith of Abraham are also

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justified by faith in God's provision—Jesus (cf. Gal. 3.17-18; Rom. 3.21-28). Secondly, it can be applied also to the believers of the New Testament, who die in the hope of the Lamb who came to accomplish the whole plan of salvation. Upon these, Jesus' death has had an effective and prospective application (cf. Jn 1.29; Rom. 3.24-26; 8.1-3).

Clearly, Hebrews 9 presents important characteristics of Jesus' sacrifice, which is infinitely superior to the sacrifices of the Old Testament. It is personal and human, not animal (9.13); it purifies the conscience (compare 9.9 with 9.14); it is definitive and endures forever (9.25, 26). The key theme of the Hebrew is that no one else can serve God with an unclean conscience. For this reason the blood of Christ cleanses people's conscience rendering them acceptable and allowing them to approach and adore God without fear. This is exactly what Paul is driving at in Romans 12.1-2; after grasping hold of it fully, the new community were able to offer the perfect λατρείαν, so he goes on to explain the implications of this new life in Christ exposed in Romans 1-8.

Thus Romans 12.1-2–15.13 is the synopsis of everything Paul taught previously in Romans 1–11, where he brought his theological thought to an end to introduce new concepts of relationship and other practical principles. Peter Stulhmacher corroborates my view on this: 'Romans 12.1-2 to 15.13 is anything but a mere appendix to the theological exposition of chapters 1–11, therefore the sequence of placing chapter 1–11 before 12–15 is intentionally planned by Paul.'⁵²² In fact, this is a usual Pauline structure confirmed by the fact that this arrangement is noticed in other letters as well.

⁵²² Stulhmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, p. 185.

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First of all, salvation is dealt with followed by an exhortation encouraging its members to keep it fully (e.g. Gal. 1.1–5.12 and 5.13–6.10; Col. 1.1–2.23 and 3.1–4.6).

8.7. Ethical recommendations

In the previous paragraph we saw that Romans 12.1-2 offers a normative program for the Pauline exhortation (*paraclesis*) to the church. It concerned the worship of those who had been justified, which was to be conducted in the everyday affairs of the world according to the criteria established by Christ for what is good and what is reprehensible. Subsequently, Paul presents paradigmatic instructions for what this (all-encompassing) worship of God should look like (in Rome). Henceforth, Romans 12.3-8 focuses its attention on the practical issues of the letter.

To begin with, their liberation from the power of sin is anything but a license to live from now on according to one's discretion or to sin; in other words, Paul deals with the verification of justification in the life of the community and makes it clear that God accepts sinners unconditionally in Christ, but as a result Christians are placed under the reign of Christ and are enlisted to pay the right λατρείαν to God through Him. With this in mind, for Paul, the priesthood of all believers is not just a mere metamorphosis that goes on in the mind. Furthermore, it does not implicate only the right cultic service or the right adoration paid to God, but it will reflect within their circle of action as well as in the life of the community around them.

Robert Jewett offers a good summary of Romans 12.3-8: 'it describes the spiritual and moral resources required for the task (i.e. ethical implications), beginning with a

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wordplay on avoiding superiority claims popularized by society: “do not be super-minded above what one ought to be minded, but set your mind on being sober-minded, according to the measuring rod of faith that God dealt out to each”.⁵²³ He concludes: ‘By referring to the unique experience of faith that each person and group possess in Christ, Paul defines “sober-mindedness” as the refusal to impose the standard of one’s relationship with God onto others. This had a direct bearing on the conflicts between the *weak* and the *strong*, in which each side was attempting to compel the other to accept its views.’⁵²⁴

The *measure of faith* expression of Romans 12.3 implies the power of God to each member to fulfil various ministries within the church environment. Once again, Paul focuses on the priesthood of all believers in Christ (cf. Rom. 12.5), and since the power comes from God, there can be no basis for a superior attitude or self-righteousness. Morris says, ‘there is a tendency to make this and the following verses refer to people holding official positions in the church. This is probably misguided, for we know very little about what offices existed in the church at the time Paul wrote, and in any case he puts what he says in very general terms. Since a good deal of it applies to all believers, there is no reason to think he was referring to office-bearers as such.’⁵²⁵ So then, for Paul, ministry is a function of membership in the Body of Christ, and each Christian has the function of ministry to some degree.

⁵²³ Jewett, ‘Romans’, 102

⁵²⁴ Jewett, ‘Romans’, p. 102.

⁵²⁵ Morris, *Romans*, p. 437.

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In fact, the priesthood of all believers is one of the most significant doctrines in Pauline thought; it is seen through the metaphors he applies to refer to the new Christian Church (e.g. building, bride, body, olive tree and vineyard), whereby the people and Jesus (and vice-versa) function together, and where the leadership are seen as mentors (cf. Eph. 4.11-12). The concept of laity is absent from the New Testament as whole, but it is Paul who develops the argument further, which is based on the view that serving the community involves the Church as a whole (cf. Eph. 4.11-12; Rom. 12.4-8; 1 Cor. 12.1-31). For this reason, Stevens sees the Church as the *object* not the subject of the ministry.⁵²⁶ Hans Küng, a prominent Roman Catholic Theologian, shares the same view and adds that the Church is not an inferior class or caste. On the contrary, members of the people of God are all fundamentally equal.⁵²⁷

As said above, the concept of laity does not appear in the New Testament. The term laypersons (*Laikoi*) was first used by Clement of Rome at the end of the first century and thus, it is a post-apostolic concept. Stevens argues that none of the Apostles ever applied this word to describe the Church as second-class citizens and inexperienced people.⁵²⁸ In Stevens' view, the practicality of the ministry is

⁵²⁶ Paul R. Stevens, *The Abolition of the Laity: Vocation, Work and Ministry in a Biblical Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), p. 3.

⁵²⁷ Hans Küng, *The Church* (Tonbridge: Burns and Oates, 1995), p. 370.

⁵²⁸ Stevens, *The Abolition*, p. 5.

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misunderstood once ministry is seen as what the leadership do, thereby relegating the role of the believers within their community as something secondary and irrelevant.⁵²⁹

Quoting Jesus' words at John 7.17 ('if anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God'), Stevens argues that the Hebrew meaning for 'know' is 'intercourse',⁵³⁰ which relates to an intimate invitation given to someone to have intercourse with the subject itself. Thus there is a link between John 7.17 and practicality—thought with action, faith and life, doctrine with ethical practice—implied within the idea that divine truth involves love for God and for the neighbour. In this way, like Christ's body, the Church functions together, and for Hans Küng the Church does not refer to a few especially distinguished members, but to *all* the members who are singularly important for the good functioning of the whole.⁵³¹

Depending on the specific church context, a 'lay' person is: someone who does not belong to the hierarchy; deprived of a title; at the service of the world; with non-theological preparation; not remunerated; and in terms of life style, is not religious but is occupied with secular life, therefore, an anti-biblical perspective. As far as I am concerned, due to its stronger emphasis on Soteriology than Ecclesiology, the Protestant Reformed teaching failed in bringing about changes, and the priesthood of

⁵²⁹ Stevens, *The Abolition*, p. 5.

⁵³⁰ Steven, *The Abolition*, p. 6.

⁵³¹ Küng, *The Church*, p. 370.

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all believers was interpreted according to its effect on individual salvation. With regard to the collective Christian experience it was business as usual.

Furthermore, the presence of contradictions is noticeable in so-called Evangelical circles where 'generally laypersons are considered to be assistants to the leader rather the other way around'.⁵³² This is a counterproductive view, given that in the New Testament the leader functions as a kind of *primus inter pares* and is not in a distinct position to the others. This is what Paul interpolates in Romans 12.3-8, but was already touched upon in many other texts (e.g. 1 Cor. 12.12ff., and continued in Col. 1.18; 2.17; 3.15; Eph. 1.23; 2.16; 4.4ff., 12ff.; 5.30).

Even though Paul does not disagree with full time ministry—much the opposite—he shows reminiscence of different kinds of calls within the new Church. He makes every effort to inculcate into the mind of his hearers a distinct view which will prevent them from moving backward to a pre-Christian view of 'clergy' and 'laity' as portrayed by the Old Testament model of leadership, i.e. a general call to the people and a special call to a few. In the meantime, Petts reminds us that 'The word "minister" really means "servant" and a ministry is a form of service and in a sense we all have a ministry.'⁵³³ On the other hand, Petts adds that it would be wrong to assert that Ephesians 4.11 applies to everybody, given that it is clear from Petts' view and from 1 Corinthians 12.29ff that

⁵³² Steven, *The Abolition*, p. 24.

⁵³³ David Petts, *Body Builders*, p. 20.

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only some are apostles or prophets or teachers.⁵³⁴ This is exactly what Paul has in mind in Romans 12.4-8.

He likens Christians to members of a human body. In fact, there are many members and each has a different function, but all are needed for the health and functioning of the body; the sense is on unity within diversity in Christ, i.e. the key of Paul's concept of Christian unity (cf. 1 Cor. 12.12-31). It is only in Jesus Christ of Nazareth that any unity in the church is possible, so true unity is spiritually based, in contrast to the former concept of servanthood contained in the Old Testament cultic system whereby lay people relied upon human mediators to perform the service.

In other words, Paul undoes such a concept. For him, the leaders' role is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, and they function, by and large, not in a solo or monarchical manner, but in plurality (cf. 1 Tim. 4.14). Ephesians adds, 'to prepare God's people for works of service' (cf. Eph. 4.12) and 'as each part does its work' (cf. Eph. 4.16). The Pauline corpus implies duality of functions and involvement so that everyone has a personal and unique role to play for the edification of God's kingdom, including the leadership. In short, Paul's concept is that the leadership is responsible for teaching, disciplining and guiding the flock and it is up to them to justify this investment.

⁵³⁴ Petts, *Body Builders*, p. 20.

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In this context, ‘the gifts’ (χαρίσματα) refers to special gifts of grace which are freely given by God to his people to meet the needs of the body, and the *proportion of faith* (Rom. 12.6) has a very similar meaning to the *measure of faith* (12.3). Paul itemizes some of these gifts (for instance prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, and contributing), each of which focuses on people working alongside the leadership for the welfare of the whole (cf. Rom. 12.6-8). In brief, for Paul, serving in the church, is not a one-man-band thing or just a leadership role—it is a communal thing. In virtue of this he uses the rest of the letter to sort out practical issues which will help the Roman community to accomplish its task (cf. Rom. 12.9–15.13).

Conclusion

In my opinion, Romans 12.1-3 has to do with the type of mission developed by both entities. To the former Israel, a centripetal mission was required, whilst to the second Israel, a centrifugal mission is given. In biblical terms, Israel κατὰ σάρκα should have brought Glory to its God by drawing the nations to Him. This should be characterised by the keeping of the law, by living under divine principles, and by inspiring a holy life style—the hallmarks of a distinctive people among other nations of the earth. However, she failed in her endeavour to accomplish this task. In response to its failure, Yahweh redefines *Heilsgeschichte* in Pauline thought (cf. 2 Cor. 5.17-21) so that a new concept of relationship is brought into being. This new concept is the law, and the former bridge God built between Him and Israel κατὰ σάρκα is replaced by Jesus who is the object of faith to whom the law makes allusion (cf. 1 Tim. 2.5-6).

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In this sense I argue for a replacement theology where a redefinition takes place. I sustain that the law had a temporary purpose and worked as a bridge built between God's covenant with Abraham and the Cross of Christ. It served its role as a custodian given for a purpose in time but never as measure of faith or salvation, which having reached its fulfilment became obsolete by the inauguration/renewing of the New Covenant in Christ. Thus for Paul, Christianity meant the age of adulthood and the Church is God's ultimate creation—the universal family whose head is Christ.

For Paul, God's long term aim since the time of Adam has been to restore His original plan for humanity. Consequently, in accordance with His salvific purposes, He established Jesus as the second Adam in order to provide the means by which this purpose could be achieved. Paul demonstrates this in his Letter to the Romans, thereby illustrating how God Himself played a fundamental role in meeting all the conditions that were necessary for this purpose and the restored relationship which would ultimately follow to become a reality, in and through Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

In 2 Cor. 2.14-16, Paul thus depicts this centrifugal role:

Now thanks *be* to God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ, and He revealing through us the fragrance of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are to God a sweet savour of Christ, in those being saved, and in those being lost; to the one *we are* the savour of death to death, and to the other we are the savour of life to life.

The message is clear. Paul speaks to a specific group of people—recipients of the divine revelation—whose mission is to proclaim God's salvation plan to all people. In a figured form he uses the terms savour and fragrance as the expression of the faith and of the divine knowledge. What Paul wants to convey is simple. This Christian life, when

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lived in a victorious way will be obvious to all around. The knowledge—or in biblical terms, the new life in Christ—is embodied by the savour who, spread in all directions, makes God's knowledge known. Those who are saved are edified, exhorted, and consoled by this divine knowledge so that they receive life that flows towards others (i.e. *life to life*, cf. Jn 3.19; 9.39; 15.22).

As for the lost, there are some considerations to do. Firstly, though God's primary intention is to save all men, the Pauline Corpus implies that not all will respond to His Paternal appeal to be saved. While spreading everywhere, this knowledge acts as a divine evidence which brings people to a point whereby they may reflect in order to respond to God's divine appeal, thus reaching eternal salvation.

The expression *death to death* may have a double-edged interpretation. It can mean that those in Christ, who in a spiritual sense are dead to their sinful nature and set free from the flesh and the world's evil influence, may spread everywhere the sweet savour of Christ through their new life in Him. In this respect, this death for the sin as symbolised by the new life in Christ, gives off life. So through this divine influence, those spiritually alive reach those who are bodily alive but spiritually dead, reviving them for God.

So for Paul, God is justifiable because no one loses salvation for His divine will or by predestination, otherwise the announcing of the gospel would be pointless (cf. Mt. 24.14; 28.18-20; Mk 16.15-16; Lk. 24.45-48; Acts 1.8). Moreover, we must not forget that the Gospel of God has a double-edged function; it brings life and hope, but if

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rejected may lead to eternal damage, and this for Paul was the role given to Israel κατὰ πνεῦμα, that is, to be a vehicle of Yahweh's divine intention proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to the nations (cf. Acts 1.8).

Chapter 9: General Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to evaluate the question of the *relationship* between Yahweh and a chosen people in Pauline thought, and for this purpose the Letter to the Romans has been used as the basis upon which I have built my thesis. As such, an overall understanding of this book was axiomatic within the wider context of Pauline theology, as we considered how Paul's perspective impinges upon the question at hand. The main focus of this dissertation, therefore, has been to present a relational parallel between the People of Israel and the Christian Church with particular reference to the logic of Pauline Theology.

This thesis has been divided into eight chapters, each with their respective subtopics. It has been stated from the very beginning that Romans deals with questions that focus upon such issues as justification by faith, righteousness, Law, grace, legalism, and the concept of 'Israel'. Each of these issues have been dealt with in a concise way across this thesis. As matter of fact, it is noticeable throughout this essay that *relationship* in Pauline thought is intrinsically linked to *justification by faith*, and the two have been at the core of this research. Various schools of thought have been analysed and discussed, and other pertinent issues have been drawn into the discussion. Although a conclusion has been drawn at the end of each chapter, I shall reinforce these ideas by framing the whole thesis into an overall conclusion, and addressing the purpose of this dissertation.

I began this thesis by exploring the question of what kind of effect the NPP has had upon the Portuguese-speaking theological debate. I identified that while the subject

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has been approached in Brazil, so far it has been discussed only in a very incipient way. Up until now, the NPP was relatively undiscussed, particularly in Portugal where topics of this academic nature have not been subject to intense study. Alongside the discussion, I examined why the Portuguese-speaking world was slow to join in the debate behind those countries where the NPP has been an academic issue for a while. I also explained how this document can bring a contribution to the debate, helping to clarify Portuguese scholarship with regard to the NPP in general, and particularly Douglas Campbell's viewpoint on the subject of justification by faith. This is the main contribution brought about by this thesis.

That said, the early chapters dealt with the main points of contention between the NPP and OPP, and during this debate it was assumed that the Jews from Paul's time understood righteousness from a legal, moral, and behavioural point of view. Thus my thesis has argued against the concept exposed by the NPP that Judaism from the period of the Second Temple was a religion based on grace. Indeed, I reiterate here, this theory voids the cross of Christ of its significance and deprives the atonement of Christ of its central focus. Indeed, the idea that first-century Judaism is a religion of grace is construed merely on the conjectural basis implied by the NPP school of thought, i.e. that the doctrine of justification by faith functions only as a pragmatic Pauline tactic to facilitate his mission to the Gentiles.

Again, I would like to draw attention to some implicit points which were discussed during the course of the mentioned section. To begin with, the NPP endangers the Reformation view of Pauline theology since its proponents strenuously advocate that

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Paul's letters should be examined in the light of rabbinical writings. In short, Paul's writings would not be a revelation about the first covenant, but an extension of the theology found in rabbinic writings, as if Judaism were the religion of the Old Testament. I have demonstrated clearly that this is not the case. In this manner, this school of thought speculates that God's grace in Christ as depicted by Paul was aimed only at Gentiles, given that the People of Israel already enjoyed God's divine favour by "staying in" the covenant.

Therefore for the adherents of the NPP, the innermost centre of Pauline theology is not *justification by faith* aimed at both Jews and Gentiles, but a distinctive 'Gospel' aimed at both ethnic groups, i.e. a covenantal nomism for the Jews and the Gospel of Grace to the Gentiles, implying thus the existence of two alliances and two peoples. As already seen during the course of this thesis, however, this is something foreign to Paul's theology. Consequently, Paul would not have relied on rabbinical writings or on any other extra sources, unless, as previously stated, to pinpoint historical-critical-religious or even environmental arguments. Instead, and appropriately, he relied on the canonical sources of the Old Testament of the first century to construct his doctrine and thought.⁵³⁵

Paul's Pharisaic background, under which he was taught, was also likely to have been a strong influence in the Old Covenant being the foundation and source of Paul's

⁵³⁵ Robert L. Thomas, 'Hermeneutics of the New Perspective on Paul', *The Master's Seminary Journal* 16.2, (2005), p. 301

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intention and doctrine. It would thus be inadvisable to understand Paul from the viewpoint of Hellenism or Rabbinic Judaism, but within the context of the verbal expressions used by him to formulate his claims, as for instance: the “Scriptures say” (cf. Rom. 4.3; 9.17; 10.11; Gal. 4.30; 1 Tim. 5.18); “Isaiah says” (cf. Rom 10.16-20); and “Moses says”(cf. Rom. 10.19).

In the final analysis, it has been stated that the main criticism to be levelled at the NPP interpretation is its hermeneutical inconsistency, and consequently it appears that the only conclusion one can come to regarding the New Perspective is that it interprets the New Testament out of context; as Crossley points out, ‘the NPP downplays the idea that Judaism was a religion whereby the individual earned their salvation.’⁵³⁶

Undoubtedly, it was noticeable that such a hermeneutic leads to interpretative diversity by the proponents of the NPP, causing tension and confusion; on the surface the views of adherents seem complementary when, in fact, their interpretations are multiple and conflicting. Farnell states: ‘the historical criticism and subjective tendency of the hermeneutic approach of the NPP directly contributes to their lack of uniformity, something that in the Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism is avoided by understanding and applying grammatical-historical principles, which promotes certain

⁵³⁶ Crossley, *Reading the New Testament*, p. 97.

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objectivity.⁵³⁷ Therefore, in the logical sense of the label, the *New Perspective* on Paul should be called the *New Perspectives*.

Having discussed the NPP, I moved towards a distinctive and contemporary debate on the matter of justification by faith, with particular scrutiny being paid to Douglas Campbell's massive volume *The Deliverance of God*. To begin with, it could be said that some points of convergence between Campbell's thesis and the NPP are detectable on the theme of justification by faith, and other aspects of his work resemble the NPP's conjectural view on salvation—Campbell's refutation of the doctrine of justification by faith, for instance. Indeed, it is clear throughout the discussion that in spite of their differences, both the NPP and Campbell have one thing in common: they are a complete denial of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith as understood by the Reformed school of thought.

On the one hand, the NPP implies that 'righteousness' is primarily about God's faithfulness (i.e. the divine side), and membership in the covenant community (i.e. the human side). In fact, the NPP operates within the concepts of "getting into" the covenant through divine election and "staying in" it through law observance, thus implying that salvation for the Jewish people can be attained by the merits of national identity, without the use of, or belief in, Jesus Christ. In other words, the NPP's conceptual understanding of salvation implies some sort of universalism and gives the

⁵³⁷ David Farnell, 'The New Perspective On Paul: Its Basic Tenets, History, and Presuppositions', *The Master's Seminary Journal* 16. 2 (2005), pp. 189-243.

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impression that the nation of Israel lacks nothing and therefore has no need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, I objected to this saying that the main point in Paul's argument is not about universal salvation but that God will justify both Jews and Gentiles *sola gratia, sola fide, and propter Christum*.

On the other hand we saw that Campbell's theoretical view is solely participatory and infers that the faithfulness or *faith of Christ* replaces one's faith and personal obedience; salvation is solely reliant on Christ's faithfulness. However, I demonstrated that the justification discourse does not emerge in a spontaneous and unmediated way from Pauline texts. It is a theological doctrine, formulated on the basis of a series of theological premises which address a particular problem and is driven by a whole apologetic among the Roman church groups with which Paul is concerned. In other words, we concluded that the generic confusion and Campbell's misreading could be traced to both doctrinal exposition and biblical scholarship *per se*.

During my research I called attention to the fact that neither Campbell nor the NPP have taken into account the New Testament's emphasis on the importance of the problem of sin and forgiveness described in Romans. In sum, for both the NPP and Campbell, *justification by faith* does not refer to Yahweh's dealing with mankind using strict justice through the atonement of Christ, i.e. the divine side (cf. Rom. 1.16-18; 3.21-28), or by means of justification where Christ's righteousness is attributed to sinners by God himself, i.e. the human side (cf. Rom. 5.1).

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For this reason, we demonstrated the inadequacy of Campbell's thesis, as well as the inadequacy of the NPP with regard to forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ (termed *eternal security* within the context of Evangelicalism) and the concept of the *righteousness of God* as depicted by Paul. It has been shown, then, that both theories tend to be reductionist or minimalist in nature, undermining the *eternal security* of believers concerning the Roman's message, and, as seen in both sections, any other way of attaining salvation apart from the way of the cross is foreign to Paul (cf. Rom. 4.25; 1 Cor. 1.18-23).

In view of this, the main reason why the NPP and *TDoG* have been subjected to meticulous scrutiny has to do with their views on *relationship* in Pauline thought. In this way, and although the issue of justification by faith has been addressed in both sections, it was thought reasonable to present an overview on the subject of justification alongside its implications and meaning in chapter four. Thus in juxtaposition to the adherents of the NPP and Campbell, and in order to follow the same line of thought, I considered God's provision for the inability of both the Jews and Gentiles to fulfil the divine requirement of a righteous life, as part of what it meant to be a member of the community of God's people. Within this context I arrived at the conclusion that, throughout the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul set out the revelation of God's righteousness which has been made possible in and through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and, more specifically, through his cross, his resurrection, and the power of the Holy Spirit.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ Wright, *The Climax*, p. 235.

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In chapter five, I discussed the structure of Romans, arguing that chapters 9–11 continue on from where Chapter 8 leaves off in terms of God’s sovereignty in contrast to those who believe that Romans contains two different messages (e.g. Lloyd Jones). Indeed, chapters 9–11 complement Yahweh’s original intention to reach the whole of humanity rather than a specific ethnic group. Indeed, the basic thesis of Romans is that the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles *together* forms the wider community of God’s people. This is a view that I personally share.

In chapter six I observed how, in spite of Paul’s anguish, his sorrow and his deep discomfort at the plight of his nation, he opposed Jewish tradition. Consequently, in Paul’s mind, God has not favoured any particular ethnic group of people because *all humanity* is of equal importance to Him. In eschatological terms, Paul understood national Israel as a group which were chosen to represent wider humanity at large, in terms of her historic experiences with God. Reflections of those experiences, for Paul, are interpreted in a typological way, the thesis of which is made quite clear throughout chapter 9 as it serves as both the link and key to what follows in chapters 10–11.⁵³⁹ On the whole, it has been shown in Pauline thought that God acts in mercy and this does not depend upon ethnic or racial status, but rather upon His divine nature (cf. Rom. 10.13).

⁵³⁹ Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible*, pp. 194-195. See also Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, p. 268; Rigby, *Comfort*, pp. 10-12.

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After chapter six, the thesis presented a redefinition of relationship in Paul's thought. For Paul, redefining relationship meant also redefining Israel's role in Yahweh's agenda. Again, at this point there is an obvious link between Paul's thought in Romans and that explained by the author to the Hebrews. Walter Kaiser says, 'the key to understanding the *better covenant* of Hebrews 8.6 is to observe the equation made between the Abrahamic promise (cf. Rom. 4.1-4; Heb. 6.13; 7.19, 22) and the New Covenant (cf. Heb. 8.6-13). Since the Mosaic covenant had been the first full covenant under which the nation of Israel had experienced a relationship with God, the Abrahamic is not the first according to the author's numbering.'⁵⁴⁰

Kaiser goes on, 'thus the Mosaic covenant did have its faults (cf. Heb. 8.7) but it was not because of any inadequacies on the part of the covenant-making God; rather, many of the provisions had a deliberately built-in planned obsolescence. This was indicated from the beginning when the ceremonial and civil institutions were expressly called *copies or patterns* made after the real (cf. Exod. 25.9; Heb. 9.23)'.⁵⁴¹ In this way, many were temporary teaching devices until the "surety" of the better covenant arrived (cf. Heb. 7.22). They came from the progression of revelation and not from the errors or deliberate misinformation of the former covenants.

This is exactly what Paul drives at in Romans; the law's pedagogical role was thus conditioned and superseded by a higher and *better covenant*, granted on the basis of a

⁵⁴⁰ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 268.

⁵⁴¹ Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 268.

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better certainty—Jesus. In Paul’s mind the Old Testament law had fulfilled its role as the παιδαγωγὸς as something temporal and should be relinquished for a better thing (cf. Rom. 8.3; Gal. 3.24-25).

We saw that Paul’s intention and argument aimed to clarify that the Mosaic era was no more and no less than the Abrahamic covenant being outgrown; its nature was merely preparatory. In this way, what Paul is driving at is that all promises have been brought to completion, from the inception of the patriarchal promises given under divine favour, continuing through the Sinaitic and Davidic promises; nothing was deleted, abrogated or jettisoned except that which was clearly delimited from its first appearance. God, then, has been faithful. I declined a dual-covenant theology and made clear that Jesus renewed the covenant through his death, but that he did not institute an entirely new covenant.

In view of this, my contention is not that the New Covenant only fulfilled the spiritual promises made to Abraham’s seed. It is true that the middle wall of partition was broken down between believing Jews and Gentiles (cf. Eph. 2.13-18), but this again did not imply or teach that national identity or promises were obviated any more than maleness and femaleness were dropped. Paul’s claim is that Gentile believers have been grafted into the Jewish olive tree (cf. Rom. 11.17-25) and made ‘fellow heirs of the same body and takers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel’ (cf. Eph. 3.6). Since ‘salvation is of the Jews’ (cf. Jn 4.22), and since there is only one fold (cf. Jn 10.16), it should not be too surprising to see the New Testament writers add to the emerging thesis of the Old Testament that there is just one people of God and one programme of

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God even though there are several aspects to that single people and single programme.⁵⁴²

Paul made the Gentile believers part of the 'household of God' (cf. Eph. 2.19) and part of 'Abraham's seed' (cf. Gal. 3.16-19) whose inheritance was part of 'the hope of their calling' (cf. Eph. 1.18) and part of the 'eternal inheritance' given to Abraham (cf. Heb. 9.15). Gentiles, who were 'aliens from the state of Israel' (cf. Eph. 2.12,) and 'strangers and foreigners' (cf. Eph. 2.19) to the 'covenants of promise (cf. Eph. 2.12), have been made to share in part of the blessing of God to Israel.

However, in the midst of this unity of the 'people of God' and 'the household of faith' there still remains an expectation of a future inheritance which will also conclude God's promise with a revived nation of Israel—the Kingdom of God—and the renewed heavens and earth. Again, it is evident that we already share in some of the benefits of the age to come, yet the same unified plan still awaits a future and everlasting fulfilment. For this reason, and eschatologically speaking, Israel's national identity has been kept intact and was not transferred to the Church unconditionally but extended for a purpose in time. Thus Paul summons the Christian Church to live the new life in a victorious way, spreading the knowledge and the life of Christ, making Him known.

In the final analysis, this thesis has built up its argument in four main sections: the New Perspective on Paul, Douglas Campbell's thesis, Eschatology, and the subject of

⁵⁴² Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, p. 268.

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Israel. These sections were all used as the foundational basis to delineate my thoughts on Paul's understanding of *relationship with God* within the Pauline Corpus, and primarily in Romans. In sum, the themes proposed at the beginning of this dissertation (justification by faith, righteousness, Law, grace, legalism, and the concept of Israel) have been discussed and analysed to the best of my ability. Overall, the findings were that Paul's understanding of *relationship with God* cannot be discussed apart of these themes, which successively cannot be approached without dealing with the corresponding schools of thought mentioned during the course of this study.

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